



The North Sea Programme Joint Annual Conference 2007, Brunstad, Norway, 21<sup>st</sup> June

## NSC Political Seminar

**“Political Priorities for the North Sea Region and how INTERREG can help achieve them”**

### Speakers:

Gunn Marit Helgesen, President North Sea Commission  
Ann-Kerstin Myleus, European Commission, DG Regional Policy

### CONCLUSIONS AND OUTCOMES

The seminar speakers highlighted the benefits of transnational working, and emphasised that there was a key role for local politicians. They stated that the benefits from participation are not just related to obtaining the money. Other benefits include raising the local profile, influencing others, building up skills, and setting the foundation for long term inter-regional co-operation.

Key points made in the feedback from the discussion groups included:

Political Priorities for the North Sea Region:

Climate Change  
Energy  
Sustainable urban and rural communities (including affordable housing and health equality)  
Economic Development – innovation and competitiveness (Lisbon Strategy)  
Sustainable Development (Gothenburg strategy) – particularly the Maritime Policy  
Accessibility  
Co-operation with the Baltic Regions

How INTERREG could help achieve them:

The discussion groups identified a number of issues which were perceived as barriers to using INTERREG. These included :

Not enough time for international work  
Funding too complex to get the private sector interested  
Too much bureaucracy in the application process  
Difficulty of connecting political organisations with international work  
The need for a ‘bottom up’ approach, and more effective connection and influence with national level.

The discussion groups also identified a number of solutions to help make more effective use of INTERREG. These included :

Easier and greater access to knowledge and the opportunities INTERREG offers

Measuring success and sharing best practice between regional politicians  
Recognising the key role of politicians and the need to work together with other local interest groups in successful INTERREG projects  
Using the potential of the North Sea Commission (NSC) Thematic Groups to pursue political priorities through INTERREG  
Providing local solutions  
Developing systems to ensure greater local involvement in EU programmes  
Politicians being clear about their priorities in relation to European activities

**Presentations can be downloaded from our website**

<http://www.northsearegion.eu/ivb/home/>

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by working together for a  
sustainable and competitive region*