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Item 3

**50th NSC Executive Committee Meeting,
27 March 2009.**

REPORTS

This paper consists of the following reports;

- from the thematic groups
 - Transport group report **Major Trends in Modal Split** (separate paper)
- summary Brussels activities for the NSC
- from NSC-BSC cooperation
 - Minutes from NSC-BSC meeting January 09 (separate paper)
- Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion
 - Joint NSC-BSC response (separate paper)
- Maritime Policy Update
- cooperation with Interreg – report by Programme Manager Christian Byrith at the meeting
- ESPON project Territorial Diversity (TiDe)
- Minutes CPMR Political Bureau January (separate paper)

The Report on Major Trends in Modal Split is a result of the "statistical mapping task" of the Transport group, from which previously have announced an intention to produce regular reports. The Transport group believes it would be useful to submit the report to the Executive as a "proof" of progress in this task.

The reports show the activities of NSC since last meeting in October 2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. ***For discussion***
2. ***The NSC Executive Committee approves these reports and supports the work of the NSC.***



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CULTURE & TOURISM GROUP

The Culture & Tourism Group has followed up the work plan since the AGM by arranging a conference on EU cultural agenda and on EU sustainable tourism agenda, in Vlissingen/Middelburgh, Province of Zeeland, 22-23 October 2008. The conference was hosted by the Province of Zeeland, and was jointly planned by the Province of Zeeland and the Västra Götaland Region.

Representatives of three DGs attended the conference as speakers, and there were also several specialists in the two subjects invited as speakers. The first part of the conference, on the EU Cultural Agenda, was held in the Town Hall of Vlissingen, whereas the second part, on the EU Sustainable Tourism Agenda, was held in the Provincial House in Middelburgh. The speakers included Mr Sheamus Cassidy from DG Education and Culture, Mr Haitze Seimers from DG Maritime Policy and Fisheries and Mr Mathieu Hoeberigs from DG Enterprise, tourism unit. Mr Casten Westerholt from the Interreg IVB North Sea secretariat and Professor Ossian Stiernstrand (working for European cities Marketing) were also among the speakers, as were Ms Laura Grijns and Ms Klaartje Bult from the Foundation of International Cultural Activities.

The conference adopted a position paper that is attached to this report.

The next meeting of the group will take place in Huntley, Aberdeenshire, 1-4 April 2009. The following up of the EU agendas on culture and tourism will be one of the main issues at this meeting.

APPENDIX:

Position paper of Culture & Tourism Group on the role of regions in the fields of culture and tourism, adopted at the conference in Vlissingen/Middelburgh.

The role of the Regions in Culture and Tourism

1. European Regions play an important role in helping to develop and deliver European policies.
2. Regions should be more active in contributing ideas for Europe's culture and tourism agenda.
3. Regions can help inform MEPs and members of the Committee of the Regions as well as national authorities.
4. Implementing European policy is an important role of the regions.
5. During the consultation phase of European policies (like *Green Papers* on various policies), Regions should actively respond and stress that culture and cultural heritage must be taken into account.
6. Moving funding from the EU-budget to individual national budgets may have a negative influence on less populated and more remote rural areas, especially in the field of culture,



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since the main attention of national politics is often focussed on more densely populated urban areas.

7. The North Sea Regions must not merely react to changes in European policies and funding programmes, but they should be heard much earlier in the process before changes are finalised.
8. The North Sea Commission will develop its policies with reference to common objectives and endeavour to steer joint activities *inter alia* through an open method of coordination and explore opportunities offered by EU funding
9. The North Sea Commission can provide added value to the region's own involvement in the European Agenda.
10. Influencing European policy is best carried out by politicians. Therefore, North Sea Commission thematic groups, including the Culture and Tourism Group, need to ensure that more politicians attend the meetings.
11. The North Sea Commission will identify any need for lobbying actions and will prepare strategies for co-operation with EU institutions (especially DG Culture and Education and DG Enterprise) and the Committee of the Regions on these issues and will disseminate information to member regions of the North Sea Commission and their cultural partners
12. The North Sea Commission will ensure that its voice, particularly in relation to the development of EU policies and programmes on culture, is heard loud and clear.
13. Regions can play a useful role as intermediaries between stakeholders and EU institutions.
14. Regions should create a European and wider international market and platform for artists and others involved directly with cultural activities.
15. Culture should be used to stream flow dynamic processes in society (power of art)

Input for the European agenda's on culture and tourism

Tourism is a constant factor in world (economic) changes especially tourism that is related to cultural identity (distinctiveness)

Within cultural heritage, maritime heritage should have a permanent place.



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INNOVATION AND 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 October 2008 to March 2009.

2. Innovation & Education Group meeting in Gothenburg 23rd – 24th October 2008

25 people attended the IEG meeting in Gothenburg.

Highlights from the agenda:

- **CPMR's TN-RIS report: Towards A New Regional Innovation System:**

Stockholm County Council adviser Mr. Dag Boman gave an overview re. The work with the CPMR's technical paper – the TN-RIS report.

- **Strategies to support research and innovation in Region Västra Götaland, Sweden**

Ms Helena L. Nilsson, Manager R & D Department, Regional Development Region Västra Götaland,

presented the VG region's Regional growth scheme and also outlined industry investment in the Top Five regions in Europe.

- **Competitive Clusters in Nord-Pas de Calais, France**

Councillor Mr Alain Alpern, Region Nord-pas de Calais, presented "Competitive Clusters in the region of Nord-Pas de Calais".

- **Workshops**

Mr Lave Thorell, Region Västra Götaland, was the facilitator of the workshop session after lunch:

The discussions revealed the following:

- The group should go on with the R&D-focus – go deeper into the matter in future meetings
- Try to involve more NSC-regions.
- We should update and use the North Sea Commission's website actively
- We should continue to produce Newsletters to disseminate news and information
- IEG members are welcomed to send in proposals/ideas to the Strategic Group (the Strategic Group is the group chair and vice-chairs and their supporting officers, and group adviser)
- News from the NSC Executive Committee should be disseminated to group members.

- **Smart Energy:**

A dialogue and strategy for sustainable economic growth *and* reduced climate impact. Project coordinator Ms Kerstin Quentzer presented the Smart Energy project in Region Västra Götaland.

- **The North Sea Schools Sustainability Network**

Ms Ann Brown (ABInternational Network Limited/former NSC adviser) provided information about the two school projects, which are our group's "babies", so to speak.

- "Sustainability around the North Sea" started autumn 2007, will have the final conference in Suffolk, England the first week of June 2009
- "Talking about Food around the North Sea", started autumn 2008. The two projects will have a joint meeting in Suffolk next year.
- Two new school projects are to be developed early in 2009.



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- **Business meeting**, Work Plan update
- Shadowing Interreg projects:
 - Build with CaRe (low energy housing) and the North Sea Screen projects have been approved by the Interreg secretariat. Contact person: hanna.blomdahl@vgregion.se
Home page: <http://www.buildwithcare.eu/>
 - The North Sea Screen project is about enhancing the film industry's cooperation and business development around the North Sea. Contact person: Ms Julie Craik, Project Manager, TayScreen Scotland, julie.craik@dundee.gov.uk
<http://www.northsearegion.eu/ivb/projects/details/&tid=87&back=yes>
 - **Study tour** to the town of Alingsås, where we visited Utbildningens Hus (The House of Education), and a Passive House building site, where older houses/flats were renovated/upgraded to so-called Passive Houses, i.e. buildings with a minimum demand for energy for heating.

3. The I & E Strategic Group (the chair, vice-chairs and adviser, plus supporting officers) met in Aberdeen City 6th January and 9th February 2009 to revise the Work Plan and to plan strategies and Innovation & Education Group meetings in 2009. Invitations to group meetings are e-mailed to all group members, and published on the NSC website.

4. Work Plan / Activities

The Work Plan was updated in February 2009. The group has limited the number of actions in order to make the work more efficient and realistic to accomplish. The IEG wants to develop the connections with the Baltic Sea Commission, and the group invites the BSC to group meetings.

• Newsletters and Fact Sheets

- The group plans to produce Newsletters and Fact Sheets on a regular basis. The content of the newsletter can for instance be:
 - group news
 - news from the North Sea Commission and the CPMR
 - EU news on innovation and education
 - news from the Interreg secretariat
 - presentations of member regions
- The Strategic Group will put this issue forward to the group meeting in Aberdeen in March, suggesting that the newsletters can be produced by an editorial group, i.e. the adviser plus interested group members from the member regions.
- **Fact Sheets**: Proposal: Regions produce fact sheets, which will be published on our website. Here we have an excellent opportunity to develop a data base which can be helpful for networking between group members and regions. Aberdeen will produce the first Fact Sheet, which also will be a template for future sheets. A maximum two page sheet is to be preferred, including facts like business highlights, "facts at a glance", and intellectual capital.



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5. IEG meetings in 2009;

- a) The next Innovation & Education Group meeting will be held in Aberdeen 24th – 25th March 2009, starting in the morning of the 24th, ending with lunch at 12:00 the next day.
Agenda: Innovation and education, R & D, Energy
- b) We are invited by the County of Moere & Romsdal (Norway) to have our autumn meeting in the town of Aalesund 22nd – 23rd October.

NSC - Events calendar 2009

Date	Event
6 th January 2009	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Aberdeen
9 th February	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Aberdeen
24 th – 25 th March	Innovation & Education Group meeting in Aberdeen
26 th – 27 th March	NSC ExCom meeting in Kristiansand, Norway
First week of June	North Sea Schools Sustainability Network: The “Sustainability around the North Sea”-project: Final conference in Suffolk, England. This conference will coincide with the new “Talking about Food around the North Sea”-project’s meeting in Suffolk.
23 rd – 26 th June	North Sea Commission GA in Region Noord-Holland
30 th September – 2 nd October	CPMR GA in Gothenburg
September	IEG Strategic Group meeting
22 nd – 23 rd October	Innovation & Education Group meeting in Aalesund, Norway



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MARINE RESOURCES GROUP

This report aims to update the Executive Committee as to the work of the NSCMRG.

The NSCMRG has had two meetings one Politicians meeting in Hirtshals on 1 & 2 December 2008 and a meeting of the full group in Kiel on 23/24 February 2009. Both meetings were very well attended.

The Group is very pleased to have its first German member and to have its first meeting in Germany.

Hirtshals Meeting

The aim of the Politicians meeting is to set the priorities from the Group for the coming year. This meeting addressed a number of issues including:

The EU Baltic Sea strategy was discussed as it is due to be finalised in June 2009. The main challenge for it is to ensure that it delivers results such as a 5-point action plan on clean shipping delivering:

- standardised onshore electricity supplies
- environmentally-differentiated fares/port dues
- a voluntary ban on waste-water discharges
- best practice prizes such as the Clean Marine Award
- labels for clean Baltic shipping/sustainable port services

It was agreed that such a strategy could also be taken forward in the North Sea as well.

Representatives from the INTERREG North Sea Region Secretariat attended the meeting and took part in a discussion around the proposed Maritime Policy Pilot project. A meeting had previously been held in Billund between the NSC Secretariat and INTERREG Secretariat to discuss joint working and the project had been briefly discussed then. At the Billund meeting, it was suggested that a transport-related project may be appropriate as the Accessibility priority is under-subscribed. However, the group felt that maritime spatial planning may be a more appropriate topic as it would cover a number of policy areas of interest to the NSC and ties in well with the European Commission's upcoming workplan. It was agreed to develop the idea further and discuss it at the next meeting.

Alyne Delaney from the University of Aalborg gave a very interesting presentation on her research into immigration in coastal communities; the presentation stimulated some very interesting and diverse debate. It was agreed that the research fitted well with the workplan of the group and that Alyne would keep the Group informed about her findings.

Tom Christer-Nilsen gave an update on the situation regarding the sunken U-boat containing a large amount of mercury off the coast of Norway. Tom requested that we send another letter stating that the NSCMRG's recommendation was for removal not burial. This was to be followed up at the next full meeting of the group.



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Kiel Meeting

The Chairman stated that he was pleased to be having this meeting in Kiel. During the two day meeting the very full agenda stimulated much interest. Among the issues discussed were:

Stefan Musiolik updated the Group on the Clean Baltic Shipping strategy which Schleswig-Holstein has developed through the BSSSC. 6 Baltic Sea organisations have supported the idea as a flagship project for the Baltic Sea Strategy. Commissioner Hübner was presented with the plan in December 2008. While the action plan had not yet been formally included in DG Regio's proposals for the Baltic Sea Strategy, some elements had been picked up by DG Mare (e.g. onshore electricity supplies in ports). Schleswig-Holstein would like to see an expert group set up through the Council of Baltic Sea States tasked with the implementation of the strategy.

The Group highlighted that competition between ports can be a challenge for clean shipping and that ship-to-ship transfers of oil and waste water were other issues of relevance to the North Sea. The Group was very supportive of the action plan but recognised that there is not the same political will and platform in the North Sea as in the Baltic at present. The group agreed to monitor the implementation of the action plan in the Baltic and see if it could be applied in the North Sea.

Professor Pawlik gave a presentation on the Northern Maritime University (NMU) INTERREG project. The project aims to create a network for education and research in maritime transport. The main concept behind the project was the pooling of resources of different institutions around the North Sea to enhance the European maritime business sector. The network is based on existing partnerships and facilitates student exchanges; joint courses; a virtual competence centre; a travelling lecturer concept (to improve accessibility); and knowledge sharing and creation. The network can provide courses on demand in areas such as maritime economics; transport management; human resource management; ship knowledge for non-engineers; and environmental issues.

The Maritime Policy Pilot project idea was discussed, with Jesper and Sina from the North Sea Secretariat able to give their initial thoughts on the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) proposal. There have been 28 projects approved through the IVB North Sea Programme already, securing 51% of the available grant. A list of thematic gaps is due to be presented to the next Monitoring Committee to highlight areas of the Programme where no projects have been approved. This includes the best fit for the project idea – action 2.1.

A question was also raised regarding whether 'Action 3.2' referred to the European Commission's Blue Book or the INTERREG Operational Programme.

Martin Brebner explained that the Action refers to the Blue Book and agreed with the comments from the Secretariat. It was recalled that Västra Götaland had indicated that they might be interested in leading the project and Anders Carlberg agreed to look into this further.

The Group highlighted a lack of tools to co-ordinate MSP; co-ordination of national MSP policies (both with each other and EU legislation); and a bottom-up approach as areas which the project could focus on. It was agreed that additional resources and a lead partner would be needed to drive forward the project. A more detailed report will be given to the Executive Committee.



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On the second day, following an authentic German dinner hosted by the Region, the Group were shown around the IFM-GEOMAR Research facility, which is the leading German marine institute. Professor Hertzog presented to the group, highlighting that the Institute focuses on global ocean issues and complements these with more local projects. Its aim is to understand the physical, chemical, biological and geological processes in the ocean and their interaction with the seabed and the atmosphere. Its main research themes are:

- The role of the ocean in global change (e.g. the Gulf Stream);
- The human impact on marine ecosystems (e.g. acidification);
- Living and non-living marine resources (e.g. gas, minerals and biotechnology);
- Plate tectonic processes and geological hazards (e.g. earthquakes).

A DVD on the 'Sea our Future' initiative was also shown, highlighting the impressive cluster work undertaken in Schleswig-Holstein on developing a cross-sectoral maritime

Continuing with the theme of maritime research, David Goldsborough presented to the group on the Wageningen Centre for Marine Policy. This centre will look to better link marine related sciences, notably social and physical sciences. Areas to be covered include ecology; governance, fisheries, economics and law. The Centre will provide a PHD and post-Doctorate research environment; an education platform; and project organisation. The Centre will have the legal status of a consortium agreement and will be based in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. David has also asked that he be included in the mailing list of the Group and be allowed to attend future meetings.

Tom-Christer Nielsen spoke to the group about the sunken Second World War submarine containing some 67 metric tonnes of mercury off the coast of Bergen. The Norwegian government has taken on board the views of a number of groups (including the Marine Resources Group) who advocated raising the wreck rather than burying it. The section of the submarine containing the mercury will be raised on a platform and the remaining section will be buried, costing around €100 million. **This is a very positive outcome from the group's lobbying.**

The following are dates which were of interest to the work of the Group:

26-27 March – NSC Executive (Kristiansand, Norway)

18-19 May – Maritime Week event (Aberdeenshire)

10-11 May – BSC/NSC joint Meeting (Gotland, Sweden)

23-26 June – General Assembly (Egmond an zee/Haarlem, Netherlands)

October – CPMR (Gothenburg)

The North Sea Regional Advisory Council is to invite the NSCMRG to give a present on their North Sea Maritime project proposal at the next Executive Committee meeting to be held in Goteborg on 29/30 June 2009.

The next NSCMRG Politicians meeting is proposed to a joint meeting with Baltic Sea Commission Fisheries Group, it is hoped that by making this a politicians meeting it may encourage Baltic Sea Politicians to attend and in future give their support to the work of the BSC Fisheries Group.



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The next full meeting of the group is scheduled to take place on 23 June during the General Assembly, although there may be opportunities for the group to meet around the above meetings if desired.



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

1. Introduction

This report is aimed at informing the Executive Committee to the work carried out by the Sustainable Development Team after the North Sea Commission Executive Meeting in October 2008.

2. SDG Chair, Vice – Chairs and Adviser

Chair: Cllr John Lamb, East of England Regional Assembly
V.Chairs 1) Cllr Henrik Ringbæk Madsen, Nordjyllands Amt, Denmark
2) **Vacant**
Adviser **Vacant**

Yasa Ratnayeke, Aberdeen City Council – Is still acting as the Adviser but the group need to recruit somebody as soon as possible.

3. Work Plan and Activities

The work plan was updated and the group have decided to focus on Energy and feed directly into the CPMR Energy Group through Cllr Kevan Lim, who is the NSC Representative on the CPMR Energy Group. This will give the group a topic to focus on and will also help raise the profile of this group. As you will know the various legislative proposals included in the Energy & Climate Change Package are following their course through the European Parliament.

Cllr Kevin Lim attended the last group meeting in January at South end on Sea and gave an overview of the main points on the EU Climate and Energy Package. It was also decided by the group that we should try and facilitate in developing an FP7 research project by using partner Universities. The group is looking into this and will work closely with the Innovation and Education group.

The Group will continue to take up other Sustainable issues from time to time.

3.1 Co-Operation with the North Sea Programme

The North Sea Programme Secretariat attend the Group's meeting in January and gave the group an overview of the Interreg North Sea Region Programme and criteria for participation, project ideas etc. The next call closes on the 30th of March and the next round call will be in October 09. We recommend that all thematic groups invite the NSP secretariat to do presentations as our members found it extremely useful.

4 Next Meeting

June at the General Assembly.



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TRANSPORT GROUP

Please find below an account of the main activities of the NSC Transport group in the period since the last Executive meeting on 16 October 2008.

- **Meeting with Interreg North Sea Programme Secretariat, Billund, 11 November**

The Adviser attended a meeting with the North Sea Programme (NSP) Secretariat in Billund on 11 November, together with the NSC President, Executive Secretary and a representative from Aberdeenshire Council. The meeting discussed various issues of cooperation between the NSP and the NSC, as well as the role of the NSC in developing a “maritime project” under the NSP. The NSC Secretariat has set up a report from the meeting.

- **Meeting of CPMR Aquamarina group, Brussels, 12 November**

The Adviser represented the group at the above meeting. Maritime research and maritime clusters were the main topics on the agenda. The official meeting report can be found at CPMRs website, see: <http://www.crpm.org/en/index.php?act=4,4,3,29>

- **Attendance at meeting of Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) Transport group, Tallinn, 27 November**

The Adviser, attended the above meeting. The main topics on the agenda were: Basic concepts of the future TEN-T infrastructure policy, Freight railway corridors – Connections to third countries as important parts of the future TEN-T network, Fundamentals of EU maritime policy 2008-2018 and main conclusions for the Baltic Sea Region, and update on transport projects under the Interreg IVB Baltic Sea Programme.

- **Meeting of CPMR group on the TEN-T review, Brussels 11 December**

The European Commission will launch a Green Paper on the TEN-T review in February 2009, opening a public consultation running to 30 April. A proposal for new TEN-T guidelines from the Commission is expected in the second half of 2010, with final approval not before 2011.

Cllr. Mimmi Von Troil from Västra Götalands Region and the Adviser represented the NSC at the inaugural meeting of the CPMR TEN-T group in Brussels. The group is chaired by the region of Aragon, Spain. The group aims to analyse European policies relating to the Trans-European Transport Network, to monitor planned developments, and to permit the CPMR to make its voice heard on these questions. The group will be made up of interested CPMR member Regions which are willing to provide an input, in terms of their expertise, to the content of the group’s work and its actions. The group will meet approximately every four months, in order to ensure that monitoring work and other actions are ongoing.

The meeting discussed and decided on the Terms of reference of the group, heard presentations on the background & motivation for the TEN-T review and adopted the following timetable for the CPMR response:



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* 16 April 2009 in Saragossa: CPMR Scientific Council meeting at the invitation of Aragon, focusing on the TEN-T's contribution to territorial cohesion. The CPMR General Secretariat and Aragon are in charge of organising this brainstorming session, with the participation of the members of the TEN-T working group and top-level European experts in this field. The Head of Unit responsible at DG TREN will also be invited to take part in the discussions;

* 17 April 2009 in Saragossa: taking as a basis the contributions from the experts and the content of the Green Paper, the TEN-T working group will meet to define the outlines of the CPMR's response to the Green Paper;

* 12 June 2009 in Odessa: adoption of a response to the Green Paper by the CPMR Political Bureau.

- **Meeting of Chair, Vice-Chair, supporting officers and Adviser, Copenhagen, 23 January**

The Chair, a Vice-Chair, the Adviser and some supporting officers met in Copenhagen on 23 January to make up status, discuss priorities and to plan future activities of the NSC Transport group. The meeting was organised in light of the fact that no ordinary group meeting had taken place since May 2008, and that the level of attendance and activity during the last year have been fairly low.

The meeting decided to carry on with the main items in the current Work Plan as they are reflecting the over all priorities of the NSC, and also being of a permanent / long-term character. However, the orientation & profile of the different items should be permanently monitored and to the degree necessary adapted to changes in over all NSC priorities. Concerning the EU transport agenda, the meeting decided to focus on Urban transport, maritime transport & MoS and the revision of the TEN-T. The group will furthermore contribute to the development of a NSC maritime project under the North Sea Programme in cooperation with other NSC groups, and seek a structured cooperation with relevant Interreg projects on transport. The group intends to explore the feasibility of organising common meetings with the BSC transport group, also seeking to coordinate positions on the TEN-T review through the CPMR. The meeting furthermore decided to broaden the perspective of the work on energy issues to all forms of energy-efficient transport (not limited to sustainable fuels only), and to use the NSC website as a "landing page" with links to existing information resources on energy-efficient transport. The meeting suggested applying a "landing page-approach" also for the statistical mapping task, whereby links to existing statistics & analysis are being made available at the NSC website. Such an approach saves resources and is maximising the added value. The meeting also decided to submit a summary report on major trends in modal split to the Executive meeting in Kristiansand on 27 March.

The group will try to raise the level of attendance and activity by joining forces with other NSC groups, the CPMR – BSC, and with the Interreg North Sea Programme. The group will also exploit opportunities for improved marketing as represented by the upgraded NSC website, and more systematically try to engage inactive NSC member regions, particularly in Germany, France and the Netherlands through written information and visits where appropriate.



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Concerning the role of the thematic groups as being discussed in the context of the follow-up of the “Success of the NSC-report”, the meeting indicated a preference for combining a corporate and a more bottom-up-oriented approach whereby the Executive is defining the over all priorities & direction of the NSC (“what”), but where the thematic groups are relatively free to decide on the operational activities (“how”) for implementing the over all priorities.

- **Meeting of BSC Transport group, Rostock-Warnemünde, 5 February**

The Adviser attended the above meeting. The main item on the agenda was the EU Green Paper on the TEN-T which had been launched the day before. A DG Tren official made a presentation of the Green Paper at the meeting. The BSC and NSC Transport groups will exchange views on the Green Paper and explore the option of also coordinating positions in relation to the CPMR response. Other topics on the agenda were input from the BSC and other regional organisations to the EU Baltic Sea Strategy and CPMRs response to the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. The next meeting of the BSC Transport group is scheduled for 2 – 3 April in Brussels.

- **Meeting of NSC Marine Resources group, Kiel, 23 February**

A group member from the South Denmark Region attended the first day of the meeting of the NSC Marine Resources group in Kiel on 23 February, where he in particular followed the discussion of clean shipping, maritime spatial planning and the development of a NSC maritime project for the North Sea Programme. It is referred to the progress report from the MR-group for further information on these topics.

- **Input to NSC response to EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion**

The Adviser provided a short input to the above response on behalf of the Transport group

- **Meeting of CPMR Aquamarina group, Brussels, 3 March**

The main topic on the agenda was maritime spatial planning (MSP), on the basis of the “Road map” issued by the European Commission in November last year. DG Mare officials announced that the Commission will launch pilots on MSP also in the North Sea Region, testing the practical application of cross border cooperation. I expressed that the NSC would welcome such pilots in the North Sea, and encouraged DG Mare to consult us in the further development of this issue.

A representative of the Marine Centre at Shetland presented an example of an island approach to MSP.

The meeting discussed some initial questions and reactions to the MSP Road map from the Commission. The meeting pointed to the need of clarifying the scope and nature of MSP, as to whether it is supposed to be a legally binding instrument, or rather a process. There is also a need to clarify the relation between MSP and ICZM. Governance issues related to MSP would also need to be more precisely defined in terms of identifying the most appropriate level(s) for decision making.



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The next meeting of the AM-group is scheduled for 2nd half of June, including issues of training and maritime safety. The last meeting of the AM-group will probably take place in the autumn, analysing DG Mares status report on the implementation of the Blue Book Action plan. This meeting will also decide on the future of the AM-group.

There is also a question of whether the CPMR & AM-group should work for a 4th Erika maritime safety package, although not all measures in the Erika III-package have been adopted by the member states.

Maritime Commissioner Joe Borge encouraged the CPMR and the CoR to maintain the pressure for a continuation of an EU integrated maritime policy under the new Commission and Parliament which will be appointed/elected later this year. Otherwise, one could risk that the measures in the Blue Book would not be fully implemented and followed up. Borge emphasised that the outgoing Commission is on track & schedule with implementing the different Blue Book actions.

- **Ordinary group meeting in Kristiansand, 26 March**

This meeting will have been organised by the time of the Executive meeting on 27 March, and highlights will be provided in the oral report to the Executive.



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SUMMARY BRUSSELS ACTIVITIES FOR THE NSC

- Plenary session Committee of the Regions (CoR) 12-13 **February** 2009
- European Summit of Regions and Cities on 5 and 6 March – Prague

Find below the most important themes discussed at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels.

The first plenary session in 2009 dealt with the following issues; the growing challenges of the financial and economic crisis, and to help soften its consequences, the fight against climate change, the problems related to immigration, the quest for a better health care policy in Europe or the need to protect the quality of our agricultural products.

Two Commissioners, Piebalgs and Wallström were visiting the CoR as well as the Czech Minister for Regional Policy, Cyril Svoboda.

Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, responsible for European energy policy, did a plea to join forces in the struggle for more renewable energy supply in Europe. Indeed, it is only with both the regions and cities that the EU will achieve its ambitious environment goals of increasing energy efficiency by 20 per cent and reducing Europe's CO2 emissions by 20 per cent by 2020.

Vice-President Margot Wallström, who is responsible for European Communication Policy, participated in an exchange of views with CoR members on how to ensure that citizens know about and take part in the European elections from June 3- June 7.

And Cyril Svoboda, the Czech Minister for Regional Policy, presented the programme of the Czech EU Presidency, which will set our common political agenda for the coming months. Furthermore, territorial cohesion and the role of regions and cities was on the agenda. The CoR said very clearly that they would like the green paper followed by a white paper, although the Commission has not been very outspoken on this.

Opinions in brief

- **Climate change and energy**

The focus of the plenary debate with energy commissioner **Andris Piebalgs** on Friday 13 February, the final day of [EU Sustainable Energy Week](#) (EUSEW) were the ambitious proposals for tackling climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the role of the regions. The Committee of the Regions has continually stressed the importance of involving cities and regions in any strategies to combat climate change, such as the [Covenant of Mayors](#), which also celebrates its first anniversary during EUSEW.

Two opinions by CoR members contributed to the debate on the role of regions in environmental matters. The opinion on ["Greening the transport sector"](#), **Herwig Van Staa**, President of the Tirol *Landtag* (AT/EPP) focuses on the use of tolls to reduce road transport, calling for regions to have a say on where they are introduced and how the money raised is spent. And the opinion on the ["Revision of EMAS and the Ecolabel"](#) from **Britt Lundberg**, Member of the Government of Åland (FI/ALDE). An overhaul of the EU's eco-management and audit system (EMAS) and the eco-label designed to show consumers products that are considered as environmentally friendly must include greater involvement of local and regional authorities in promoting both schemes through their public procurement role.



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- **Economic crisis and territorial cohesion**

The effects of an economic slowdown or recession are felt first at local and regional levels. It is becoming more difficult to fund public projects and pressure on public expenditure continues to grow, yet calls are already coming through for public programmes to boost the economy.

Members of the Committee of the Regions, through their local responsibilities, are experiencing such constraints on a daily basis. There was support for the entrepreneurs.

Constance Hanniffy, Member of Offaly County Council (IE/EPP), turned her dialogue with Irish SMEs into bottom-up input to her draft opinion "[Think small first: a Small Business Act for Europe](#)," in which she called for cutting red-tape to sustain entrepreneurship. In such a context, the CoR's Commission for Economic and Social Policy stressed in its draft opinion - entitled "[Single market, social vision and services of general interest](#)" - that local and regional authorities expect a legal framework proposal from the European Commission to ensure genuine legal certainty for the provision of services of general interest.

One of the aims followed by such a regulation would be to ensure territorial cohesion in Europe. This theme has been included in the Treaty of Lisbon and is addressed by **Jean-Yves Le Drian**, President of the Brittany Regional Council (FR/PSE). He underlined the importance of territorial cohesion as a political objective for Europe alongside economic and social cohesion

- **Three opinions about immigration.**

"[Local and regional authorities at the forefront of integration policies](#)", prepared by **Dimitrios Kalogeropoulos**, Mayor of Egaleo - Athens (EL/EPP), highlighted the role of sub-national authorities in both the countries of origin and host countries in order to achieve a successful integration.

Ursula Männle, Member of the Bavarian Parliament (DE / EPP), emphasised in her draft opinion on the "[Green paper on Migration and Mobility](#)" the role of education in integrating children and young people from migrant backgrounds.

Finally, the CoR addressed the bridges cities can build with third countries in the opinion "[City Diplomacy](#)" drafted by **Eleni Loucaides**, Municipal Councillor of Nicosia (CY / EPP). She referred to the importance of cities when it comes to laying the foundations for a functioning democracy at all levels, and hence creating a stable environment in which people can live peacefully in a climate of prosperity.

And a major improvement in food quality has been proposed by **Milner Whiteman** (UK/UEN-EA), Member of Bridgenorth District Council, who in his opinion on the "[Green Paper on agricultural product quality](#)" urged European producers to focus on quality in order to compete more effectively with low-cost imports and calls on local authorities to do their bit by encouraging schools and hospitals to offer locally grown produce.

- **Yet to come...European Summit of Regions and Cities on 5 and 6 March – Prague**

On 5 and 6 March, some 500 elected representatives of over 250 regions and cities will assemble in Prague for the European Summit of Regions and Cities, at the invitation of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the city of Prague and its mayor, Pavel Bém.

After the meeting of heads of state or government in Brussels on 1 March, the day before the European spring summit and less than a month before the G20 meeting in London, local and regional representatives will gather in the Czech capital to take part in meetings and send a message of unity, solidarity, competitiveness and responsibility to the European Commission and the Member States with the aim of addressing the economic crisis and its social consequences in partnership.



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NSC – BSC COOPERATION

- **Cooperation between working groups in NSC-BSC**

As stated in the NSC-BSC presidency meeting in Århus in January, the cooperation between the commissions is working well. It seems like common group activities are taking place in all working groups where possible. All groups are following what is on the EU agenda for the moment. As of now, TENT is high priority along with tourism, maritime transport and the future cohesion policy.

- **Other CPMR intercom groups**

The interest for the intercom group on tourism is rising. During the CPMR bureau in January a paragraph was adopted regarding culture and territorial cohesion. In the Intercom group on CAP, the BSC has two representatives Germany and Finland. They are representing different views regarding the future CAP politics.

- **NSC-BSC presidency meeting, Århus 24 January 2009**

The presidency in NSC and BSC met in Århus in January. Topics for discussion were among others future cooperation between the commissions. Themes that were discussed included northern dimension, maritime policy, and more needed input from the Brussels antenna. Both the NSC and BSC gave short reports regarding the current state of things within the commissions. These meetings will continue to give updates between the commissions on ongoing projects, intentions and joint activities.

The minutes from the meeting is enclosed in a separate file.

- **Update Baltic Sea strategy**

The 2nd stakeholder conference on the Baltic Sea strategy was held in Rostock in early February. This was the last conference before the Commission is supposed to produce a concrete action plan which is expected in late spring. The regions have opted for a stronger part of the development of the strategy both through the Committee of the Regions but also independent regions themselves. Region Västra Götaland has especially reminded stakeholders about the North Sea potential regarding transport and accessibility. The Baltic Sea strategy will be presented to the Council in June 2009 and further developed during the Swedish presidency this fall.



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TERRITORIAL COHESION

NSC has sent a response to the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. The paper was prepared by Vice-President Sandy Cluness and his supporting officer Sally Spence.

The first draft was put on the NSC website for comments, using the opportunities for blogging. There were five responses on the website and one separate e-mail response.

Based on previous general discussions and the responses a joint NSC-BSC statement was finalised and sent to DG Regio.

The joint statement is enclosed the papers for the meeting, separate paper.



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MARITIME POLICY UPDATE

1. Maritime Spatial Planning Action Plan

As part of the European Union's (EU's) Common European Maritime Policy, a 'Blue Paper' proposing an Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) for the EU was adopted on 10 October 2007. Maritime Spatial Planning is seen as a key instrument in achieving an IMP, with the EU viewing its role as being one of facilitation and encouragement for the uptake of MSP by Member States.

A Commission Communication entitled "[Roadmap for Maritime Spatial Planning: Achieving Common Principles in the EU](#)" (also available in [French](#) and [German](#)), was adopted on 25 November 2008. The document aims to stimulate a debate among stakeholders on how best to implement MSP and also identifies a number of key principles which govern existing MSP in parts of Europe and internationally. A more detailed Commission workplan for MSP is set to be published in early 2009. This will focus on organising stakeholder workshops, pilot projects for cross-border co-operation and a concluding report to summarise the findings of the workshops.

The Communication puts forward the case that while MSP is a Member State competence, value can be added at the European level. This is due to the cross-border nature of MSP and marine ecosystems as well as the potential efficiency benefits of co-ordinating national policies.

The Communication also sets out a number of examples of MSP from Member States, Norway, Australia and Canada, including the Scottish Marine Bill. It also highlights a number of EU-funded projects from programmes such as INTERREG, the EU Research Programmes and Marco Polo II.

Relevant EU legislation for MSP includes the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which requires Member States to achieve good marine environmental status by 2020; to apply an ecosystem approach; and to ensure that pressure from human activities is compatible with good environmental status.

The Water Framework Directive also requires Member States to publish River Basin Management Plans by December 2009 which could impact upon MSP. Other environmental legislation such as the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive and the Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Directive is also relevant to MSP.

The Common Fisheries Policy is also likely to be interlinked with MSP, given the interaction of the fisheries sector with marine ecosystems, the mobility of fish stocks and the development of aquaculture.

In addition to implementing MSP, Member States have been asked to develop Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) strategies in co-operation with neighbouring countries.

The following principles for Maritime Spatial Planning are identified in the Communication:



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Using MSP according to area and type of activity, which generally advocates against using a ‘one size fits all’ approach to MSP. Instead, approaches should depend on the type of activities in question and their environmental impact.

Defining objectives to guide MSP, which recommends defining management objectives for a given offshore area.

Developing MSP in a transparent manner.

Stakeholder participation, including coastal regions, at an early stage.

Co-ordination within Member States – Simplifying decision processes (e.g. for licences) as has been put forward in the Scottish Marine Bill.

Ensuring the legal effect of national MSP, which means that MSP should be legally binding but not just replicate terrestrial planning at sea.

Cross-border co-operation and consultation.

Incorporating monitoring and evaluation in the planning process, in order to recognise that MSP operates in an environment exposed to constant change.

Achieving coherence between terrestrial and maritime spatial planning – relationship with ICZM, recognising the interactions between the land and sea.

A strong data and knowledge base, to ensure that MSP is based on sound information and scientific knowledge.

2. Maritime Spatial Planning Kick-Off Seminar

To officially launch the aforementioned action plan, the European Commission held a ‘kick off’ seminar in Brussels on 26 March, which was attended by Martin Brebner.

Key Messages

- MSP will happen, but the form in which this is implemented varies
- Limited implementation in the North Sea, but ever-increasing demands from a wide range of users
- MSP should not lead to rigid and inflexible plans given the dynamism of the seas
- Existing sectors may be reluctant to share maritime space with new users of the sea
- There is a lack of forums for regional sea-level implementation of MSP

[Commissioner Borg](#) explained the rationale behind the action plan, namely that there are more users of the sea than ever. The question is not whether or not to tackle conflicts between users, but how. MSP is seen by the Commission as an important tool to manage competing demands and foresee and manage future changes. MSP is also a means of establishing political priorities



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for the sea and can act as a catalyst for improved decision-making, arbitration and capitalising on potential.

The Commissioner added that it is important for all levels of governance to be involved in the process and for stakeholder ownership to be taken. While MSP remains a Member State responsibility, cross-border co-operation is key. There will be further stakeholder events later this year in Italy (2nd half of April); the Azores (June) and Sweden (2nd half of October). Pilot projects will also be launched towards the end of 2009.

Jean-François Tallec presented the views of the French Government on the roadmap. The strategic dimension to planning was emphasised, with France looking to use its experience of land-based spatial planning to implement MSP. The French Government's view is that a centralised system of planning is essential for an integrated approach to be achieved.

Uwe Döring presented an alternative model to the centralised implementation of MSP, advocating a strong regional dimension to the EU Maritime Policy. The Minister for Justice, Employment and European Affairs from Land Schleswig Holstein presented his region's [Maritime Action Plan](#) (MAP-SH) which was adopted in June 2008 and contains 60 actions. A 2005 Spatial Planning report was also presented and this document will feed into the region's State Development Plan for 2009. Schleswig Holstein sees MSP as the most important tool for integrating sectoral policies.

Johan Vande Lanotte, President of the [Coastal and Marine Union](#) spoke about the Belgian experience in implementing MSP. The first attempt in 1999 failed due to it being too 'top-down'. The second also failed, given a lack of political enthusiasm and unresolved conflicts between renewable energy and habitat protection. However, the most recent event has been more successful thanks to a dedicated minister taking responsibility and a masterplan for MSP. The lessons learned through the process were that communication and stakeholder engagement, knowledge gathering and patience are key to successfully implementing MSP. There is still work to be done on integrating fisheries into the plan; cross-border co-operation; and the need for a regional sea-level platform for co-operation.

Hans Christian Sørensen, Vice-President of the European Ocean Energy Association, presented on the offshore energy sector, which has the potential to generate up to 14% of the EU's electricity needs by 2030. He also highlighted that there is great potential for job creation in areas where the oil and gas sector is declining. MSP has the potential to speed up developments, as well as minimise the risk of conflicts. There are also synergies between wind and wave power, as they can share the same transmission infrastructure and their peak production occurs at different times.

Hugo Andersson represented the North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC) and talked about the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. NSRAC has a Spatial Planning working group which looks at the mapping of important fisheries areas; the interaction between fishing and energy; and the interaction between fishing and protected areas. Mr. Andersson highlighted the case of the Dogger Bank as a protected area over which 3 Member States have jurisdiction. Given that each State must decide how to apply the protected area legislation, there is potential for three differing systems to be put in place. It was also remarked that while



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dispersed activities such as fishing may not seem as important to planners, there are many communities which are very dependent on the sector.

Ewa Milewska represented the Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council (BS RAC). She spoke about a workshop on MSP which they held in Tallinn, which found that MSP is becoming increasingly important. It requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders and good governance based on sound scientific knowledge. Within the Baltic Sea Area there is a need to identify the best arena/organisation through which to pursue MSP.

Pauli Merriman delivered a presentation from the perspective of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The WWF is interested in fisheries, shipping and renewable energy development in Europe and favours an ecosystem approach which takes account of the cumulative effects of human activities. An evolving and adaptable system of MSP was advocated which effectively involves stakeholders and meets conservation needs.

Diana Linskey spoke on behalf of the UK Government and spoke on their experience in developing a Marine and Coastal Access Bill. The main challenges so far have been the need for cross-sectoral political agreement and collective decisions, which take time to achieve. The objectives of the Bill are to bring certainty and assurance to maritime stakeholders.

Javier Cochon de Mesa talked about the Spanish Government's experience with regards to offshore renewable energy development. While there are no offshore windfarms in Spanish waters yet, a marine energy plan is under development. The issues which need to be overcome include cross-administrative competences (different levels of governance have different competences over the seas); environmental factors; and public opposition in some areas (particularly those dependent on tourism).

Michael Lund represented the International Shipping Association which has welcomed the Commission's stakeholder involvement to date in the field of Maritime Policy. The view of the industry is that passage at sea for shipping should be kept as free as possible. MSP has to take account of existing international agreements and should engage with industry. New activities, such as renewable energy, can be problematic with regards to radar and hence should not be placed near large shipping routes.

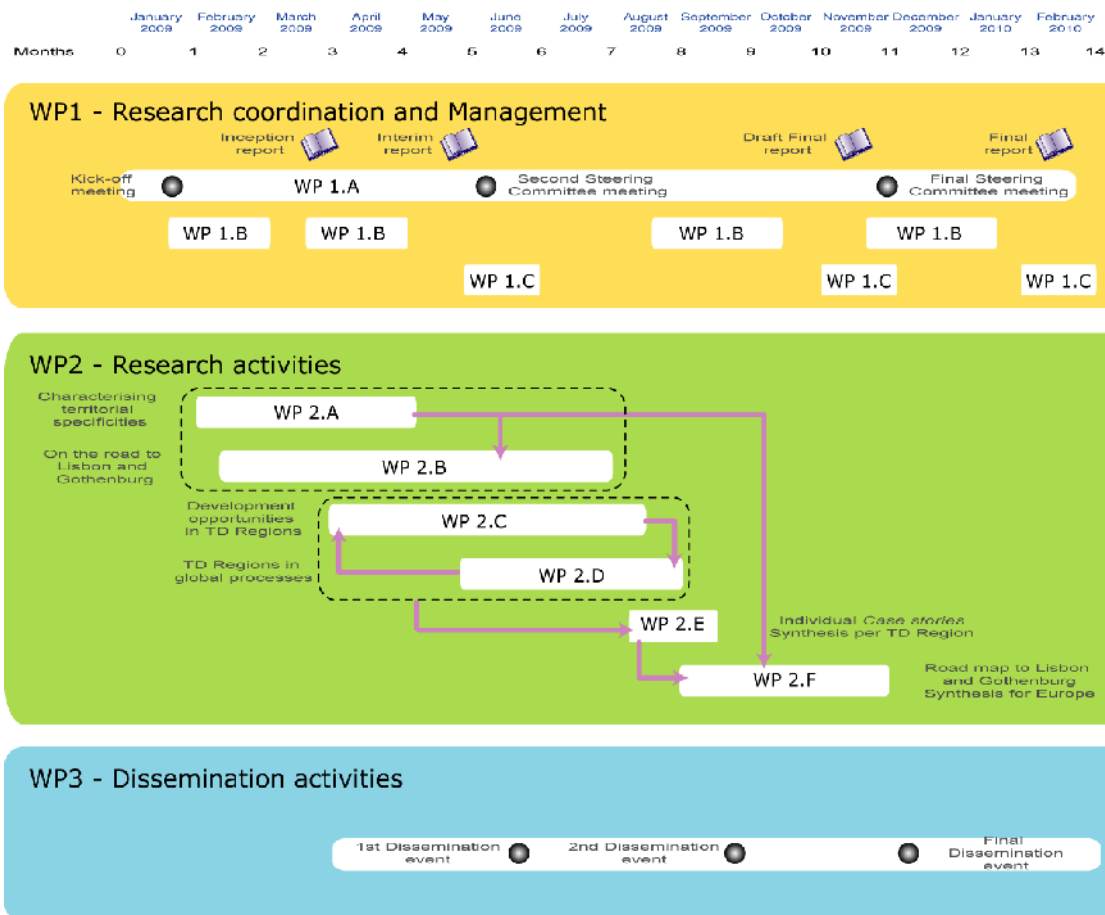
David Johnson from OSPAR presented on the role of Regional Sea Conventions with regards to MSP. The objective of OSPAR is to ensure clean, healthy and biologically-diverse North East Atlantic ecosystems. OSPAR also has an obligation to deliver MSP through its mandate, although it is currently undergoing a strategic review. OSPAR sees the role of MSP as delivering a platform for co-operation. MSP should help to operationalise the ecosystem approach to marine management and must avoid enshrining existing use patterns. The sea is much more dynamic than land, hence forward planning and an integrated approach to management is required. A co-ordinated approach is particularly important with regards to the harmonisation of data across national boundaries. Member States which have already implemented MSP have tended to do so in relative isolation to each other (e.g. the Netherlands and Germany).

ESPON PROJECT TERRITORIAL DIVERSITY (TiDe)

NSC is a member of the Steering Committee of the ESPON project Territorial Diversity (TiDe). On the ExCom meeting 26 March the project leader Erik Glørsen from Nordregio will present the project for the members. You will find information and presentations regarding the project on our website under the heading **Projects**.

The project is organised as the figure below;

ESPON TeDiE proposal



NSC activities in the project:

- Participate at the Steering Committee meeting (WP 1.A), the first meeting was 16th February 2009 in Brussels. The Executive Secretary participated at the meeting.
- Organise the 1st Dissemination event, this will be 24th June during our GA in Egmont aan See (WP 3)
- We will present the project reports and presentations on our website as soon as they are public, <http://www.northseacommission.info/nsc-projects-links/98-espon.html>