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Item 2

53rd NSC Executive Committee Meeting, 27th April 2010.

REPORTS

This paper consists of the following reports;

- from the thematic groups
- from NSC-BSC cooperation
- from CPMR Aquamarina group
- Separate reports
 from the CPMR working gr

from the CPMR working group on Territorial Cooperation cooperation with Interreg – oral report by Programme Manager Christian Byrith

The reports show the activities of NSC since last meeting in December 2009.

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

ACTIVITY REPORT/UPDATE WORK PLAN

The Culture & Tourism Group now a chair-team consisting of Mr Harry van Waveren (Province of Zeeland), Chair Mr Lars Nordström (Västra Götaland Region), Vice-Chair Mr Peter Robindson (Lincolnshire Council), Vice-Chair. The advisor is still Mr Geir Sør-Reime from Rogaland County Council.

The Group has had one meeting since the 2009 AGM of the North Sea Commission. The 37th Meeting took place in Skagen (North Jutland Region) on 17th March 2010.

Only 8 members attended the meeting, which was held back-to-back with the annual conference of the Interreg-project CoastAlive! This project is based on two previous Interreg-projects, the North Sea Cycle Route and the NAVE Nortrail/North Sea Trail, both of which were developed in close co-operation with the Culture and Tourism Group. It is intended that this co-operation should continue through the CoastAlive! project.

The main item on the Agenda of the 37th meeting was a discussion on the culture and tourism agendas of the EU, and how culture and tourism could be integrated into the North Sea Strategy proposal.

It was agreed to produce an input paper to the writing group on cultural and tourism issues relating to the North Sea.

The Action Plan was revised to include working on the North Sea Strategy.

The Culture & Tourism Group intends to organize a workshop on culture and tourism in relation to the North Sea Strategy during September.



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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 November 2009 to April 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 and adviser, plus supporting officers) met in Aberdeen 14 December 2009 and 21 April 2010 to plan IEG activities in 2010.

4. The North Sea Schools Sustainability Network

a) The project "Talking about Food around the North Sea" which started in September 2008, is coming to an end and will hold the final conference in Dundee, Scotland, 8 – 11 June 2010.

The project schools are:

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

Project website: www.talkingaboutfood.ik.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 third project is called "Connect, Create, Sustain". It started in September 2009 and finishes in the summer of 2011. It's aimed at older pupils/students and sets out to encourage innovation and sustainability through the medium of creativity and design, and to maintain this focus through the



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progression from concept to realisation. A programme of international Masterclasses and mobilities will enable students and teachers to extend their range of specialist and core skills. The project itself will look at promoting the use of environmentally friendly materials and practice in the creation of pieces of art.

The schools/colleges involved in the project are:

- Dundee College, Dundee, Scotland, UK (lead partner)
- Angus College, Arbroath, Scotland, UK
- Lycée César Baggio, Nord Pas de Calais, France
- ROC Westerschelde, ternuezen, The Netherlands
- Platengymnasiet Motala, Motala, Sweden
- Colegiul Tehnic Piatra Neamt, Romania.

The school projects are funded by so-called Comenius fundings, 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.

5. The North Sea Strategy

a١

IEG Strategic Group has sent the following statement to the NSC President:

Re. North Sea Stakeholder Conference: Overall it is the group's view that the North Sea Strategy is about adding value to the North Sea Region and based on this the group would like to put forward the following points:

- § The strategic group 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.
- § One very important purpose of the North Sea Strategy is to coordinate the different funding opportunities that exist in the North Sea Region. However, the strategic group recognises that the North Sea Region Interreg Programme is the primary source of funding for projects in the North Sea Region. Hence, a North Sea Strategy should help secure maximum funding for this Programme. The funding that goes into the North Sea Region Interreg Programme will in turn help fund projects that will transform the North Sea Strategy into action and results
- § 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
 - o Climate change coordinated action in relation to rising sea levels, increased precipitation, flooding and increased temperatures
 - Development of a North Sea Grid supporting renewable energy production and security of energy supply
 - Maritime research and data collection consistent and comprehensive information on which to base policy decisions particularly in relation to the Common Fisheries Policy, maritime safety, ICZM
 - o Develop the economic potential of the North Sea Region through new industries and jobs support the restructuring of economies and development of supply chains
 - o Support knowledge as the engine for sustainable growth by strengthening education and research and providing the framework for innovation and creativity.
 - o Support excellence in relation to renewable energy production, supply and technologies
 - o Safe use of our seas As the busiest sea region there is a need to balance and manage the increased use of maritime space.
 - o 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 has produced a paper on the North Sea Strategy process. The comments are jointly supported by the two groups, and has been forwarded to the NSC Secretariat and the respective chairs and vice chairs.



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6. 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. 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.

7. 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.

- 7. 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. 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. More information about Buskerud here: http://www.bfk.no/Modules/theme.aspx?ObjectType=Article&ElementID=2331&Category.ID=4146

8. Events calendar 2010

2010	
3 – 4 February	NSC Advisers and NSC Secretariat meeting, planning the
	NSC GA in June
10 – 11 February	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
21 April	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland
8 – 11 June	The school project "Talking about Food around the North
	Sea": Final conference in Scotland
16 – 18 June	NSC GA / joint NSP annual conference in Stavanger,
	Norway
29 September – 1 October	CPMR General Assembly in Aberdeen
Date tbc	IEG Strategic Group meeting
3 – 4 November	IEG meeting in Buskerud County, Norway



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MARINE RESOURCES GROUP

The work has concentrated on preparing and reporting from the Stakeholder conference 17-18 March 2010 in Newcastle.

A report from the Conference is enclosed under item 7.



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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 Group from November 2009 to April 2009.

2. SDG Chair, Vice – Chairs and Adviser

Chair: Cllr John Lamb, East of England Regional AssemblyV.Chairs 1) Cllr Henrik Ringbæk Madsen, Nordjyllands Amt, Denmark

2) Cllr Marten Wiersma

Adviser Yasa Ratnayeke

3. 8th March 2010 – Meeting in Aberdeen

The group met in Aberdeen on the 8th and 9th of March in Aberdeen. A presentation from the lead officer of the build with CaRe project was made to the group. A lot of discussion took place regarding the challengers the North Sea Region faced with mainstreaming energy efficient buildings and the significance of existing building stock. As such the group have decided to work closely with the Build with CaRe project and have 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

The Sustainable Development Group recommend to the Executive Committee to support this statement.

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

The SDG also discussed the possibilities of working much more closely with the other thematic groups and it was decided that a joint conference should be arranged along with the Baltic Sea Energy group.

4. 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.



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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 ahs 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.

5. Co-Operation with the North Sea Programme and Baltic Sea Energy Group

The group will continue to work closely with the North Sea Programme in order that its members could develop projects and the SDG could help and develop strategic projects.

The group will also work more closely with the Baltic Sea Energy Group and look at the possibility of hosting another Energy Conference in 2010 / 11.

6. Next Meeting of SDG

June 2010.



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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 1 December 2009.

Ordinary meeting of the NSC Transport group, Copenhagen, 22 February

The agenda comprised the ordinary items on the Work Plan.

As for the <u>European Transport agenda</u>, 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 <u>the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme</u> (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 <u>on energy</u> <u>efficient transport solutions</u> 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 <u>statistical mapping task</u>, 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.

Other activities of relevance

- The Adviser attended a project development seminar under the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme in Antwerp, Belgium, on 26 27 January.
- On 10 March, the Adviser attended a planning meeting for the 2010 Annual Conference in Copenhagen, 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 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)
- During February and March the Adviser attended events under the TransBaltic-project (Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme) in Stockholm and Malmø. Several members of the BSC Transport group are partners to this project & events.



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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 Agenda

On May 27th-28th, the Baltic Sea Commission will arrange their General Assembly, hosted by Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Rostock-Warnemünde. There will be three parallel workshops followed by a plenary seminar on "prospects of territorial cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region".

2010 is an election year for the Baltic Sea Commission. As the sitting president is not nominated for re-election the situation opens up for a renewed discussion and analysis of what profile member like to have for the commission.

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.

Baltic Sea Strategy

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 a North Sea Region Strategy, depends on the success of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy implementation, according to EU Member States.



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CPMR Aquamarina group

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



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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 \rightarrow 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.