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Paper for the
19th NSC Annual Business Meeting,
18th June 2010

Item 1

NSC PRESIDENT, THEMATIC GROUPS ANNUAL REPORTS AND OTHER REPORTS

The Presidents report will be presented at the meeting.

Enclosed are the Annual reports for the Thematic Groups.

There are additional written reports regarding;

- NSC-BSC Cooperation
- CPMR Aquamarina group

There will be oral reports from;

- Report from the Interreg IVB North Sea Region programme, by Head of Secretariat Christian Byrith
- The North Sea Regional Advisory Council by the Chair of NSRAC Hugo Andersson

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 18th June 2010 adopts the Presidents report and the Thematic Groups Annual Reports and continues to support the work of the NSC.***
- 2. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 18th June 2010 adopts the other reports for information.***



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Culture & Tourism Group

The Culture & Tourism Group has been chaired by Cllr Harry van Waveren (Province of Zeeland) throughout the period.

Cllr Lars Nordström (Västra Götaland Region) has been Vice-Chair throughout the period, whereas Cllr Peter Robinson (East Midlands) was elected new Vice-Chair in November 2009.

Mr Geir Sør-Reime has been the advisor of the group throughout the period.

The Group met during the annual conference in Egmond aan Zee, and had planned to organize a conference on cultural and sustainable tourism in Angus in December 2009, to be combined with a normal meeting of the group. For various reasons, this conference was cancelled, and as a consequence, also the planned meeting of the group.

The group held its 37th meeting then in Skagen (North Jutland Region, Denmark) on 17 March 2010. The meeting was integrated into the annual meeting of the Coast Alive project, an Interreg IVC North Sea programme project focusing on public health through outdoor activities, including the use of walking and cycling paths.

The meeting discussed the current EU agenda on culture and tourism, and concluded that at the moment, the EU is merely working on issues relating to easing the movement of artists and works of art throughout and into Europe.

The meeting also discussed the North Sea Region 2020 strategy initiative, and decided to support the input from other thematic groups and add more culture and tourism specific issues to their input.

The chairs group held a discussion meeting in Gothenburg 6 May 2010 in conjunction with an European conference on transfer of best practice in cultural tourism. It was agreed to continue working with input to the North Sea Region 2020 strategy paper.

The group will organize a meeting in conjunction with the North Sea Conference 2010 in Stavanger just prior to the opening of this conference.

Innovation & Education Group

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to summarise the work of the North Sea Commission's thematic group "Innovation and Education Group" (IEG) from June 2009 to June 2010.

2. IEG Chair, Vice-Chairs and Adviser

- Chair: Cllr. Ole B. Sørensen, Region North Denmark
- Vice-Chairs:
 - Cllr. Kate Dean, Aberdeen City, Scotland
 - Cllr. Ellen Marie Solheim, Rogaland County Council, Norway
- Adviser: Erik Lindboe, Rogaland County Council, Norway

3. The I & E Strategic Group

The chair, vice-chairs, adviser and supporting officers met in Gothenburg, 1 October 2009 to plan the Innovation & Education Group meeting in Aalesund, Norway, 10 – 11 February 2010. The Strategic Group met again in Aberdeen City 14 December 2009 and 3 June 2010 to plan IEG activities.

4. Innovation & Education Group meetings in 2010

a) The IEG meeting in Aalesund, Norway, 10 – 11 February 2010 was very well attended. Around 30 people from England, Scotland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Denmark participated in this seminar. The main theme was Young Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Minutes and papers from this meeting are published on the NSC homepage: <http://northsea.org/>

b) The next IEG meeting will be held 3 – 4 November 2010 in Buskerud county, which is situated in the eastern part of Norway. Meeting venue tbc.

5. The CPMR seminar on energy in Falmouth, Cornwall, England

IEG chair and adviser attended the CPMR's Energy Working Group seminar 21 – 23 October 2009 on maritime energy in Falmouth. Minutes and papers from the seminar is to be found on the CPMR homepage: <http://www.cpmr.org/index.php?act=13,24,2>

6. Build with CaRE (Interreg IV B project)

The Annual meeting was held in Bremen 11 – 12 November 2009. IEG chair Ole B. Sorensen attended the meeting.

7. The North Sea Schools Sustainability Network

The school projects are funded by so-called Comenius findings, Lifelong Learning Programme, which is a strand of European funding which promotes travel between countries in order to develop knowledge and understanding of the diversity of European cultures as well as sharing educational objectives.

a) The project "Talking about Food around the North Sea" which started in September 2008, held the final conference in Dundee, Scotland, 8 – 11 June 2010. Adviser Erik Lindboe attended this event.

The pupils have made a cook book with recipes from their region. The project schools:

- Invergowie Primary School (Scotland)
- Beaumont Primary School, England
- Tofthøjskolen (Denmark)
- Ecole Viala (France)
- Kvaleberg skole (Norway).

Project website: www.talkingaboutfood.uk.org.

b) The project “Healthy Living” started in September 2009, and it will run till May/June 2011.

Participating schools:

- Kirkhill School, Aberdeen, lead partner
- Methwold High School, England
- IES Num. 1 Xabia, Spain
- SSG DE Rede, the Netherlands
- Seja School, Latvia
- Tume School, Latvia
- Sunde School and Gosen School, Norway

The international project teams will meet, demonstrate and compete at a Sports and Cultural Event In Aberdeen in May 2011, where the project outcomes will be disseminated. A virtual Exhibition will illustrate project activities and display the project results.

Project website: <http://healthylivingproject.derede.nl/>

c) The project “Connect – Create - Sustain” began in August 2009 and will run until July 2011. The partners involved are Romania, Sweden, France, The Netherlands and Scotland. The breakdown of the partners is as follows:

Dundee College - Scotland
 Angus College - Scotland
 Platengymnaist - Sweden
 ROC Westerschelde -The Netherlands
 Coleguil Tehnic - Romania
 Lycée Charlotte Perriand - France
 Lycée César Baggio - France

The purpose of the partnership is to explore sustainability in design, attitudes, ideas and practices. Partners are currently developing design work using recycled materials and environmentally sound approaches, and European mobility between the partners is developing a greater understanding of different national and cultural attitudes to sustainability.

8. Cooperation with the NSC Sustainable Development Group (SDG)

IEG chair, councillor Ole B. Sorensen and adviser Erik Lindboe attended the SDG meeting in Aberdeen 8 – 9 March 2010. The purpose was to discuss broader input into the North Sea Strategy, and possible joint future events between the Sustainable Development Group and the Innovation & Education Group. Also, the Sustainable Development Group and the Education and Innovation Group agreed upon writing a paper on the North Sea Strategy process.

The IEG Strategic Group is considering the possibilities of holding a major conference in 2011 in cooperation with other NSC thematic groups, also including the Baltic Sea Commission.

9. North Sea Stakeholder conference 17 – 18 March 2010 in Newcastle

In June 2009 the North Sea Commission Executive Committee decided that the NSC should work for the launch of an EU strategy for the North Sea Region. The first stakeholder conference was held in Newcastle, England, in co-operation with CoR and the EU Commission, sponsored by the UK

Government and the NSC. IEG chair, councillor Ole B. Sorensen and adviser Erik Lindboe attended the conference.

10. The North Sea Strategy

a) In 2010 IEG Strategic Group sent a statement to the NSC President, amongst other things pointing out that the IEG finds that the focus of the draft strategy paper is too narrow. The paper focuses to a large extent on the maritime sector and fisheries and if this focus is not broadened the NSC risks not being able to attract a broad stakeholder base which is necessary for the development of a North Sea Strategy that is representative of all users of the North Sea. The stakeholder conference should involve all stakeholders in the North Sea Region. Furthermore, the strategic group believes that attention should be paid to Michelle Armstrong's paper 'Briefing paper – North Sea Strategy' which focuses on points that will add value to the North Sea Region:

- Climate change
- Development of a North Sea Grid
- Maritime research and data collection
- Develop the economic potential of the North Sea Region through new industries and jobs
- Support knowledge as the engine for sustainable growth by strengthening education and research and providing the framework for innovation and creativity.
- Support excellence in relation to renewable energy production, supply and technologies
- Safe use of our seas
- Demographic change
- Enhanced digital infrastructure coverage to increase competitiveness

The strategic group also believes that attention should be paid to the working document on the EU 2020 strategy that will replace the Lisbon Agenda.

b) The Sustainable Development Group and the Education and Innovation Group have produced a paper on the North Sea Strategy process. The comments are jointly supported by the two groups, and were forwarded to the NSC Secretariat and the respective chairs and vice chairs earlier this year.

10. Events calendar 2009 - 2010

2009	
23 – 26 June	North Sea Commission GA in Region Noord-Holland
24 – 25 September	New Comenius school project "Healthy Living", Kick-off meeting in Stavanger, Norway.
30 September – 2 October	CPMR GA in Gothenburg
1 October	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Gothenburg
21 – 23 October	CPMR's Energy Working Group seminar on energy in Falmouth, Cornwall, England
11 – 12 November 2009	Build with CaRE Interreg IV B project – Annual meeting in Bremen.
25 – 26 November	NSC secretariat / advisers meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland
30 November – 1 December	NSC Executive Committee meeting in Kiel, Germany
14 December	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Aberdeen



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2010	
3 – 4 February	NSC Secretariat and advisers meeting, planning the NSC GA in June
10 – 11 February 2010	IEG meeting in Aalesund, Norway.
8 – 9 March	Sustainable Development Group meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland
17 – 18 March	North Sea Stakeholder Conference in Newcastle, England
11 May	NSC Secretariat, advisers and North Sea Programme meeting in Copenhagen, planning the NSC GA in June
3 June	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Aberdeen
8 – 11 June	The school project “Talking about Food around the North Sea”: Final conference in Dundee, Scotland
16 – 18 June	NSC GA / joint NSP annual conference in Stavanger, Norway
29 September – 1 October	CPMR General Assembly in Aberdeen, Scotland
date tbc	IEG Strategic Group meeting
3 – 4 November	IEG meeting in Buskerud County, Norway



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Marine Resources Group

This report aims to update the General Assembly as to the work of the NSCMRG.

The NSCMRG has had two meetings one in the Netherlands during the NSC GA last year and one in St. Combs, Aberdeenshire, on 4/5 February 2010. Both meetings were very well attended.

The NSCMRG also organised, on behalf of the NSC a North Sea Stakeholder Conference in Newcastle on 17/18 March 2010 and NSC Workshop on 20 May 2010 in Gijon during Maritime Days

The NSCMRG Advisor has attended the following:

25/26 June 2009 NSCMRG meeting Netherlands
6/7 July 2009 – EU Marine Policy meeting with Commissioner Borg. President and Advisor attended this meeting.
2/14 August 2009 – NSC Strategic Committee
2/3 September 2009 – Marine Spatial Planning Project seminar, Netherlands
14 September – CPMR FIG meeting Brussels
16 November 2009 – CPMR FIG meeting Brussels
25 November 2009 NSC Advisors meeting Aberdeen
30 November/1 December 2009 – NSC Ex Com Keil
21 January 2010 meeting with DEFRA & EU Commission – Stakeholder Conference
4/5 February 2010 NSCMRG meeting, St Combs
17/18 March 2010 NS Stakeholder Conference
23 March 2010 meeting with DEFRA – Stakeholder Conference
23 March 2010 meeting at House of Lords – Stakeholder Conference
13/14 April 2010 COR Conference Brussels
28 April 2010 presentation at EU Parliament Regional Approach to Fisheries Management Seminar
18/21 May 2010 – NSC Stakeholder Workshop, Gijon
- CPMR Workshop, Gijon
29/30 June 2009, Martin Brebner represented the NSCMRG at the NSRAC Executive Committee meeting in Goteborg, to present the NSC Maritime Project Proposal.

1. Netherlands Meeting

During this meeting we discussed the CPMR CFP response document, the group did not entirely agree with the response so it was agreed that we would prepare our own response. We also discussed the Maritime Seminar report, which is on the web site and Martin Brebner gave us an update on the Maritime Project paper.

The NSCMRG Chair and Advisor joined the BSC General Assembly, which was held on the beautiful Island of Gotland. They were made very welcome by the President.

They also joined the BSC Workshop on Fisheries, which was Chaired by Dr. Rolf Gydemo, where we discussed future co-operation between the BSC and NSC Marine Resources groups. Also discussed were the issues of Salmon, seals, coastal fisheries and the CFP.

It was agreed that Rolf Gydemo be invited to speak at the Maritime Week Seminar on 18/19 May, as this would further enhance the co-operation between the two Commissions. Which, he did.

2. St Combs Meeting

Chairman Anders Fasth welcomed Cllr Janne Johnsen and Camilla Stavnes from Rogaland to the meeting. He said it was good to have representatives from Rogaland once again.

This meeting was very well attended and included presentations of the CPMR, NSC and Aberdeenshire Council responses to the CFP reform paper, James Muldoon of the Scottish Government presented their views on Regionalisation. We also heard from Alan Campbell, Chairman of the Scottish Government Inquiry into Future Fisheries Management. After these presentations a lively debate followed, with discussion on the methods of reducing or banning discards. Cllr. Janne Johnsen agreed to send a copy of the Norwegian Discard paper. As discards was such an important issue it was agreed that we could continue the discussion at our next meeting.

Harry Jensen presented the need for a data base of polluted areas, it was agreed that this really important issues.

The latest version of the North Sea Strategy paper was presented by Martin Brebner and Ann Bell presented the draft programme for the NS Stakeholder Conference, much debate took place and changes to both the Strategy Paper and Conference Programme agreed.

Cllr Tom-Christer Nilsen presented the North Sea Clean ships Action Plan again a good discussion took place, these included views representative from both Fraserburgh and Peterhead Harbours.

Andrew Ironside, Harbours Master, Fraserburgh Harbour and John Wallace, Chief executive of Peterhead Port Authority both gave presentations on their respective ports with particular regard to their future plans for green energy; this was a most interesting item.

Roddy Matheson, Aberdeenshire Council Renewable Energy Champion, gave a really interesting presentation on renewables in Aberdeenshire; this was followed by input from James Muldoon and Tom-Christer Nilsen. We also had an interesting presentation from Carsten Westerholt, North Sea Interreg Programme, who highlighted the funding possibilities for possible projects.

We also had a very interesting visit to Fraserburgh Harbour, including the Fish Auction and Deep Sea Mission Memorial Room for those lost at sea.



Great fun was had at the Burns Supper hosted by Aberdeenshire Council, Chief Executive, Colin Mackenzie, where we were entertained by local children and Cllr. John Lamb, Chair Sustainable Development Group, who addressed the Haggis. We also sang Auld Lang Syne in Norwegian (which was translated by Lena Soderholm). A good night was had by all...

3. NS Stakeholder Conference

The Conference which, was attended by almost 140 participants from 8 countries including America and Japan, was chaired by Baron Sewel of Gilcomston (Lord Sewel). The level of

presentations was very high, with all four parallel sessions being very well attended. The summing up stated “what we can do, following this conference, is to consider further the idea of developing a stakeholder forum for the North Sea, where representatives of the different sectors can reach agreement with one another and where they will also be able to draw the attention of member states to emerging cross-boundary problems. The immediate requirement is for a forum to address one another’s concerns, especially over the expansion of economic and commercial activities in the North Sea. Such a forum could also look at the impacts upon all sectors of implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the bringing forward of proposals for marine protected areas and perhaps also the compilation of data sets.

A decision to establish such a forum could not be made at the conference however it was agreed that the North Sea Commission could be asked to look into the implementation of such a forum, perhaps as a pilot project – with support and cooperation from the European Commission.



Final conference report available on NSC website.

4. NSC Stakeholder Workshop Gijon

The NSC Stakeholder event in Gijon had around 50 participants from diverse backgrounds. There was a great deal of discussion around the need or not for a North Sea Basin Strategy.

The three key messages from the workshop were:

- Dialogue and engagement with stakeholders is key to marine management, perhaps through the formation of a stakeholder forum
- There is a need to identify and prioritise tangible objectives for the North Sea Region
- There is a need for improved co-ordination between stakeholders and policy makers.

The report of the meeting is available on the NSC website

5. Presentation to EU Parliament Regional Approach to Fisheries Management Seminar.

This seminar organised by the Struan Stevenson MEP, Senior Vice President EU Parliament Fisheries Committee, Ian Hudgton MEP and Pat the Cope Gallagher MEP, looked a Regional Approach to Fisheries Management, as this issue was within our response to the CFP I was asked to give a presentation.

The report of the Seminar and my presentation is available on the website.

6. CPMR Fisheries Inter-Commission Group

The NSCMRG has continued to work closely with the CPMR FIG and has been represented at most of their meeting over the past year. Reports of their meetings available on the CPMR website.

The date of the next MRG meeting will take place on 16 June in Stavanger, where we will update our Workplan.

Sustainable Development Group

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to summarise the work of the North Sea Commission's thematic group "Sustainable Development Group" (SDG) from June 2009 to June 2010.

2. IEG Chair, Vice-Chairs and Adviser

- Chair: Cllr John Lamb
- Vice-Chairs: Cllr Marten Wiersma
Cllr Henrik Ringbaek Madsen
- Adviser: Yasa Ratnayeke

3. SDG Group Meetings 2009/10

- a) The SDG meeting in Aalborg November 2009 was not very well attended due to various work related commitments from various members who had to pull out at the last minute. However the meeting was very successful with one new Politician Cllr Kristine Gramstad from Rogaland County Council joining the group. At this meeting the Chair and Vice Chairs instructed the Adviser to start forming closer links with all the other Thematic groups as it was felt that Sustainable Development is the Golden Thread through all the groups. This co-operation has started and it is intended that a joint meeting is held for all its members at the latter part of this year or early next year. The group also instructed the Adviser that the SDG should be developing a paper on "**The influence of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive on mainstreaming energy efficient buildings and the significance of existing building stock**".
- b) The SDG met again in Aberdeen in March 2010 which was better represented. Again very fruitful discussions took place. We had presentations from the Build with CaRe (North Sea Programme project) who the SDG has worked very closely with, and developed a:
POLITICAL STATEMENT FOR THE NSC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING;

**"THE CHALLENGE OF MAINSTREAMING ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDINGS
IN THE NORTH SEA REGION AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXISTING BUILDING
STOCK"**

Further discussions took place on the North Sea Strategy along with the Innovation and Education Group and have jointly put forward their concerns to the secretariat.

4. The CPMR seminar on energy in Falmouth, Cornwall, England

The SDG chair and adviser attended the CPMR's Energy Working Group seminar 21 – 23 October 2009 on maritime energy in Falmouth. Minutes and papers from the seminar is to be found on the CPMR homepage: <http://www.cpmr.org>

5. Cooperation with the NSC Innovation and Development Group

The IEG chair, Cllr Ole B. Sorensen and adviser Erik Lindboe attended the SDG meeting in Aberdeen 8 – 9 March 2010. The purpose was to discuss broader input into the North Sea Strategy, and possible joint future events between the Sustainable Development Group and the Innovation & Education Group. Also, the Sustainable Development Group and the Education and Innovation Group

agreed upon writing a paper on the issues raised by its membership on the North Sea Strategy process.

The SDG and IEG Strategic Group is considering the possibilities of holding a major conference in 2011 in cooperation with other NSC thematic groups, also including the Baltic Sea Commission.

6. North Sea Stakeholder conference 17 – 18 March 2010 in Newcastle

In June 2009 the North Sea Commission Executive Committee decided that the NSC should work for the launch of an EU strategy for the North Sea Region. The first stakeholder conference was held in Newcastle, England, in co-operation with CoR and the EU Commission, sponsored by the UK Government and the NSC.

7. The North Sea Strategy

The Sustainable Development and Education and Innovation Committee having met to discuss broader input into the North Sea Strategy agrees that the North Sea Region is much more than simply the North Sea Basin and that this has to be fully reflected in any North Sea Strategy. While it understands that the sea is what physically links us together too much focus on the physical maritime space also opens up the potential for a strategy failing to fully engage or benefit a large portion of the communities that are intended to be the principle beneficiaries.

Given the feedback from other groups which indicate that a North Sea Strategy (NSS) should look to tackle the key land and maritime challenges and more importantly opportunities faced by the regions of the North Sea and that this will require broad political and civil support at a domestic/regional level. Of perhaps of greater importance is that any Strategy has the financial backing to ensure that it is action focused with positive impacts visible on the ground. That is why we would agree with some of the comments put forward by other groups that there should be:

- Closer correlation with the themes of the North Sea Programme and other EU transnational funding Programmes
- Clearer identification of how the North Sea Strategy will work in collaboration with EU policy aims and targets such as those outlined in the EU 2020 Strategy
- Clearer identification of local, regional and national competencies in taking a Strategy forward and a means of ensuring broad buy in from all sectors.
- Aims and targets articulated through a clear time frame.

Attached is a more detailed document on the joint document that was submitted to the Secretariat.



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Transport Group

1. Introduction

This report summarises the work of the NSC Transport group since the last NSC General Assembly in Haarlem in June 2009.

2. The Transport group in brief

The main aim of the group is to improve cohesion, accessibility and competitiveness in the North Sea Region (NSR) through the development of sustainable and efficient transport solutions.

Current key issues of the group: Monitoring and responding to the European Agenda on Transport, shadowing projects in the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme, cooperation with Baltic Sea Commission (BSC), statistical mapping and promoting use of more sustainable energy in the transport sector.

Leadership and administration

Chair: Councillor Leif Blomqvist, Västra Götaland region Sweden (appointed 1 March 2006)

Adviser: Jon Halvard Eide, Vest-Agder Norway (appointed October 2000)

Vice-Chair: Councillor Anne E. Robertson, Aberdeenshire Council, Scotland (appointed in June 2007)

Vice Chair: Poul Weber, South Denmark Region (appointed June 2007, resigned in November 2009)

Vice-Chair: Preben Fris-Hauge, South Denmark Region (appointed in April 2010)

Membership

The group has got about 30 registered members. In addition, a number of regions are on a correspondence list receiving information about the activities of the group.

3. Group meetings

The group has held two meetings in the 2000 – 2010 season:

- Gothenburg 30 September 2009

The agenda comprised the ordinary items on the Work Plan. As for the European Transport agenda (apart from the TEN-T review), the group decided to explore the EU Urban Transport Action Plan which had just been published the day before the meeting. The group furthermore decided to shadow a recently approved project under the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme – Care North – on carbon responsible strategies as this project could be a relevant resource for the activities on urban transport and energy issues. The group will also develop a database on energy-efficient transport solutions and NSC member regions will be encouraged to submit good practice examples as soon as the database is operational. Finally, the group will continue the task of compiling updated statistics with a view of publishing a new report on major trends in modal split to the Executive meeting in the Spring of 2010.

- Copenhagen 22 February 2010

As for the European Transport agenda, the group decided to be represented at the meeting of the CPMR Working group on the TEN-T revision in Zaragoza on 7 June. At the invitation of the CPMR Secretariat, the group will also try to identify suitable experts for the TEN-T Working group from the North Sea Region. The group also decided to analyse the EU Urban Transport Action Plan which was published last fall.

The group will furthermore monitor and study the selection of transport-related projects in the next call under the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme (decision expected in June), with a view of shadowing the most relevant projects.

The group also endorsed a proposal to widen the scope of good practice collection on energy efficient transport solutions to all forms and modes of transport. In this way the group is likely to be perceived as a more practically-useful body for transport planners and officers in the member regions. Aberdeenshire Council will lead on this task, and will shortly propose a structure and pro-format for such a good practice data base. Eventually, all NSC members will be invited to submit relevant good practice to the data base.

Finally, the group agreed to a proposed shift in the statistical mapping task, whereby the group this year would concentrate on identifying, compiling and analysing transport statistics of relevance for a North Sea Strategy. South Denmark Region acts as a task holder with assistance from Västra Götaland Region. The background for this shift is that no major changes in modal trends are expected to materialise only one year after the previous report.

- A meeting is scheduled for 16 June in conjunction with the Annual conference & General Assembly in Stavanger

Attendance

On average, about 6 - 10 persons coming from member regions in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Scotland have attended the meetings of the group, a level of attendance fairly equal to the 2008-2009 season. No representatives from German and French member regions have attended any group meetings this season.

4. Participation in other NSC meetings, contribution to general NSC activities

- The Adviser helped the Secretariat with drafting the Terms of Reference for the NSC strategy development process. He has also provided some transport-related input to the draft strategy paper.
- Joint meeting with NSC Advisers and Interreg North Sea Region Programme Secretariat meeting, Aberdeen, 25 – 26 November

The Adviser attended a meeting with fellow NSC Advisers and representatives of the Interreg North Sea Region Programme Secretariat in Aberdeen. The meeting discussed the planning of a North Sea Stakeholder conference (took place in Newcastle on 17 – 18 March) and other issues related to the development of a North Sea strategy.

- Planning meeting for the 2010 Joint Annual Conference & General Assembly, Copenhagen 10 March,

The Adviser attended the above meeting together with the NSC Executive Secretary, other Advisers, as well as members of the North Sea Region Programme Monitoring Committee and Secretariat

- The Chair attended the North Sea Stakeholder Conference in Newcastle on 17 – 18 March

- The Adviser attended a meeting of the Executive Committee in Central Denmark Region, on 26 – 27 April 2010

5. Involvement in external events of relevance to the group

- Meeting of the CPMR group on the TEN-T review, Gothenburg, 30 September

Three members of the NSC Transport group attended the above meeting together with representatives of the CPMR Secretariat and other Geographical Commissions. The meeting gave an update on the TEN-T review process and each Commission presented priority themes and concepts, as well as geographical priorities in accordance with the paragraph above.

By the time of the General Assembly, a delegation from the NSC Transport group will have participated at a meeting of the CPMR TEN-T group in Zaragoza, Spain, on 7 June.

6. NSC contribution to TEN-T review

NSC priority themes and concepts for the TEN-T review

- Territorial cohesion and polycentric development
- Consistency with Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda & other EU policies
- Framework conditions for maritime transport
- Inclusion of maritime borders
- Facilitation of Modal shift in favour of sustainable transport modes
- Interoperability across borders and modes
- Eliminating bottlenecks in entire logistics chain,
- Alternative fuels and Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)
- The current TEN-T priority projects should be completed before new ones are added
- Consistent approach to project assessment
- Prolonged timeframe for planning and funding

Geographical priorities in terms of axes, corridors, Motorways of the Sea

As a main rule, the Transport group believes it's premature to present a firm priority list of specific geographical corridors and axes at this stage. We will therefore confine ourselves to list some more general principles on which the definition of the "geographical dimension" of the future TEN-T could be based

- Integrate periphery in future core & priority networks
- Open up the TEN-T towards third countries
- Implement current TEN-T priority projects in the NSR, and include these projects in future priority networks
- Strengthen integration of current MoS corridors, e.g Western Europe (incl North Sea), Baltic and Mediterranean
- Common session with the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) Transport group, Gothenburg 30 September

Meeting at the same time & place in conjunction with the CPMR General Assembly, the two groups took the opportunity to organise a common session. This session was concerned with the TEN-T review and the concept of "Green Transport Corridors".



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It was agreed that the two groups have certain common interests related to the TEN-T review and other EU transport policy issues and should continue to mutually attend meetings and exchange information on policy positions. There are also synergies to be exploited between transport projects under the Baltic Sea Region and North Sea Region Programmes – facilitated by the fact that NSC members are partners to projects in both programmes.

- The Adviser attended a project development seminar under the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme in Antwerp, Belgium, on 26 – 27 January.
- The Adviser attended the Marco Polo II Info Day in Brussels on 10 February (Marco Polo is an EU Programme for the promotion of sustainable transport by supporting shift of freight off the road)



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Other written activity reports;

NSC-BSC Cooperation

Background

The North Sea Commission and the Baltic Sea Commission are both geographical organisations under the umbrella of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR). Cllr Annelie Stark from Västra Götaland is assigned to co-ordinate the cooperation between the two commissions.

Cooperation between the secretariats, the presidiums and the working groups

The two secretariats exchange continuous information. All NSC working groups have ongoing contacts with their counterparts. The yearly joint meeting between the presidiums was planned for winter/spring 2010, but has not yet taken place.

Baltic Sea Commission ABM

On May 27th-28th, the Baltic Sea Commission arranged their General Assembly, hosted by Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Rostock-Warnemünde. 2010 was an election year for the Baltic Sea Commission. Mr Erik Bergkvist from Region Västerbotten in Sweden was elected as new BSC President and new Vice-Presidents are Ms Marjatta Vehkaoja, Osterbotnia (FI) and Mr Toomas Kivimägi, Pärnumaa (EST). The secretariat will be hosted by Region Uusimaa, Finland with Mr. Janne Tamminen as the new Secretary General

The Activity Plan for next year includes reviewing the possibility of alternative membership in countries where the regional level is disappearing, so that the BSC can have members from all regions around the Baltic Sea.

The BSC will follow-up on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan. The four cornerstones of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy are to make the Baltic Sea Region environmentally sustainable; prosperous; accessible and attractive and safe and secure. The Strategy is accompanied with an Action Plan which comprises 15 priority areas which represent areas which can contribute to the improvements either through tackling the main challenges or through seizing the main opportunities. The priority areas are implemented through approximately 80 flagship projects. Many of the flagship projects are closely linked to issues in the North Sea, for example Clean Shipping,

- The experiences of the BSC in the process leading up to the Baltic Sea Region Strategy and now in the implementation are very interesting for the NSC.

- Further EU macro-regional strategies, including North Sea Region 2020, depend on the success of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy implementation, according to EU Member States.

CPMR Aquamarina group

Report from the 4th Aquamarina Plenary Session 3 March 2010.

CPMR Secretary General, **Eleni Marianou**, highlighted the present priorities of the CPMR. These include the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, and in particular territorial cohesion and the new EU institutional arrangements. Eleni spoke about the first meeting of the European Parliament Intergroup on coastal and maritime affairs which met on 24 March. Chaired by Corinne Lepage, the Group will focus on the integration of maritime activities and bring together representatives from different Parliamentary Committees (e.g. environment, regional policy, transport) and different political parties. It is likely to focus on governance, particularly at the sea-basin level.

The EU budget negotiations and how they relate to Cohesion Policy post-2013 were also identified. Finally, Maritime Policy will continue to be an important theme of the CPMR's work, suggesting a role for the Aquamarina group. The group is being reviewed through questionnaires to assess its effectiveness and clarify its future. The responses to the questionnaires were due to be presented at the meeting (which was originally to be a full plenary session before being revised to a technical meeting). However, there appears to have been a shortage of respondents.

The technical meeting focused on maritime training and was led by a sub-group on this issue which was set up 9 months previously. It presented best-practice examples from member regions and opinions from the European Commission. Examples of best practice highlighted included a partnership between Tuscany and Brittany, focused on the mobility of individuals and groups between the two regions for study visits and work placements. Of particular relevance to Aquamarina was the prospect for sector mobility (e.g. bringing ship builders and wind turbine manufacturers together to explore synergies). The presenter, Professor Federighi from **Tuscany**, spoke about how the two regions would like to see a 'Columbus' version of the Erasmus programme to fund such exchanges.

A perspective from **Basse-Normandie** with regards to maritime training was also given by Annie Rossi, who spoke about how the region is moving more towards lifelong learning rather than initial training. This was echoed by Duncan Kidson from **Shetland** who highlighted the declining demand for training from new entrants to traditional sectors such as fisheries. Both regions are widening the scope of their training schemes to wider maritime activities. **Brittany region** identified the lack of attractiveness of maritime jobs as a barrier to attracting new entrants to the sector, and thus of sustaining and growing the maritime economy. They are undertaking a study to analyse the representation of young people in maritime industries to explore this further.

One final example of best practice was given from Simona Costa of the **Italian Shipping Academy**. This organisation is having the opposite problem in that there are more applicants than places. The organisation guarantees employment after the course by working closely with shipping companies to ensure that students placed with them will be taken on when qualified.

Perspectives from three **European Commission DGs** were given. Patricia de Smet spoke about current **Education** priorities, which will focus on mobility, the recently-launched European Higher Education Area and inclusive growth. The need to adapt the higher education sector and modernise universities was identified. It will be important to forecast the demand for jobs in the future and

ensure that sufficient training is available to avoid skills shortages. Soft skills, as well as vocational ones, are also important and these can be improved through student exchanges across Europe.

Mobilities enhance personal development, employability, competitiveness and understanding of European citizenship. Barriers to undertaking mobilities still exist, namely funding, language, recognition of qualifications, information and motivation. A target has been set that 20% of graduates will have undertaken mobilities by 2020. The proposed “youth on the move” initiative, set out in the draft Europe 2020 strategy, is likely to cover learning, training and voluntary work.

Christina Vartsos from DG MOVE gave a **Transport** perspective to the meetings. She highlighted that there has been a shortage of seafarers in Europe since the 1980s, despite 80% of trade being carried by sea. With regards to maritime education and training, the Commission is focusing on competence and safety and the recognition of qualifications between countries. The international Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) convention is being revised and set to be adopted in June.

The Commission is also prioritising the promotion of maritime employment through an awareness campaign, research projects and revising State aid guidelines with regards to tax exemptions (due for revision in 2011). They would also like to see the development of post-graduate maritime qualifications. Improving social conditions was identified as an important means of increasing the attractiveness of the sector, hence this is prioritised in the EU Maritime Transport Strategy → 2018. A Social Agenda for Maritime Transport is set to be launched in 2011 and will include a mixture of soft law and legislative proposals. Proposals on maritime labour standards are also under development by the International Labour Organization.

Haitze Siemers gave a perspective from **DG MARE** and highlighted potential for economic growth and job creation from maritime activities. The Commission plans to set up a task force to work on the maritime social agenda to help realise this potential. The blue book focused on developing a ‘certificate of excellence’ and maritime career paths. The latter could be improved by improving links between land-based maritime sectors and sea faring ones.

The next Aquamarina plenary will take place Tuesday 8 June. This meeting will examine the future of the group and review its work over the past 3 years. An oral update from this meeting will be given on 18 June.