



Cllr. Ellen Marie Solheim

IEG Vice-chair cllr. Ellen Marie Solheim

On December 1st 2009 the Executive Committee of the North Sea Commission elected councillor Ellen Marie Solheim from Norway as vice-chair of the Innovation & Education Group (IEG).

Councillor Solheim is deputy chairman to the Rogaland County Council, which has the main base in Stavanger, Norway. She has been into politics for a number of years, and has varied experience from private companies.

IEG Strategic Group

meet several times a year to discuss IEG activities, the Work Plan, NSC policy etc. This is the Strategic Group:

Cllr. Ole B. Sorensen (Denmark) – IEG chair
Cllr. Kate Dean (Scotland) - IEG vice-chair
Cllr. Ellen Marie Solheim (Norway) – IEG vice-chair
Erik Lindboe (Norway) IEG adviser
Runa Coxeter (Denmark)
Yasa Ratnayeke (Scotland)

The North Sea Strategy 17 – 18 March 2010 in Newcastle

In June 2009 the North Sea Commission Executive Committee decided that the NSC should work for the launch of an EU strategy for the North Sea Region.

17-18 March 2010 in Newcastle: The North Sea Commission is organizing a North Sea Strategy stakeholder conference, in co-operation with COR and the EU Commission, sponsored by the UK Government and the NSC.

More information and registration will on the NSC website: www.northsea.org

IEG Strategic Group has sent the following statement to the NSC President:

The Strategic Group of the Innovation and Education Group has discussed Ann Bell's paper on the North Sea Stakeholder Conference. Overall it is the group's view that the North Sea Strategy is about adding value to the North Sea Region and based on this the group would like to put forward the following points:

- § The strategic group finds that the focus of the draft strategy paper is too narrow. The paper focuses to a large extent on the maritime sector and fisheries and if this focus is not broadened the NSC risks not being able to attract a broad stakeholder base which is necessary for the development of a North Sea Strategy that is representative of all users of the North Sea. The stakeholder conference should involve all stakeholders in the North Sea Region.
- § One very important purpose of the North Sea Strategy is to coordinate the different funding opportunities that exist in the North Sea Region. However, the strategic group recognises that the North Sea Region Interreg Programme is the primary source of funding for projects in the North Sea Region. Hence, a North Sea Strategy should help secure maximum funding for this Programme. The funding that goes into the North Sea Region Interreg Programme will in turn help fund projects that will transform the North Sea Strategy into action and results
- § The strategic group believes that attention should be paid to Michelle Armstrong's paper 'Briefing paper – North Sea Strategy' which focuses on points that will add value to the North Sea Region
 - o Climate change – coordinated action in relation to rising sea levels, increased precipitation, flooding and increased temperatures

- o Development of a North Sea Grid – supporting renewable energy production and security of energy supply
 - o Maritime research and data collection – consistent and comprehensive information on which to base policy decisions particularly in relation to the Common Fisheries Policy, maritime safety, ICZM
 - o Develop the economic potential of the North Sea Region through new industries and jobs – support the restructuring of economies and development of supply chains
 - o Support knowledge as the engine for sustainable growth by strengthening education and research and providing the framework for innovation and creativity.
 - o Support excellence in relation to renewable energy production, supply and technologies
 - o Safe use of our seas – As the busiest sea region there is a need to balance and manage the increased use of maritime space.
 - o Demographic change
 - o Enhanced digital infrastructure coverage to increase competitiveness
- § The strategic group also believes that attention should be paid to the working document on the EU 2020 strategy that will replace the Lisbon Agenda.

Best regards
 Ole B. Sørensen
 Chair Innovation & Education Group.

EU strategy for the Danube region

The first in a series of stakeholder events, organised in the framework of the preparation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, took place in Ulm (Germany) on 1 and 2 February 2010. This marks the start of a series of conferences and debates to be held providing opportunity for interested parties to feed in views. Drawing closely on the experience of the EU's Baltic Sea Region Strategy, the European Council formally requested the European Commission to draw up a strategy for the Danube Region by the end of 2010. As with the Baltic region, pressing challenges also exist here, not least in the need to improve transport and energy networks, reduce pollution and tackle flooding.

You can find out more details about how work is progressing here:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/danube/index_en.htm

Following the consultation, the Commission will propose an Action Plan, highlighting priority projects, to be formally adopted in December 2010 in the form of a Communication on the EU Strategy for Danube Region.

Events calendar 2010

10 – 11 February	IEG meeting in Aalesund, Norway.
8 – 9 March	Sustainable Development Group meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland
26 – 27 April	NSC Executive Committee meeting in Denmark
15 – 18 June	North Sea Commission / North Sea Programme Annual Conference and General Assembly in Stavanger, Norway.
29 September – 1 October	CPMR General Assembly in Aberdeen, Scotland
3 – 4 November	Innovation & Education Group meeting in Buskerud, Norway

Contact info – Innovation and Education Group:

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NSC website: www.northsea.org