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Report to General Assembly NSC

Ad hoc- group¹ on Territorial Cooperation

The decision to install this group was made during the meeting of the Strategic Committee and Thematic Group Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Co-ordinators on July, 4th 2005 in Brussels. The activities of the group can be considered as a continuation and follow up of the resolution on EU-territorial co-operation, adopted at the Annual Business Meeting on June 17th 2005.

Target for the activities of the group should be the guarding of the interests of the North Sea Regions in the preparatory actions with regard to the new programmes for the objective Territorial Cooperation in the period 2007-2013.

Unfortunately there was not found a solution for the financial perspectives of the EU during the Luxemburg chair. So the uncertainty for the future lasted longer than expected and there was some delay in the preparation of future programmes.

During August/September 2005 a draft for a resolution on Territorial Cooperation to be discussed (and adopted) at the General Assembly CPMR was prepared in collaboration with the Baltic Sea Commission, demonstrating the intentions for strengthening relations and co-operation with the BSC in the next future.

At the end of September discussions on the programming for the new objective Territorial Cooperation were (re-) started by DG Regio.

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 October, 13 2005 in Brussels. The meeting proved to be successful.

At the CPMR General Assembly on November 4, 2005 the 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) had 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". Lower Saxony and the North of the Netherlands were mentioned as priority areas for the Baltic Programme.

¹ In fact never a Group was established. Activities and actions were all based on several multilateral and bilateral deliberations and consultations.



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Seen 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 Northsea surrounding member-states to lower the EU-budget for the period 2007-2013 (and consequently their contributions) no real opportunity was present to lobby for levelling up the amounts to be spent on territorial co-operation. Such an action could even have turned out to be contra-productive.

After the basic agreement on the financial perspectives for the period 2007-2013 in December 2005 the first steps were made in the programme preparation for the several cooperation areas.

Main point to draw attention on now should be the recording of further co-operation (fields and items) in both, the Northsea and the Baltic Sea programmes, cashing the lobby-results. For both programmes preparation is well under way in the meantime.

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