



Fylkeshuset,  
3706 Skien, Norway  
Tel: +47 35 58 42 00  
Fax: +47 35 52 90 44  
nsc@northsea.org  
www.northsea.org

## **North Sea Commission – Culture & Tourism Group**

### **Workshop on the Development of a North Sea Tourism Strategy Brussels 28 September 2010**

#### REPORT

The North Sea Commission's Culture & Tourism Group hosted a workshop on The Development of a North Sea Tourism Strategy in the West Sweden office in Brussels, Tuesday 28 September 2010. The workshop was a back-to-back event linked to the European Tourism Day the previous day, and event where the Vice-President of the Commission, Mr Tajani, announced the rising of the tourism issue to the top EU agenda level.

The workshop opened with two presentations, one by Professor Greg Richards on 'Developing Sustainability through Creativity' and one by Professor Frank Go, on 'Place Branding Strategies'. Before a general discussion on the adaptation of these thoughts into a North Sea tourism strategy, the development of a Baltic Sea tourism strategy was presented by Dr Merten Barnert from the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern office, and there was also a presentation of the NECSTouR network (Network of European Regions for a Competitive and Sustainable Tourism), by Alice Jude, the network's secretary.

Already in the introduction to the workshop, Claes Rydberg, Director of Culture of the Västra Götaland Region, underlined that tourism is now on the European agenda, and that it has been demonstrated the vital role tourism now plays in the European economy. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss strategies for North Sea Region co-operation in this field, and make this more operational.

Greg Richards in his presentation focused on tourism as a creative industry. He also stressed that it is a collaborative industry – all actors have to work together. Tourism starts with culture, culture leads to tourism. Pride in place is essential too. He also talked about virtual clustering.

Frank Go led emphasis on interaction, place branding, a clear vision and a mission, and the distinctiveness of place. There must be an authentic appeal, and you must not promise more than you can keep, and all marketing must be co-ordinated at all levels. He also talked about creating awareness, and that you should present quality (standards are essential). The brand must reflect something we share, and we must pool resources to achieve this.

A strategy should start with mapping what we have, and conceptual innovation is needed. We need a distinct identity and a good infrastructure, and this needs to be communication. We need co-ordination, co-operation and consolidation.

More about the Baltic Sea strategy work can be found at [www.baltic-sea-tourism-strategy.eu](http://www.baltic-sea-tourism-strategy.eu)



Fylkeshuset,  
3706 Skien, Norway  
Tel: +47 35 58 42 00  
Fax: +47 35 52 90 44  
nsc@northsea.org  
www.northsea.org

Towards the end of the presentation section, Judith Estol I Perez, from DG Enterprise and Industry, European Commission, invited the NSC Culture & Tourism Group to exchange ideas with the DG in order to organise the further work with a tourism strategy for the North Sea area. There are also mutual interests for strengthening tourism in the preparations for the next program period..

Following the presentations, there was a general discussion. Points that were raised included:

Should a new strategy be based on existing tourism and infrastructure patterns?

What kind of tourism do we need? Should we focus on neighbourhood tourism?

We should avoid using the term 'tourist' – 'visitor' is far better and reflects a more mutual approach, which includes what can be termed interactive tourism

Europe needs to maintain its prime tourism position in the world

We should attract short-travel visitors (environmental concerns)

Networks are beneficial for all, in the post industrial society the strong position is "linking networks"

What do we need to create a North Sea tourism strategy, and what are the benefits

There is a need for closer co-operation in the North Sea region

There is a need for more co-operation within CPMR, with other regions outside North Sea region, primarily with the Baltic Sea, but our friends from Basque Country and Balearic Islands who also attended, were examples of interest from Atlantic Arc and Mediterranean areas.

There should be focus on a few items

A tourism strategy should be part of the EU2020 and the North Sea 2020

There should be a link to existing projects and programmes, and these should be identified

There are already many initiatives and projects – these should be mapped

We should also map upcoming new ideas.

Should we continue with further studies, Frank and Greg has been asked to provide a study, who should finance that

A 'coalition of the willing' could be the source and driving force

There needs to be a commitment

A study should be ready before Christmas



Fylkeshuset,  
3706 Skien, Norway  
Tel: +47 35 58 42 00  
Fax: +47 35 52 90 44  
nsc@northsea.org  
www.northsea.org

### **Conclusions:**

We need a North Sea Tourism strategy  
We need someone to take this further  
We want to look at neighbourhood tourism  
We want tourism to be included in the North Sea 2020

### **Actions decided:**

Frank Go and Greg Richards prepare a draft for a study, Östfold and Västra Götaland put up basic information and asks other regions about funding.

A meeting with tourism unit DG Enterprise and Industry should be arranged:

Focus 1: Future Interreg programs, 2: Relating tourism to creative industries, 3: Discuss developing projects.

Region Västra Götaland will take necessary contacts and communicate proposed dates.

NECSTouR will be asked about formal co-operation. Contacts by Region Västra Götaland.

### **Timetable:**

Prepare actions before NSC General Assembly June 2011

Prepare draft before planned stakeholder seminar in Middelburg January-February 2011

Meeting DG Enterprise and Industry EU Commission November-December 2010



Fylkeshuset,  
3706 Skien, Norway  
Tel: +47 35 58 42 00  
Fax: +47 35 52 90 44  
nsc@northsea.org  
www.northsea.org

## **ANNEX:**

### **Participants**

Catalina Escarrer Bauzà	Centre Balears Europa
Vibeke Dyrvig	Central Denmark region
Siv H. Jacobsen	Östfold County Council
Olle Jonäng	Region Västra Götaland
Håkon Johnsen	Östfold County Council
Helge Kolstad	Östfold County Council
Inga Lauvdal	Vest Agder County Council
Joana M Lofqvist	Centre Balears Europa
Merete Mikkelsen	West Norway Office
Karin Nygaard Kristensen	Central Denmark Region
Tomas Olsson	Region Västra Götaland
Idurre Ostolaza	Basquetour, Basque Government
Stein Ottosen, Hordaland	Hordaland County Council
Geir Sör Reime	Rogaland County Council
Claes Rydberg	Region Västra Götaland
Fredrik Skau Gundersen	South Norway European Office
Frederikke Stensrød	Östfold County Council
Kajsa Sundström van Zeveren	Westsweden
Lillian Sæther Sørheim	Møre og Romsdal County Council
Judith Estol i Perez	European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry
John Tveit	West Norway Office
Berit Vetlejord	Hordaland County Council

### **Speakers:**

Frank Go	Erasmus Univeristy Rotterdam
Greg Richards	University of Tilburg
Merten Barnert	Baltic Sea Tourism program
Alice Jude	NECSTouR

### **Apologies**

Lars Nordström	Region Västra Götaland
Harry van Waveren	Zeeland
Peter Robinsson	East Midlands
Annika Strömberg	Region Västra Götaland
Craig Lafferty	Angus
Alison Smith	Angus
Brian Goodall	Fife