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RESOLUTION ON MARITIME EMISSIONS

Adopted by the North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting 21 June 2011..

The North Sea Commission (NSC) is one of six Geographical Commissions under the CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions), whose purpose is to raise the profile of maritime and peripheral regions in Europe. As such, the NSC represents the regions around the North Sea, with a special responsibility to promote a good environment and health for their citizens and a positive economic development. These are threatened by pollution from a.o. ships' emissions, as shown by numerous scientific studies.

The North Sea is a very complex and sensitive marine ecosystem, providing a nursery for fish and shellfish and a migratory and wintering area for many species of birds. It is also one of the most heavily-used seas in the world, supporting fishing, shipping, trade, several forms of energy production, sand mining, defence and recreation. Increasing economic activity in the sea, such as growing shipping traffic and the development of offshore wind farms, leads to increasing competition between users of the sea. One of the North Sea Commission's tasks is the protection of the marine environment, and subsequently to assist the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in its efforts to make shipping more sustainable.

IMO is the United Nations agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships. The IMO pollution rules are contained in the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). MARPOL's Annex VI seeks to prevent air pollution from ships (SOx, NOx, ODS, VOC) and its contribution to global air pollution and environmental problems. So called Emission Control Areas (ECAs) set more stringent standards in a.o. the English Channel, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

In 2015 and 2016 new limits for sulphur and nitrogen levels in ship fuels are introduced in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Compared to surrounding European waters the regulation will lead to substantial reductions of SOx and NOx emissions from shipping, which mean health benefits and protect the marine environment. This is a major step forward - but also entails significant cost implications and therefore affects the North Sea Region's competitiveness. Shipping in the rest of Europe has to follow suite without hesitation in order to curb pollution as well as distorted competition.

IMO's new regulations need to be implemented without delay. However, the situation regarding negative environmental and health impacts from ships' emissions is similar in most European waters. Therefore - and for reasons of equal competition - it is essential that the same (or similar) emission rules are introduced and enforced in all EU waters. This should be done in anticipation of IMO regulation globally to the same effect. Member States should start this process in the IMO immediately.

- **The North Sea Commission, at its General Assembly in Bruges in June 2011:**
 - welcomes IMO's new regulations for the North Sea and the Baltic Sea and invites relevant authorities to implement them from 2015.
 - asks for the same (or similar) emission rules to be introduced and enforced in all EU waters, to secure a good environment and good health for European citizens – and equal competition conditions for all European sea-basins.
 - invites the European Union to take steps to do so within its own jurisdiction.
 - invites relevant Member States to start a process within the IMO to create global regulations to the same effect.