NORTH SEA COMMISSION
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Minutes of the 39th Executive Committee Meeting on 15th June 2005, Zeeland, the Netherlands

NSC Executive Committee Participants:

President	Cllr. Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark)
Vice-President	Cllr. Audrey Findlay (Aberdeenshire) accompanied by Paul Kane and Iain Gabriel (Aberdeenshire)
Danish Representative	Cllr. Harry Jensen (Ringkjøbing) accompanied by Karsten Bækgaard (Ringkjøbing
Dutch Representative	Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga (Noord Holland) accompanied by Gerrit Walstra (Noord Holland)
English Representative	Cllr. Kevan Lim (Suffolk)
French Representative	Cllr. Martine Filleul (Nord-Pas de Calais) accompanied by Delphine Dufoix and Nathalie Cos (Nord-Pas de Calais)
German Representative	Represented by Peter Wieland (Niedersechen)
Norwegian Representative	Cllr. Gisle Handeland (Hordaland)
Scottish Representative	Cllr. Kathleen Matheson (Highland) accompanied by Gordon Summers (Highland)
Swedish Representative	Not represented
Executive Secretary	Lars Haukvik
Assistant Executive Secretary	Vibeke Jakobsen
Hired consultant	Vivien Collie

NSC Chairs/Vice-chairs of Thematic Groups present:

Culture and Tourism	none
Economic Development	Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga (Noord-Holland), Cllr. Kevan Lim (Suffolk)
Education and Research	none
Environment	Cllr. Alison McInnes (Aberdeenshire) Cllr. Andreas Lervik (Østfold)
Fisheries	Cllr. Harry Jensen (Ringkjøbing)
Transport	none

NSC Thematic Group Co-ordinators present:

Culture and Tourism	Geir Sør-Reime (Rogaland)
Economic Development	Erik Lindboe (Rogaland)
Education and Research	Ann Brown (NSC)
Environment	Per Horberg (Västra Götaland)
Fisheries	Ann Bell (Aberdeenshire)
Transport	Jon Halvard Eide (Vest-Agder)

CPMR: Fanny Harling, CPMR Secretariat

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Interreg:	Lorraine George, Programme Manager Interreg North Sea Secretariat Friedhelm Budde, Chairman of the Interreg North Sea Programme Monitoring Committee
Observers:	Cllr. Richard Rockcliffe (Norfolk) Hugo Andersen (North Sea RAC) Karen Gibson (Norfolk) Toine Janssen (SNN) Mads Nedergaard (Ringkjøbing) Eva Kanstrup (Ringkjøbing) Jörgen Niemann (Västra Götaland) Dominique Robertson (Fife) Per Røen (Rogaland) Torhild Kongsness (Østfold)
Apologies:	Cllr. Roland Andersson (Västra Götaland) Cllr. Peter Byman (SNN) Cllr. Sandy Clunes (Shetland) Cllr. Anders Fasth (Västra Götaland) Cllr. Albrecht Harten (Niedersachsen) Cllr. Bjørn Thümler (Niedersachsen) Cllr. Alexander Thomson (Fife) Cllr. Tony Thomkinson (Norfolk) Cllr. Tor Ottar Karlsen (Buskerud) Cllr. Jan Hallberg (Västra Götaland)

The President started by welcoming everyone and introducing Piet Klip from Provincie of Zeeland. Piet welcomed the NSC to Zeeland and outlined the plans for the 2005 GA.

The Agenda for the meeting was approved.

1. Minutes of the 38th North Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting held at Hotel Fjordgarden, Ringkøbing, Denmark on 1st March 2005

Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga reminded the Committee that during the March meeting discussions had taken place regarding the current Thematic Group structure and the future structure of the NSC. The President agreed. She stated that work was required to progress these discussions the process and a new structure would be agreed and introduced in 2007.

<u>The Executive Committee decided:</u>

It was agreed that a note on the original discussions should be added to the minutes. The minutes were then adopted.

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2. Annual Reports

a. Presidents Report

The President tabled her report and advised that it would be raised at the GA. Cllr. Kevan Lim raised the issue of the European Commission's new map of the regions and the need for the NSC to influence the current discussions.

<u>The Executive Committee decided:</u>

It was agreed that the President would produce a statement on this issue and would arrange to meet with the relevant EU Commissioners.

b. Annual Reports from the Thematic Groups

Culture and Tourism
Economic Development
Education and Research
Environment
Fisheries
Transport

The President advised that these reports were tabled and could be discussed at the GA if required.

c. Report from the conference 'The North Sea – Today and Tomorrow'

Mads Nedergaard (Ringkjøbing) gave a presentation on the outcomes and recommendations from the conference. The conclusions are summarised in the Conference Report. The President congratulated everyone on the success of this event. It was suggested that the outcomes of the conference are studied and consideration is given to incorporating them into the future work of the Thematic groups.

Cllr. Alison McInnes also suggested that the Executive Committee should write to all the Ministers in each member states and the relevant Commissioners involved with Fisheries, Transport and the Environment highlighting the issues raised at the conference. The Executive Committee should also write a letter in support of the KIMO resolutions on Maritime Safety.

<u>The Executive Committee decided:</u>

It was agreed that the NSC Thematic Group Chairs, Vice Chairs and Co-ordinators should meet to discuss and prioritise the conference outcomes.

It was agreed that the Executive Committee should write to all the Ministers in each member states and the relevant Commissioners involved with Fisheries, Transport and the Environment highlighting the issues raised at the conference. The Executive Committee will also write a letter in support of the KIMO resolutions on Maritime Safety.

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3. NSC Work Plans

a. Executive Committee Action Plan and overview of the Thematic Group work plans

Cllr. Audrey Findlay described the process used to develop the Thematic Groups Work Programme 2005 – 2006. This provides an overview of all the work plans. It is hoped that this will give a clear view on the main issues and will help to monitor the work of the Thematic groups.

Discussion took place on the NSC Executive Committee Action Plan 2005 – 2006, the proposal to introduce 'Ad hoc' groups to work on corporate issues and the role of the Strategic Committee.

Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga also raised the need for the NSC to produce comprehensive policy papers in future so that Executive Committee members can act as spokesmen.

It was suggested that these issues should be taken forward for further discussion.

The Executive Committee decided:

Further discussion is required to progress the NSC Executive Committee Action Plan and proposed working structures.

b. Thematic Group Work Plans

Culture and Tourism – summary given by Geir Sør-Reime
Members of the Executive Committee were advised that this was a new, revised work plan. Members should be aware, therefore, that the combined NSC Thematic Groups Work Programme 2005 – 2006 requires to be changed in order to incorporate this new version.

Economic Development – summary given by Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga

Education and Research – summary (and update on the planned Lisbon Agenda event) given by Ann Brown

Environment – summary given by Cllr. Alison McInnes

Fisheries – summary given by Cllr. Harry Jensen and Ann Bell. Hugo Andersen gave an outline of the development and work of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC).

Transport – summary given by Jon Halvard Eide

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The Executive Committee decided:

The Thematic Group Work plans were approved for adoption and will be put forward to the Annual Business Meeting for information.

The new, revised, Culture and Tourism Work Plan should be incorporated into the NSC Thematic Groups Work Programme 2005 – 2006.

4. Finances

a. Accounts and Audit Report

The Executive Secretary presented last year's accounts. He highlighted the fact that although there is a surplus identified there are still a number of invoices to be received - including fees for the Economic Development and Education and Research Co-ordinators and the Zeeland conference expenses. He also explained that, as external contractors are now used, there have been additional expenses involved in the development and maintenance of the new NSC website. He also advised the members that there were a number of membership fees still to be collected.

The Executive Committee decided:

The Accounts were accepted.

b. Budget 2006

The Executive Secretary advised the Executive Committee members that the work of the NSC is growing and changing. There is, therefore, a requirement to consider the option of increasing membership fees on an annual basis in order to generate more income for the organisation.

The Executive Committee decided:

The 2006 budget should be submitted to the GA with the proposal that the membership fees should be increased by 10% (the actual amount in Euros should be stated).

The budget should be adjusted annually according to the EU 15 inflation rate.

The NSC Secretariat should pursue members who have not paid their membership fees.

c. Membership update

The Executive Committee members were advised that Aberdeen City Council in Scotland has applied to the CPMR and the NSC for individual membership.

The Executive Committee decided:

The Executive Committee agreed to accept the application and welcomed Aberdeen City Council to the NSC.

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5. Election of NSC Office bearers

a. Election of Vice President

Vice-President Audrey Findlay is the only candidate as Vice-President for the next 2-year period from the NSC Annual Business Meeting 2005 until the Annual Business Meeting 2007.

<u>The Executive Committee decided:</u>

For information

b. Confirmation of the election of Vice President Peter Byman

The 14th NSC Annual Business meeting should confirm the election of Cllr. Peter Byman as Vice-President of the NSC from October 2004 until the NSC Annual Business Meeting in 2006.

<u>The Executive Committee decided:</u>

For information

c. Confirmation of the Members and Substitute Members of the NSC Executive Committee, elected by the National delegations

The Executive Committee members were advised that a politician from Zeeland has expressed an interest in becoming substitute member for the Netherlands. They were also advised that Cllr. Albrecht Harten, substitute member for Germany, will require to be replaced. A replacement politician has still to be identified.

Following decisions made by the elected members from the national delegations, the members and substitute members of the Executive Committee should be agreed and elected until the NSC Annual Business Meeting in 2006. The election will be done at the Annual Business Meeting June 17th 2005.

<u>The Executive Committee decided:</u>

For information

d. Election of Vice Chairs

The Executive Committee members were advised that there were vacancies for Vice-Chair positions in the Transport Group and the Education and Research Group.

No nominations had been received for the position of Vice-Chair of the Transport Group.

Two nominations were received for the position of Vice-Chair of the Education and Research Group. (Cllr. Knut M Olsen from Sogn og Fjordane Fylkeskommune, Norway and Cllr. Christian Bach Iversen, North Jutland, Denmark).

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The Executive Committee decided:

The position of Vice-Chair of the Transport Group should be re-advertised before the next NSC Executive Committee meeting.

Cllr. Christian Bach Iversen, North Jutland, Denmark was elected as a new Vice-Chair of the NSC Education and Research Group.

6. Update of the NSC Charter

The Executive Committee members discussed the new proposed NSC Charter.

The Executive Committee decided:

To adopt the new North Sea Commission Charter dated 15th May 2005 at the NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 17th.

7. Report from CPMR

Fanny Harling of the CPMR Secretariat outlined the contents of the recent CPMR activity report. A formal representation will be made at the General Assembly.

The Executive Committee noted the proposals in the CPMR paper "CPMR-NSC: Building closer links for mutual benefit". This must be discussed further at the Executive Committee Meeting in November.

The Executive Committee decided:

No comments to the report.

8. Report from the Interreg IIIB programme for the North Sea

Programme Manager Lorraine George, Interreg Secretariat, described how the spending targets for last year have been met. She advised that 58 projects have been approved and 15 projects will be completed this year. A project book has been produced containing information from the 58 projects. She outlined their publicity activities and the work of two new initiatives (InterAct Point and Maritime Safety).

Lorraine George also advised that an open call would be held in November with an emphasis on projects that look to the future. The remaining funds comprise about 3.7 million euros (ERDF) and 0.4 million euros (ERDF interest money).

She stated that the Secretariat was aiming to build on previous work and were seeking views and input on future funding.

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The Executive Committee decided:

No comments to the report.

9. Resolutions and Political Statements

- Political Statement on Inshore Ship to Ship transfers of crude oil products and other hydrocarbons

The Executive Committee decided:

No comments to the statement. Put forward to the NSC Annual Business Meeting for approval.

- Draft Resolution Towards a European Maritime Policy – a major European perspective for the North Sea Region
- Draft Resolution on A Future European Maritime Policy

Members of the Executive Committee acknowledged that there had been two resolutions put forward on the European Maritime Policy. Discussion took place on the level of detailed required at this stage.

The Executive Committee decided:

The two resolutions should be combined for consideration at the NSC Annual Business Meeting.

- Draft Resolution on the interdependence of EU's Lisbon Strategy and the Gothenburg Agenda

Cllr. Kathleen Matheson suggested that the wording in the second bullet point could be strengthened.

The Executive Committee decided:

Cllr. Kathleen Matheson should submit some alternative wording for consideration and approval for the NSC Annual Business Meeting.

- Draft Resolution with reference to a new European legislation on chemicals

The Executive Committee decided:

No comments to the statement. Put forward for approval to the NSC Annual Business Meeting.

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- Draft Resolution on EU Territorial Co-operation 2007 - 2013

Members of the Executive Committee agreed with the general message of the resolution but requested that wording was changed to make the resolution more positive and diplomatic.

The Executive Committee decided:

A small working group should be put together to make the necessary amendments and put forward to the NSC Annual Business Meeting for approval.

10. 15th General Assembly 2006

On behalf of all the Scottish members, Cllr. Kathleen Matheson, Highland Council, Scotland invited the NSC to hold its 15th General Assembly in Scotland during June 2006. Details to be confirmed.

The Executive Committee decided:

To accept the offer to host the NSC's 15th General Assembly in Scotland.

11. Next meeting

It was suggested that the next meeting of the NSC Executive Committee could be held in Sweden on 3rd November 2005 to coincide with the Lisbon Agenda event. To be confirmed.

12. AOB

The President closed the meeting by thanking the Provincie of Zeeland for all their assistance with the organisation of this year's NSC GA.

The papers for this meeting are available on the NSC website www.northsea.org , Executive Committee

NSC Secretariat; VC/VJ/LH
June 2005