



CRPM CPMR

CONFÉRENCE DES RÉGIONS PÉRIPHÉRIQUES MARITIMES D'EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS OF EUROPE

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39TH CPMR GENERAL ASSEMBLY
29-30 September 2011 - Aarhus (Midtjylland, Denmark)

The Peripheral Maritime Regions listed below met for their 39th CPMR Annual General Assembly in Aarhus (DK) on 29 and 30 September 2011:

ABERDEEN CITY (UK), ABERDEENSHIRE (UK), AÇORES (PT), ANATOLIKI MAKEDONIA THRAKI (GR), ANDALUCÍA (ES), AQUITAINE (FR), ARAGÓN (ES), ARGYLL & BUTE (UK), BALEARES (ES), BASSE-NORMANDIE (FR), BORDER, MIDLAND AND WESTERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (IRL), BORNHOLM (DK), BRETAGNE (FR), CANAKKALE (TUR), CANTABRIA (ES), CATALUNYA (ES), COMUNITAT VALENCIANA (ES), CORNWALL (UK), DEVON/SOMERSET (UK), DYTIKI ELLADA (GR), EDIRNE (TR), EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT), FAMAGUSTA (CY), FIFE (UK), FRIULI-VENEZIA-GIULIA (IT), GALICIA (ES), GÄVLEBORG (SE), GOTLAND (SE), GOZO (MT), HALLAND (SE), HAMPSHIRE (UK), HAUTE-NORMANDIE (FR), HELSINKI-UUSIMAA (FI), HIGHLAND (UK), HORDALAND (NO), KIRKLARELI (TR), KYMENLAAKSO (FI), LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON (FR), MARTINIQUE (FR), MAYOTTE (FR), MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN (DE), MELILLA (ES), MIDI-PYRÉNÉES (FR), MIDTJYLLAND (DK), MONASTIR (TUN), MØRE OG RØMSDAL (NO), MURCIA (ES), NAVARRA (ES), NOORD-HOLLAND (NL), NOORD-NEDERLAND (NL), NORDJYLLAND (DK), NOTIO-AIGAIO (GR), NORDLAND (NO), NORD-PAS-DE-CALAIS (FR), NORRBOTTEN (SE), ÖREBRO (SE), ORKNEY (UK), ØSTFOLD (NO), OSTROBOTHNIA (FI), OULU REGION (FI), PÄIJÄT-HÄME (FI), PÄRNUMAA & IDA-VIRUMAA (EE), PAIS VASCO (ES), PAYS DE LA LOIRE (FR), PELOPONNISOS (GR), PICARDIE (FR), PODLASKIE (PL), POITOU-CHARENTES (FR), POMORSKIE (PL)*, PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR (FR), ROGALAND (NO), SARDEGNA (IT), SICILIA (IT), SINOP (TR), SHETLAND (UK), SKÅNE (SE), SOGN OG FJORDANE (NO), SOUTHEND-ON-SEA- (UK), SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ALLIANCE (UK), SOUTH-WEST FINLAND (FI), STOCKHOLM (SE), SYDDANMARK (DK), TELEMAR (NO), TOSCANA (IT), TROMS (NO), TULCEA (RO), VÄSTERBOTTEN (SE), VÄSTERNORRLAND (SE), VÄSTRA GÖTALAND (SE), VEST-AGDER (NO), VOREIO-AIGAIO (GR), WALES (UK), WESTERN ISLES (UK), ZUID-HOLLAND (NL).

^(*) *Observer*

The Regions attending the General Assembly wish to thank the Danish Regions of Midtjylland, Nordjylland, Syddanmark and Bornholm, together with President Bent Hansen, for organising and hosting the event.

CPMR's President extends his thanks to all delegates representing the regional authorities and EU institutions who took part in the proceedings of the Conference, as well as the Polish Government in its capacity as EU Presidency in office for its participation in the General Assembly.

On behalf of its 152 members, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, gathered for its 39th Annual General Assembly in Aarhus, adopted the following Final Declaration:

FINAL DECLARATION

The year 2011 has been the scene of instabilities, uncertainties and historic challenges at several different levels:

- On a global scale, the difficulties encountered in recovering from the crisis and establishing a new worldwide balance, as mentioned at the 2010 General Assembly in Aberdeen, are not yet over. In the world's two biggest economies, the United States and Europe, the shaky growth that has been re-emerging since 2009 is put in jeopardy by sometimes drastic money-saving measures designed to redress public finances that have recently been crippled under the effect of recovery plans. This debt crisis is testimony, three years after the 2008 crash, to the unchanged power of the financial markets and the extent to which political leaders and economic policies are dependent on them, especially in Europe. It also shows how strongly and intricately intertwined the world's major economies are, and consequently the strategic positions adopted by their political leaders.
- At Europe's Mediterranean gateways, a democratic and cultural revolution is in progress. It is a huge political and strategic challenge for the European Union to support and assist the newly established regimes in their democratic transition process.
- This challenge is all the greater in that the situation is extremely delicate and uneasy within the EU itself. In the States most highly exposed to market apprehension, the already tangible economic and social consequences of austerity measures, as well as those to come, have shaken the political arena. At European level, this sovereign debt crisis is sending shockwaves throughout the Euro zone and, from the angle of EU economic governance, raises the question of what comes next for the European project. At the same time, negotiations are getting under way between the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council on the Union's financial framework for 2014-2020 and the EU policies that it will need to fund in order to give substance to the Europe 2020 Strategy approved in 2010.

It is in this context that the General Assembly of the CPMR's 160 Regions took place in Aarhus (Midtjylland, Denmark). On this occasion, the CPMR acknowledged the above situation and wished to convey the following messages:

- 1) **Firstly, the Conference is concerned about the persistent lack of trust and solidarity between the States of the European Union.** A number of encouraging steps forward have of course been made over the past few months: creation of the European financial stabilisation mechanism and its durable transformation into a European Financial Stabilisation Facility are examples to the credit of the Eurozone leaders. This is welcomed by the CPMR, as is the agreement reached on the 2nd plan for Greece at the 21st July Summit. However, these measures fail to conceal the divergent approaches that persist between some States regarding the solutions to be sought, or the distrust of some States in relation to those in difficulty. This weakens the Union as a whole not just within its own borders, but it also constitutes a serious threat to its place as a credible leading player on the world stage.

As supporters of a resolutely European future which is the only way to ensure a strong role in the global interplay of the 21st century, the peripheral maritime Regions have made European solidarity a focus of their reflections. Following the round table that addressed this issue at its Political Bureau meeting last June, the CPMR will be organising a discussion seminar on "*European solidarity: from theory to practice*" at the beginning of 2012.

Consequently, it urges European leaders not to miss out on this historic opportunity and make no delay in taking the decisions that will allow the Eurozone, and by extension the EU, to reduce their dependence on the financial markets and set a new tangible course for the European project that rallies all its stakeholders.

- 2) **The Conference acknowledges that money-saving measures taken by the governments of EU States are unavoidable** in an aim to reduce their budget deficits and consequently the burden of their sovereign debt. Its member Regions undertake to do all in their power, within the scope of their respective remits, to take part in this effort to stabilise public finances, especially through a more rational and efficient use of their own budgets.

Nevertheless, the CPMR wishes to draw attention to the detrimental short- and long-term effects of the spiral of austerity into which some States have currently launched themselves. From an economic point of view, it fears that too drastic measures will stifle a still tenuous growth by further limiting investments and consumption that have been straining to pick up again since 2009. Related cuts that governments are making to budget transfers to the Regions in this respect risk leading rapidly to a fall in the standard of public-sector action, including future investments. On a social level, the member Regions are unhappy with the swingeing cuts made in social policies that as a direct result are crippling and impoverishing whole groups of populations. Thus, political leaders risk opening the door a little wider to populist movements and people's resentment of the political class, creating the risk in some countries of threatening their democratic foundations. Moreover, on a European level, it wonders whether such measures are compatible with taking forward and achieving the aims in all three dimensions (smart, sustainable and inclusive) of the Europe 2020 Strategy, for which it expressed its full support at its General Assembly in 2010 in the same way as the European political class as a whole.

For this reason, the CPMR's member Regions are calling on governments to strike a reasonable balance between reducing deficits and supporting the necessary investments to boost consumption in order to foster European growth. They themselves are embarking on this course of action.

- 3) **In this respect, the Conference expresses its overall satisfaction at the proposals for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 presented by the European Commission on 29th June last, which it believes are consistent with the aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy.** In adopting the policy position entitled *"Financial Framework 2014-2020: A proposed level below which it would be unacceptable to go"*, it welcomes the proposals on creating new own resources, which it believes will help to dissociate EU budget discussions from national budget interests and promote a proper European financial framework. It is pleased with the breakdown of the main budget headings within the financial framework. It acknowledges the albeit moderate but real reduction in the two biggest EU budget policies, namely the Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion Policy, and it will watch that these budgets are safeguarded in the context of the future negotiations. Finally it applauds efforts to ensure a transparent and integrated proposal.

However, the CPMR does not hide its concern regarding the position of some Member States on the overall amount of the MFF. It believes, especially given the current state of national public-sector budgets, that the Commission's proposal, which on the whole is stable in relation to the current programming period, is a minimum below which it would be neither reasonable (in light of the objectives to be reached) nor justified (in light of the nature of the EU budget) to go. It will therefore be lobbying hard, especially with the European Parliament, to make sure that the negotiation does not affect this overall amount and the chances of achieving the aims set out in Europe 2020.

- 4) The CPMR is now awaiting the publication of regulations on the different EU policies funded by the MFF. It intends to react to them in due course on the basis of the opinions adopted at its General Assembly in 2010, with some additional points to be included as set out below:

4.1) Regarding Cohesion Policy, the CPMR is pleased that the Commission proposes, as it has been urging it since 2008, that Cohesion Policy should continue to benefit all European Regions and it welcomes the creation of an intermediate category of Regions, which it believes is able to consolidate the competitive assets of the Regions concerned. It is pleased that the ESF is kept within cohesion policy and that it is given greater prominence within this framework. Finally, it expresses satisfaction at the proposed budget increase for the European territorial cooperation instrument, but will remain attentive to developments in terms of the operation and governance of these programmes, where it feels there is room for improvement. In order to do this, the CPMR will be launching in the immediate future a platform for monitoring macro-regional approaches in relation with European territorial cooperation, and will be organising a seminar on this issue in the second half of 2012.

The General Assembly adopts the position of its Political Bureau *"Seizing the opportunity of internal conditionality linked to regional policy"*. In this respect, it supports any conditionality measure under Cohesion Policy that is able to increase the effectiveness and added value of this policy and therefore its legitimacy in the medium term, provided that it does not increase the administrative burden. In this context, it is asking for the introduction of *"Territorial Pacts"* to be considered as one of the horizontal *ex ante* conditions defined under Cohesion Policy. Territorial Pacts must be understood as a political agreement concluded in each State between the central government and the regional and local authorities involved in delivering Cohesion Policy and focusing on i) the priorities for thematic and territorial intervention under cohesion policy at national level and ii) arrangements for

implementing the regional and local partnership. Finally it firmly opposes the proposal put forward by the German Chancellor and French President last August aiming to introduce macroeconomic conditionality into Cohesion Policy. It considers such an instrument to be both politically unacceptable and counterproductive.

The CPMR also regrets that the MFF proposal fails to give differential treatment to the Outermost Regions. For this reason, the CPMR asks for the Outermost Regions to be guaranteed proper differential treatment regarding access to structural funds as laid down in Articles 355 and 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Finally, the CPMR regrets to note that the MFF proposal ignores the provisions set out in Article 174 of the Lisbon Treaty on territorial cohesion, and especially on territories with permanent geographic or demographic handicaps. While the Commission plans to include a budget line for "*Outermost regions and regions with a very low population density*", it totally overlooks the situation of other regions and territories mentioned in Article 174. Consequently, the CPMR reminds the Commission of point 17 of the Final Declaration approved in Aberdeen on 1 October 2010 and point 11 of the Final Declaration approved in Göteborg on 2 October 2009, which expressly include the islands/small island States, sparsely populated areas in the extreme north and mountain territories, in addition to Ceuta and Melilla. In this context, the CPMR asks that, in accordance with the European Parliament Resolution of 22nd September 2010 on "*The European strategy for the economic and social development of mountain regions, islands and sparsely populated areas*", these territories also be given an appropriate level of funding.

The Conference will give its opinion on the content of the regulations once they are published. It also intends to tie this in with the review of the guidelines on regional national aid due out in the autumn.

- 4.2) Regarding accessibility**, the CPMR regrets that neither the White Paper on the future of Transport, nor the outlines of the review on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) pays any actual attention to the principles of territorial cohesion and improving accessibility. It therefore hopes that these principles will be fully integrated into the Commission's forthcoming proposals.

Moreover, the Conference is concerned about the MFF proposals with regard to accessibility in peripheral areas, since they plan to concentrate the new "Connecting Europe Facility" on a series of nodes and corridors that leave out the peripheries. On the basis of the two policy positions adopted by the General Assembly, entitled "*TEN-T Review: Priorities for the CPMR*" and "*The European Transport Policy White Paper: Some Observations and Potential Areas of Work for CPMR*", it will be actively lobbying, notably with the European Parliament, to make sure that the forthcoming legislative proposals take into account the specific characteristics, in terms of intra regional transport, access to markets and to core transport networks, of the peripheral Regions, including Outermost Regions and islands. It also raises questions about how this facility will be joined up with Regional Policy and its specific multi-level governance. It stresses that the regional authorities, which provide part of the funding for the infrastructures concerned by the facility, need to be involved in the related decisions.

Finally, the CPMR believes that intra-EU maritime transport needs to be more proactively developed as a sustainable alternative to road transport, since it is able to reduce the carbon footprint of European transport and, if served by a balanced harbour structure, contribute towards the polycentric development of the continent. Moreover, it is a significant way of developing innovative shipbuilding and contributing to blue growth. The CPMR will implement the conclusions of the Gijón seminar held on 15th April 2011 and between now and its next General Assembly will be organising an interest and proposals group involving professional partners, whose aim will be to advise the EU in order to bring about a real EU policy in this area. With a review of the framework on aid to shipbuilding in the pipeline, the CPMR also reaffirms its support for the European shipbuilding industry and in the coming months will be launching an initiative in this field in relation to the issue of blue growth.

- 4.3) The CPMR welcomes the latest budget proposals aimed at enhancing the EU's maritime dimension.** With regard to Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), the CPMR supports the Commission's proposal for the financial instrument 2011-2013 and is asking for it to be adopted rapidly. It would find it regretful if, under the pressure of some States, the budget were to be under 50 million Euro. It will urge the European Parliament to ensure that the regulation on this instrument provides the possibility to co-finance international exchanges of young students and professionals, which is a prerequisite to the success of blue growth and especially the Vasco Da Gama pilot scheme initiated by the CPMR.

Moreover it welcomes the Commission's proposal to create a European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) within the MFF 2014-2020.

The CPMR is asking for these measures to be implemented on the basis of a concerted approach between DG REGIO and DG MARE of the European Commission and applied at the level of both the Regions and the sea basins in relation with macro-regional approaches. It will therefore be closely monitoring all maritime-related macro-regional initiatives in partnership with its Geographical Commissions.

Nevertheless, the peripheral maritime Regions draw the attention of the EU institutions to the weaknesses and unexploited potential of some EU policies in this area:

- Maritime Regions are the first to be affected by rising sea levels caused by ongoing climate changes. They face increasingly costly investments in order to adapt to this phenomenon. However, the CPMR notes that the MFF proposal, which focuses on the "prevention" side of climate change, underestimates the extent of this challenge. It therefore asks for it to be made easier to mobilise EU funding for this type of investment in the forthcoming programming period. Moreover, many European maritime Regions are strongly involved in mitigation actions (development of renewable energies, especially marine-based, or the promotion of energy efficiency) and in this respect are contributing to EU targets. It would be unacceptable to expect them to bear the burden of adapting to climate change alone.
- The Conference is in favour of furthering EU action with regard to Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning. However, it calls on the European Commission to favour the most simple and flexible options, which would mean not having to refer to another directive.
- Finally, the General Assembly adopts the opinion entitled "*Common Fisheries Policy post 2012*". It raises questions as to the capacity of the Commission's recently published legislative framework to fully achieve a sustainable balance between the three fundamental pillars - environmental, economic and social - of the CFP. They especially regret the lack of a clear and innovative reference to the role of the Regions in the governance of the European fisheries sector, as well as the absence of any new benchmarking system for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture that could serve as a basis for the new common policy. It deplores the failure to take adequately into account the socio-economic impacts that the future CFP could have on maritime Regions and underlines the risk for Europe of losing certain coastal communities and the historic and cultural heritage they represent. Finally, it recalls the importance of maintaining adequate funding to meet the challenges of the sector. The CPMR therefore asks the Council and European Parliament to take action in this direction.
- The development potential of Europe's maritime areas is still largely under-exploited. This puts the European Union at great risk of losing its competitiveness in a context of fierce international competition marked by significant investments made by Europe's competitors. The CPMR therefore appeals to the European Union to massively step up its investments in marine research and technologies and marine renewable energies through the FP, Intelligent Energy Europe Programme and European Technology Institute.
- The need, as part of delivering Erika 4, to build EU capacity to train seafaring personnel to meet the increasing demands of modern maritime transport.

4.4) The CPMR greeted with interest the **proposals on the review of the Common Agricultural Policy** presented by the Commission in November 2010 and detailed in the MFF 2014-2020 proposals. It feels that this review provides the opportunity to introduce a more efficient governance system for the CAP. It will be lobbying for the forthcoming regulations to provide the necessary degree of flexibility for the Regions to adapt the first and second pillar to the specific characteristics of their territories. Special attention will be given to the status of less-favoured areas and new criteria for allocating direct payments to farmers, making sure that they do not penalise jobs in rural areas. The CPMR is again urging for the regulation on the rural development fund (formerly EARDF) to explicitly stipulate that the regional authorities are mandatory partners in regional rural development programmes supported by the EU, as they have been in Cohesion Policy for the past 15 years already.

4.5) The CPMR very much welcomes the changes that are currently taking place in the Mediterranean, and hopes that the people's aspirations for democracy and freedom in these countries will be fulfilled. It therefore expresses satisfaction at the importance given to support for EU external action in the MFF 2014-2020. It hopes that this will allow the Union to address the present and future challenges extending beyond Europe's borders and which cannot be solved in a European context alone.

The General Assembly adopts the opinion entitled *"Turn Neighbourhood Policy into a Genuine Cohesion Policy at the Borders of the European Union"*. As it has continued to maintain since 2008, it believes that neighbourhood policy should be considered as an extension of the internal policies of the Union with a view to forming the EU territory and its neighbourhood into one large 800-million person-strong market that can play an important and strong role in globalisation. The increase in funding for this policy is not enough in itself to achieve this. It needs to go hand in hand with a substantial change in its governance. Europe, as it has pledged itself to doing, now needs to link its support for partner countries in a transparent way to respecting the principles of human rights and promoting growth to the benefit of the majority. To continue further down the road of democracy, it is crucial to involve citizens. In this respect, support for regional and local authorities (RLA) is essential. This is why the CPMR is once more asking for RLAs from partner countries to be genuinely involved in neighbourhood policy.

Similarly, the CPMR welcomes the substantial increase in funding earmarked for the programme designed for civil society and RLA under development aid policy. It also welcomes the support given to associations of RLA in partner countries, which is necessary for contributing towards a territorial approach to development and supporting decentralisation processes, and which the CPMR has long been calling for. It will nevertheless keep a close watch on the fact that these proposals are not used as an adjustment variable during the negotiations. It regrets that the EU Council has asked to reduce funding for the RLA programme in 2012, and appeals to the European Parliament to overturn this request.

- 5) The CPMR's member Regions give a mandate to the Political Bureau and General Secretariat to implement the guidelines of the present Declaration and the accompanying policy positions.
- 6) The General Assembly is pleased to welcome new member Regions into the Conference: Border, Midland & Western Regional Assembly (Ireland), Mayotte (France) and Southend-on-Sea (UK).
- 7) They agree to meet again in 2012 for their 40th General Assembly in Bialystok (Podlaskie, PL).

Approved unanimously