

**ÚDARÁS RÉIGIÚNACH AN OIR-DHEISCIRT  
SOUTH-EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY**

**EUROPEAN MARITIME DAY 2010**

**“SUSTAINABLE ESTUARIAL REGIONS: DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE WATERFORD ESTUARY”**

**Waterford City – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

**Address by Cllr. Thomas Kinsella, Cathaoirleach, South-East  
Regional Authority**

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Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the South-East Regional Authority I would like to join with Cllr. John Halligan in extending a warm welcome to you all today to this Conference organised by the South-East Regional Authority as part of the European Union's European Maritime Day 2010.

European Maritime Day is now an annual event with the key stakeholder event taking place this year in Gijón, Spain under the Spanish Presidency of the European Union. Innovation for sustainable growth of maritime sectors and coastal regions is its main focus. In addition, events are being organised across the EU in parallel with the Gijón event, my Authority's event here in Waterford today being one of them.

Regional Authorities were established on a statutory basis in 1994 to, amongst other things, promote the co-ordination in the provision of public services in their regions, review their overall regional development needs and priorities, monitor and review public spending and programmes in the regions, prepare regional economic strategies and regional planning guidelines.

Since its establishment, the South-East Regional Authority has been to the forefront in identifying and articulating the deficiencies, the development needs and investment priorities of this Region. In doing so, the Authority has worked in close co-operation with local and public authorities, with business, farming, employer and employee organisations and with local communities.

Maritime affairs have significant importance in the South-East – think of the major freight and passenger ports at Rosslare, New Ross and Waterford; the fishing industry; our rivers and lakes, our coastal areas in counties Wexford and Waterford; etc. Only very recently we saw how this association was reinforced through the successful campaign to retain the Region's full-time coastguard service at Waterford Regional Airport.

The core approach of the Authority's Regional Planning Guidelines, which are under review at present, is the creation of a coherent spatial structure in the Region. The Guidelines look at the need to integrate an economic, cultural and social vision, while achieving necessary and sustainable settlement and densities within the Region. They highlight the vital role of Waterford City as the Gateway city in the Region and the resource that is the Waterford-Suir Estuary. There is a growing realisation of the strategic importance of the Estuary and the potential it has to be a significant economic driver for the entire region. In addition, the role of the Estuary as an amenity and ecological resource for an expanding and increasingly developed city and region is recognised in the Guidelines. The maximisation of this amenity potential and unique setting for the benefit of all will be a challenge.

Today's Conference will examine the challenges and pressures facing estuarial environments with a specific focus on the Waterford Estuary and on how marine spatial planning can assist and facilitate consultation between competing interests, co-ordinated development and integrated management approaches.

It is the Regional Authority's objective that today's proceedings will promote the development of a strategic methodology and framework for the sustainable coordinated development and management of the Estuary.

The programme and speakers for today, I believe, will provide significant fuel for such a debate. I wish to compliment and thank the Director and Staff of the Regional Authority for their foresight in arranging today's Conference and for their work in bringing the event together.

I wish to thank you all for attending and look forward to your active engagement in the proceedings and discussions today.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh uile.