

CPMR

The North Sea Commission is one of 7 Commissions under the umbrella of the CPMR (the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions). The CPMR works to raise the profile of maritime and peripheral regions in Europe and to initiate a deeper understanding of the problems which these regions face.

The North Sea Interreg IIIB programme

In order to promote and develop co-operation between the regions around the North Sea, the North Sea Interreg IIIB programme under the EU's structural funds has been established. The programme offers financial support to spatial development projects in the North Sea region. The new programming period runs from 2000-2006.

NSC and other co-operation partners

The North Sea Commission works together with a number of organisations and partners at local, regional, national and international levels, which can help promote and support regional development.

Highlight of the year

Once a year the NSC holds its General Assembly where a number of activities take place, such as study tours and meetings on specific subjects of relevance to the North Sea. The General Assembly also offers the delegates a unique opportunity to meet colleagues from other countries and exchange experience and develop projects of mutual benefit to the regions.

Members of the Executive Committee, who are senior politicians, are also elected at the General Assembly.

Organisation of the NSC

The Executive Committee consists of a President and two vice-presidents and representatives from each of the 8 countries. The Executive Committee usually meets three times a year.

The Executive Committee has the overall responsibility for the work carried out in the North Sea Commission and in the Thematic Groups.



President of the NSC:

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The North Sea

- a common future
through a
common vision

A united North Sea

The North Sea Commission is a co-operation between counties around the North Sea. Member regions come from 8 countries, Scotland, England, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway and have a population of about 40 million inhabitants. Speaking with one voice significantly improves the chances of influencing a decision, than when a single region works on its own.

Main objectives of the NSC

The North Sea Commission was founded in 1989 in order to encourage and develop partnerships between regions around the North Sea. The North Sea Commission also promotes the North Sea Basin as a major economic entity within Europe, by encouraging joint development initiatives and political lobbying at European Union level.

The North Sea Commission has determined that its activities must be action orientated, involving co-operation programmes, research activities, funding applications and joint policy statements which bring positive benefits to the people of the North Sea Basin.

An overall aim of the NSC is also to create awareness of the North Sea region, to raise its profile and to focus on strengthening the position of the North Sea area.

NSC Thematic Groups

The North Sea Commission has established 6 Thematic Groups whose aim is to encourage activities within the following fields: Business Development, Transport & Communication, Culture & Tourism, Education & Research, Environment as well as Fisheries.

Business Development

This group aims to increase knowledge and awareness within the member regions and to develop networks and practical projects, which will create business opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses.

Examples of the group's activities:

- Encouraging joint business ventures between small and medium-sized companies from different regions
- Exchanging experience on best practice in economic development

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Transport & Communications

This group aims to work for safe, sustainable and efficient transport & communications and to improve access to the information society throughout the North Sea Region.

Examples of the group's activities:

- Promotion of short sea shipping in the North Sea
- Improvement of communication and transport links in the North Sea area
- Permanent monitoring of key developments in the transport & communications sector
- Exchange of information on best practice projects and ideas in the whole issue area
- Influencing EU transport policy - responding to EU White Paper on the Common Transport Policy
- Developing a sustainable transport programme with emphasis on the exchange of best practice

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Culture & Tourism

The aims of this group are to stimulate cultural co-operation and exchange between the member regions, to improve awareness of historical and cultural links among the general public and to stimulate increased cultural tourism activity around the North Sea.

Examples of the group's activities:

- idea laboratory for new project ideas
- support for projects dealing with cycle tourism, non-material cultural heritage, viking heritage
- North Sea Youth Festival of Culture
- North Sea culture conferences - culture "on the edge"
- seminar and conferences on cultural tourism

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Education & Research

This new group was formally established in February 2001. It aims to promote, facilitate and co-ordinate cross-border and transnational co-operation, and to exchange best practice, in the fields of education and research within the North Sea Area.

Examples of the group's proposed activities:

- A conference to bring together examples of best practice in vocational education and to promote the work of the group
- A new cross-national virtual learning environment for lifelong learning
- to support the economic development of SMEs through projects involving access to information and exchanges
- to encourage the recognition of the North Sea as a region with potential for enhancing education and research activities through links and networking

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Environment

The aim of this group is to progress key environmental issues as they affect local authorities bordering the North Sea.

Examples of the group's activities:

- Regional sustainability work, "Porsgrunn Challenge"
- Environmental seminars and co-operation projects
- Regional input to EU and national legislation

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Fisheries

The main aim of the Fisheries Group is to improve the situation in fishing dependent areas around the North Sea in relation to people living there as well as to the fishing stocks and the environment.

Examples of the group's activities:

- Inter-regional co-operation projects
- North Atlantic Shellfish Management
- Conferences "The Scientists and the Fishermen", "Predation and Technical Interaction on North Sea Stocks" and "Holistic Fisheries Management"
- Women in the fishing industry and fishing communities

• NSC Fisheries Partnership

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