

<p><b>1.</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Firstly, I would like to thank all of this afternoon's speakers who have kindly travelled to Stavanger to contribute to this conference. Their valuable input to discussions on the Maritime Policy has given us a sound basis for our discussions in the thematic workshops tomorrow.</li> <li>- I have great confidence that the rest of the presentations this afternoon will be as interesting and informative as those which you have already heard.</li> <li>- The European Maritime Policy is of fundamental importance to regions and localities from around the North and Baltic seas. Our history, culture, environment and economies are all intertwined with the seas.</li> <li>- Hence, the development of this innovative policy is of great interest to the North Sea Commission and its members, and has quite rightly been given special attention by our Executive Committee.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>Background to the Maritime Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The North Sea Commission has always had a keen interest in maritime affairs. Indeed, it is our common maritime heritage which brings North Sea Commission members together.</li> <li>- It was therefore with great interest and enthusiasm, that the North Sea Commission welcomed the European Commission's communication of 2 March 2005, which gave a commitment to producing a Maritime Policy Green Paper.</li> <li>- The European Commission set up a Maritime Policy Taskforce, headed by Mr. John Richardson. This taskforce was charged with co-ordinating a wide range of sectoral policies which are usually managed across both different levels of governance, and different departments within these levels. I'm sure you'll all appreciate the magnitude of this task from your own experiences of joint-working in your regions!</li> <li>- After much consultation within the European Commission itself, the Maritime Policy Taskforce produced a Draft Green Paper. This document was approved by the European Commission on 7 June this year, and a year-long consultation with stakeholders was launched.</li> <li>- The North Sea Commission was well-prepared to receive this document, having proactively set up an ad hoc Maritime Policy Thematic Group in 2005, chaired by myself.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>North Sea Commission ad hoc Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our group has worked in parallel with the Maritime Policy Taskforce in evaluating and defining our hopes and expectations for a common European Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- The Maritime Policy Thematic Group met on a number of occasions, and has worked closely with the other North Sea Commission Thematic Groups to ensure that a wide North Sea Commission consensus could be reached.</li> <li>- We feel that our close engagement across the Thematic Groups has not only enabled the North Sea Commission to identify a</li> </ul>

	<p>number of sectoral issues, but also to examine potential synergies and solutions across traditional policy boundaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We welcome the European Commission's endeavour to co-ordinate sectoral policies. It is only through breaking down barriers between rigidly-drawn policies, that effective solutions to marine management can be achieved.</li> <li>- This is not to say that focused and specialised work is not necessary or appreciated. Without specialists in fields such as fisheries, tourism, transport or sustainable development, the identification and analysis of problems, and indeed strategies to solve these issues, would be impossible.</li> <li>- As I previously mentioned, the North Sea Commission Thematic Groups have made a valuable contribution to the North Sea Commission position on the Maritime Policy to date, and will continue to do so during this conference.</li> </ul>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Culture and Tourism Group</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Culture and Tourism group very helpfully carried out a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (or SWOT) analysis for culture and tourism in the North Sea region.</li> <li>- Firstly, the group recognised the opportunities presented by the widespread knowledge of English across the region. Our relative ease at communicating with each other is greatly beneficial to both mutual cultural understanding and to encouraging tourism.</li> <li>- Secondly, the group identified our region's economic strengths, with a highly-educated workforce complementing strong tourism products along the coastline and beyond. There is a large indigenous market in the North Sea area, with great potential for the tourist industry in the future.</li> <li>- Thirdly, the group recognised the importance of our shared culture and heritage, both from historic trade links and present co-operation and ideals.</li> <li>- Fourthly, the group identified recognised some of the difficulties facing culture and tourism in the North Sea area as relating to partnership. In particular, the nature of INTERREG financing sometimes makes it difficult for us to work together as effectively as we would like.</li> <li>- Fifthly, the group identified economic disparities between areas of the North Sea as problems in need of address. In the wider European context, the group was concerned that disparities in wages between the richest and poorest areas are distorting competition.</li> <li>- Finally, the fragility of our shared maritime heritage is an issue which the Maritime Policy should address. In many regions, heritage sites are cared for by volunteers and under-resourced. It is important that we recognise and take care of our shared heritage so that it can be enjoyed for generations to come. There is also a strong economic argument within the tourism sector for promoting our maritime heritage.</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Innovation and Education Group</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indeed, the Lisbon Agenda is about more than just research and</li> </ul>

	<p>technological development. It is about using Europe's existing assets in new and innovative ways in order to promote growth and jobs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our Innovation and Education group is tasked with following the Lisbon goals, among other things, and has an important role to play in harmonising the Lisbon Goals with the Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- It is of vital importance that the Policy helps to foster and grow both traditional marine instruments, and new high-technology sectors such as renewable energies, across Northern Europe.</li> <li>- It is also of fundamental importance that our industries are supported not only in becoming economically sustainable, but also environmentally sustainable.</li> </ul>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Sustainable Development Group</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Sustainable Development Group recognises the importance of highlighting the opportunities available from innovative, sustainable use of marine resources. The Group would like the Maritime Policy to have a positive perspective based on opportunity, rather than merely being 'problem orientated'. However, this is not to say that there are no sustainability problems in the North Sea which the Policy should tackle.</li> <li>- The Sustainable Development Group has identified a number of challenges facing Europe's marine environment, which could potentially have serious repercussions for both economic and environmental sustainability.</li> <li>- Climate change is perhaps the most pressing issue, and must naturally be a priority of the Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- The Sustainable Development Group has more specific concerns with the quality of marine fuels, which often emit higher than average levels pollutants into the atmosphere. The group would like to see the EU to more stringently regulate the quality of marine fuels.</li> <li>- A particular problem with poor-quality marine fuels is the pollution created when ships are in ports. The Group would like the Maritime Policy to consider and promote the benefits of onshore electricity facilities in ports, which eliminates the need for ships engines to be kept running.</li> <li>- The environmental impact of shipping should also be addressed by the Maritime Policy. The "Clean Ship" initiative, where vessels are designed, constructed and operated in an integrated manner to eliminate harmful discharges and emissions throughout their working life, should be taken into consideration in the new Maritime Policy.</li> </ul>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of the areas most affected by pollution and changes to the marine environment is that of maritime resources and fisheries.</li> <li>- The Maritime Resources and Fisheries Thematic Group is tasked with studying a very dynamic sector which is vulnerable to changes to marine eco-systems, and has provided valuable input to North Sea Commission work on maritime affairs.</li> <li>- The Maritime Resources Group identified a number of</li> </ul>

	<p>contemporary challenges which a common European Maritime Policy should address.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Firstly, the question of sustainability of marine resources is of paramount importance, both from an ecological and an economic perspective. Many coastal communities rely on maritime resources for their survival.</li> <li>- Ensuring that all agencies at EU, local, regional and national level work in partnership to develop long term aims centered on people and communities was the second goal for the Maritime Policy identified from this group.</li> <li>- Thirdly, it is also important to acknowledge the diversity of coastal communities and to recognise that a 'one size fits all' approach to marine management is unworkable. Flexibility will be key to the success of the Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- Fourthly, a common Maritime Policy should evaluate and appreciate the importance of the marine economy to the Lisbon growth and jobs agenda.</li> <li>- Fifthly, the Policy should study the best models of regional governance for maritime affairs and Integrated Coastal Zone Management.</li> <li>- The final priority area identified by the Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group is that of safety at sea. Much work in Europe has already been done to reduce the tragic loss of life in our seas. This should be continued and prioritised in the Maritime Policy, with a particular emphasis on vessel tracking and other technological developments such as 'Fishsafe'.</li> </ul>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Transport Group</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The NSC Transport Thematic Group shares this concern with maritime safety.</li> <li>- The European Commission has made great efforts to improve maritime safety, particularly through the establishment of the European Maritime Safety Agency - EMSA. The Transport Group would favour an increase in the powers of EMSA with respect to the implementation and control of Member State regulations.</li> <li>- The potential environmental consequences of accidents at sea, such as the spillage of hazardous goods are also of great concern. The maritime policy must aim to prevent such accidents, as well as deliver strategies to cope with them when they occur.</li> <li>- Transportation has an environmental impact on our seas even without accidents. Ship-to-ship transfers of oil in inshore waters, as also highlighted by the Sustainable Development Group, can lead to hydrocarbons polluting our waterways. Again, the Maritime Policy should address this issue, for instance through reviewing existing international conventions on environmental damage by oil and chemical pollution of the seas.</li> <li>- From an economic perspective, it is important that the significance and potential of maritime transportation is fully reflected in the Maritime Policy. Maritime services offer the potential to link peripheral areas and bypass the congested central areas that currently may need to be crossed.</li> <li>- Short Sea Shipping could help to encourage a shift to a multi-</li> </ul>

	<p>modal transportation system in Europe, with potentially both economic and environmental benefits. Expansion in this sector could benefit not only the shipping sector, but also for export industries and ports in general.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ports in particular need support to adapt to a modal shift to sea-based transportation. Ports are the key link between land and sea-based transport, and must be accessible through road, rail and inland waterways.</li> <li>- The Transport Group emphasises the importance of European initiatives such as Motorways of the Sea, and funds such as the Marco Polo Programme and INTERREG in supporting the transportation goals of the Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- Motorways of the Sea are an important instrument for overcoming congestion and peripherality, as well as for improving sustainability, accessibility and cohesion in the North Sea Region.</li> <li>- The North Sea Commission would like to see the introduction of Motorways of the Sea in the North Sea area and beyond supported by the Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- The Marco Polo and INTERREG financial programmes have great potential to support the EU's transportation goals through the involvement of local and regional stakeholders in international projects. In many cases, it is at the local level where problems are most acutely felt and opportunities are realised.</li> <li>- The involvement of local and regional stakeholders in spatial planning, facilitated through the maritime policy, is to also to be welcomed. The impact of increased sea transportation on spatial planning should be a focal point of the Maritime Policy. Local and regional organisations, such as the North Sea Commission, are eager to share their expertise with others, and to work hard to manage our regional waters in a sustainable way which is beneficial to all.</li> </ul>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Ad hoc Thematic Group - synergies</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I hope that this brief overview of the issues identified through the hard work of our Thematic Groups illustrates a number of points.</li> <li>- Firstly, the commitment of the NSC Thematic Groups to solving common problems through joint –working.</li> <li>- Secondly, the contemporary issues facing Europe's maritime space.</li> <li>- Finally, the challenge facing the maritime policy taskforce in co-ordinating a comprehensive response to tackle these issues.</li> </ul>
<b>10.</b>	<b>John Richardson</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This leads me on to how we can all work alongside the European Commission in delivering a common Maritime Policy which is coherent, cross-sectoral, effective, and respectful of diversity.</li> <li>- The North Sea Commission was one of the first organisations to meet with representatives from the European Commission's Maritime Policy Taskforce.</li> <li>- John Richardson, Head of the Maritime Policy taskforce was very supportive of our desire to be actively involved in the development of the common Maritime Policy. He said that he is very pleased with the positive feedback and contribution received from groups</li> </ul>

	<p>such as the NSC, and hopes that we will continue to input our ideas throughout the consultation process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The European Commission made great efforts to talk to as many different stakeholders as possible during the drafting of the Draft Green Paper, and will continue to do so.</li> <li>- In spite of the positivity surrounding the Maritime project, the future of the policy is by no means secured. We must actively express our support for this innovative initiative to both the relevant departments of the European Commission, and national authorities in our own countries.</li> <li>- John Richardson gave an excellent speech at the CPMR General Assembly in Murcia recently, which reiterated these points.</li> <li>- In Murcia, Mr. Richardson recognised both the analytical and political contribution of the CPMR and its geographical commissions in advancing the European Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- He also stressed the importance of overcoming sectoral barriers, while respecting the diversity of character of Europe's regions. It was very encouraging to hear that the Head of the Maritime Policy Taskforce shares the goals and aspirations of the North Sea Commission.</li> <li>- However, it is concrete ideas and co-operation across the geographical areas of Europe which will be key to the success of the Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- The European Commission recognises the expertise and values the input of local and regional authorities and organisations. It is imperative that we support the European Commission through our responses to the consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>11.</b>	<b>NSC-BSC Joint Resolution</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An excellent example of joint-working to input ideas into the Maritime Policy has been the development of a joint North Sea Commission/Baltic Sea Commission resolution.</li> <li>- This resolution was adopted at the CPMR general assembly and has considerable potential to influence the new policy.</li> <li>- This event is the next step in the process, &amp; is fostering both ideas &amp; co-operation between the North &amp; Baltic Sea Commissions.</li> </ul>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Next steps</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I would urge you all to make the most of tomorrow's workshops, which will enable us to further develop our already good ideas with regards to the Maritime Policy.</li> <li>- We can then take feedback from the workshops and formulate a formal response to the Commission's Maritime Policy Consultation. In this way, we can really influence the final form of the common European Maritime Policy.</li> </ul> <p>- Thank you for your attention &amp; ongoing hard work on maritime issues.</p>