

# Minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004, Gunnebo Castle, Region of Västra Götaland, Sweden

## NSC Executive Committee Participants:

<b>President</b>	Cllr. Bent Hansen (Viborg)
<b>Vice-President</b>	Cllr. Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark) accompanied by Lars Haukvik (Telemark)
<b>Vice-President</b>	Cllr. Audrey Findlay (Aberdeenshire) accompanied by Jim Knowles and Iain Gabriel (Aberdeenshire)
<b>Danish Representative</b>	Cllr. Harry Jensen (Ringkjøbing) accompanied by Karsten Bækgaard
<b>Dutch Representative</b>	Cllr. Peter Byman (SNN) accompanied by Toine Janssen (SNN)
<b>English Representative</b>	Cllr. Jane Hore (Suffolk)
<b>France:</b>	Not represented
<b>German Representative</b>	Represented by Peter Wieland (Niedersachsen)
<b>Norwegian Representative</b>	Cllr. Gisle Handeland (Hordaland)
<b>Scottish Representative</b>	Cllr. Kathleen Matheson (Highland) accompanied by Gordon Summers (Highland)
<b>Swedish Representative</b>	Represented by Jörgen Niemann
<b>NSC Executive Secretary</b>	Henrik M Jensen
<b>NSC Assistant Executive Sec.</b>	Karen Greve Somerset

## NSC Vice-chairs of Thematic Groups present:

Economic Development Group:	Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga (Noord-Holland)
Education & Research Group,	Cllr. Alec Thomsen (Fife) accompanied by Dominique Robertson
Environment Group:	Cllr. Alison McInnes (Aberdeenshire)
<b>Observers:</b>	Mads Nedergaard, Ringkjøbing Amt Richard Beaton, NSC Secretariat

## NSC Thematic Group Co-ordinators present:

<b>Culture &amp; Tourism</b>	Geir Sør-Reime (Rogaland)
<b>Economic Development</b>	Vivien Collie, (Fife)
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	Ann Brown (Suffolk)
<b>Environment</b>	Per Hörberg (Västra Götaland)
<b>Fisheries</b>	Ann Bell (Aberdeenshire)
<b>Transport &amp; Communications</b>	Jon Halvard Eide (Vest-Agder)

## **Apologies.**

Due to important budget discussions, Roland Andersson, unfortunately was unable to attend the Executive Committee meeting.

The President started by welcoming everyone to the 36<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee and he thanked Roland Andersson and his staff for organising and hosting this meeting and the General Assembly. This would be Bent Hansen's last meeting as President of the NSC, and he would look back at all the years with great pleasure.

## **1. Minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting**

The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.

## **2. Financial Matters**

### **2a. Financial Statement up until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2004**

Henrik M Jensen presented the financial statement, which showed that an additional 5000 Euro has been spent on co-ordinator support, which is the extra funding for the Economic Development Group. 7979 Euro has been spent on conferences, but this is for a conference, which took place in 2003. None of the conferences in 2004 has claimed their money yet.

Some Scottish members pointed out that the NSC receives considerably less money from the CPMR and other Geographic Commissions and that the NSC ought to write to the CPMR asking to be treated the same as the other Commissions. It may also be an option that the CPMR pay for specific activities, such as the NSC's involvement in OSPAR. It was decided that Henrik M Jensen should write to the CPMR. Alternatively, Gunn Marit Helgesen could also present the case at the next CPMR Political Bureau.

### **2b. Membership update**

#### *Application for membership from Finnmark fylkeskommune*

As the most northerly county in Norway, Finnmark had applied to the NSC Secretariat for membership. This was unanimously accepted. Their application will also be dealt with by the CPMR at the next CPMR Political Bureau meeting on 9th July.

#### *Map and list of member regions*

These were noted.

## **3- 13<sup>th</sup> NSC General Assembly**

### **3a. Election of new President**

Due to important budget discussions, Cllr. Roland Andersson was unable to attend the executive Committee meeting. Members of the Executive Committee felt this was a great pity, as they would have liked to have had a discussion with the two candidates. Instead it was decided that they should both give a 5-10 minutes presentation on the morning of the Annual Business Meeting. This would be followed by some short national meetings and the election. It was decided to have a closed election and that the votes would be counted by Audrey Findlay, Peter Byman and Henrik M Jensen.

Members of the Executive Committee expressed their gratitude to Bent Hansen for all his work over the years for the North Sea Commission. It was also pointed out that it would be important to support the new President, whoever it may be, in order to keep the North Sea Commission as a strong and unified organisation.

### **3c. Nominations for the new Executive Committee**

A new name for the Danish substitute may be agreed upon during the national meetings. The names for England are also likely to change. The Executive Committee expressed its regret that France had not been able to notify the NSC of its member and substitute. However, some French officers are now involved in some of the Thematic Groups which is appreciated.

### **3d. Resolutions**

Three resolutions will be presented to the ABM on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2004. One was received after the deadline, so it would be handed out during the National Meetings later in the day.

#### *European Territorial Cooperation*

A resolution from member counties of the Regional Council for Western Norway dealing with European Territorial Cooperation was presented. It gave rise to some comments and suggestions for changes, so it will be amended and presented in a revised version at the ABM.

#### *Sulphur content of marine fuels*

This resolution has previously been endorsed by the NSC Environment Group. It deals with proposals for reducing the sulphur content of marine fuels. The emissions at sea have until now not been so strictly regulated as on land.

#### *Resolution produced by the Interreg IIIB Seaplane project on air transport*

This resolution was put forward by the Interreg IIIB project "Seaplane" which works towards linking regions and towards providing better access for smaller airports to the major airports. All three resolutions will be presented at the Annual Business Meeting.

## **4. Thematic Groups**

### **4a. Recent and future activities**

#### *Fisheries Group*

Ann Bell presented the report from the Fisheries Group. The next meeting will take place in Aberdeenshire on 24<sup>th</sup> –25<sup>th</sup> June. Items on the agenda include inshore fisheries management, the coastal zone management conference in Ringkøbing in March 2005 and the conference "The changing role of women in Fishing and Rural Communities" will take place in Peterhead on 22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2004. This conference is looking to be quite popular with two MEPs attending and a representative from DG Fish. The next event in this series will be a conference in Brussels in September. It is also anticipated that a formal network will be established, which will have observer status on the North Sea Regional Advisory Council.

The NSC Fisheries Partnership had met on 14<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup> June in Aberdeenshire. It has done a lot of work establishing the first RAC in the EU, which will cover the North Sea. Ann Bell has been given the job of Executive Secretary of the RAC. Ann Bell thanked the NSC president and the NSC Executive Committee for their support in setting up the RAC. She also mentioned that the NSC Executive Committee could become an active observer on the NS RAC on similar terms to the national governments and the EU. It was unanimously agreed that the NSC seat should be represented by vice-president Audrey Findlay from Aberdeenshire Council. The NSC Fisheries Partnership will also have a seat on the RAC as long as it exists.

It was at the same time also agreed that the NS RAC could have an observer on the NSC Executive Committee.

#### *Education & Research*

Ann Brown presented the report of the Education & Research Group. Most of the work recently has involved organising the group's first major conference, which will take place in Aalborg, Denmark, on 27<sup>th</sup> –29<sup>th</sup> September 2004. It will deal with lifelong learning and look at ways in which the North Sea Region can rise to the top of the league in lifelong learning. The conference will appeal to politicians, officers and practitioners. A conference leaflet was tabled and all members of the Executive Committee were asked to attend or encourage colleagues to do so.

For further information and to register please visit the conference website: [www.northsea-education.org](http://www.northsea-education.org)

#### *Economic Development Group*

Vivien Collie gave an update of the work of this group. The last meeting was held in Ipswich, England, in April, which included a study tour by boat. Items discussed were the CAP reform, The Port and water Transport Partnership, networking with EuroInformation Centres and an action plan for 2004.

The Economic Development Group was also a co-organiser of the seminar in Wesermarsch, Germany, at the end of April dealing with culinary heritage, which had been very interesting. The next meeting will take place in Arendal, Norway, together with the Environment Group, when a joint conference on sustainable innovation is held.

The sub-group on sustainable innovation held its last meeting in Aberdeen and the next one will be held in Husum, Germany. Plans are underway for building a North Sea house using renewable energy sources and for example explore local cladding etc. The plan is that it will be built in Highland, Scotland.

#### *Culture & Tourism Group*

Geir Sør-Reime reported on the work of the Culture & Tourism Group. A report will be circulated to all delegates during the General Assembly and it sums up the group's activities over the last couple of years.

The last meeting of the group was held in Wesermarsch which dealt with culinary heritage. This is an area of great economic development potential and it is planned that the process can continue and the group is now looking towards initiatives turning trad-food into trend food.

The Interreg North Sea Programme is having a focused call in early 2005 for a tourism strategy for the North Sea region. The Culture & Tourism Group had already had some meetings with staff from the Interreg Secretariat. It is a major task and will involve much hard work. However, it will also be a unique opportunity to market the North Sea Region and a way of influencing a new Interreg programme for the North Sea.

The next meeting will take place in Suffolk in October, which will have libraries and archives as its main theme.

#### *Transport & Communication Group*

Jon Halvard Eide presented details of the group's recent activities, which included details of its most recent meeting, held in Kristiansand, Norway, in May. It was well attended, including a French member. Items discussed were, for example, the proposed Port Partnership and the European Short Sea Network.

A project dealing with sustainable accessibility between hinterlands and gateways around the North Sea was approved in May with the Region of Västra Götaland as lead partner.

The Group also asked the Executive Committee for permission to change its name from Transport & Communication Group to Transport Group. The group will still deal with information and communication technology, but it would prefer to treat these aspects as integral parts of the work of the group and not work on them separately. This was accepted by the Executive Committee.

The group also wants to influence the future Interreg Programme and has set up a task force, which will work towards including transport issues in the next programme.

The next meeting will take place on 7<sup>th</sup> –8<sup>th</sup> October 2005 in Aberdeenshire.

#### Environment Group

Per Hörberg outlined recent activities of the Environment Group, which include a sustainable transport project, wind energy and CONSSO. The last meeting was held in Wesermarsch together with the Economic Development Group, Education & Research Group and the Culture & Tourism Group. It had proved very useful having separate meetings at the same time and place, as it offered the opportunity for discussions during the study tour and lunch breaks etc.

A review of the Porsgrunn Challenge is currently being carried out. An initial report will be available in the conference bags, but it is not too late to respond. The revised version will be placed on the NSC website. Work will also be carried out to promote the exchange of experience.

The annual conference will be held together with the Economic Development Group in Arendal, Norway. It will look at sustainable innovation as part of regional development and will present a toolbox of examples and methods.

The NSC has worked towards a moratorium about Sellafield since 1998 and thanks to continuous pressure and a strong political will, this has finally been achieved.

#### **4.b Vacant position as vice-chair and co-ordinator**

As Cllr. Alex Thomson at the last meeting moved from vice-chair to chair of the Education & Research Group, there is a vacancy for a new chair. No nominations were forthcoming, so it was decided to ask the new French region if they would be interested. The Executive Committee expressed its thanks to Cllr. Alec Thomson for taking on this position.

There were no nominations the vice-chair of the Fisheries Group and as co-ordinator of the Economic Development Group.

### **5. Coastal Zone Management – a focus area of tomorrow**

This item was also on the agenda at the meeting in March. Mads Nedergaard, Ringkøbing, came to give an update of the proposed conference, which will take place in Ringkøbing, Denmark, on 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2005. The conference programme was tabled. The issues have been broadened considerably following comments from other Thematic Groups and the conference also extended by ½ day. The NSC Secretariat has applied to CPMR for a contribution of 20.000 Euro. This will be decided upon at the CPMR Political Bureau meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

The Executive Committee agreed to donate 10.000 Euro towards the conference.

Alison McInnes mentioned that the Environment Group at its spring meeting had felt the theme was still too broad. Henrik M Jensen replied that the content is not final yet and encouraged people to contact Mads Nedergaard with suggestions to the content of the conference.

### **6. CAP – common NSC view**

Jim Knowles, Aberdeenshire, gave a brief update of the work of the CPMR Intercom Group on Agriculture & Rural Development. It is not easy to obtain a common NS view on the CAP, as interests are so diverse. Work in the Intercom Group has been concentrating on rural development. The President thanked Jim Knowles for continuing his work on this Group and all regions were

encouraged to supply the NSC Secretariat with their papers on the consequences of the CAP reform, which many regions have produced.

## **7. CONSSO**

### **Survey of ports around the North Sea**

The NSC Executive Committee approved the funding of 25,000 SEK (approx. 2750 Euro) towards a survey of ports, which would be concerned with looking into electrical onshore connections in order to replace the burning of marine fuel oil, while the ships are berthed at quay. The survey will be carried out by the Region of Västra Götaland.

## **8. CPMR matters of interest to the NSC**

No person from the CPMR was present to give an update, but all would be informed about CPMR activities at the Annual Business Meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> June. However, a link to recent activities is available [here](#).

## **9. CPMR internal debate on the future of interregional co-operation**

The CPMR has asked its Geographical Commissions for their views on the European Commission's proposals in the third report on economic and social cohesion. Regions have been asked to send in their comments to the questionnaire shortly, so they can be used at the CPMR Political Bureau meeting on 9th July and subsequently at the CPMR General Assembly in September. Members of the Executive Committee pointed out the complexity of the questionnaire and mentioned that it may be difficult to get a clear response. General comments on the proposal are, however, also welcome.

## **10. OSPAR**

### **10a. NSC comments on offshore wind farms**

Members of several NSC Thematic Groups have during the spring been working on the NSC's comments to OSPAR's proposals on offshore wind farms. The final paper was attached for information, as it has now been sent to OSPAR, the EU and all national authorities around the North Sea responsible for wind farms.

### **10b. Progress on observer status**

The Executive Committee was pleased to learn that yet another person has been found to follow the work of OSPAR, in which the NSC has observer status. She is Monica Kørhsen and she will in particular follow the work within the field of hazardous substances.

More people are, however, still needed to cover fully this task, so anybody with an interest in the work of OSPAR and the necessary time to spend on it is invited to contact the NSC Secretariat.

## **11. Interreg North Sea Programme**

Henrik M Jensen gave an update on the Interreg Programme. About 96% of the money has now been allocated, i.e. 127 Euro to a total of 54 projects. There is about 10.5 mill. Euro left for a focused call in the spring of 2005, which will cover themes such as a sustainable tourism strategy for the North Sea, integrated coastal management and maritime safety.

## **12. Date and location of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2005 in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. It will be preceded by a Thematic Meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> October.

### **13. Any Other Business**

Nothing to report.

Karen Greve Somerset  
North Sea Commission  
June 2004