

NSCMRG Politicians Meeting
North Sea Centre
Hirtshals, Denmark
1-2 December 2008

Present:

Anders Fasth – Chairman

Harry Jensen – European Spokesperson

Tom-Christer Nielsen – Energy and Climate Spokesperson

Ann Bell – Adviser

Stefan Musiolik

Henrick Jensen

Tommy Mostrup

Martin Brebner

Jesper Jönsson – INTERREG Secretariat

Lise Espersen – INTERREG Secretariat

Doug Wilson – University of Aalborg

Alyne Delany – University of Aalborg

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked the hosts, Region Midtjylland.
2. The group were given a very interesting tour of the North Sea Centre, including a demonstration of selective nets which help fishermen to better target certain fish species. It was noted that selective netting would be discussed at a future meeting of the demertial meeting of the North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC).
3. The matter of joint-working with the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) was raised. While a letter has been sent to the BSC regions regarding joint working, a response had yet to be received. It was agreed to follow-up this matter with the BSC Secretariat.
4. An update on the work of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) was given by Stefan Musiolik, given the role of Schleswig-Holstein in leading a Maritime Policy working group. While there had not been many active participants in the group, it was planned to open up the working group to other Baltic Sea organisations. It was agreed to invite representatives from the BSC to the group's next meeting in Kiel.
5. The EU Baltic Sea strategy was also discussed and is due to be finalised in June 2009. The main challenge is to ensure that it delivers results such as a 5-point action plan on clean shipping delivering:
 - standardised onshore electricity supplies
 - environmentally-differentiated fares/port dues
 - a voluntary ban on waste-water discharges
 - best practice prizes such as the Clean Marine Award
 - labels for clean Baltic shipping/sustainable port services

Such a strategy could also be taken forward in the North Sea as well.

6. Representatives from the INTERREG North Sea Region Secretariat attended the meeting and took part in a discussion around the proposed Maritime Policy Pilot project. A meeting had previously been held in Billund between the NSC Secretariat and INTERREG Secretariat to discuss joint working and the project had been briefly discussed then. At the Billund meeting, it was suggested that a transport-related project may be appropriate as the Accessibility priority is under-subscribed. However, the group felt that maritime spatial planning may be a more appropriate topic as it would cover a number of policy areas of interest to the NSC and ties in well with the European Commission's upcoming workplan. It was agreed to develop the idea further and discuss it at the next meeting.

7. An update was given on the situation regarding the sunken U-boat containing a large amount of mercury off the coast of Norway. This will be followed up at the next full meeting of the group.

8. Alyne Delaney gave a very interesting presentation on her research into immigration in coastal communities, which fits in well with the workplan of the group.

9. An NSRAC Position Paper on discards and technical measures was discussed and supported by the group.

10. Tommy Mostrup updated the group on the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive through an informative presentation. The Directive was approved by the Council and Parliament in 2008 and aims to improve the environmental quality of Europe's marine environment.

The next Marine Resources Group meeting will take place in Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein on 23 and 24 February, 2009.

Meeting closed