

Paper on the Theme for the Joint Annual Conference 2008

‘Shaping a Sustainable Future for the North Sea and Baltic Sea Regions’

The European Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) identifies some key objectives and policy guiding principles for a coherent strategy for actions to meet the challenges of sustainable development. The strategy was adopted by the 2001 European Council in Gothenburg and was modified in June 2006. The Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs forms the basis for a more dynamic economy within the SDS as an overall framework.

The aims of Gothenburg and Lisbon form the primary policy framework for the new Interreg IVB programmes on transnational cooperation for the period 2007-13. The key challenges for the North Sea and the Baltic Sea match the challenges and actions formulated for the SDS.

Climate Change and Energy

Climate change has become a major threat for our common future. A combined effort is essential for accommodating the need to reduce green house gas emissions as committed in the Kyoto targets and simultaneously to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The challenge for the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions is to identify ways to accommodate those challenges that are both economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

Key words in this context are:

- Energy efficiency
- Emission reduction
- Energy supply for transport
- Diversification of fuel supply sources
- Risk prevention in terms of flooding, storms and unstable weather-situations.

Sustainable Transport

How will the transport systems for the North Sea and the Baltic Sea regions be organised in the future to meet society’s economic, social and environmental needs? The answers to this question partly links with the challenges raised in relation to energy consumption and climate change.

Key words in this context are:

- Contributions towards decoupling economic growth and transport demand
- Shifting transport towards more environmental friendly transport modes
- Drawing on the opportunities of new transport information systems
- Modernising public transport services.

Sustainable production and consumption

Globalisation has drawn a lot of attention to production patterns. One of the main challenges facing the North Sea and the Baltic Sea regions is to develop production patterns addressing the social and economic development within the carrying capacity of its ecosystems.

Key words in this context are:

- Accommodating the demand for sustainable consumption
- Environmental technologies and eco-innovations.

Conservation and management of natural resources

Managing the environment of the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions in a sustainable way is a key topic for the new Interreg IVB period. The main challenges are to improve resource efficiency by reducing the overall use of non-renewable natural resources and avoiding overexploitation of resources as fishery, biodiversity, water, air, soil, and marine ecosystems.

Key words in this context are:

- Life-cycle concepts
- Increased natural resource efficiency
- Natura 2000 networks
- Integrated water resources management
- Improved marine environment
- Integrated coastal zone management and the EC bluebook on maritime policy.

Demography and social inclusion

Demography and social inclusion are also major topics shared within the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions. Taking into account solidarity between and within generations and to secure and increase the quality of life of citizens represent important challenges.

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