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Culture & Tourism Group

Annual report 2005-06

Since last NSC General Assembly, there have been three meetings of the Culture and Tourism Group:

XXVI in Trollhättan, Västra Götaland, 27-29 October 2005

XXVII in Dunkeld, Perth & Kinross, 9-10 February 2006

XXVIII in Stavanger, Rogaland, 1-2 June 2006

The last was held so late that it could not be included into this report, delivered in May 2006.

The group is chaired by Annelie Stark from Västra Götaland, with Jacques Suurmond from the Province of Zeeland and Alan B. Livingstone from Perth & Kinross as Vice-Chairs. The co-ordinator is Geir Sør-Reime from Rogaland.

In addition, approx. 10 delegates from a similar number of member regions of the NSC have attended the meetings. Active participation has been noted from Västra Götaland, Zeeland, Perth & Kinross, Ringkjøbing, Norfolk, Aberdeenshire, Highland, Vestfold and Sør-Trøndelag.

The issues discussed during the last year include the future of the thematic groups, developing an Interreg application on sustainable tourism, the North Sea Food Event 2006, Interreg IV, Green Paper on Maritime Policy and the European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN).

Through active participation in the ECTN, members of the group have been able to influence European policy development especially in regard to the inclusion of Cultural Tourism as a major policy area of the European Union. This also included lobbying for the inclusion of Cultural Tourism into the new 'Interreg' programmes.

The development of an Interreg project on sustainable tourism has proved to be a challenging and difficult task, but there are still hopes that the project proposal might succeed in getting funding, and using the Culture and Tourism Group as a reference group within the project.

The group also contributed to the NSC input to the EU Green Paper on Maritime Policy, pointing out the cultural values and the role of cultural tourism.

The group finally asked the Executive to contact all member regions to encourage more politician involvement in the thematic groups. In this context, the group has discussed a press strategy, and will follow this up closely in the future.

Geir Sør-Reime
Co-ordinator