



## **Draft Minutes for the 21<sup>st</sup>North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at the Rathaus, Bremen, Germany**

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark Fylkeskommune) President of the North Sea Commission (NSC) welcomed everyone and thanked the representatives from Bremen and Bremerhaven for hosting the Annual Conference and General Assembly in 2012.

Cllr. Jens Böhrnsen, Mayor of the City of Bremen, welcomed the NSC representatives. He gave a presentation on the area's history, their present day administration and the importance of the sea to this area. He emphasised the importance of co-operation in the North Sea region and the potential to act as a catalyst for growth and as an example to other areas. He outlined the content of their Maritime Action Plan and their preparations for European Maritime Day in 2014.

Cllr. Hermann Kuhn, (Chair of the Intergroup North Sea/English Channel in the Committee of the Regions and Chair of the parliamentary committee for European Affairs in the Bremen regional parliament) talked to the group about the North Sea Region 2020 paper and the importance of having a strategy for the area.

### **21<sup>st</sup>North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting - Agenda**

#### **Decision:**

***The agenda was adopted unanimously.***

## **1. Annual Reports**

### **1a. President's Report**

Cllr. Gunn Marit Helgesen(President of the NSC) said that it had been eight years since her election, and this would be her last speech as President of the NSC. It had been a great pleasure and honour to be the 'mother' of the organisation.

She thanked all her NSC colleagues for their hard work and support. She described all the changes that had happened to the NSC membership over the last 12 months, and welcomed the new participants.

She stressed the need to maintain a strong NSC within the CPMR. She talked about the importance of the North Sea 2020 Strategy and the work of the NSC Thematic Groups.

President Helgesen also talked about the future, and the problems of overcoming the current economic crisis and returning to sustainable growth – with the current Earth Summit in Brazil demonstrating that there is still work to be done. She talked about how the Green Economy and sustainable development will be important topics in the future.

President Helgesen emphasised that the NSC has a role to play on the global stage and it is important that the region learns how to use its natural capital in a smart way. She was sure that the NSC, under its new President, would take these issues forward.

President Helgesen thanked everyone and said that she was looking forward to her continued involvement with the NSC.

## **1b. Report from CPMR, by General Secretary Eleni Marianou**

Eleni Marianou (CPMR) gave a presentation on the current economic climate, its impact on European policy and activities, and how this relates to the G20. She said that this was a time that Europe must look at the assets it can promote.

Ms Marianou talked how Europe is looking to the future – ‘Towards a new narrative in Europe’. The topics covered included: Fiscal discipline and competitiveness, European solutions to global issues, Europe 2020 and Cohesion policy responding to growth and jobs, and Regions being at the heart of solutions on new competitiveness: blue and green growth, research and innovation to help create growth. ‘Blue growth’ is a common theme for the CPMR.

Key issues highlighted were EU Budget negotiations and Cohesion Policy, the Europe 2020 strategy cycle and growth potential, infrastructure investment for all regions (eg ICT), conditionalities for efficiency, Macro Regions (relevant for the NSR), and the new cycle of strategies and programmes.

Ms Marianou emphasised the key role that the CPMR plays in policy development, monitoring the EU budget negotiations, shaping European Parliament positions, involvement in the EP Intergroup and other high level groups (eg on adaptation to climate change, leaderSHIP, and smart specialisation), submitting proposals on the Cohesion Policy, in depth analysis of issues, Maritime Day, and 11th maritime priority on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) proposal.

Ms Marianou outlined the CPMR’s activities with regard to the EU Budget, monitoring negotiations on MFF (Multiannual Financial Framework), proposals for amendments to the Cohesion package, Maritime Fisheries (preparing for the Cypriot Presidency), maritime safety, pollution, integrated coastal zone management, maritime spatial planning, ship building, training, Offshore Oil and Gas Production (encouraging NSC participation), Accessibility (eg TEN-T), a Macro Regions task force being established across the Commissions, Neighbourhood Policy and cross border co-operation, and a range of other policies including CAP and Rural Development, Energy, Innovation and research (other than maritime), and Development policy.

Ms Marianou finished her presentation with a note of key dates towards the CPMR AGM and funding activities:

- EP negotiating positions on structural fund regulations: Regulations on General Provisions/ERDF/ESF – vote in Committees in June/July 2012; vote draft reports in Plenary Autumn 2012
- Revised MFF proposal (July or September?)
- Danish Presidency General Affairs Council (28 – 29 June)
- Informal Ministerial meeting under Cypriot Presidency (November)
- Informal on Maritime Policy (8 October)
- Key dates on TEN –T/CEF negotiations: CEF: “first reading” Council: 7 June 2012, without amounts. CEF + TEN-T: adoption EP January 2013
- Energy: Communication on marine renewable energies planned in December.
- State aids: Publication of the draft guidelines on regional state aids planned in September

## **1c. Annual Reports from the Thematic Groups**

### **i. Culture and Tourism Group Report**

The Report was given by Cllr. Henning Gjellerod (Region Midtjylland) as member of the group. He talked about the work of the group and highlighted two projects that were currently being developed – 'Visit Your Neighbours' and 'The North Sea Seafood Route'. He also mentioned key future meetings for the group.

### **ii. Innovation and Education Group Report**

Cllr. Ellen Solheim, (Rogaland Council) advised of the recent changes to the group with the loss of Kate Dean (Aberdeen City Council) following the elections in Scotland, and welcomed the new Vice Chair Cllr Annika Carlsson (Region Halland). Cllr. Solheim outlined the activities of the group. She gave thanks to Ann Brown for the excellent work she has undertaken on the North Sea Schools Sustainability Network. She also highlighted the three new projects that have been submitted for future funding.

### **iii. Marine Resources Group Report**

Cllr Anders Fasth (Region Västra Götaland) highlighted the importance of the North Sea Maritime Forum for key stakeholders (and the need to find a way to support this group). He also talked about the NSCMRG meeting in London at the start of the year. He gave thanks to Ann Bell – who was stepping down as Marine Resources Group Adviser – and to Cllr Harry Jensen who was stepping down as Vice Chair.

### **iv. Sustainable Development Group Report**

Cllr Henrik Ringbæk Madsen (North Denmark Region) highlighted a number of organisational issues. Their group required a new Vice Chair, and they also hoped they could retain Yasa Ratnayeke (Aberdeen City Council) as their Adviser. The group would also like the NSC Executive Committee to consider re-naming and structuring the Thematic Groups in order that sustainable development is considered across all activities. The group has put together a proposal for discussion and consideration against the proposed NSR 2020 activities. Cllr Ringbæk Madsen also highlighted the collaborative work undertaken with the CPMR Energy group, and other Geographical Commissions.

### **v. Transport Group Report**

Cllr. Preben Friis-Hauge (South Denmark) thanked Jon Halvard Eide (Group Adviser), and Cllr Leif Blomqvist (Region Västra Götaland) who was the group's former Chair and now Vice Chair. He highlighted the work undertaken on the EU Transport White Paper and the TEN-T policy. Cllr. Friis-Hauge also talked about how the group will be following CPMR meetings on key issues.

The President thanked Ann Bell and Erik Lindboe for their work as NSC Thematic Group Advisers.

## **1e. Reports from co-operating organisations**

### **i. Report from the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme, by Head of Secretariat Christian Byrith**

A report was given on behalf of Christian Byrith by Carsten Westerholt (Head of Unit), of the North Sea Region Programme Secretariat. He thanked the hosts for this year's event.

He said that it had been a busy year, although there had been a shadow cast by the payment interruptions in the UK. This had made a significant impact on programme project delivery and partners. Some projects had not received payments for over a year. It is hoped that this situation will be sorted soon.

There were now over 50 projects and 5 Clusters approved. The remaining funds are now fully allocated. Five final project reports have been received and they expect around 20 by the end of the year.

Mr Westerholt talked about capturing the outcomes of co-operation, the importance of ongoing evaluation, and explained the benefits of the Cluster project approach.

Mr Westerholt talked about the recent commencement of discussions on the new rounds of Programmes and Programme preparation, and future stakeholder involvement. He also highlighted the opportunities offered by European Maritime Day, a new magazine that is about to be launched (with a transport theme for the first issue), and a joint conference held with different Programmes in Poland last year. He also mentioned that a NSR reference paper submitted on friendly transport had been taken to the Rio+20 conference.

Mr Westerholt thanked Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen for her input to the Programme and looked forward to continuing this co-operation with the new NSC President.

Eleni Marianou (CPMR) asked how the NSR can capitalise on the work of smaller projects in strategy development. Mr Westerholt advised that work has started on this, but was still at an early stage. Discussions have started on the new programme, and they will look at how they can work with EU investment priorities and regional strategies.

Mr Westerholt also advised that the North Sea Maritime Forum has been discussed – but will need further consideration in order to find support.

Jon Halvard Eide (Transport Group Adviser) asked how stakeholders can become involved in the Programme development. Mr Westerholt advised that they will start by using feedback from the previous two conferences, and are currently discussing how they could open up the consultation.

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen (NSC President) thanked the Interreg Secretariat for their excellent co-operation.

**Decision:**

- 1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012 unanimously adopted the Presidents Report and the Thematic Groups Annual Reports and continues to support the work of the NSC.***
- 2. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012 unanimously adopted the other reports for information.***

## **2. North Sea Commission Thematic Group Work Plans 2012– 2013 and follow up North Sea Region 2020 Strategy**

### **2a. Culture and Tourism Group Work Plan**

No additional comment

### **2b. Innovation and Education Group Work Plan**

No additional comment

### **2c. Marine Resources Group Work Plan**

No additional comment

### **2d. Sustainable Development Group Work Plan**

No additional comment

### **2e. Transport Group Work Plan**

No additional comment

### **NSC 2020 Strategy - Introduction of SeaBasin Strategy**

Mr. Haitze Siemers (DG MARE) described how maritime policy has evolved from a prospective policy (integrating, co-ordinating and linking activities at all levels) for sustainable growth and competitiveness, into the delivery of objectives and looking at key indicators. He also gave an update on good work in other areas eg the Atlantic Sea Strategy, the Baltic Sea Strategy and the Danube Strategy.

He outlined the concept of 'Blue Growth' (how integrated maritime planning fits with Europe 2020, Growth and Employment) and working with sea basin stakeholders for practical delivery. He stressed the importance of ensuring all strategy inputs reflect the objectives of Blue and Maritime Growth within the new financial framework.

He identified the 3 integration tools of Maritime Spatial Planning, Surveillance and Technology (to assist seamless working across the area), and concrete actions to support growth (eg aquaculture, tourism). Mr. Siemers also talked about the benefits of regional and maritime clusters around the EU, and how they can help accelerate technological development, and increase innovation, competitiveness and growth.

Mr. Siemers talked about the benefit of having a Common Strategic Framework, the new financial perspectives and links between individual funds. Work is starting now on the programmes for the next financial period.

He suggested using the NS 2020 strategy to set out the North Sea ambitions which can be used to feed back into member states, knowing the Interreg outcomes that you wish to take forward to the next period, and recognising the benefits of a Common Strategic Framework to provide links between funds.

It is important to ensure the North Sea Action Plan priorities are aligned with the EU financing and priorities that are coming forward. It is also useful to produce a North Sea Strategy that member states can follow and help put into action too.

Mr. Siemers said the idea of having a Stakeholder Forum for the North Sea would be helpful, and members of the NSC should continue the dialogue with their own political representatives to raise awareness of the opportunities for the North Sea area.

Conny Boersma (Province of Zeeland) raised her concern that cultural history and natural history appear to be vanishing from Maritime Strategy to integrated Policy. It is important that cultural and natural aspects are recognised, and that tourism is integrated into this - and for the inclusion of communities.

Mr. Siemers said that during the current economic crisis there was a need to focus on growth and development (although don't have to exclude things that aren't first priority). Maritime heritage could be part of tourism and links, therefore, should be built with Europe 2020 and Economic Growth and Employment.

Eleni Marianou (CPMR) said that maritime and coastal tourism could be an important Blue Growth sector. Also, member states need to see tourism as a good industry to promote- and a focus for structural funds.

Ms. Marianou also said that the CPMR participates in a number of high level groups on various DGs. Would there be a Taskforce of Commissioners to discuss all these different maritime issues? How will all these sectoral groups be co-ordinated?

Mr. Siemers talked about the practicalities of policy development and the use of Commissioners' time. A steering group of Commissioners is needed at the early stage and is used help develop the policy. Once the policy is in place, however, a dedicated service (eg DG MARE) is required to co-ordinate it.

Vice-President Cllr John Lamb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) raised the issue of maritime safety. In addition, there is an increased danger of pollution due to collisions, and further issues due to the increasing size of ships.

Mr. Siemers agreed this was a big question with lots of issues. A lot of work is being done within the DGs on maritime safety and the environment. This will require more industry assistance (with technology and development) and will need to consider actions such as improved surveillance and joint Maritime Spatial Planning, co-operation across the sea basins and links between appropriate policy areas.

**Decision:**

- 1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012 unanimously adopted and supported the presented Thematic Groups' Work Plans.***
- 2. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012 unanimously adopted the overview 'NSR 2020 Action Plan with responsible thematic groups' as a basis for the development of specific group plans adapted to the NSR 2020 format for the next meeting of the Executive Committee.***

### 3. Finances

#### 3a. Accounts for 2011 and Audit Report

Lars Haukvik (NSC Executive Secretary) reported on the financial status of the NSC at 31.05.12 (enclosure 1), the accounts for 2011 (enclosure 2) and the Auditors report of 30.05.12 as a separate paper.

The accounts for 2011 show a deficit of 16,500 Euro, giving the NSC disposal of 198,502 Euro by 01.01.12.

Information was provided on Advisers costs.

All members paid their membership fees in 2011.

#### 3b. Budget 2013

Two budget options for 2013 were included as enclosure 3. The NSC members discussed the current and future financial climate, the implications of cuts to the NSC budget, the impact of inflation, and CPMR fees.

Vice-President Cllr John Lamb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) suggested that, in order to help support future budget discussions within member authorities, members should be informed about the implication of NSC fee increases before the next ABM.

President Helgesen suggested that this could be taken up for discussion by the new NSC administration.

#### Decision:

1. *The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 adopted the accounts for 2011 as presented in enclosure 2.*
2. *The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 adopted the Auditors report of 09.06.11*
3. *The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 unanimously adopted the budget for 2012 with no adjustment for the inflation rate as presented in Enclosure 3.*

### 4. Resolutions and Political Statements

#### 4a. Resolution on Discharges from Nuclear Processing Plants: Appeal to close down the Sellafield Nuclear Reprocessing Plant.

Vice-President Cllr John Lamb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) said that the wording of the Resolution should be altered so that it applies to all nuclear processing plants affecting the North Sea and associated waters – and not just Sellafield. This was discussed and it was agreed the Resolution could go through with this amendment.

#### 4b. Giglio Declaration.

Vice-President Cllr John Lamb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) said that he thought the Declaration needed to be strengthened. He said that maritime safety for passenger transport shouldn't be seen in isolation – it also needs to consider the environmental impact of any associated pollution caused by damage or sinking. Crew training also needs to be strengthened - with a minimum qualification for any crew member used in evacuation process.

Vice-President Lamb also advised that the word 'leeway' has two interpretations. It could be confusing and should be changed.

Vice-President Lamb also suggested that all vessels should have a passage plan lodged with a suitable authority – and should not be allowed to deviate from this plan. The vessels should be tracked and questioned if they varied from this route.

Eleni Marianou (CPMR) said that the CPMR Political Bureau has approved this already. These comments would, however, be relevant for this paper and the work being done by the Maritime Safety (Erika IV group) paper. This would take these issues to a wider arena.

The declaration was accepted and Ms. Marianou suggestion would be pursued.

#### **4c. Resolution “Establishment of European Fisheries Technology Centre (EFTC)”**

This was agreed, and members discussed how the EFTC project could be taken forward. Ann Bell (Marine Resources Adviser) advised on the need for funding of a Secretariat, the information sent to the Commissioner, and the contacts made with DG MARE and the CPMR GA.

#### **4d. Bremen declaration**

Cllr. Henning Gjellerod (Region Midtjylland) identified three lines at the start of the third paragraph in the declaration that could be deleted from the text. This amendment was agreed, and the declaration was agreed unanimously.

#### **Decision:**

- 1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20th 2012 agreed unanimously to adopt the resolution “Discharges from Nuclear Processing Plants: Appeal to close down the Sellafield Nuclear Reprocessing Plant” – with the agreed amendment.***
- 2. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20th 2012 agreed unanimously to adopt the Giglio Declaration – and will follow up the suggested contact with CPMR.***
- 3. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20th 2012 agreed unanimously to adopt the “Resolution on the establishment of European Fisheries Technology Centre (EFTC)”.***
- 4. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20th 2012 agreed unanimously to adopt the “Bremen Declaration” – with the agreed alteration.***

## **5. NSC Organisational issues**

The group members discussed the issue of the need to evaluate whether the NSC is organised in a way to be able to meet the priorities of the North Sea Region 2020 Strategy. It was agreed that the members of the Executive Committee should work towards presenting a clear plan with suggested changes for next year. The recommendations were agreed.

**Decision:**

- 1. The Annual Business Meeting of 20.06.12 asks the Executive Committee to evaluate the organisation in light of the priorities of the North Sea Region 2020 Strategy. If the evaluation finds the need for organisational changes of the North Sea Commission, the Executive Committee are asked to present their recommendations for the Annual Business Meeting 2013.***

## **6. Elections of NSC Office Bearers**

### **6a. Election of President of the North Sea Commission**

The Annual Business Meeting unanimously confirmed their acceptance of Cllr Ole B. Sørensen (Region Nordjylland) as the new President of the North Sea Commission.

Cllr Sørensen (NSC President) gave a talk about the importance of the North Sea, key challenges and opportunities, the work of the NSC, the importance of the NSR 2020 Strategy, the wider context of EU 2020, and the need for members to contribute to the work of the NSC in order to make a difference and add value.

### **6b. Election of Vice-President of the North Sea Commission**

The Annual Business Meeting unanimously confirmed their acceptance of Cllr Tom-Christer Nilsen (Hordaland Fylkeskommune) as Vice-President of the North Sea Commission.

### **6c. Confirmation of Members and Substitute Members to the NSC Executive Committee 2012-2014**

Due to the local government elections in Scotland in May, no decision has been made about the Scottish Member and Substitute Member.

The English Member and Substitute Member have to be confirmed.

For Germany the Member is Cllr. Anke Spoorendunk (Land Schleswig-Holstein) and Substitute Member Cllr. Herman Kuhn (Free and Hanseatic city of Bremen)

Member for Norway is Cllr. Thore Westermoen (Vest-Agder Fylkeskommune). The Substitute Member is Cllr. Karen Anne Kjendli from Vestfold County Council.

**Decision:**

- 1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 elects Cllr Ole B. Sørensen as President of the North Sea Commission for the period 2012-2014.***
- 2. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 elects Cllr Tom-Christer Nilsen as Vice-President of the North Sea Commission for the period 2012-2014.***
- 3. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of June 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 confirms the members of the Executive Committee for the period 2011-2013.***



## **7. Invitation to the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly 2013**

The NSC and the Interreg North Sea Programme are invited to Region Halland in Sweden for the Annual Joint Conference and the NSC Annual Business Meeting on the 10-13<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

**Decision:**

***It was agreed that the next General Assembly should be held in Region Halland in Sweden on the 10-13<sup>th</sup> June 2013.***

Cllr Ole B. Sørensen (NSC President) thanked Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen for all her work as President. He also thanked Lark Haukvik and Vibeke Jakobsen (NSC Secretariat) for all their support.