



## Bremen Declaration

Adopted at the NSC Annual business Meeting 20 June 2012

### Creating Climate for Change

There is a common cultural heritage and a long history of intensive human exchange around the North Sea region. Life and work on and by the sea have strengthened the feeling of a shared identity and self-confidence among the people living around this sea basin. Today the North Sea region is one of the most prosperous parts of the EU and the North Sea basin is the busiest maritime space in the world that is under extreme pressure from human exploration.

The regions bordering the North Sea have various common interests, but are also facing major challenges. In addition to traditional economic activities in the North Sea area such as ports, shipbuilding, fishing and raw materials extraction, new issues and challenges, such as the adaptation to the effects of climate change, a sustainable management of the sea basin or promoting maritime research have come into focus.

The North Sea Commission (NSC) is convinced that the concept of the macro-regional strategy can serve as a model for similar approaches in other European areas and therefore provides an adequate framework for a coherent development of the North Sea region.

Based on its own opinion on a strategy for the North Sea Region adopted in October 2010, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) describes the common challenges and opportunities of the North Sea area. Therefore, **the CoR calls for a European strategy for the North Sea** that could help to further develop the region and strengthen the cooperation between the different stakeholders.

The NSC decided to contribute to this discussion and explore the feasibility of developing a strategy for the North Sea region. With the strategy paper “**North Sea Commission Strategy – Contributing to the Europe 2020**” adopted on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011 and following an intensive period of consultation, the NSC provides arguments for and demonstrate the added value and benefits of having a coherent strategy for the North Sea region.

By analysing challenges and opportunities, the **North Sea Region 2020 Strategy identifies five priority strategic areas** with the view to support the achievement of the Europe 2020 strategy objectives:

1. Managing Maritime Space
2. Increasing Accessibility and Clean Transport:
3. Tackling Climate Change
4. Attractive and Sustainable Communities:
5. Promoting Innovation, Excellence and Sustainability (as a horizontal priority)

Against the background of these priorities the **NSC members commit themselves to developing projects that demonstrate direct and visible benefits for the region and its**



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**people.** With these concrete actions the NSC members promote cooperation and contribute to a closer cohesion of regions. In this context the **Interreg North Sea Region Programme is regarded as an important source of funding for the priorities defined on the basis of the North Sea Region 2020 strategy.**

**The NSC calls on all stakeholders in the North Sea region to improve and intensify the cooperation efforts within this sea basin area.** The aim is to create forums that promote discourse and consultations among all relevant stakeholders. The idea of a North Sea Maritime Stakeholder Forum is regarded as a good example of a governance mechanism in this respect.

With its strategy North Sea Region 2020 and its action plan the NSC underlines that the North Sea region is an economically successful region that could serve as a centre for excellence for wider EU issues. Nevertheless, the NSC emphasizes that a coherent strategic approach on the European level would help the North Sea Region to act as an engine for sustainable growth in Europe.

The **NSC members commit themselves** to further promote the idea of a strategy for the North Sea Region and address especially the national administrations and governments in the member states bordering the North Sea. Furthermore, the President and Vice-Presidents of the NSC will address the European institutions in order to get their support.

The whole consultation process has shown that stakeholders and regions are in favour of a **stronger cooperation within the North Sea Region.** Given the pressing challenges in our area the NSC will continue to promote this idea within the next years. Nevertheless, the long-term aim of the NSC based on its North Sea Region 2020 strategy is to have a European macro-regional strategy.