



Charter for the North Sea Commission, approved by NSC ABM Meeting 13th June 2013

Article 1: Preamble

- This Charter setting out the internal regulations of the North Sea Commission (NSC) is set within the provisions of the statutes of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR).
- The North Sea Commission does not have legal status and the only legal document is the CPMR statutes.

Article 2: Constitution

- The North Sea Commission brings together the Presidents and delegates appointed by the Regional Authorities immediately below the level of Government which border the North Sea or which in some way have strong links to the North Sea.
- Only regions, which are members of the CPMR, may be members of the North Sea Commission.
- The member countries so defined are Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, England and Scotland.

Article 3: Objectives

- The North Sea Commission is established to further partnerships between Regional authorities which face the challenges and opportunities presented by the North Sea. Through dialogue and formal partnerships it will seek to promote common interests, especially in relation to the Institutions of the European Union, the national governments and other organisations dealing with issues, which are relevant to the North Sea.

Article 4: Organisation

The North Sea Commission shall be organised through the institutions of:

- an Annual Business Meeting
- a President and two Vice-Presidents
- an Executive Committee
- Thematic Groups
- an Executive Secretary

Article 5: Annual Business Meeting

- An Annual Business Meeting for all member regions shall be held once a year, or more frequently if required.
- The Annual Business Meeting shall elect a President and two Vice-Presidents and appoint an Executive Committee.
- When decisions are to be adopted, the President, the vice-presidents and each member Region shall have one vote. Delegates representing a Region must be elected members of the Regional Government or Regional Assembly, or duly authorised persons, including high ranking officers assigned with political responsibilities inside the administration.
- The Annual Business Meeting can only legitimately take decisions if at least one quarter of its members is present.

- Only Regions that have paid their membership fee in full for the year of the meeting shall have the right to vote at these meetings.
- The Secretary General of the CPMR shall be invited to the Annual Business Meetings or meetings of the Executive Committee. The Secretary General may be represented where necessary.
- In order to promote exchanges between the Geographical Commissions, the Presidents and Executive Secretaries of all the other Geographical Commissions shall be invited to the Annual Business Meeting as observers.

Article 6: President

- The President will normally be the President or political leader of their respective authority.
- The President and two Vice-Presidents shall be elected by the Annual Business Meeting for a period of two years which is renewable.
- The President is a full member of the CPMR Political Bureau and shall appoint a vice-president to be the NSC alternate member of the Political Bureau.
- Members shall be notified of the call for applications at least two months before the end of the President's term of office.
- Interested candidates must forward an application to the NSC Secretariat at least one month before the end of the President's term of office.
- At the Annual Business Meeting, a vote by show of hands will be taken. However, if any of the regions so request, the vote will be by secret ballot. If there is more than one candidate, the vote will be by secret ballot.
- The candidate having obtained an absolute majority of the votes of the delegates present will be declared elected. If there are more than two candidates, and none of them obtains an absolute majority in the first round of voting, a second vote will be taken in which the two candidates having received the largest number of votes will be presented.
- If, during his or her term of office, the President resigns, loses his or her political mandate within the Region or be incapacitated in any way, his or her successor shall be elected at the next Annual Business Meeting;
- During the interim period one of the two vice-presidents shall serve as acting President.

Article 7: Executive Committee

- The members of the Executive Committee shall consist of the President, two Vice Presidents and the national elected regional representatives from each member country of the North Sea Commission.
- Each member country shall nominate one representative and one substitute representative.
- Unless the nominated national representatives cease to hold office in their own region, they shall retain NSC office for two years, which is renewable.
- If a member of the Executive Committee ceases to hold local office in mid-term, the nominated substitute shall act as full member of the Executive Committee until the next Annual Business Meeting, which approves the representatives and substitutes.
- If both the member and nominated substitute from a member country cease to hold office in their own region, new representatives may be appointed to the Executive Committee in mid-term. The Executive Committee has delegated authority to appoint members in this circumstance, provided that no objections to the nominations are received during consultation with member regions of the country in question.
- The Executive Committee shall meet at least three times per year.
- The Executive Committee is capable of decision if one third of its members or substitute members are present. The meeting shall include at least the President or one of the Vice-Presidents.
- A member of the Executive Committee may be a chair of a thematic group.

Article 8: Thematic Groups

- A number of Thematic Groups shall be established to progress key issues identified by the North Sea Commission.
- The primary focus of the Thematic Groups shall be on policy-making and on network co-operation in relation to projects.
- Each group shall have an Advisor, who is appointed by the NSC Executive Committee.
- The Advisor is responsible for the daily running of the group and for progressing initiatives decided upon by the Annual Business Meeting, the Executive Committee, the Thematic Group, or the NSC Secretariat.
- Each Thematic Group shall have a Chair, who need not necessarily be drawn from the Executive Committee, but needs to be a regional elected politician from a member region. However, on taking up the position as chair they will be granted ex-officio Executive Committee membership during the period of their tenure.
- Each Thematic Group may also have two other elected politicians from a regional authority who shall be appointed as vice-chairs.
- The chairs and vice-chairs shall be elected by the Executive Committee for a period of two years at the first Executive Committee meeting following the Annual Business Meeting. Chairs are elected in uneven years, vice-chairs in even years and their positions are renewable.
- The chairs of the Thematic Groups do not have the right to vote in the Executive Committee.
- It would normally be the case for one of the vice-chairs of a thematic group to progress to the position of chair when it is vacated.
- Membership of the Thematic Groups consists of officers and politicians from member regions, but can also include external experts by invitation of the Chair. The experts may come from f. ex. non-member regions, institutions, companies or national/local authorities.

Article 9: Executive Secretary

- The North Sea Commission shall have an Executive Secretary whose responsibility is to ensure the day-to-day organisation of its work and implementation of its decisions.
- The Executive Secretary assists the President in his/her tasks and under his/her authority.
- The duties of the Executive Secretary are carried out with the support of the CPMR General Secretariat.

Article 10: Finance

- The activities of the North Sea Commission shall be funded through an annual subscription payable by each Member Authority, this annual subscription being determined by the Executive Committee and approved by the Annual Business Meeting.
- The subscription is levied through the CPMR in December each year covering the following year.
- Application for the use of funds shall be made to the Executive Secretary of the North Sea Commission and shall be determined by the Executive Committee.
- Accounts and a budget shall be presented by the Executive Secretary or his/her substitute to the Annual Business Meeting and monitored at meetings of the Executive Committee.

Article 11: Communication

- Any policy material, such as resolutions and brochures, shall bear the logos of both the North Sea Commission and the CPMR.

Article 12: Partnerships

- The North Sea Commission shall seek to work in partnership with the other organisations or institutions whose aims are complementary to the objectives of the North Sea Commission. To this end the North Sea Commission and its Thematic Groups may enter into co-operation agreements with relevant local agencies, organisations or institutions.
- If the co-operation agreements have political or financial consequences for the CPMR, prior notification must be given to the CPMR Secretary General.

Article 13: Amendments to the Charter

- Amendments to the North Sea Commission Charter can only be made by the Annual Business Meeting and will normally be based on the recommendations of the Executive Committee.