



Fredrikstad Declaration

Adopted by the CPMR North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting
13 June – Fredrikstad, Norway

The regions of the CPMR North Sea Commission (NSC) met in Fredrikstad (Østfold, NO) on the 13th of June 2018 for the 27th NSC Annual Business Meeting. On behalf of its members, the North Sea Commission wishes to convey the following messages:

To ensure a strong North Sea cooperation in the Brexit era, the NSC:

1. **Calls for** stronger cooperation between the EU, national, regional and local authorities to balance the many interests in the North Sea. The North Sea is one of the busiest sea basins in the world, with activities related to shipping and ports, fishing, marine renewable energy, oil and gas and recreation. Yet the shallow waters and the coasts are vulnerable to oil spills, plastics and other pollution. Strong North Sea relations are more important than ever, and Brexit is a reason to increase cooperation.
2. **Stresses** the need for future frameworks between the UK and the EU/EEA to provide a scope for direct engagement of local authorities in the UK and regions in the EU27 and the EEA.
3. **Emphasises** the importance of continued UK participation in relevant EU programmes. The UK is one of the most active partners in EU's research programme, and the strong scientific links across the North Sea will suffer if the UK doesn't join the programme post 2020. Interreg North Sea and other European cooperation programmes provide valuable support to regional development and exchange in the North Sea area.

To ensure that marine litter becomes a priority for the EU and globally, the NSC:

4. **Expresses** profound concern about the amount of plastics ending up in the oceans every year. Marine litter, particularly plastics, is an important challenge to tackle across borders to maintain a sustainable North Sea Region marine environment, both at the open sea, the shoreline and the sea bed.
5. **Calls for** intensified international cooperation to more efficiently address the issue of marine plastic pollution in the North Sea. It is important to transform the way plastics are designed, produced, used and recycled. All actors at global, national, regional and local level must join forces to enable a sustainable impact.
6. **Urges** all levels of government in Europe and globally to ensure awareness of the marine litter problem, and the importance of funding actions to mitigate pollution and restore the health of our seas.

Concerning the future of Interreg, the NSC:

7. **Calls for** a strong and well-resourced budget for European Territorial Cooperation in the post-2020 period. In view of the far-reaching questions related to climate change, demographic change, digitisation and Europe's global competitiveness, the need for cooperation across Europe has never been stronger.
8. **Urges** the EU to preserve the maritime cross-border cooperation programmes. 23 EU member states and all North Sea states have a coastline, and several of them are almost entirely maritime. It is also of utmost importance to maintain a dedicated programme for the North Sea Region. Maritime regions face several specific challenges, which are often handled best in cooperation with their closest neighbours.
9. **Stresses** that regional authorities must remain at the core of European Territorial Cooperation, national and regional operational programmes, macro-regional and sea basin strategies. Cohesion policy is based on shared management, multilevel governance and the partnership principle. These features are even more important as regards cooperation programmes. The success of cooperation lies in a bottom up participation approach, the involvement of citizens and the ownership of the programmes by different actors across borders.

To reinforce connectivity and accessibility in the North Sea Region, the NSC:

10. **Calls on** the European Parliament and the Council to support the European Commission's proposal to extend the Scan-Med corridor from the current "end point" in Taulov up to the ports of Frederikshavn and Hirtshals in the framework of the upcoming revision of the TEN-T/CEF regulations post 2020.

11. **Urges** the Norwegian Government to ensure that the rail and road links to the ports in South Norway comply with TEN-T standards, and that the pace of infrastructure investments in this area matches the developments on the Danish side of the Jutland corridor.
12. **Calls for** an increase of the CEF Transport budget for the Comprehensive network in the new EU Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027).
13. **Stresses** the importance of continuing providing grants as the main tool for funding transport projects on the TEN-T core and comprehensive networks.
14. **Encourages** the EU to invest in the scaling up of sustainable and digital transport innovations, cross border connections and the development of all types of alternative fuels for transport.

The CPMR North Sea Commission

The CPMR North Sea Commission represents 32 regional authorities in Denmark, England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Scotland and Sweden. We have been working since 1989 to create partnerships between our members and to promote the interests of the North Sea Region in Europe, specifically in the fields of marine resources, accessibility and sustainable transport, energy and climate change and prosperous and sustainable communities.

We are part of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions, a leading regional interest organisation and think tank with 160 member regions across Europe.