

Draft Minutes of the 56th North Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting 21st June 2011, the Provincial Court, Bruges, Belgium

NSC Executive Committee Participants:

President	Cllr. Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark fylkeskommune)
Vice - President	Cllr. Ole B. Sørensen (Region Nordjylland)
Vice-President	Cllr. John Lamb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council)
Danish Representative	Cllr. Henning Gjellerød (Region Midtjylland)
Dutch Representative	Cllr. Ben de Reu (Provincie Zeeland)
English Representative	
French Representative	
German Representative	Cllr. Wilfried Wengler (Schleswig-Holstein)
Norwegian Representative	Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen (Hordaland fylkeskommune)
Scottish Representative	Cllr. Kate Dean (Aberdeen City)
Swedish Representative	Cllr. Annelie Stark (Region Västra Götaland)

Executive Secretary	Lars Haukvik (NSC)
Assistant Executive Secretary	Vibeke Jakobsen (NSC)

NSC Chairs/Vice-Chairs of Thematic Groups present:

Culture and Tourism	Cllr. Frederikke Stensrød (Østfold fylkeskommune)
Innovation and Education	Cllr. Ellen Solheim, Rogaland fylkeskommune
Sustainable Development	
Marine Resources	Cllr. Anders Fasth (Region Västra Götaland)
Transport	Cllr. Anne Robertson (Aberdeenshire) Cllr. Preben Friis-Hauge (Region Syddanmark)

NSC Thematic Group Advisers present:

Culture and Tourism	Geir Sør-Reime (Rogaland fylkeskommune)
Innovation and Education	Erik Lindboe (Rogaland fylkeskommune)
Sustainable Development	Yasa Ratnayeke (Aberdeen City)
Marine Resources	Anne Bell (NSC)
Transport	Jon Hallvard Eide (Vest-Agder fylkeskommune)

Supporting officers and Observers:

Cllr. Annika Carlsson (Region Halland)
 Cllr Peter Grant (Fife Council)
 Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga (Noord Holland)
 Cllr. Sandy Cluness (Shetland)
 Belinda Miller (Aberdeenshire Council)
 Bettina Rafaelsen (COWI)
 Birgit Dufour (Provincie Zeeland)
 Charlotte Lillefjære-Tertnæs (Hordaland fylkeskommune)
 Dominique Robertson (Fife Council)
 Erik Ørskov (Region Syddanmark)
 Henning Christensen (Region Nordjylland)
 Henrik Jensen (Region Midtjylland)
 Lisa Belfrage (Region Västra Götaland)
 Martin Brebner (Aberdeenshire Council)
 Runa Coxeter (Region Nordjylland)



Draft Minutes of the 56th North Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting 21st June 2011, the Provincial Court, Bruges, Belgium

Sally Spence (Shetland Islands Council)
Toine Janssen (Provincie Groningen /SNN)
Tomas Olsson (Region Västra Götaland)
Trine Moe Stokstad (Østfold fylkeskommune)
Vivika Lemke (Schleswig-Holstein)
Viv Collie (Vivid Ideas & Solutions Ltd)

Apologies:

Cllr. Heinz Maurus (Schleswig-Holstein)
Cllr. Piet de Vey Mestdag (Province Groningen/SNN)

56th North Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting - Agenda

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark fylkeskommune) President of the North Sea Commission (NSC) opened the meeting and asked for agreement of the proposed agenda.

Decision:

Agenda adopted

1. Minutes from 55th NSC Executive Committee meeting 7-8 April 2011 in Southend, England

Decision:

The Minutes were adopted.

2. Election of NSC Office Bearers

Lars Haukvik (NSC Executive Secretary) gave a clarification on the candidates standing for the two vacancies. Members discussed the options and were keen to see a balance.

Decision:

- *Cllr Ben de Reu (Province of Zeeland) was elected as Vice-Chair of the Sustainable Development Group.*
- *Cllr Peter Grant (Fife Council) was elected as Vice-Chair of the Culture and Tourism Group.*

3. NSC Organisational issues

The Executive Committee discussed how to follow up the decisions made at the Annual Business Meeting earlier that day (21st June 2011).

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen (NSC President) advised the Executive Committee that suggestions had been made about how to improve the NSC's way of working. She suggested that the first thing to do would be to give the thematic groups the opportunity to look at the European agenda and to tell

Draft Minutes of the 56th North Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting 21st June 2011, the Provincial Court, Bruges, Belgium

the Executive Committee what they can contribute. The NSC is a 'bottom-up organisation', and members require the NSC to work for policy areas that can be prioritised together. It would be useful, therefore, to get a list of what kind of issues the groups want linked to the European agenda, and what they think it is possible to achieve, and what are their priorities. The Executive Committee could then try to link even more together, and improve activities.

Cllr Henning Gjellerod (Region Midtjylland) advised that this issue had been discussed within the Danish group, and the conclusion was similar. They did not like the 'top to bottom' approach, and preferred a 'bottom-up' way of working. We think we could help the thematic groups if we are keen to have an Executive Committee meeting and debate in November, when we know what issues the Commission will deal with in the next year.

Geir Sør-Reime (Culture and Tourism Group Adviser) stated that it is good to look at the EU agendas, but there is not much for the Culture and Tourism Group, although this is improving. There are very important issues that are not part of the competence of the thematic groups, the main issue is the Cohesion Policy, and of course the future of the Interreg. That is what we are dealing with in North Sea Region 2020. In principle there are some very important new issues that shouldn't be in the thematic groups, otherwise we have to construct a new group (this has been done before). It is important that the Executive Committee has focussed on the work plan of the commission and tries to identify those issues that are not part of the agenda of the thematic groups.

Cllr Annelie Strark (Region Västra Götaland) said that the next Executive Committee meeting should be held in November, and should focus on the EU agenda. Some kind of seminar should be held during the Executive Committee, on three or four key points of interest eg cohesion policy, maritime policy, transport. There should be a contribution from experts, and some kind of discussion around that. This would help identify what the Executive Committee sees as the important areas, and also what the thematic groups consider to be important.

Ann Bell (Marine Resources Adviser) told the Executive Committee that the Marine Resources group had decided to have its next meeting in November. This will be held in Brussels, and they intend to invite the relevant MEP's, along with someone from the European Commission. Ann suggested that the next Executive Committee meeting could also be in Brussels. This would also allow a better chance of getting experts to attend.

Jon Halvard Eide (Transport Group Adviser) told the Executive Committee that the NSC Transport Group is already monitoring the European agenda on transport. There could, therefore, be the opportunity to do this more systematically on behalf of the other Thematic Groups and the whole organisation. Jon Halvard enquired if there was an opportunity to exploit the Brussels offices of the NSC member regions in terms of monitoring policy development, assisting with the collection of information and making appointments. It could be an underused resource.

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen (NSC President) described the Ad Hoc groups that the Executive Committee has used in the past. She also stressed that the Executive Committee would need to realise they only had limited resources. If the Executive Committee wish to be even more active in lobbying they will need time and resources. She reminded the group that they had just decided not to increase the budget for 2012. It may not be possible, therefore, to reach all of the organisation's ambitious goals.

Draft Minutes of the 56th North Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting 21st June 2011, the Provincial Court, Bruges, Belgium

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen suggested that the thematic groups should discuss their work plans, compare them to the European agenda, then come back and prioritise the items and issues that are most important. The NSC Executive Committee should do the same, and we would then come back to the next meeting in November and decide what the NSC is able to do for the next year regarding European policy.

Cllr Frederikke Stensrød (Østfold fylkeskommune) asked if all of the thematic groups have meetings in November – could they fit together with the Executive Committee meeting?

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen recognised that although this is always difficult, it might be possible to find dates to meet in Brussels – and include a seminar. The most important thing, however, is to decide what can be achieved together with existing human and financial resources. She suggested that the NSC Secretariat should explore the possibility of using the regional offices in Brussels.

Decision:

It was agreed that the NSC Secretariat should research the possibility of holding the next Executive Committee meeting in Brussels, with a seminar and thematic group input.

4. Next meeting

A short discussion took place regarding the timing of the next meeting – as the EU Agenda is due to be published in November.

Decision:

It was agreed that the Executive Committee should meet in Brussels in November. The date will be arranged and posted via the NSC website and e-mail.

5. AOB

5.1 Sellafield Nuclear Reprocessing Plant Resolution

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen (NSC President) advised the group that the NSC Annual Business Meeting discussions had been unable to formulate a new Resolution regarding the Sellafield nuclear re-processing plant. This will need more facts and appropriate re-wording so that it can be put forward for a vote at the next Executive Committee meeting in November.

It was agreed that Cllr Tom-Christer Nilsen (Hordaland fylkeskommune), Cllr John Lamb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council), and Cllr Peter Grant (Fife Council) would work together to formulate a factual and professional statement for the next Executive Committee meeting in November.

Draft Minutes of the 56th North Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting 21st June 2011, the Provincial Court, Bruges, Belgium

5.2 North Sea Region 2020 Strategy Document

Clr Gunn Marit Helgesen (NSC President) reminded the Executive Committee that it had been agreed that members should be consulted by the 1st of October. The Executive Committee requires a meeting of the ad-hoc group, and a reaction from members before the papers are finalised.

Gunn Marit advised on the need to make an action plan, and involve the thematic groups to look at opportunities, risks, measures, and what they can become involved in.

Bettina Rafaelsen (COWI) advised that a further development process for the Strategy has not been discussed in detail, apart from the development of an action plan. She recommended that the thematic groups should look through the measures proposed in the document. These have been developed, and it is important that the groups go through them and look at their feasibility.

She said that, after the document has been finalised, the NSC can work on an action plan, with the thematic groups. The groups could take each measure, and develop an appropriate action. For each action they should then say who should be involved, when it should be finalised, and how it should be funded. There will be different answers for different measures and actions. Some measures are mainly lobby measures.

Bettina advised that she could make a template for the implementation of the action plan. This does not need to be very complicated. It can be done in a table form. This would be a very systematic way of working for the groups, and could be followed up every six months or yearly for monitoring progress and achievements. This could be an Annex to the Strategy.

Jon Halvard Eide (Transport Group Adviser) advised that work will also be required on a communication dissemination strategy. Decisions will be required on who it will be distributed to (eg universities and business clusters). The weight of the strategy will very much be defined by the kind of stakeholder involvement mobilised. Some of the measures of the strategy are about creating the maritime stakeholder forum and there is a proposal for creating a tourism forum. We should start working on that and the thematic groups could also come with some suggestions for interested parties who need to be addressed.

Clr Henning Gjellerod (Region Midtjylland) reminded the group that the morning discussions had included a request for inserting something about nuclear power in the report.

Clr Gunn Marit Helgesen agreed that it was a proposal to try to formulate a paragraph or short chapter under an energy theme. Christian Bruns (City of Bremen) had said that they could contribute to this information. She suggested that this proposal from Bremen is accepted, and then a reaction from other member regions could be received. This work will help the NSC decide what to put into the finalised document and help the Executive Committee agree their position on this matter.

Clr Gunn Marit Helgesen stressed the need to obtain reactions from the thematic groups and the need to involve stakeholders in the 2020 consultation. It could also be an idea to ask the Interreg Secretariat for involvement in the consultation. There are around 50 projects so far in the North Sea, some of them will last until 2013. A lot of these projects could provide ideas for the action

Draft Minutes of the 56th North Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting 21st June 2011, the Provincial Court, Bruges, Belgium

plan. The 2020 Strategy could be an instrument for the European Commission to continue Interreg initiatives in the North Sea Region.

The NSC will continue to try to convince the member states of the importance of the 2020 Strategy. This is a document that identifies changes in our region. The NSC wants to see a link to European policy and try to get existing funding, or funding for the next programme and projects for the North Sea Region.

Gunn Marit asked Bettina if she considered the document to be finished, or if she wanted to make further comment. Would the Action Plan be an appendix?

Bettina said that the document is finished apart from some small changes for the consultation. It now needs input from the stakeholders and the thematic groups. With these inputs it can then be finalised

There was a discussion about the need for the Thematic Groups to meet before the deadlines.

Cllr John Lamb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) referred to his previous comments at the Annual Business Meeting about the need for sustainability to be a horizontal theme. This needs to be dealt with before the papers are sent out.

There was a discussion on how this might be achieved – and the correct wording required to be included in the document.

Cllr John Lamb said that if some wording can be included initially, the main part of the document can be amended later. He said that it is important to show that sustainability is being considered and it is a key link.

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen (NSC President) drew the meeting to a close and said that people had to work hard and finalise the paper. She said that European Commissioners really appreciated the strategy as it is. She said that there could be good co-operation using existing funding, and it had to be demonstrated that the strategy is added value. In the longer term it had to be used in relation to national governments as an instrument for development in the North Sea region.

Decision:

- ***Cllr Tom-Christer Nilsen (Hordaland fylkeskommune), Cllr John Lamb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council), and Cllr Peter Grant (Fife Council) would work together to formulate a statement on the Sellafield Resolution for the next Executive Committee meeting in November.***
- ***Christian Bruns (City of Bremen) to help contribute information on nuclear energy to consider for inclusion in the North Sea Region 2020 Strategy.***
- ***Bettina Rafaelsen and Jon Halvard Eider to ensure that sustainability is mentioned in the consultation document.***

The meeting finished with Gunn Marit thanking Cllr Sandy Cluness for his contribution to the work of the NSC, and she presented him with a North Sea gift.