



## Resolution on land/sea interaction

Approved by the North Sea Commission Annual Business Meeting – 28 June 2017 –  
Göttingen, Germany

The regions of the CPMR North Sea Commission (NSC) met in Göttingen (Lower Saxony, DE) on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2017 for the 26<sup>th</sup> NSC Annual Business Meeting. On behalf of its members, the North Sea Commission wishes to convey the following message:

The Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) directive was adopted by the Council and European Parliament July 2014. The Marine Resources Group (MRG) had been actively involved in lobbying prior to this. Based on concerns and interests from member regions, a resolution on MSP was put forward and adopted by the North Sea Commission (NSC) Annual Business Meeting in Aberdeenshire June 2014. Although competence and responsibility for marine planning differ in the different North Sea countries; regional development in maritime regions are very much connected to the notion of blue growth. Coastal regions have the advantage of proximity and interaction with stakeholders and the actual opportunities and challenges they face relating to blue growth.

The focus for the MRG in the implementation phase of the directive has been to engage in active dialogue with national level. The group is an observer in the NorthSEE-project, where member region North Holland is a formal member. The project gathers national authorities, universities and one regional authority (North Holland). The project aims to develop coherent marine planning in the North Sea basin within environment, energy and shipping. The project was approved during the Interreg North Sea first application round; it is a great opportunity for the NSC to engage directly with national level authorities regarding MSP.

Land/sea interaction is one of the issues that still needs to be addressed in a holistic work with maritime spatial planning. Regions have competence to contribute in a dialogue between the different governmental levels and users of the sea. The North Sea Commission urges the following points to be part of the future dialogue on land/sea interaction.

- Multi-level governance. Looking at the role of the regions in relations to local and national authorities in marine planning; as geography is overlapping and there is an unexplored potential for better coordination.

- The skills gap at local level. While many local authorities have the authority to plan in the coastal zone, especially small municipalities face a skills gap in marine planning due to size and priorities.
- Political commitment. Marine planning is a highly technical area, but it also has to do with political priorities about use of space and facilitation for different areas of business or environmental protection. The interactive MSP game developed by the Dutch government is mentioned as one practical solution to involve politicians in the thinking of marine planning.
- Vertical and horizontal integration. The North Sea Commission is a suitable arena to exchange information and best practice of models on how to deal with the vertical integration (between different governmental levels) and horizontal integration (between different users of the sea).
- Dynamic sector, how can plans follow suit? Regional planning is a rather lengthy procedure to facilitate for process and involvement. The marine sectors on the other hand can be highly dynamic, and therefore there is a risk that marine plans are outdated as soon as they are completed. A more dynamic planning system and involvement from users of the sea seems to be part of the solution.
- How to do business within marine protected areas. There are different practices of whether it is possible to do business or not within marine protected areas. There is a potential to learn from each other in order to develop systems of a sound balance between economic development and environmental protection in marine areas.
- Cross border cooperation. The international dimension is interesting and relevant to look at in light of the cooperation in the North Sea basin. While several North Sea countries share a marine border with a neighboring country the different national rules need to be able to adapt to each other, international cooperation and common solution can also be found between local and regional authorities.

### The CPMR North Sea Commission recommends:

- The link between terrestrial planning and sea planning needs to be addressed, taking into account multi-level governance and the balance between environmental protection and blue growth.
- Regional authorities should be actively involved in the processes as they have knowledge about local conditions and challenges, in addition to close dialogue with stakeholders.
- The North Sea is one of the most intensively used sea basins in the world. A cross-country approach is needed to address the competition between different users of the sea and between activities at sea and on land.