

## North Sea Commission

### Culture & Tourism Group

### XXX Meeting

### Gothenburg 25 November 2006

#### Minutes

The XXX Meeting of the NSC Culture & Tourism Group was held at Gunnebo Castle close to Gothenburg, 25 November 2006, hosted by the Västra Götaland region. This meeting was held in conjunction with the ECTN (European Cultural Tourism Network) Annual Meeting in Gothenburg 21-25 November 2006. As part of the XXX Meeting, two separate workshops, on food and on film, were organised 25-26 November.

#### Participants

Annelie Stark	Chair	Västra Götaland Region (Sweden)
Jacques Suurmond	Vice-Chair	Province of Zeeland (Netherlands)
Geir Sør-Reime	Co-ordinator	Rogaland County Council (Norway)
Kathleen Matheson	NSC Executive	Highland Council (Scotland)
Tomas Olsson		Västra Götaland Region (Sweden)
Conny Boersma		Province of Zeeland (Netherlands)
Craig Lafferty		Angus Council (Scotland)
Jan Lindh		Vestfold County Council (Norway)
Knut Wik		Sør-Trøndelag County Council (Norway)
Berit Vetejord		Hordaland County Council (Norway)
Geir Berge Nordtveit		Telemark County Council (Norway)

Excuses had been received from Karsten Bækgaard (Region Midtjylland, Denmark), Gyrite Andersen (Ribe Amt, Denmark), Michael Knights (Norfolk County Council, England).

Alan D Livingstone, upon being elected as Chair of the new NSC Innovation and Education Group, had announced his retirement as Vice-Chair of the Culture and Tourism Group.

#### **1. Welcome to Västra Götaland**

Annelie Stark welcomed all participants to the Västra Götaland region and to Gunnebo Castle.

#### **2. Approval of Agenda for XXX Meeting and presentation of attendees**

The proposed agenda was approved. It was suggested that we should encourage member regions to send other representatives if the 'permanent' representative is

unable to attend a particular meeting. It was also mentioned that the letter to member regions encouraging more politicians to join the work of the thematic groups had not yet been sent out, and that contact had been made with the NSC Secretariat to ensure that this letter is now distributed.

Attendees presented themselves.

### **3. Minutes of XXIX Meeting, Dundee 2 September 2006**

The Minutes were approved as true records of the proceedings of the XXIX Meeting. It was noted that abbreviations should be explained when used in NSC minutes.

### **4. Report from Executive Committee Meeting at Amsterdam Airport, 20 October 2006 and other relevant reports**

Tomas Olsson reported, as he attended the meeting on behalf of Geir as co-ordinator. A major item on the agenda was the terms of reference of the various thematic groups. The Executive provisionally adopted these, but wanted a second round of clarification between the groups (there was a meeting between chairs/vice-chairs and coordinators in Stavanger 20 November to clarify this), and the final approval will be made by the Executive 13 April 2007.

Another major item was the merger and transformation of some of the thematic groups.

Geir then reported from the informal meeting in Stavanger 20 November between the chairs/vice-chairs and the coordinators of the thematic groups. This meeting was also attended by the NSC President. The main item was to follow up the Executive Committee meeting re the terms of reference. The Stavanger meeting came up with a number of suggestions that will be taken to the Strategic Committee for final approval by the Executive in April.

An important element of the discussions was the issue of cross-over work between the thematic groups, and several members of the Culture & Tourism Group expressed their support for this.

Annelie Stark summarized this item. The new structure would mean that the Executive Committee develops strategic priorities in cooperation with the thematic groups, and that the thematic groups combines the following up of these priorities with concrete projects and thematic items relating to each group's area of interest. There will in the future be no need for ad hoc groups, but Executive Committee members will probably be selected to be responsible for the strategic priorities. It is important to involve more regions in the work, including political representatives of all member regions.

A more thorough discussion of this issue should be taken at the next, XXXI Meeting in Middelburg, 9-11 February 2007.

Here we should also discuss a new action plan for our group.

## **5. Maritime Policy Conference, Stavanger 20-21 November 2006**

The North Sea Commission (NSC) and the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) organised a joint conference on the EU Green Paper on Maritime Policy in Stavanger 20-21 November.

In addition to a number of papers that were presented, there were also separate work sessions based on the thematic groups of the NSC. 6 persons attended the workshop on culture and tourism in relation to the Green Paper.

Conny Boersma underlined that anyone can make comments to the Commission on the Green Paper, and that there is an on-line questionnaire that can be used. The Culture and Tourism Group as such will give input to the joint NSC-BSC statement, which probably will be incorporated into a CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, the mother organisation of NSC, BSC etc.) response. The importance of the regions in forming and carrying out maritime policy must be more outspoken. Comments on the Green Paper will be posted on the BSC website. It was pointed out that there had been no real Green Paper discussion in many member regions yet, but it is extremely important for our politicians to know that this kind of issues are now being discussed on European level. Some regions, like the Province of Zeeland, have already established a task force working actively on the Green Paper.

We should continue our discussion at the meeting in February.

### ***The following timetable applies:***

Discussion papers (by Geir and Conny) have been distributed to all members (the Green Paper itself can be downloaded at [http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/pdf/com\\_2006\\_0275\\_en\\_part2.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/pdf/com_2006_0275_en_part2.pdf))

Comments on these papers should be mailed to Geir (with copy to other members) as soon as possible and no later than 20 January 2006 to be considered for inclusion in the Culture and Tourism Group response.

A draft response will be presented at the XXXI Meeting in Middelburg 9-11 February.

Any amendments/additions etc. made at the meeting will be incorporated and circulated to members during February 2006, with the last date of comments of 28 February.

This document will then be sent on to the Executive Committee for their April meeting.

## **6. ECTN (European Cultural Tourism Network)**

Our group has been working together with the ECTN, which is both an organised network and an Interreg IIIC project since the ECTN Interreg project was started. Conny Boersma and Tomas Olsson have been updating our group on ECTN work, and we have also met with ECTN leaders.

Tomas now reported from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual ECTN Conference, held in Gothenburg 21-25 November. The network now moves from an Interreg project to a self-sustained organisation. There will be a meeting in Brussels on 25 January 2007 to discuss the future of the ECTN.

It was suggested that the ECTN could be a forum for more practical discussions than can be had in the Culture and Tourism group, and also that we could use the ECTN to support CPMR activities and initiatives in relation to cultural tourism. Here, Kathleen Matheson also mentioned the plans for a CPMR intercom group on cultural tourism, and suggested that we write to the CPMR to be updated on the status of this work.

Annelie remarked that she would also raise this issue at the upcoming CPMR Political Bureau meeting in March. Annelie is now the Swedish member of this body. She also remarked that the NSC would volunteer to take the chair of a CPMR intercom group for cultural tourism. At the upcoming Political Bureau meeting, Annelie will also raise the question on how our group can co-operate with similar groups within the AER (Assembly of European Regions).

Finally, she suggested that we encourage members of the NSC to join the new ECTN organisation. We should also take informal contacts with the AER, to find out what kind of co-operation might evolve between the AER and us. The chair and vice-chair of the Culture and Tourism Group should be responsible for such overtures.

## **7. EU Culture Programme 2007-2013**

The first call for proposals under the new Culture programme was published 7 November, with an application deadline of 28 February 2007.

In the two seminars on food and film, Annika Strömberg from the West Sweden office in Brussels presented the new programme in detail.

## **8. Next meetings**

The XXXI Meeting will be held in Middelburg, Province of Zeeland 9-11 February 2007. The Agenda will include the Action Plan 2007-08, the Green Paper on Maritime Policy, Cultural Tourism etc.

Delegates are supposed to arrive Middelburg during 8 February, and leave on 11 February after lunch.

It was suggested that the XXXII Meeting should be held in conjunction with the NSC Annual General Assembly in June, possibly combined with joint meetings with other thematic groups.