

CHAIR

SUMMARY OF THE GÖTEBORG DECLARATION

Chapter I – The need for action

1. The North Sea is a vital resource for the North Sea region. North Sea shipping is of major economic importance for the whole of northern Europe. The fishing industry provides, locally, regionally and nationally, important food resources and employment. Although significant efforts have been made to improve the ecological status of the North Sea, the overall status of the ecosystems still causes considerable concern.
2. The shipping and fishing industries need to reinforce their current efforts to control and reduce their adverse impacts on the North Sea marine ecosystems, with the shared long-term objective of developing and implementing an operational ecosystem approach to managing their activities and the resulting environmental effects.
3. The European Marine Strategy will be an important instrument for ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of the North Sea. The Strategy and the accompanying proposal for an EC Directive should constitute the environmental pillar of the EU Maritime Policy. Comment: Some reference to the role of IMO is also needed here – suggest: The North Sea States also have had a leading role in developing new and stricter environmental rules at the IMO level.

The environmental impact of fisheries

4. The ecosystem approach must be made simple and operationally effective in order to protect the North Sea environment. To this end, an ecosystem plan for the North Sea fisheries should be adopted by 2010, and Environmental Assessment procedures developed. At the same time, marine spatial planning should be further developed, for use as a coordinating instrument. Further research is needed, concentrating on the science needed for the ecosystem approach, and how to develop and use more selective and environmentally friendly fishing gear and methods, in order to achieve long-term sustainability of living marine resources and the fishing industry.
- 5 Marine Protected Areas and closed areas for fishing management can be efficient tools to protect environment and marine resources. By 2008, additional areas should be considered for permanent or temporary closure to fishing activities, and implemented on an experimental basis.
6. By-catch and discards are still major problems in North Sea fisheries management. Over-capacity in the fishing fleet is a contributory problem that also requires further action. The EU and Norway should continue their efforts to investigate and implement possible means to eliminate discards. The competent authorities should support experimental regimes, such as that proposed to be applied in the Kattegat by 2007, relying on effort limitation and, in the light of the results of such experiments, consider an extension.
7. Competent authorities should consider how to reduce marine litter from fishing vessels, if possible through improved port waste-reception facilities. Where not yet in place, mandatory reporting of lost fishing gear should be considered, and regular retrieval programmes for lost gear instituted.
8. Regional cooperation between the EU and Norway should promote urgently needed effective and consistent fisheries control and enforcement. Efficient port-stat and flag-state controls to prevent the landing of illegal unregulated and unreported (IUU) fish catches

should be established. Comparability in the treatment of fisheries offences should be pursued through a better knowledge base on the penalties imposed.

The environmental impact of shipping

9. The clean ship approach should be developed and implemented as a means to mitigate the environmental impacts of shipping and will provide an increased opportunity for transport managers to choose environmentally sound sea transport options. This should be done by common initiatives in the International Maritime Organization (IMO), by i.e. exploring economic and other incentives, by the formulation of criteria for environmental indexing of ships, by promoting research and development and by investigating how port-state control can be used.
10. A regional strategy to implement elements of the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention should be developed prior to the Convention coming into force. The North Sea strategy on anti-fouling treatments should be pursued.
11. Specific initiatives should be taken in IMO to tighten shipping air-emission standards, and to improve the quality of marine fuels. Joint efforts will be made during the on-going revision of Annex VI of MARPOL. A Joint North Sea study of the global supply of low-sulphur oil will be undertaken. To reduce emissions in ports, shore-side electricity supplies should be encouraged.
12. The review of Annex V (waste) to MARPOL 73/78 at IMO should be supported, together with OSPAR's work to develop indicators for marine litter, as a basis to monitoring progress and further develop pro-active and sustainable policies in this area. Quality management systems on board vessels should be advanced for ships' waste and appropriate initiatives to retrieve marine litter should be encouraged.
13. Coordination and liaison between authorities, and the identification and, if possible, removal of disincentives, should promote the use of port waste-reception facilities. The review of the relevant EC Directive should consider its application to the fishing industry.
14. The development of an international convention on ship recycling at IMO should be supported, and brought into effect as soon as possible. Cooperation should be intensified in combating both accidental and deliberate discharges from ships. Initiatives should be taken in IMO to regulate ship-to-ship transfer of oil. The maritime safety of tankers should be improved by IMO action.

Enforcement of maritime pollution rules and standards

15. The North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors for maritime pollution offences should be continued. National legislation should make pollution of any part of the North Sea an offence in all North Sea States, and cooperation should be intensified between North Sea States for investigation and prosecution of vessels which are no longer in the jurisdictions where they have caused pollution. A database of penalties imposed should be maintained to improve comparability in sentencing. Where possible, publicity should be given to convictions for maritime pollution offences. Highest relevant international standards for transport of radioactive materials should be used.

Future cooperation

15. Ministers will remain in close touch over issues affecting the North Sea marine environment, notably in the IMO, EU and OSPAR. Close contacts will be maintained with regional and local authorities and other stakeholders, including industries and environmental NGOs. Active consultation will be maintained in the development of the European Marine Strategy and the Future Maritime Policy of the EU.