78th NSC Executive Committee Meeting
11th October 2018
Brussels

78th NSC Executive Committee, 11th October 2018, Brussels
Draft agenda

11.00 – 11.15 Formalities
   Welcome by the President of the CPMR North Sea Commission
   1. Approval of the agenda
   2. Approval of the minutes from the 77th Executive Committee Meeting, 13th June 2018, Fredrikstad

11.15 – 12.00 Reports on NSR 2020 priority areas
   3. Managing Maritime Space by Cllr Anders Fasth, Chair of Marine Resources Group
   4. Increasing Accessibility and Clean Transport by Cllr Preben Friis-Hauge, Chair of Transport Group
   5. Tackling Climate Change by Cllr Jimmy Gray, Chair of Energy and Climate Change Group
   6. Attractive and Sustainable Communities by Cllr Barney Crockett, Chair of Smart Regions Group

12.00 – 12.15 Coffee break

12.15 – 13.15 Other strategic issues
   7. Brexit developments by Cllr Nienke Homan, Chair of Brexit Taskforce
   8. Update from CPMR by Eleni Marianou, CPMR Secretary General
   9. Interreg NSR State of play by Sarah Holsen, Interreg North Sea Secretariat

13.15 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 14.45 External presentation
   10. North Seas energy cooperation by Brendan Devlin, DG Energy, European Commission
   11. Future of European Territorial Cooperation by NN, DG Regio, European Commission (tbc)

14.30 – 15.00 Reports from member regions
   12. Reports on North Sea related issues in member regions by national representatives

15.00 – 16.00 Internal issues
   13. Post 2020 NSR strategy by Magnus Engelbreksson, Executive Secretary
   14. Statement of accounts by Magnus Engelbreksson, Executive Secretary
   15. Member fee model from 2020 – follow-up discussions in Kiel
   16. Venue and time for the 28th Annual Business Meeting and North Sea Conference 2019
   17. Next Executive Committee meeting(s)
   18. AOB
1. Approval of the agenda

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Approves the agenda for the meeting
2. Approval of the minutes

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Approves the minutes of the 77th Executive Committee meeting, 13th June 2018, Fredrikstad (Norway)
Welcome and introduction by Cllr Kerstin Brunnström, NSC President.

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Approval of the minutes from the 76th ExCom
3. Follow-up on decisions from the Annual Business Meeting
4. Election of Vice Chairs of thematic groups 2018-2020
5. Membership
6. Next Executive Committee meeting(s)
7. AOB
At the 77th NSC Executive Committee Meeting, held on 13th June 2018 in Østfold, the following attendees were present:

**Attending**

President
Kerstin Brunnström
Vice President
Andreas Lervik
Vice President
John Lamb
Danish Representative
Preben Friis-Hauge
Dutch Representative
not present
English Representative
John Lamb
French Representative
not present
German Representative
Antje Grotheer
Norwegian Representative
Kåre Pettersen (substitute)
Scottish Representative
John Reynolds (substitute)
Swedish Representative
Dag Hultefors

**NSC Thematic groups Chairs/Vice Chairs**

Energy and Climate Change
not present
Marine Resources
Anders Fasth (Chair)
Transport
Preben Friis-Hauge (Chair)
Smart Regions
Barney Crockett (Chair)
Otto Kjaer-Larsen (Vice Chair)

**NSC Secretariat**

Executive Secretary
Magnus Engelbrektsson
Assistant Executive Secretary
Melissa Frödin
Assistant Executive Secretary
Irma Ganibegovic

**NSC Thematic group Advisors**

Energy and Climate Change
Paulien Kooistra
Marine Resources
not present
Transport
Jon Halvard Eide
Smart Regions
Geir Sør-Reime

**Other Ministers/Councillors**

Erik Johansson, Region Örebro län
Karen Anne Kjendlie, Vestfold

**Other Supporting Officers**

Gregg Jones, CPMR
Martin Brebner, Aberdeenshire
Laura Paterson, Aberdeen City Council
Torsten Raff, Bremen
Elmer Koole, Noord-Nederland
Dino Keljalic, Region Örebro län
Charlotta Lundström, Västra Götaland
Karen Greve Somerset, North Denmark
Kia Sofie Abildtrup, South Denmark
Sidony Venema, Flevoland
Kjersti Helene Garberg, Østfold
1. Approval of the agenda

Decisions and conclusions
1. The Executive Committee approves the agenda.

2. Approval of the minutes

Decisions and conclusions
1. The Executive Committee approves the minutes of the 76th Executive Committee meeting, 15th March 2018, Kiel, Germany.

3. Follow-up on decisions from the Annual Business Meeting

Decisions and conclusions
The Executive Committee takes note of
1. its appointment to act as the steering group for the process of drafting the post 2020 strategy for the North Sea Region.
2. the information that the Secretariat will communicate the resolutions, policy positions and the final declaration to relevant stakeholders and decision makers.

4. Election of Vice Chairs of thematic groups 2018-2020

Decisions and conclusions
The Executive Committee elects
1. Cllr Tjisse Stelpstra, Noord-Nederland (NL) as Vice Chair for the Energy and Climate Change Group
2. Cllr Jon-Olav Strand, Aust-Agder (NO) as Vice Chair for the Energy and Climate Change Group
3. Cllr Åshild Kjelsnes, Sogn og Fjordane (NO) as Vice Chair for the Marine Resources Group
4. Cllr Henk Staghouwer, Noord-Nederland (NL) as Vice Chair for the Marine Resources Group
5. Cllr Birgitta Adolfsson, Västra Götaland (SE) as Vice Chair for the Smart Regions Group
6. Cllr Otto Kjær Larsen, Nordjylland (DK) as Vice Chair for the Smart Regions Group
7. Cllr Kåre Pettersen, Vestfold (NO) as Vice Chair for the Transport Group
5. Membership

CPMR has received a membership application from **Highlands and Islands of Scotland European Partnership** (HIEP) to be decided by the CPMR Political Bureau in Pärnu on the 21st of June. According to the statutes of the CPMR, a decision on membership should be made “following advice from the relevant Geographical Commission”, which means that the North Sea Commission should present its view to CPMR Political Bureau.

**Decisions and conclusions**

The Executive Committee

1. notes that HIEP is not an elected council, but an association. The CPMR should not become an association of associations, that could devaluate our status.
2. notes that HIEP includes not only councils, but also a university and another public body. It would open for a new category of members, which would change the membership base of CPMR.
3. notes that it is unfair that seven councils would get the services of CPMR/NSC to the price of one. This could lead to several members being inclined to leave and save money by letting existing or new umbrella organisations represent them. Which could lead to a loss of members and income from membership fees.
4. mandates President Brunström to decline the HIEP membership at the CPMR Political Bureau in Pärnu, and recommend the Political Bureau to explore alternative ways to cooperate with these kinds of associations and organisations.

6. Next Executive Committee meeting

**Decisions and conclusions**

The Executive Committee

1. confirms the 11th of October 2018 as the time for the next ExCom meeting which will take place in Brussels, Belgium.
2. Confirms the 11th of January 2019 as the time for the 79th ExCom meeting which will take place in Groningen, Netherlands. This ExCom will be devoted to discussing the process of the post 2020 strategy for the North Sea Region.

7. AOB

Cllr Preben Friis-Hauge, Chair of the NSC Transport working group, informed that the transport working group is planning a joint meeting with the Energy and Climate Change group in February 2019 to collect input to the new North Sea Commission strategy. Arranging a joint group meeting usually requires more resources from the host region. And as joint meetings are encouraged in the NSC, Cllr Friis-Hauge suggests that the ExCom discusses the possibility to reserve funding in the budget for joint meetings. That way the working groups can apply for funding when needed.
Decisions and conclusions

The Executive Committee

1. confirms that there is room in the budget to fund joint working groups meetings, and encourages the working groups to apply for funding when needed.

Kerstin Brunnström thanks the participants for engaging discussions and closes the meeting.
3. Managing Maritime Space

The agenda point will be presented by Cllr Anders Fasth, Chair of the Marine Resources Group. A written activity report is attached.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
Activity report – Managing Maritime Space

Period: June – September 2018

**Key Action Areas in the North Sea Region 2020 Strategy**

**Use maritime spatial planning as a tool to promote dialogue between different governmental levels and stakeholders**

*Coordinate/contribute to NSC activities within the NorthSEE project:* The province of Noord Holland participates in the Interreg NorthSEE project on behalf of the NSC/Marine Resources Group.

Maritime Spatial Planning has been discussed in innovative and interactive ways. During the Annual Event of the Interreg North Sea Region programme in Fredrikstad (June 2018) the Marine Resources Group was in charge of organizing the seminar on Maritime Space. An interactive workshop was held on marine litter with two representatives from KIMO. After the interactive workshop, the biggest board game of Europe, the MSP Board Game, was played. This way the lessons learned were efficiently put straight into practice.

**Ensure sustainable and innovative exploitation of marine resources**

Establish a NSC position on marine litter and plastics: The Marine Resources Group drafted a resolution on Marine Litter which was much supported and adopted by the Annual Business Meeting in Fredrikstad (June 2018). The need for an action plan from a regional perspective was discussed and agreed upon. The MRG will draft an action plan.

During the morning programme on the 13th of June, a site visit was organized: a beach-clean up session. We were joined by the local artist who builds a Cathedral of Hope from marine litter, the project manager of the Interreg project “Clean Coastline”, Oslofjord friluftsråd and KIMO International. It was a great awareness raising operation.

There have been contacts with OSPAR, KIMO, Waddensee cooperation and North Sea Advisory Council about strengthening cooperation and exchanging knowledge. KIMO especially has been involved the last couple of months to work together on strengthening the coordinated approach on the marine litter issue. A request for further cooperation has resulted in signing an MOU with KIMO during the Annual Business Meeting in Fredrikstad.

Establish a NSC position on Brexit to make sure regional interests are heard: Brexit will have huge implications for the marine sector. The advisor has joined the CPMR meeting on the Channel taskforce on June 25th, 2018, in Portsmouth about the future cooperation with UK regions and the effects of Brexit. For the upcoming MRG meeting in October, presentations on the implications for fisheries will be held as well as a discussion on the Brexit negotiations (from the NSC taskforces).

**Ensure a skilled workforce to meet the needs of the future and livelihood in coastal communities**

A site visit to the Scottish Maritime Academy & simulator is planned for the next MRG meeting on October 2nd in Aberdeen.
Update on the development in the EU, CPMR and North Sea Region related to the priority area

The CPMR is doing a thorough work on maritime projects and financing, fisheries and aquaculture, maritime spatial planning, etc., on European level. The NSC attends meetings and contributes with input to questionnaires and reports.

CPMR’s Future of Europe initiative is highly relevant for the group’s work on Brexit. The CPMR’s work on Cohesion Policy is also very important, we work together as much as possible and support the lobby work where we can.

There is of course close contact with CPMR on Maritime Spatial Planning topics as well as the initiatives undertaken in the marine litter issue. This has resulted in planning a beach-clean-up operation during the General Assembly (Madeira) like we have organized during the ABM in June (Fredrikstad, Norway).

A second meeting on the New North Sea Region is planned on September 21st in Brussels with all the thematic group advisors, experts and the NSC secretariat to discuss the future plans for a new North Sea Region Strategy.

Marine Resources Group
Chair: Cllr Anders Fasth, Västra Götaland, Sweden
Vice Chair: Cllr Åshild Kjelsnes, Sogn og Fjordane, Norway
Vice Chair: Cllr Henk Staghouwer, Northern Netherlands, Netherlands
Advisor: Yolanda Schmal, Province of Noord-Holland, Netherlands

Group meeting(s): when, where, regions attending and focus of the meeting(s)

- The MRG group met on the isle of Texel and Flevoland in April 2018.

A special 3-day MRG meeting was organized in April 2018 together with all the project partners of the NorthSEE project on the isle of Texel. The MRG group participated in the MSP Challenge 2050. It was a dedicated session on Ecology and included relevant stakeholders from several organizations, research institutions and regions. It was considered a strong tool for awareness raising. A typical Dutch bike ride was part of the Texel meeting including a joint dinner with all the partners of the NorthSEE project.

After the Texel experience, the group was invited by our new member, province of Flevoland. A guided bus tour from Texel to Flevoland was organized, Cllr. Jan-Nico Appelman was welcomed into the North Sea Commission’s family by Anders Fasth with the licensed North Sea Commission’s tie. And a site visit was organized to the picturesque fisheries village, a former island Urk, the second largest fish-auction in Europe. 12 regions from five countries have attended the group meetings.

- The MRG group met in Fredrikstad, Norway in June 2018.

The group met for a special marine litter site visit, the ABM and the Annual Conference of the Interreg North Sea Region programme.
Participation in other events and processes of relevance for the priority area, e.g. EU and CPMR events, project meetings, conferences, networks etc.

9th of April Marine litter taskforce CPMR, Brussels
10th of April SEARICA meeting on marine litter, Brussels
17th - 19th of April MRG on the isle of Texel
20th of April Seminar CPMR on Future of Fisheries, EMFF and Brexit, Flevoland
13th of June Annual Business Meeting Fredrikstad
13th of June ExCom Fredrikstad
14th of June Annual Event Interreg North Sea Region programme, Fredrikstad
25th of June CPMR Taskforce Channel Programme on future cooperation and Brexit, Portsmouth
2-4th of October Joint MRG and E&CC group, including MSP Challenge, Aberdeen

Other group activities contributing to the NSR 2020 Key Actions Areas

During the MRG meeting in Flevoland (April 2018) a representative of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and the director for Maritime Affairs of the CPMR introduced the approved SEANSE project. This is a project in the framework of a DG Mare call on maritime spatial planning in the North Sea. The MRG will remain in close contact with this project.

It was decided to organize a joint meeting of the Marine Resources Group with the Energy and Climate Change group. It is a special edition since it will also include an MSP challenge (focus on Energy) with the members of Energy and Climate Change group coordinated by the Interreg NorthSEE project in Aberdeen October 3rd and 4th.

Upcoming activities (group meetings, participation in and contribution to external events, processes, projects etc.) and planned activities in follow up of the key action areas

13th of September: Strategic meeting MRG
20th of September: NSC Brexit Taskforce
20th of September: Advisors meeting
21st of September: Taskforce New North Sea Region Strategy
2nd - 4th of October: Joint meeting of the Marine Resources Group with Energy and Climate Change group. It will also include an MSP challenge with the members of the Energy and Climate Change group Aberdeen, UK
4. Increasing Accessibility and Clean Transport

The agenda point will be presented by Cllr Preben Friis-Hauge, Chair of the Transport Group. A written activity report is attached.

**Recommendation:**

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
Activity report – Increasing Accessibility and Clean Transport

Period: June – October 2018

Key Action Areas in the North Sea Region 2020 Strategy

- Ensure good access to the TEN-T Core Network for peripheral and maritime regions through funding instruments (the CEF) and governance mechanisms (Core Network Corridor Forums)
- Facilitate modal shift from road to rail and sea
- Support measures and incentives to promote clean, efficient and inclusive transport, incl. clean shipping

Update on the development in the EU, CPMR and North Sea Region related to the priority area

Europe on the Move III

Building on previous packages in this series, the European Commission put forward a 3rd and final set of measures on 17 May. The objective is to allow all Europeans to benefit from safer traffic, less polluting vehicles and more advanced technological solutions, while supporting the competitiveness of the EU industry. To this end, the initiatives include an integrated policy for the future of road safety with measures for vehicles and infrastructure safety; the first ever CO2 standards for heavy-duty vehicles; a strategic Action Plan for the development and manufacturing of batteries in Europe and a forward-looking strategy on connected and automated mobility.

With this third 'Europe on the Move' package, the Commission is completing its ambitious agenda for the modernization of mobility.

Transport in European Commission proposal for cohesion policy post 2020

Green, low-carbon and more connected Europe are included among the objectives for the cohesion policy post 2020. This means that transport and clean mobility should be eligible for the next generation of Interreg programmes.

Proposal for draft regulation for Connecting Europe Facility – CEF II – 2021 - 2027

On 6 June, the European Commission published its proposal for a regulation for CEF II post 2020. This instrument has three components: Energy, Digital and Transport.

The transport component has a total budget of 30,6 billion EUR, of which 12,8 bn EUR is allocated for the general envelope, 11,3 bn EUR for the cohesion envelope, and 6,5 bn EUR for military mobility / dual use. There are two policy objectives:

- Infrastructure - “Efficient and interconnected networks”: 60% of funds
- Horizontal - “Smart, sustainable, inclusive, safe and secure mobility”: 40% of funds
Most of the funds for the policy objective on infrastructure will go to the Core Network Corridors.

The proposal is encouraging synergies with other funding programmes, in particular Horizon Europe and ERDF/ETC (territorial cooperation/Interreg). It is positive that the regulation has proposed to increase the share of the funding to the comprehensive network from 5 to 9%. Groningen – Bremen is furthermore included in the list of pre-defined projects on the comprehensive network.

It is however regrettable that ports are not regarded as "cross border" infrastructure and thus not included in the lists of pre-identified sections. The same goes for the failure to include the link between Örebro and Oslo in the ScanMed corridor – as previously requested by the Swedish Government.

Proposal to extend the Scan-Med corridor in Jutland

We are very pleased to note that the draft CEF II regulation is proposing to extend the ScanMed Core Network Corridor up through Jutland to the ports of Frederikshavn and Hirtshals – in line with long-established positions of the CPMR NSC. It is now important to work towards the European Parliament and the EU Council, to make sure that this proposal is finally adopted in the decision on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework for 2021 – 2027.

CPMR

Response to EU consultation on connections between Ireland and the European Continent after Brexit

As of today, the UK is part of the North Sea – Mediterranean (NSM) core network corridor. Subject to any transitional arrangement as of the date of its withdrawal from the EU, the UK will no longer be part of the corridor. Facing an obvious need to revise the alignment of the corridor in order to ensure a continuous connection between the section located in Ireland and the section in the Continental EU, the European Commission launched a public consultation between 28 June 2018 and 12 July 2018.

The CPMR contributed to this first consultation highlighting that it is indeed of outmost importance that this alignment enhances Ireland's connectivity with continental EU after the Brexit. It stressed that maritime links should be added between the Irish core ports of Dublin and Cork and the NSM corridor’s ports on the continent. At this occasion, it underlined that ports of the Atlantic coast has an ideal location in relation to Ireland.

Therefore, the CPMR asked the European Commission to consider Atlantic ports as a longer term complementary option to better connect Ireland after the withdrawal of the UK as a complement to the new maritime link of the NSM corridor.

On 1 August 2018, the European Commission published its proposal. It proposes that the line connecting Ireland to the Continental EU would be "Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin/Corcaigh/Cork – Zeebrugge/Antwerpen/Rotterdam".

Amendments to European Parliament Report on the draft CEF II regulation
The CPMR secretariat has proposed amendments to a report drafted by the European Parliament TRAN-ITRE Committees Rapporteurs on the CEF II proposal. The amendment proposals were also reviewed and validated by the meeting of the CPMR Transport group on 4 September (see separate para. on this meeting below).

Several of the proposed amendments state that the CEF, in line with art.4 of the TEN-T regulation, should contribute to promote the territorial accessibility and connectivity of all regions of the EU, including remote, outermost, insular, peripheral and mountainous regions, as well as sparsely populated areas. They also call for the encouragement of modal shift to sustainable modes of Transport, such as railways, maritime and inland waterways, and for the introduction of support mechanisms for maritime transport. CPMR furthermore requests that regional authorities should be included in the project selection committee of CEF. The amendments are also advocating higher co-financing rates for Motorways of the Sea, maritime links and ports on the comprehensive network. Finally, the CPMR is also calling for the inclusion of the link Oslo - Örebro – Stockholm in the ScanMed corridor – in line with NSC and BSC positions.

**North Sea Region**

**Project applications on transport in the NSR programme**

One transport project (full application) was approved by the NSR Programme Steering Committee on 19 June.

Transport applications with partners from NSC member regions are likely to be submitted to the upcoming call of the NSR Programme closing on 1 October.

The City of Bremen is leading the development of an application of automated road transport to the upcoming call. Institutions from NSC member regions in Hordaland, Västra Götaland and Groningen are partners to the proposal – for which the NSC has issued a letter of support.

**Transport Group**

Chair: Cllr Preben Friis-Hauge, South Denmark Region, Denmark (elected 31 October 2011)
Vice Chair: Cllr John Reynolds, Aberdeen City, UK (elected 15 March 2018)
Vice Chair: Cllr Kåre Pettersen, Vestfold County Council, Norway (elected 4 March 2015)
Advisor: Jon Halvard Eide, Vest-Agder, Norway (appointed October 2000)

**Group meeting(s): when, where, regions attending and focus of the meeting(s)**

**Meeting of Transport group in Fredrikstad 13 June**

17 persons from member regions in Denmark, Sweden, Scotland, Netherlands and Norway attended the meeting. There were observers from the Interreg North Sea Region Programme Secretariat and South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SESTRANS).
The meeting heard an update on the exercise of mapping the interests and priorities among members. The purpose of this mapping is to improve the basis for mutual learning and exchange. More member regions are encouraged to respond to this.

Group members from Groningen and Vestfold agreed to formally take on the function as task holders for clean transport. An updated version of the report on the use of alternative fuels in public transport and other transport services was presented. It was decided to update the report on an annual basis. The Clean Transport Team will consider how this report could be exploited for policy purposes and/or project development, or just as an inventory of practices to be shared among the members. More member regions are requested to provide new input or update their previous input to this report.

The Task Holder for Clean Shipping presented preliminary findings of a survey on measures and practices on clean shipping in the NSC member regions. Eight member regions have responded so far, but more members are encouraged to respond. The meeting discussed clarifications in the survey, and how it could be disseminated and exploited (e.g. for projects, policy resolutions, good practice guide etc.)

The Assistant Executive Secretary presented the EC proposal for a draft CEF regulation post 2020, and the meeting discussed its potential implications for the NSR. The group decided to provide input to the CPMR on the alignment of core network corridors and “pre-identified sections on the core and comprehensive network (see also the dedicated para. on this below). The group will continue its work to prepare input to the revision of the TEN-T regulation which is scheduled for 2023.

Participation in other events and processes of relevance for the priority area, e.g. EU and CPMR events, project meetings, conferences, networks etc.

Attendance at meeting of the CPMR Transport group in Brussels on 4 September
Some 20 people from the different geographical commissions and the CPMR secretariat attended the meeting. The Adviser and a group member from Örebro region represented the Transport group. Also representatives of the Lower Saxony EU office attended the meeting.

The new Transport Director Lucas Bosser presented CPMRs assessment of the CEF II proposal”, and the meeting reviewed CPMRs amendment proposals for a report drafted by the European Parliament TRAN-ITRE Committees Rapporteurs on the CEF II proposal. An officer from the DG MOVE presented their proposal for realignment of the North Sea / Mediterranean Corridor in the context of Brexit.

Participation in other NSC meetings
- On 20 September, the Adviser met with the NSC Secretariat and the fellow Advisers in Brussels.
- The Adviser attended a meeting of the NSC Brexit Task Force in Brussels on 20 September
- The Adviser attended the kick-off meeting of the NSC Strategy Force in Brussels on 21 September
Other group activities contributing to the NSR 2020 Key Actions Areas

ABM resolution on the extension of the ScanMed corridor in Jutland (DK)

The Agder counties and the North Denmark Region submitted a resolution to the ABM in Fredrikstad which is calling on the European Council and the Parliament to support the proposal of the EC to extend the ScanMed corridor up to Frederikshavn and Hirtshals when making the final decision on the CEF regulation next year. The resolution is also calling on the Norwegian Government to upgrade the transport infrastructure and keep up with the pace of EU investment. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the ABM on 14 June.

ABM resolution calling for increased funding for the TEN-T comprehensive network

Northern Netherlands submitted a resolution to the ABM - calling for increased funding for the comprehensive network. The resolution is highlighting that the core network is dependent upon a good functioning comprehensive network, which could also be suitable as a demonstration site and "living lab" for sustainable and innovative transport solutions. Also this resolution was unanimously adopted by the ABM on 14 June.

Meeting with Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Europe in Brussels on 19 June to discuss follow-up of ABM resolution calling for international regulations on shore side power in the cruise industry

CLIA is the world's largest cruise industry trade association and promotes the interests of cruise ship operators within Europe. CLIA Europe strives for an EU regulatory environment that supports safe shipping operations and environmental protection. CLIA is also member of the European Sustainable Shipping Forum (ESSF), established by the European Commission.

The Adviser met with the CLIA Manager for European Government Affairs in Brussels on 19 June. The purpose of the meeting was to hear the opinion of the cruise industry when it comes to the need and feasibility of introducing such regulations. CLIA doesn't want to see the introduction of international / European regulatory requirements for the use of shore side (SS) equipment in cruise vessels, but would support the development of such equipment. The need and the additional environmental benefits of introducing such regulations were considered to be limited - as 50% of cruise ships have already installed other systems which are significantly reducing the emission of SOX and NOX. Furthermore, it is not considered economically viable to install SS equipment on outgoing vessels. CLIA believes that one should also take into account that SS facilities are already on the rise in the cruise industry. According to CLIA, the benefits of introducing regulations would anyhow be limited as only few cruise ports in Europe are equipped to accommodate cruise vessels with SS systems.

Purely European regulations for SS equipment were not considered feasible because all CLIA cruise lines are sailing to the US where the frequency system is different from Europe. CLIA believes that the focus should be on how to improve the overall environmental performance of shipping in all markets (e.g. Ro-Ro, container shipping etc.) in the most cost-effective and fair manner and claimed that a combination of different
clean shipping technologies (e.g. exhaust systems, LNG, SS facilities etc.) would be most beneficial in order to achieve that.

The Transport group will in cooperation with the CPMR now adapt & modify the approach to further follow-up on this issue to the ongoing developments in the industry and continue the dialogue which has now been established with CLIA. This, also taking into consideration that the CPMR & NSC after all have limited capacity and technical expertise on these issues.

**Input to CPMR on CEF corridor alignment and pre-identified sections**

The group presented an input to the CPMR secretariat on 20 June based on contributions from member regions in SE, NL and DK. The input consists of proposed amendments to the alignment and pre-identified sections of the ScanMed corridor – calling for the inclusion of rail and road links for Oslo-Stockholm, and Trelleborg - Malmö – Göteborg – NO border. The input is also confirming support for the proposal to add the Groningen - Bremen link to the pre-identified sections of the comprehensive network. Finally, the input is calling for continued support for the proposal to extend the ScanMed corridor from the current "end point" in Taulov up to the ports of Frederikshavn and Hirtshals.

**Input to CPMRs amendments to a European Parliament report on CEF II**

The group has presented some changes and additions to CPMRs draft amendments to the above report – hereunder a reminder to include rail and road links between Stockholm-Örebro-Oslo in the ScanMed corridor. This proposal is also supported by the Baltic Sea Commission. The group and the NSC Secretariat have furthermore proposed that the CPMR should call for the removal of text in the EP report which questions the need for corridor extensions – which in turn could have complicated the implementation of relevant corridor alignments.

**Amendments to CPMR paper on connections to Ireland in the context of Brexit**

The Adviser, members of the NSC Secretariat and officers in Zuid-Holland and West-Flanders have proposed amendments to CPMRs "post-consultation paper" on the above issue (see also above). The amendments have managed to change the first draft of the CPMR paper in the direction of support for the link between Irish ports and Antwerpen/Zeebrugge/Rotterdam which has been proposed by the EC. Our proposals have also served to remove references to concrete ports at the Atlantic coast.

**Upcoming activities (group meetings, participation in and contribution to external events, processes, projects etc.) and planned activities in follow up of the key action areas**

**Ordinary group meeting in Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein 22 – 23 October**

The meeting also includes an excursion to the Port of Kiel and a meeting with the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Transport.

**Joint event with the NSC Energy and Climate Change group in February 2019**

The event will take place in Brussels and address issues related to sustainable energy and transport fuels - also including external speakers.
5. Tackling Climate Change

The agenda point will be presented by Cllr Jimmy Gray, Chair of the Energy and Climate Change Group. A written activity report is attached.

**Recommendation:**

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
Activity report – Tackling Climate Change

Period: June – September 2018

Key Action Areas in the North Sea Region 2020 Strategy

1. Facilitate climate change adaptation and mitigation through local, regional and national levels
2. Facilitate for a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
3. Promote energy efficiency as well as innovation and green growth in low-carbon technologies
4. Foster strong regional, national and European support for the development of the North Sea Grid

Update on the development in the EU, CPMR and North Sea Region related to the priority area

Several NSC members have joined the Climate Taskforce of the CPMR, launched in March 2017 at the initiative of Brittany Region. Among its main issues, the Task Force aims to

- focus on the role of regions in the implementation of the Paris Agreement;
- to understand the economic, social and environmental impact of climate change in peripheral maritime regions;
- to share experience on climate change mitigation and adaptation; and to ensure synergies with existing projects, as well as with the key objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

The CPMR gave input for the consultation from the European Commission, Strategy for long term EU greenhouse gas emissions 2050.

The Clean Energy for all Europeans

The “Clean Energy for all Europeans” package consists of numerous legislative proposals together with accompanying documents, aimed at further completing the internal market for electricity and implementing the Energy Union. It is an overall package of more than 40 planned measures, which was first announced in February 2015 and designed by the Commission to strengthen and standardize the European Union’s energy markets.

New 2030 framework

EU countries have agreed in January 2018 on a new 2030 Framework for climate and energy, including EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period between 2020 and 2030. These targets aim to help the EU achieve a more competitive, secure and sustainable energy system and to meet its long-term 2050 greenhouse gas reductions target.

The strategy sends a strong signal to the market, encouraging private investment in new pipelines, electricity networks, and low-carbon technology. The targets are based on a thorough economic analysis that measures how to cost-effectively achieve decarbonization by 2050. The main financial effect of decarbonization will be to shift our spending away from fuel sources and towards low-carbon technologies.
Targets for 2030
- a 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels
- at least a 27% share of renewable energy consumption
- at least 27% energy savings compared with the business-as-usual scenario.

Policies for 2030
To meet the targets, the European Commission has proposed:
- A reformed EU emissions trading scheme (ETS)
- New indicators for the competitiveness and security of the energy system, such as price differences with major trading partners, diversification of supply, and interconnection capacity between EU countries
- First ideas for a new governance system based on national plans for competitive, secure, and sustainable energy. These plans will follow a common EU approach. They will ensure stronger investor certainty, greater transparency, enhanced policy coherence and improved coordination across the EU.

Political declaration off shore wind North Sea Member States 2016
In 2017 four support groups were formed by the EC, in cooperation with member states, TSO’s and industry. The groups are Maritime spatial planning (SG1), Development and regulation of offshore grids and other off shore infrastructure (SG2), Support framework and finance (SG3) and standards, technical rules and regulations in the offshore wind sector (SG4).

In SG2 action plans will be developed to implement concrete umbrella projects within a cluster/cross border approach. The four cluster regions are: UK-NL-BE, Irish Sea/North Channel, Dogger Bank and German Bight. The priority has been given to the UK-NL-BE cluster, their action plan will be ready Q4 2018. On 25 September a stakeholder meeting was organised during the WindEurope Conference in Hamburg. An update was given from the 4 Support Groups.

Energy and Climate Change Group
Chair: Cllr Jimmy Gay, Highland (United Kingdom)
Vice Chair: Tjisse Stelpstra, North Netherlands/Drenthe (Netherlands)
Vice Chair: Jon Olav Strand, Aust-Agder (Norway)
Advisor: Paulien Kooistra, North Netherlands/Drenthe (Netherlands)

Group meeting(s): when, where, regions attending and focus of the meeting(s)
During the annual conference in Fredrikstad, Norway, the group chair and advisor gave a workshop “Responding to climate change’ together with the Interreg B programme. The workshop focused on flood protection and reducing risks. Flood protection infrastructure needs renovation, adaptation and maintenance. Some dykes, sluices and dams are ageing and over 70-100 years old and are no longer at the desired safety level. Several North Sea regions are working closely together, different North Sea projects and the relation with EU policy concerning climate change was discussed. This meeting relates to key action area “Facilitate climate change adaptation and mitigation through local, regional and national levels”.

The group followed up on the meeting in Groningen where the main focus was hydrogen and off shore wind. During the meeting there were three presentations by Aberdeen City
Central questions were how to create markets for alternative fuels like hydrogen and biofuels, what role do the regions play (funds, procurements, tendering public transport) and what are other important issues to deal with (financially and logistically). The group discussed the Clean energy for all Europeans package, the Energy Union and the role of hydrogen. It was decided to write a position paper on hydrogen.

In Aberdeenshire/Aberdeen City the following topics were on the agenda: The Aberdeenshire Council Carbon budget, CCS and hydrogen, Climate Change adaptation and offshore wind. Eight regions gave input for the energy transition factsheets which can be downloaded via the NSC website.

During the working group meeting in Aberdeenshire/Aberdeen City presentations focused on:

- **Hywind**: the world first floating windfarm park, a pilot project located 29 km off the coast of Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, comprising five 6MW turbines which have been generating enough clean energy for around 20,000 homes in Scotland for around 9 months. Also a battery storage is implemented (Batwind).
- **NorthConnect Interconnector**: is a commercial venture (still under development) to develop, own and generate a high voltage electricity interconnector between Peterhead, Scotland and Norway. The interconnector will provide a 1,4 gigawatt 2-way transmission link to enable renewable energy generated in Scotland to be converted into pumped storage (hydro) in Norway - and for hydro energy to be transmitted back to Scotland as required.

In the NorthSEE workshop in Aberdeen the future of offshore energy in the North Sea region from a Maritime Spatial Planning perspective was central in the discussions and in the MSP Challenge game. Participants to the workshop contributed knowledge and opinions on future industry trends, energy policy, grids and land-sea interactions. This meeting relates to key action area “Facilitate for a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions”.

**Participation in other events and processes of relevance for the priority area, e.g. EU and CPMR events, project meetings, conferences, networks etc.**

- 

**Other group activities contributing to the NSR 2020 Key Actions Areas**

- 

**Upcoming activities (group meetings, participation in and contribution to external events, processes, projects etc.) and planned activities in follow up of the key action areas**

-
6. Attractive and Sustainable Communities

The agenda point will be presented by Cllr Barney Crockett, Chair of the Smart Regions Group. A written activity report is attached.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
Activity report – Attractive and Sustainable Communities

Period: June – September 2018

Key Action Areas in the North Sea Region 2020 Strategy

1. New EU policies and regulations relating to smart regions, attractive and sustainable communities
2. Project development and participation
3. Support the development of creative and sustainable diversification in North Sea communities
4. Support the development of permanent networks for cultural actors

Priority 4: Attractive and sustainable communities: supporting creative/sustainable economic diversification; supporting permanent networks for cultural actors; addressing demographic and migration challenges; promoting maritime clusters, blue growth, jobs and innovation; cross-over synergies between sectors, develop projects.

5. Improve policy coordination to address demographic and migration challenges
6. Promote Blue Growth to continue to play an important role as provider of blue growth, jobs and innovation
7. Promote knowledge transfer and crossovers between different sectors in the North Sea Region

Update on the development in the EU, CPMR and North Sea Region related to the priority area

Migration management at European level has still not been satisfactorily solved, and recent government change in Italy has created new challenges concerning receipt and distribution of refugees and asylum seekers. The CPMR is following this closely through the Migration Management Task Force, where the Smart Regions Group also participates. The Commission’s proposals for a new Multi-Annual Financial Framework and its suggestions for new regulations of all EU-funded programmes are also issues where the CPMR is active, and the Smart Regions group follows the discussions in the CPMR Core Group (Task Force for cohesion policy).

Smart Regions Group

Chair: Cllr Barney Crockett, Aberdeen City (United Kingdom)
Vice Chair: Cllr Birgitta Adolfsson, Västra Götaland (Sweden)
Vice Chair: Otto Kjaer Larsen, Nordjylland (Denmark)
Advisor: Geir Sør-Reime, Rogaland (Norway)

Group meeting(s): when, where, regions attending and focus of the meeting(s)

The group’s 4th meeting was held in Fredrikstad 13 June 2018 with 20 participants from eleven member regions in five countries.
The meeting started with a mini-seminar on digital economy, with three presentations from regional actors in Østfold, focusing on digitization in health care, on smart innovation
through collaboration between different industrial sectors, and on using digitization of a large heavy industry company.

Further, it was decided to nominate specific regions as Task Holders of the various key action areas of the group, and so far, Task Holder regions have been nominated for digital economy, tourism and culture, youth co-operation, ageing population, migration and integration, and blue growth.

The action plan activity of organising a conference for youth parliaments in the NSC member regions was discussed, and Rogaland agreed to organise such a conference in 2019.

In addition to this meeting of the group, the group was also in charge of organising the North Sea Conference workshop on attractive communities 14 June together with the North Sea Program secretariat. After introductions by our Chair and Advisor and the North Sea Program, four relevant Interreg-program were presented, focusing on digitization issues and sustainability issues.

Then, the participants were divided into four subgroups focusing on major elements of smart regions: demographic challenges, circular economy, blue growth, and tourism and cultural heritage.

**Participation in other events and processes of relevance for the priority area, e.g. EU and CPMR events, project meetings, conferences, networks etc.**

Vice-chair Birgitta Adolfsson has participated in several EU events focusing on migration management as well as the CPMR Task Force on Migration Management. The advisor has also participated in this task force, as well as CPMR’s Core Group working with the new Multi-Annual Financial Framework and focusing primarily on cohesion policy and the future of the Interreg programmes.

The advisor will also participate in several relevant workshops during the European Week of Regions and Cities just ahead of this meeting of the Executive Committee.

**Other group activities contributing to the NSR 2020 Key Actions Areas**

- Upcoming activities (group meetings, participation in and contribution to external events, processes, projects etc.) and planned activities in follow up of the key action areas

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for 1-2 November and will be held in Sandnes, Rogaland in Norway. Focus theme is ageing population and there will be presentations from several local authorities facing challenges related to high average age of their population. We will also have a presentation from one of the fastest growing cities in Norway and the challenges it is facing.

In addition, reports from the various Task Holders will be presented at the meeting.

Further meetings will be discussed at a meeting of the Strategic Group (Chair, Vice-Chairs and Advisor) in Aberdeen, 14 September.
7. Brexit developments

The agenda point will be presented by Cllr Nienke Homan, Chair of the Brexit task force.

The past months has seen intensified efforts to reach an agreement on the UK’s withdrawal, to agree on principles for the future EU-UK relationship (formal negotiations will start only after the UK has left the EU), and preparations on both sides for the possible event of a no-deal Brexit.

Brexit will be a topic for the European Council 18-19 October, and possibly for an extra European Council meeting in mid-November.

**Recommendation:**

*The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee*

1. Takes note of the information
8. Update from CPMR

The agenda point will be presented by Eleni Marianou, CPMR Secretary General.

CPMR will hold its General Assembly in Madeira on 17-19 October, and this could be an option to discuss questions related to the GA agenda. For additional information, see https://cpmr.org/event/general-assembly-of-the-cpmr-17-19-october-2018-funchal-madeira-portugal/.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
9. Interreg North Sea Region state of play

The agenda point will be presented by Sarah Holsen, Project Advisor, Interreg North Sea Secretariat.

Ms Holsen will give an update on recent project development (see also https://northsearegion.eu/).

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
10. North Seas energy cooperation

The agenda point will be presented by Brendan Devlin, Policy Advisor, DG Energy, European Commission.

The cooperation is a result of the political declaration, signed in 2016 by 10 coastal states and the EU, with the aim to strengthen conditions for offshore wind energy development in the North Sea and Irish Sea.

Four support groups deal with four work areas:
- Maritime spatial planning
- Development and regulation of offshore grids and other offshore infrastructure
- Support framework and finance for offshore wind projects
- Standards, technical rules and regulations in the offshore wind sector


For the North Sea Commission, offshore energy and a North Sea grid have been high on the agenda for many years.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
11. The future of European territorial cooperation

The agenda point will be presented by NN, DG Regio, European Commission (tbc).

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
12. Reports on North Sea related issues in member regions

National representatives are encouraged to report on developments in their respective countries and regions of relevance for the North Sea Commission, e.g. changes in regional structures, elections, policy initiatives or other developments in the thematic areas of the North Sea Region 2020 strategy, etc.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
13. Post 2020 North Sea Region strategy

The agenda point will be presented by Magnus Engelbrektsson, Executive Secretary.

The strategy task force, launched by the ABM in Fredrikstad, held its first meeting in September and Magnus will report from the meeting. Part of current work is to analyse the challenges and priorities expressed in regional development strategies and plans in each of our member regions.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee, in Groningen 11 January 2019, will focus entirely on the strategy.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
14. Statement of accounts by 12 September 2018

The agenda point will be presented by Magnus Engelbrektsson, Executive Secretary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Budget 2018</th>
<th>Statement of accounts 12.9.2018</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Euro</td>
<td>Euro</td>
<td>Euro</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME:</strong></td>
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<td>Membership subscription</td>
<td>142 215</td>
<td>125 495</td>
<td>-16 720</td>
<td>1)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td>142 215</td>
<td>125 495</td>
<td>-16 720</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>EXPENDITURE:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint annual conference</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotional expenditure</td>
<td>1 215</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 215</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel, accommodation, etc.</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>12 568</td>
<td>7 432</td>
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<td>Thematic groups meetings</td>
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<td>2 218</td>
<td>2 782</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisors’ support</td>
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<td>24 000</td>
<td>24 000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretariat support</td>
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<td>32 000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</strong></td>
<td>142 215</td>
<td>54 786</td>
<td>87 429</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Two members have still not paid their fees for 2018, two other fees are paid but still not transferred from CPMR.
2) The invoice from Østfold is expected to come soon. It will be substantially lower than 20 000, because of the smaller format of this year’s conference.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Takes note of the information
15. Member fee model from 2020 – follow-up discussions from Kiel

The ExCom meeting in Kiel in March 2018 discussed changes in member fee calculation. It was decided to follow up the discussions at this meeting and agree on a calculation model to be applied from 2020. The adopted model will be the basis for the budget proposal for 2020, which will be presented to the 2019 spring ExCom and decided by the Annual Business Meeting next summer.

The calculation we use today is based on three levels of fees depending on population. All regions with more than 1 million inhabitants pay the same amount, regions below 1 million but above 500,000 pay 75 percent of that amount, and regions with less than 500,000 inhabitants pay 50 percent. In euros, the fees decided for 2019 are 6792, 5095 and 3397 respectively.

The logic behind this model is that it tries to balance between the extremes: flat rate (same fee for every council) or proportional rate (same fee for every inhabitant).

The trigger for calculating differently from 2020 is the upcoming regional mergers in Norway. If we were to keep the existing fees, and if all current Norwegian members were to remain members, the effect of the mergers would be that the North Sea Commission would lose more than 8,000 euro in annual income, even if the fees are adjusted for inflation.

The proposal from the Presidency, presented at the Kiel meeting, is to lower the threshold between the medium-paying and low-paying regions from 500,000 to 250,000 inhabitants, combined with inflation adjustment for all. In other words, we keep the three-level model, but change the level definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020</th>
<th>Proposed fee</th>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;250 000 inhabitants</td>
<td>3 448 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 000-1 million inhabitants</td>
<td>5 171 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1 million inhabitants</td>
<td>6 894 EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the attached excel document, you will find an illustration of the effects of four possible fee models:

- Only inflation adjustment, no other change (column E)
- Changed threshold – the proposed model (column F)
• Fee proportional to population, but with a minimum of 3 000 and a maximum of 8 000 EUR (column G)
• Flat rate – same fee for all members (column H)

All models, except for the status quo, would lead to an increase in annual income for the NSC of more than 10,000 EUR, given that all current members will stay. This would allow us to cover our expenses also if we were to lose of one or two members. If all members will remain, it could be argued that a small increase in total budget would allow for more support to thematic group meetings and/or increasing support for the secretariat and/or advisors, which are now partly sponsored by their respective regions.

For a comparison, the other geographical commissions of the CPMR apply either a flat rate (Atlantic Arc Commission – 5297 EUR in 2018, Baltic Sea Commission – 5000 EUR in 2019, proposed to increase in 2020) or a population-based rate (Islands Commission – four levels from 4592 to 9061 in 2018).

Each geographical commission decides on its own member fee, independently from the fee to the CPMR, which is proportional with a minimum and a maximum.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Adopts the proposed model for calculation of member fee for 2020
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population 1.1.2017</th>
<th>Current budget</th>
<th>Budget decided by ABM Inflation adjusted 1.5%</th>
<th>Inflation adjusted 1.5%, breaking point medium level at 250 000 inhabitants</th>
<th>0.011 EUR/inhabitant Minimum fee: 3 000 Maximum fee: 8 000</th>
<th>Flat rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orkney</td>
<td>22 000</td>
<td>3 347</td>
<td>3 397</td>
<td>3 448</td>
<td>3 448</td>
<td>3 000</td>
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<td>Sogn og Fjordane (merging with Hordaland in 2020)</td>
<td>110 266</td>
<td>3 347</td>
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<td>3 448</td>
<td>3 448</td>
<td>3 000</td>
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<td>Aust-Agder (merging with Vest-Agder in 2020)</td>
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<td>3 397</td>
<td>3 448</td>
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<td>3 000</td>
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<td>Telemark (merging with Vestfold in 2020)</td>
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<td>3 448</td>
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<td>3 397</td>
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<td>3 000</td>
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<td>184 116</td>
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<td>3 397</td>
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<td>3 448</td>
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<td>Aberdeen city</td>
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<td>3 000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>144 353</td>
<td>136 173</td>
<td>155 126</td>
<td>156 498</td>
<td>154 000</td>
</tr>
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16. Venue and time for the 28th Annual Business Meeting and North Sea Conference 2019

Venue for the ABM and conference will be announced at the meeting.

The ABM and conference are normally held in June. In 2019, it could be wise to avoid the 5 and 6 of June (national days in Denmark and Sweden respectively), the 12 and 13 of June (CPMR Political Bureau) and the 21 June (Midsummer – Swedish national holiday).

Remaining possibilities would then be to hold the ABM in May, in the last week of June, or on a Monday-Tuesday in any of the other weeks of June.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Discusses its time preferences for the ABM and North Sea conference
2. Gives a mandate to the Presidency to take the final decision on date for the ABM after consultation with the host region and the Interreg North Sea secretariat
17. Next Executive Committee meeting(s)

It is already decided to have the next meeting on 11 January 2019 (arrival and possible study visit/social program on the 10 January) in Groningen. The meeting will mainly focus on the post-2020 strategy.

Southend-on-Sea has kindly invited to the spring ExCom meeting. The Presidency has discussed the dates 4-5 April or 11-12 April, with a preference from the host for the first alternative.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat recommends that the Executive Committee

1. Adopts the timetable for the next meetings