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CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS OF EUROPE

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33rd CPMR GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2/4 November 2005 Madeira (P)

The Peripheral Maritime Regions listed below met in Madeira (Portugal) on 2-4 November 2005
for the 33rd CPMR General Assembly.

ABERDEENSHIRE (UK), ABRUZZO (I), ACORES (P), ALENTEJO (P), ALGARVE (P), ANATOLIKI MAKEDONIA THRAKI (GR), ANDALUCIA (E), AQUITAINE (F), ARGYLL & BUTE (UK), ARHUS (DK), ASTURIAS (E), BALEARES (E), BASSE-NORMANDIE (F), BLEKINGE (S), BORDER (IRL), BORNHOLM (DK), BRETAGNE (F), BUSKERUD (N), CALARASI (RO), CAMPANIA (I), CANARIAS (E), CANTABRIA (E), CASTILLA Y LEÓN (E), CATALUNYA (E), CENTRE (F), CIUDAD AUTONOMA DE CEUTA* (E), COMUNITAT VALENCIANA (E), CONSTANTA (RO), CORNWALL-KERNOW (UK), CORSE (F), DEVON (UK), DYTIKI ELLADA (GR), EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY* (UK), EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (UK), EAST OF SCOTLAND EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM (UK), FAMAGUSTA (CYPRUS), FIFE (UK), GALATI (RO), GALICIA (E), GÄVLEBORG (S), GLOUCESTERSHIRE (UK), GOTLAND (S), HALLAND (S), HAMPSHIRE (UK), HIGHLAND (UK), HIIUMAA (EE), HORDALAND (N), ISLE OF MAN (UK), ISLE OF WIGHT (UK), ISTRIA (CROATIA), ITÄ-UUSIMAA (FIN), KRITI (GR), KYMENLAAKSO (FIN), LA REUNION (F), LAZIO (I), LIMOUSIN (F), LISBOA E VALE DO TEJO (P), MADEIRA (P), MARTINIQUE (F), MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN (D), MIDI-PYRENEES (F), MØRE OG ROMSDAL (N), MURCIA (E), NAVARRA (E), NOORD-HOLLAND (NL), NOORD NEDERLAND (NL), NORRBOTTEN (S), NORDLAND (N), NORDJYLLAND (DK), NORD-TRØNDELAG (N), NORTE (P), NOTIO AIGAIO (GR), ORKNEY (UK), ØSTFOLD (N), OSTROBOTHNIA (FIN), OULU REGION (FIN), PÄIJÄT-HÄME (FIN), PAÍS VASCO (E), PÄRNUMAA (EE), PAYS DE LA LOIRE (F), PODLASKIE (POLAND), POITOU-CHARENTES (F), PRIMORSKO-GORANSKA (CROATIA), PROVENCE-ALPES-COTE D'AZUR (F), RIGA (LV), RINGKJØBING (DK), ROGALAND (N), SAAREMAA (EE), SAIDA (LEBANON), SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN* (D), SHETLAND (UK), SICILIA (I), SOGN OG FJORDANE (N), SOMERSET (UK), SØR-TRØNDELAG (N), SOUSSE (TU), SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ALLIANCE (UK), SOUTH-WEST FINLAND (FIN), STOCKHOLM (S), TEKIRDAG (TURKEY), TELEMAR (N), TOSCANA (I), TROMS (N), TUKUMS (LV), TULCEA (RO), UMBRIA (I), UPPSALA (S), VÄSTERBOTTEN (S), VÄSTRA GÖTALAND (S), VEST-AGDER (N), VESTFOLD (N), VIBORG (DK), VOREIO AIGAIO (GR), WALES (UK).

(*) *Observer*

On behalf of the Regions present, the President of the CPMR, Mr Claudio Martini, should like to extend his most sincere thanks to the Region of Madeira and its President, Mr Alberto João Jardim, for their hospitality and welcome.

His thanks also go to all the attending participants representing regional authorities and European institutions who took part in the work of the Conference. He especially wishes to thank the President of the European Commission, Mr José Manuel Durao Barroso, for his participation.

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Final Declaration and Resolutions



In the name of its 154 members, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, meeting for its 33rd Annual General Assembly in Madeira, adopted the following Final Declaration and Resolutions:

DRAFT FINAL DECLARATION

This year's General Assembly has been held within a difficult context for EU integration. In Stavanger in 2004, we welcomed the Constitutional Treaty together with the European Commission's proposals on the Union's financial perspectives for the 2007-2013 period, and also the start of preparatory work for a European maritime policy.

A UNION THAT IS BOTH CONTINENT-WIDE AND DEEPER

1- One year on, the Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe are forced to acknowledge that **the Union has reached a deadlock** and express their concern over this state of affairs.

1.1. The rejection of the draft Constitutional Treaty by two member states means that the formal recognition of two fundamental aspects for our regions, which had been included at the cost of tough negotiations, has been put off to an undefined future date. These are namely:

- **the involvement of regional and local authorities as fully-fledged players in the institutional life of the Union**, in accordance with their fields of competence;
- **the principle of territorial cohesion**, giving the assurance of a sustainable and fair policy for regional development.

1.2. The breakdown of the summit in June 2005 highlights the dissension between member states regarding the Union's future objectives and the resources needed to achieve them. Worse still, even though there has been a significant back-down on the initial aims set out in the European Commission's proposals of 14 July 2004, disagreement has persisted throughout the successive negotiating boxes of the six-month Presidencies held by the Netherlands and Luxemburg. This has been in spite of the remarkable work carried out by the European Parliament's special temporary committee.

Our regions support the position adopted by the CPMR's Political Bureau at its meeting in Galati on Friday, 24 June 2005, entitled: **"Cohesion: more vital than ever"**. They affirm that the latest known proposals fall well short of what may be considered credible for ensuring a fair territorial development on the one hand, and continuing to mobilise regional players on the other.

- With regard to **heading 1a)**, the planned cut in funding for **research** and **trans-European networks** is in total contradiction with the goals set out in the Lisbon agenda.
- With regard to **heading 1b)**, **none of the cuts are acceptable**, whether in respect of the convergence objective, the competitiveness and employment objective or the transnational cooperation objective, the last two being reduced to a level below that of the 2000-2006 period.
- With regard to the new Rural Development Fund (EARDF), on top of the proposed budget reduction, no progress has been made in the way the regional level is involved in the programming process.

- With regard to the future European Fisheries Fund (EFF), this is overshadowed by the uncertainties hanging over the financial perspectives, though it is necessary to give greater visibility to this sector in the full throes of change. The regions nevertheless welcome with satisfaction the Commission's initiative to organise interregional meetings on fisheries aiming to strengthen dialogue on the arrangements for implementing the future EFF.

The member regions very much hope that the new proposals tabled by the six-month UK Presidency in the next few days are commensurate with the challenges of a continent-wide and deepened Union, and do not carry the risk of withdrawal into national self-interests.

2- Furthermore, the **texts in preparation for implementing cohesion policy mark a clear step backwards** in terms of:

- **arrangements for involving regions in the preparation**, by member states, of its objectives and content;
- **how the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies are both taken on board** in defining the planned actions;
- **the differentiations that need to be made** in order to boost competitiveness and employment in all regions, as part of a determined step towards **territorial cohesion**.

The General Assembly adopts the opinion of the General Secretariat of 16 September 2005 entitled "**The Community Strategic Guidelines must support territorial cohesion**". It urges the European Commission, European Parliament and Council to take forward their work on the basis of the findings of the 3rd cohesion report and the interim report on territorial cohesion. It is essential to continue showing a firm commitment towards the fair development of the Union's territories if our fellow citizens and their regional representatives are to support the re-launch of the European integration process.

It reiterates its support for the Commissioner in charge of cohesion, Mrs Danuta Hübner.

3- The member regions applaud Neelie Kroes and the services of the Directorate-General for Competition for the dialogue they have established with the Conference and the Committee of the Regions with a view to taking into account the **principles of territorial differentiation and cohesion in the run-up to the reform of the national regional aid system**. They do however regret that some aspects have not been taken on board, especially for statistical phasing out regions and territories suffering from permanent handicaps. They back the opinion paper on "**The principles underlying the review of State Aid from the point of view of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe**" issued by the Political Bureau on 24 June 2005, and the opinion of the General Secretariat of 20 July 2005 entitled "**New proposed guidelines on regional national aid: a step in favour of territorial cohesion**". They are pleased to note that they share similar views to the opinion adopted by the Committee of the Regions at its session in July 2005 and especially wish to congratulate its *rapporteur*, Mr Vicente Alberto Areces, President of Asturias Region.

They hope that the European Parliament will uphold the same policy position.

They intend to actively work together with their respective states to implement this reform in each member country. They call upon their governments and national authorities to openly accept this participation.

They task the Political Bureau and the General Secretariat to take forward their action directed at the European Commission as and when horizontal aid and exempted categories are brought under review as part of the "State Aid Action Plan 2005-2009".

4- At a more general level, the member regions welcome the **development of structured territorial dialogue between the European Commission and the organisations of regions and local authorities**.

Despite the failure to ratify the draft Constitutional Treaty, progress has been made in this area subsequent to the White Paper on Governance in which the CPMR played an active part. First and foremost, they commend the President of the European Commission, Mr Barroso, and Commissioners Hübner, Dimas and Barrot for their receptiveness in this dialogue. They are extremely pleased with the working relations enjoyed throughout the year with the Directorates-General for Research, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Agriculture, Transport, and also the start of a new cooperation with the Energy services.

They thank the Committee of the Regions for its contribution towards organising this dialogue. They welcome the Committee of the Regions' commitment to a more formalised approach towards cooperation with the CPMR, by means of an annual protocol.

They also note with satisfaction that there is a growing awareness of regional concerns among the European Parliament and its President, Mr Borrell.

They encourage the Council to move towards adopting similar practices. From this point of view, they note the inconsistency of the successive six-month Presidencies of the Union, which they consider highly regrettable. Some attitudes seem to be in contradiction with the commitments to which all member states signed up after the Intergovernmental Conference on the Constitutional Treaty.

The regions point out that the progress report on the **Lisbon Agenda** adopted by the spring Council underlined as one of the causes of its failure **the lack of involvement of sub-national players**. They are surprised that the member states have failed to put forward any new initiatives to remedy this situation and to advocate a clear-cut involvement of the regions in this strategy underpinning EU action. The constructive role of the regions could be promoted by creating a new generation of territorial cooperation programmes that could contribute to sustainable growth and jobs and to attain sustainable development socially and environmentally.

5- The CPMR member regions welcome the European Commission's commitment to a Green Paper on **Europe's maritime dimension**. They firmly believe that this is one of the only areas to convey a sense of innovation and offer some prospect for the future amidst the gloom that has descended over the Union.

Fifty of our regions are involved in a far-reaching initiative to develop analyses and proposals. They are to be wholeheartedly praised for this work. Their efforts will help to secure a central role for the CPMR in the forthcoming drafting of an **ambitious EU maritime policy**.

All efforts will be made to get past the "Green Paper" stage. The member regions want the process that has been undertaken to lead to the adoption of Community guidelines fixing the Union's medium and long term goals for the maritime sector before the current European Commission and Parliament leave office.

They warmly thank Commissioner Joe Borg and the Director of the Maritime Affairs Task Force, John Richardson, for the excellent working relations that have been established with them.

At the same time as its work on the Green Paper, the CPMR will continue to give individual focus to each one of Europe's major sea areas with a view to inciting regions and socio-economic players to promote the design and delivery of maritime strategies at regional and interregional level. Backed by its Scientific Council, and the CPMR project "Europe of the Sea", the CPMR will be in a position to make a series of substantiated proposals as of early 2006 and to defend them in the periods prior to and subsequent to the publication of the Green Paper.

The member regions likewise express satisfaction regarding the progress that has been made in terms of involving the regions in regional **maritime safety** measures and the **Regional Fisheries Advisory Councils** in each of Europe's major sea areas, e.g. in the North Sea Area, the successful NSC fisheries partnership has been a source of inspiration for the first RAC (Regional Advisory Council). Similar models - where groupings of regions have active observership in the same capacity as member states and the European Commission - might be used in a wider context in shaping an integrated maritime policy. The member regions thank the IOPC Funds and European Maritime Safety Agency for the positive attitude with which partnerships and cooperation actions have been set up and are envisaged.

6- Looking ahead to the future, the member regions lend their support to their Political Bureau's proposal to initiate a thought process on the **future of a European agriculture sector adapted to the regions**. They commission the Bureau to carry out this task with a view to coming up with some initial proposals in 2007 in partnership with the Committee of the Regions and the Directorate-General for Agriculture.

7- Similarly, they support the work initiated by the CPMR working groups on **renewable energies, employment and training, and research and innovation**. They thank the regions of Navarre, Stockholm and Asturias, Västra-Götaland and Valencia respectively for their active commitment in these areas.

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANET

8- The member regions are surprised that at a time when the number of incidents related to climate change seem to be on the rise, the Union no longer appears to be giving high priority and a high profile to the **Gothenburg Agenda**, which is not in contradiction with the demands for competitiveness made in Lisbon. They believe that these two aspects are entirely complementary and, together, convey what is particular about Europe on the world stage.

First of all, they wish to affirm their solidarity with the regions of South-East Asia, the United States, and Eastern Europe, which in 2005 were directly hit by the effects of these changes.

In the face of this challenge, they welcome:

- the seminar on climate change that their Conference is organising in partnership with the Regions of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Réunion on 3 and 4 February 2006;
- the progress achieved by nrg4SD (Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development) to build a worldwide partnership with other global players. The CPMR helps to administrate this network and through it provides its material support to regions that have fallen victim to climate hazards.

9- More generally speaking, the member regions want regional governments to become major partners in a **successful globalisation process**, failing which people may be encouraged to return to protectionism and alienation that could jeopardise peace.

They therefore support the first seminar to bring together regions from 5 continents, organised in June 2006 on the initiative of the CPMR and at the invitation of the Azores Region, with the aim of promoting **"the place of regions in globalisation"**. Through this event, the organisation representing the peripheral and maritime regions of Europe intends to pursue at world level the pioneering role it played on the European scene 30 years ago. The member regions express their thanks to the President of the European Commission, Mr Barroso, for agreeing to give his high patronage to this event.

They hope that the European Commission, in its partnership with other continental or sub-continental regions, will introduce a strand to systemise cooperation actions between regional authorities.

They urge the institutions exercising global governance to grant without delay a place to representatives of regional governments.

They place high hopes in the outermost regions of the Union, which on account of their geographical location might play a driving role in this dialogue with other world regions.

10- This concern should not prevent the CPMR from adopting an active attitude towards the success of **neighbourhood policy**.

In this respect, the member regions wholly support their Geographical Commissions directly involved in this policy in the Baltic, Balkans, Black Sea and Mediterranean. In particular, the CPMR and its Inter-Mediterranean Commission, through the proposals approved by the General Assembly of the Inter-Mediterranean Commission in Valencia and Madeira, are contributing to the efforts of Catalonia to ensure that Europe's regions contribute towards the re-launch of the Euro-Mediterranean policy on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process. The member regions urge the countries signed up to the Barcelona Process to translate into deeds the resolution of their Foreign Affairs Ministers, so that the regions can be systematically involved in implementing Euro-Mediterranean cooperation actions, drawing in particular on the successful experience of the structural funds.

They also wish to underline the importance of the initiative undertaken by the Commission, in partnership with the organisations of local and regional authorities, to respect the commitment to "clean up the Mediterranean Sea by 2020" as indicated in the Commission's Communication on a five-year action plan for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. In this regard, the regions approve the principles and priorities designed to orient the contribution of the regions towards a role whereby they ensure the consistency of actions – from EU level down to local level – and implement accompanying measures in terms of regional strategy and planning, providing training and information, involving stakeholders and integrating environmental concerns into the sectoral policies promoted by the regions.

11- In order to consolidate its competitiveness, Europe also needs to develop its interaction with Russia and Asia. To this end, instruments such as the renewed neighbourhood policy, motorways of the sea and pan-European transport policy should be promoted. For example, the Trans-Siberia railway will be a new important corridor for economic relations with the Far East.

AN ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP DESIGNED TO TAKE FORWARD OUR ACTION

12- The member regions welcome the ISO certification of their General Secretariat. It is the only organisation of its kind to have been awarded this international label. It is a pledge of the CPMR's professionalism.

13- They note with satisfaction the progress that has been achieved since the CPMR's 2nd medium-term development plan was adopted at the Stavanger General Assembly in September 2004.

14- They invite the Political Bureau, the Administrative Council and the General Secretariat to take forward their actions to implement this plan and conclude the negotiations in progress.

15- They deem that it is only by remaining independent that the CPMR - which for its funding relies on fees paid by its members - can establish useful partnerships with the EU institutions. They are therefore pleased to welcome new memberships and appeal to the other peripheral and maritime regions of Europe to join them.

Adopted unanimously

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RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED BY THE GEOGRAPHICAL COMMISSIONS

- II.1 -

RESOLUTION ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Presented by the Atlantic Arc Commission

Comments of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions on the European Commission consultation on the Green Paper on Energy Efficiency.

1. Due to the equally important roles of energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) in peripheral maritime regions, and the need to combine programmes in both these fields of energy management, future European policy should focus on the overall role of sustainable energy as a strategic factor for growth and welfare rather than devising separate policies on EE & RE.
2. The Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe believe that they should particularly benefit from decentralised electricity and heat supplies, and that these supplies are best generated and delivered locally. They consider that this point is not emphasized enough in the draft document, nor is the importance of maritime transport, which is of key importance to their economies.
3. Programmes that focus on the regeneration of communities in urban and rural areas and are partly or fully funded with European funding should recognise sustainable energy as a distinct priority, and not just simply as part of a cross-cutting theme.
4. Sustainable energy should be factored in at a very early stage of any urban or rural development/regeneration programme. Carbon savings should be included alongside other economic targets within regeneration and economic development funding programmes.
5. The peripheral maritime regions recall that, in most cases, they tend to be less developed than the more urbanised and industrialised parts of Europe. On the other hand, they have considerable potentials in the field of renewable energy, whose exploitation should substantially contribute to the lowering of the EU CO₂ emissions. They think that this opportunity should be seized to reverse positively their economic fortunes. The implementation of "regional carbon credits" should be investigated and, if feasible, fostered, so as to ensure that the development of renewable energies in the maritime periphery becomes a factor contributing to Europe's territorial cohesion.
6. Municipalities and local authorities (and any other public sector organisations) should lead by example and invest in sustainable energy within public infrastructure. The Energy Services Company (ESCO) approach should be exploited as a means of financing renewable energy & energy efficiency technologies.
7. Markets for local entrepreneurs should be created through pilot programmes that combine economic and environmental goals.
8. More attention should be given to supporting public knowledge through awareness programmes, and in particular to supporting training and awareness increasing the knowledge of stakeholder, especially project developers. Training should also be provided to educate and raise the knowledge within appropriate sections/departments of municipalities/local authorities such as planning departments (both elected officials and staff).

9. Planning policies should have a sustainable energy element that specifies a minimum level of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies to be integrated into both new and re-developments.
10. Where appropriate, renovation and revitalisation of existing homes and commercial premises should be prioritised over new build. This includes the effective re-use and development of currently empty buildings. However buildings must be “fit for purpose” so in some cases demolition and re-build must remain an option, even in conservation areas (see 12 below).
11. Conservation should be viewed within the context that everything changes. In conservation areas, the importance of sympathetic sustainable energy installations as a method of sustaining local communities should be emphasised. EU environmental legislation should bear in mind the peripheral maritime regions’ need for development, and allow for sensible compromises.
12. Departments responsible for energy, economy and the environment at all levels (EU/National/Regional and local) should work more closely in order to ensure that sustainable energy is integrated across policies in each of these sectors.
13. The EU should emphasise more strongly the economic benefits of sustainable energy and recognise that energy is prerequisite to growth and a good quality of life for European citizens.
14. EU State Aids legislation should bear in mind the absolute priority of developing a sustainable energy policy, considering both the EU energy dependency, and the potential environmental risks related to global warming. This legislation should take into account the extra costs involved the development of such a policy in peripheral maritime regions, and especially in those beset by permanent geographical handicaps. In fixing aid ceilings, allocation should be made for the extra costs arising from remoteness or from the small size of the local market.

Adopted unanimously

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- II.2 -

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON EU TERRITORIAL CO-OPERATION 2007-2013

Presented by the Baltic Sea and North Sea Commissions

The General Assembly of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe appreciates the European Commission's efforts to further develop the instruments of territorial co-operation and welcomes the principles of partnership, multi annual programming and solidarity as vital elements in the general outline of the EU Cohesion Policy.

The introduction of a new objective - European Territorial Co-operation - in the period 2007 - 2013 demonstrates the great value which the Commission attaches to regional co-operation in all its variants and facets.

The General Assembly of the CPMR with this resolution would like to pay attention to some specific points related to the European Commission's proposal.

The European Commission has proposed four prioritised themes for the future Transnational Co-operation, being:

- Water management
- Natural risk prevention
- Improving accessibility
- Creation of scientific and technological networks.

The CPMR acknowledges the value and relevance of these themes. However the CPMR would welcome an increase in the proposed number of co-operation themes and, in consultation with the regions, the possibility

to add themes that are appropriate to individual co-operation areas. Examples of such themes could be Demographic Change, Coastal Management, Energy Futures and Cultural Heritage.

The present geographical limits of Interreg IIIB - programme areas are based mainly on common spatial features and specific characteristics of these areas and have had an important relevance for the constructive and successful collaboration in the Interreg IIC and IIIB period.

The CPMR requests the European Commission to demonstrate a flexible approach with regard to the establishment of new geographical co-operation areas in order to promote and stimulate co-operation between areas in common fields of interest. The member regions of CPMR ask to be consulted on the establishment of the co-operation areas in which they are involved.

With regard to the allocation of financial resources for territorial co-operation the CPMR supports the proposal of the European Commission to have balanced contributions to cross-border operations at one hand and transnational co-operation at the other hand. The CPMR requests the European Commission and the EU Member States to do utmost efforts to achieve decisions in this respect at short notice.

Adopted unanimously
(less 6 abstentions)

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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GEOGRAPHICAL COMMISSIONS AND ENDORSED BY THE CPMR

- III.1 -

RESOLUTION ON THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF EU'S LISBON STRATEGY AND THE GOTHENBURG AGENDA

Adopted at the North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting - 17 June 2005

The outcome of the European Council in Lisbon in 2000 - The Lisbon Strategy - committed the EU to develop by 2010 the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment.

The mid-term review by the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok, in November 2004, pointed out that a key issue regarding the slow progress has been the lack of determined political action. As a result, the EU makes vigorous efforts this year to put new force into the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy.

The North Sea Commission strongly supports these efforts, since we feel that our member Regions have a lot to contribute and a lot to gain.

The Regions are experienced in promoting more competitive economies. We are already in the process of achieving key aspects of the Lisbon agenda, in some cases with the support of EU's Structural and Cohesion Funds. These efforts must be continued in the future, with a clear focus on growth and jobs. A starting point for a knowledge-based society is a flexible structure to transfer competence and skills. All resources are to be used, and in particular modern information technology.

In addition the European Union also has its Strategy for Sustainable Development- The Gothenburg Agenda of the Summit in June 2001. Great efforts are needed to make these European strategies move in the right direction.

The North Sea Commission wants to underline that the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies must be seen as strongly interconnected. There is no chance of success in implementing the one without actively taking the other into consideration.

Therefore, the North Sea Commission strongly recommends its member regions to take concrete action in the following areas:

- The North-Sea Regions must take part in all further actions at European level to stimulate the European economy. The constructive role of the Regions would be promoted by creating a new generation of interregional co-operation programmes. An Interreg Programme for the North Sea would indeed contribute to sustainable growth and jobs, and to attain sustainable development, socially and environmentally.
- The North-Sea Regions are natural partners in the efforts to create national Lisbon programmes. These national programmes must also clearly reflect the commitments required by the Gothenburg Agenda and contain strong incentives for the sustainable development of all the EU territory and its communities.
- The North-Sea Regions should continue to promote investment and research in innovative technology- and know-how, and develop systems to reinforce the learning society.

By urging its member regions to consider the recommended objectives, the North Sea Commission wishes to emphasise the role of the regions in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy and the Gothenburg Agenda. If we are to deliver the outlined long-term goals of sustainable development -involving economic, social and environmental policies- we, the member Regions of the North Sea Commission, must take immediate action.

Adopted unanimously

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- III.2 -

RESOLUTION TOWARDS A EUROPEAN MARITIME POLICY A MAJOR EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE FOR THE NORTH SEA REGION

Adopted at the North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting - 17 June 2005

The North Sea Commission welcomes the ambitious aim to design and elaborate an integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union. As outlined by a communication jointly presented by President José Manuel Barroso and Commissioner Joe Borg in early March 2005, a Commission's Task Force chaired by Commissioner Borg shall elaborate a Green Paper scheduled to be presented in the 1st half of 2006. This Green Paper shall serve as a consultation paper for an extensive consultation exercise to follow this presentation.

The North Sea Commission strongly supports the perception of the European Commission that:

- the seas are seriously contributing to livelihood and well-being of mankind.
- the seas are generating considerable potentials for economic growth in terms of transport, resources, maritime research and development, innovative technologies as well as of marine protection.
- these potentials need to be addressed by an integrated political approach as regards the aim to make the most out of these cross-cutting potentials and needs in a sustainable manner.
- it is high time to develop a Maritime Policy of the European Union as regards competitiveness of the entire Union in general and of maritime regions in particular.
- this cross-cutting issue considerably can serve to the implementation of the targets set out in the Lisbon, Gothenburg and The Hague process.

In this respect the North Sea Commission points to the potentials, capacities and needs of the North Sea Region and of the North of Europe as a whole:

- sea transport, ship building facilities and sea harbours of the area are of paramount importance for the entire
- Union maritime businesses, technologies and research of the area are offering unique potentials
- Protection of marine environment and resources as well as the pressing issue of maritime safety need to be enhanced by coordinated efforts.

Some major issues primarily to be addressed by a Green Paper and a future European Maritime Policy:

- **maritime industries and technologies:**
against the background of speedy innovation cycles development of innovative technologies need to be supported (marine environment technologies, offshore wind energy, marine aqua-culture, marine resources, safety of maritime transport, surveillance of global climate change etc.)
- **maritime research and development:**
enhanced and coordinated co-operation of research institutions need to be supported by the 7th Research Framework Programme; the number of research fields need to be enlarged up to production of healthy marine nutrition, marine pharmaceuticals or marine energy and should

include also bio-geo-systems at land-sea borders (including Coastal Zone Management and the Wadden Seas)

- **maritime transport, logistics and safety:**

maritime transport systems will gain ever increasing importance for the entire Union. Thus, hinterland connections of European harbours as well as the improvement of multimodal transport networks and logistical chains need to be supported by EU funds (Transeuropean Networks, EU programme Marco Polo, Motorways of the seas , EU Structural funds objective 3 territorial co-operation). In the field of maritime safety the promotion of environmentally friendly and secure new ship generation could considerably contribute to competitiveness of European shipbuilding sector. Increasing shipping rates as well as growing world-wide competition require sufficient education and training facilities. Enhanced network co-operation among respective institutions in the field of transport could generate added value and should be supported.

- **fisheries:**

In the North Sea Area, the successful NSC Fisheries Partnership has been a source of inspiration for the first RAC (Regional Advisory Council for Fisheries). Similar models might be useful in a wider context in shaping an integrated maritime policy.

The North Sea Commission calls upon the European Commission to involve regional cooperation organisations active in transnational co-operation in European regions of relevance: By contributing to a Green Paper as well by active participation in a consultation process to follow, their experience and the potentials of the areas which they represent could lend considerable added value to the political process. An open dialogue between all levels of governance (European, National, Regional) is necessary. Likewise open doors to stakeholders and NGO s.

Parallel to this, the North Sea Commission calls upon the governments of the North Sea Region as well as to the regions in countries bordering the North Sea to consider establishing discussion fora on European Maritime Policy and to develop joint contributions to the whole process involving the regional level within the North Sea states from the very beginning.

The North Sea is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and The Norwegian Sea, with ecosystems crossing EU borders. A future European Maritime Policy must also include a close co operation with neighbouring countries outside the European Union.

Furthermore the North Sea Commission strongly asks for the launch of an active maritime community generating joint transnational projects, which could be funded by transnational programmes. This lends to strengthen the core issues on the regional development in maritime influenced areas. The multifunctional approach needs therefore an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

Adopted unanimously

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- III.3 -

RESOLUTION WITH REFERENCE TO A NEW EUROPEAN LEGISLATION ON CHEMICALS

Adopted at the North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting - 17 June 2005

The North Sea Commission welcomes the initiative for the new European legislation on Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of CHEMicals (REACH). However, we have with some concern noted the changes in the proposal from the original White paper from the Commission, to the present proposal.

The North Sea Commission is an organisation with some 70 member regions from seven states around the North Sea. The organisation is among other things working to secure a sustainable regional development in the North Sea area. All in line with the Lisbon Strategy and the Gothenburg Agenda.

For that reason the member regions of The North Sea Commission would benefit from a strong and efficient European legislation regarding chemicals. **Chemicals in general and - hazardous substances in particular - will always be of relevance to health, environment and economic development.**

We would like to underline that not only do we see a strong European legislation in this field as vital to protect the health of our citizens and the balance of our environment. We also see it as a strong contribution to the competitiveness of our industry and businesses.

There are many examples in the member regions of The North Sea Commission - and surely in other progressive European Regions, too - of companies, which are developing new advanced products for local use and for exports. Products, which provide well functioning and attractive services without having to use chemicals, which are a threat to health and environment.

We would go so far as to say that this is potentially a whole new global market, where European businesses could be at the forefront If - they were only encouraged and stimulated by relevant and efficient legislation.

If the future REACH does not give this support, we fear that innovative ideas and technologies will have difficulty competing with old technologies, which more often use hazardous chemicals. The strong and supportive legislation of this kind is entirely in line with EU's Lisbon Strategy and Gothenburg Agenda.

The new legislation must be firmly based on the precautionary principle. Furthermore, it must contain the following elements, in order to guarantee maximum protection for European citizens and environment and to stimulate innovative European businesses:

- There must be satisfactory information available, including proper safety assessments, for all chemical products on the market. This should be provided by the producer/importer.
- Citizens, retailers and industrial users of chemicals should be guaranteed access to information on products that contain hazardous chemicals. This is crucial for their ability to avoid purchasing and using such products.
- Dangerous substances must always be replaced with less harmful alternatives, when such are available. The authorization procedure should explicitly require substitution as the measure of priority (i. e. the substitution principle).

The member Regions of The North Sea Commission expect you to actively work in order to secure a strong and efficient European chemical legislation.

Adopted unanimously

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- III.4 -

POLITICAL STATEMENT ON INSHORE SHIP TO SHIP TRANSFERS OF CRUDE OIL PRODUCTS AND OTHER HYDROCARBONS

Adopted at the North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting - 17 June 2005

The local authorities surrounding the North Sea represented by the North Sea Commission call upon the member Governments and the European Commission to address urgently the question of inshore Ship to Ship transfers of hazardous cargoes, including crude oil products, other hydrocarbons *and bunkers transfers*. In view of the potential environmental and economic consequences of spillage, there is a need for a common strategy covering all EU waters. This strategy must take into account the likely increasing demand for such transfers as tanker-borne crude and refined oil exports from the Baltic and Barents Sea areas increases. Such a strategy should also address the availability of alternative less hazardous methods of dealing with any transfer. In addition, it is requested that the EU moves to a robust vessel licensing system for all shipping in EU waters based on the best practice that already exists within the EU.

Adopted unanimously

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- III.5 -

STATEMENT OF THE NORTH SEA COMMISSION

Adopted at the North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting - 17 June 2005

- with the courage to innovate -

Striving to fulfil the objectives of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas.

The North Sea Commission recognises the relevance for the North Sea Region of the objectives of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies, and recommends its member regions to be fully committed to the implementation of these strategies.

The regions around the North Sea have already demonstrated their capacity to innovate and respond to the challenges set by these strategies. The North Sea Commission, therefore, urges its member regions to build on these strengths and take an integrated approach that equally emphasises economic growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. Member regions should make use of the opportunities for economic growth by encouraging innovation in environmental and social development. It is vital to ensure a balanced provision for the needs of urban and rural areas.

The North Sea Commission will promote innovation, development of the knowledge society and encouragement of entrepreneurship. It recognises that accessibility, social inclusion and lifelong learning are essential elements needed to realise these ambitions.

In order to implement the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies the NSC regions should build on their regional qualities, resources and strengths. We therefore encourage the EU to provide more customised instruments on state aid and territorial co-operation.

The North Sea Commission also urges the CPMR to adopt this approach towards the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies.

Adopted unanimously