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Report to Executive Committee NSC

Territorial Cooperation and the Committee of the Regions

The aims of the North Sea Commission mentioned in the resolution on EU-Territorial Co-operation 2007-2013 (Zeeland, June 2005) were explained, illustrated and discussed in a meeting with DG Regio (Graham Meadows and Esben Poulsen) on the 13th of October 2005 in Brussels. The meeting proved to be successful.

At the CPMR General Assembly on November 4, 2005 a joint NSC-BSC resolution on EU-Territorial Co-operation was presented and adopted. In this resolution the European Commission was asked -among others- to demonstrate a flexible approach with regard to the establishment of new geographical co-operation areas in order to promote and stimulate co-operation between areas in common fields of interest. From NSC's and BSC's point of view this approach should open possibilities for further cooperation in the Northsea and Baltic Sea areas.

The European Commission (DG Regio) has granted this request by stating in some messages to the member-states: "some targeted regions would be considered as priority areas for the use of the geographical flexibility". Niedersachsen and the North of the Netherlands were mentioned as priority areas for the Baltic Programme.

Considering the discussions during November and December 2005 at national levels in the member-states on the item of the EU financial perspectives and the aim of most of the North Sea surrounding member-states to lower the EU-budget for the period 2007-2013 (and consequently their contributions) it didn't seem opportune to lobby for levelling up the amounts to be spent on territorial co-operation. Such an action could have turned out to be contra-productive. Therefore a meeting for the ad-hoc group was not planned.

Main point to draw attention to at this moment is the stimulation of further co-operation (fields and items) in both, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea programmes, cashing the lobby-results. Both programmes have started already the preparation for their Operational Programmes.