



CPMR AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

1. Purpose of the paper

This paper sets out a proposed approach to the CPMR's engagement in the Future of Europe debate during 2017 and 2018.

It is for circulation to members during January and for consideration and adoption of further steps at the Political Bureau to be held in Gozo (Malta) on 10 March 2017.

2. Purpose of CPMR engagement

2017 marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome and 2018 the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe, which provides a fitting context in which the CPMR launches its reflection on the future of Europe.

The overall aim of this work is to present a strong position from the CPMR on the reform agenda for the Future of Europe, setting out the central role of regions in this debate, and the CPMR's priorities and vision for reform.

It is proposed that the CPMR would:

- Adopt a **Manifesto on the Future of Europe** placing regions and the territorial dimension at the heart of this discussion, identifying key political messages;
- Undertake a **detailed technical analysis** that underpins the political messages, looking at different scenarios/visions of EU reform, the key challenges facing Europe, focused around key thematic issues for CPMR.

The target audience for this work will be:

- EU Institutions in particular the European Parliament and European Commission,
- National Governments,
- CPMR's member regions,
- Other regions/territories that are not currently members of CPMR,
- Other EU networks and organisations representing regional/local interests, including the Committee of the Regions.

3. Timing

The Commission is due to publish a White Paper on the future of Europe in March, therefore, we propose to address a first press release to the EU Institutions on our prospective work on the future of Europe at the **Political Bureau in March 2017**, with the intention of sending a clear message of intent to the European Commission, the other EU Institutions and the Member States about the central and essential place of Europe's regions in these discussions.

Given 2019 is a year of change at EU level with the European Parliament elections, a new European Commission and the likely implementation of Brexit, we propose adoption of the **CPMR Manifesto** at the AGM in the autumn of 2018. This gives us around 21 months in total to complete this work.

We are proposing a two-phased approach:

Phase 1 - February-July 2017: Formulation of key ideas, themes, thinking

High level discussions and ideas generation/formulation, at the Brussels level, through the Geographical Commissions, and engagement of academics/experts from Member Regions. This will include a mixture of brainstorming, events as well as a new Web Forum for contribution of analysis and perspectives on EU reform (more on this below). This will culminate in the presentation of a **Technical Analysis Report** to the CPMR Annual General Meeting (AGM) in October 2017, setting out the key themes/issues and including conclusions and recommendations for consideration by members. We envisage to discuss this report with Michel Barnier, the European Commission's Chief Brexit Negotiator, during our Helsinki AGM on (18-20 October 2017). Michel Barnier is very familiar with the work of the CPMR and is former EU Commissioner for Regional Policy (1999-2003).

Phase 2 - November 2017–June 2018: Wider consultation and articulation of key political messages

This phase would focus on a wider consultation of membership, including further activities by the Geographical Commissions, local and regional events organized by Member Regions, to translate the conclusions and recommendations from the first phase into key political messages (and further analysis) on the future of Europe. The outcome from this second phase of work would be:

- (i) **CPMR Manifesto on the Future of Europe:** setting out key political messages. To be adopted at the AGM in the autumn of 2018 and presented to the EU Institutions during a high level event in Brussels.
- (ii) **Accompanying Technical Report:** providing detailed analysis from the research undertaken, providing the rationale behind the political messages.

Following the adoption of the CPMR Manifesto there would be a communication/lobbying strategy to promote the key messages of the report, including a launch conference in Brussels., as well as events in the Geographical Commissions and in Member Regions.

4. Reflecting CPMRs core principles

The CPMR since its creation has stood for three core principles:

- Balanced Territorial Development and Territorial Cohesion;
- Championing the position of regions in European policy-making;
- Promoting solidarity within Europe and between its regions.

These principles remain valid and particularly pertinent in the context of the wide-ranging challenges facing Europe presently, and will provide the foundation on which the CPMR's reflection on the future of Europe takes place.

5. Responding to Europe's challenges

Europe is facing a significant number of challenges as we highlighted in the discussion document at the AGM in the Azores in November 2016 (and *Annex 1* provides a summary of these challenges). These are broad and wide-ranging, cutting across many different levels of European life. There is a strong territorial dimension to many of these issues, and clear variation in the impact, the intensity and importance of these issues to CPMR's member regions

We propose in this work to concentrate on **three key pillars** of activity, which draw together a number of these challenges, where we can make a forceful and persuasive contribution to the reform debate:

- **Investment and spatial development:** centred around the social, economic and financial instability following the financial crisis of 2008-2009 remains, seen in the growing levels of social and economic disparities across the EU, and the failure to effectively address this through EU level action; as well as the need to support investments in key infrastructure across all parts of Europe including the maritime economy, with connectivity for peripheral and outlying areas a key priority, to underpin balanced territorial development; and measures to strengthen the competitiveness of regions across Europe, investing in skills, education, research, new and emerging technologies and sectors like ocean and marine energy etc.;
- **Democratic participation:** in the aftermath of the financial crisis there has been a rise in populist and euro-sceptic forces across Europe, together with an increase in xenophobia and racism; this has included a growing frustration with and lack of trust in traditional politics, the role of governments, institutions and the mainstream political parties, at both the national and EU level; re-engaging with citizens, in particular young people, has therefore become a top priority in the debate on the future of Europe; there are also calls for greater solidarity in Europe to address the growing inequalities, and for political institutions to provide stronger leadership and direction in pursuing a Social Europe agenda;
- **Relations between the EU and its neighbours:** in particular, the geo-political instability on the EU's borders in Eastern Europe and the Middle East/North Africa, including the resurgence of Russia and the ISIS threat; the impact of Brexit in the north west of Europe (Channel, Atlantic and North Sea). These developments draw the 'peripheral' regions into the heart of many of the challenges along the EU's borders, including a strong maritime dimension to these, and one message that we would expect to come out of this will be 'ignore the periphery at your peril'.

These are very much shared challenges that cut across national boundaries and which cannot be tackled by individual countries acting in isolation of one another. Close and effective cooperation at the European level is imperative, involving all levels of government – regional, national and supra-national – through a coordinated, multi-level governance approach.

We will underline and illustrate the role that regions play in promoting and engaging in partnership, through networks like the CPMR, and through projects and other initiatives that promote co-operation in its various forms: economic, cultural, political and in many other ways. How such activities provide the 'glue' that brings Europe closer together, and how such co-operation activities are even more essential given the social, economic and political instability across Europe, and should be supported and reinforced in the future.

6. Considering different ‘visions’ of Europe

We expect the EU level discussion to focus around different ‘scenarios’ or ‘visions’ of reform, and in the Technical Analysis we would set out what these different scenarios are, and analyse how these different visions of Europe could impact on regions and at the territorial level. This would include looking at the EU Institutions perspectives, individual Member States and groupings of Member States (where evidence exists of this, e.g. VISIGRAD).

In particular, we see this as centring around a number of themes:

- *Level of integration within the EU:* i.e. How much EU? This ranges on the one hand from the disintegration or break up of the EU, to at the other end the adoption of a federalist model. We would propose to look at how different levels of integration (including two-speed or multi-speed Europe; thematic and geographical intensities of co-operation) could impact on the three core thematic pillars of this work, including the relations between the EU and wider Europe;
- *Role of the EU Institutions:* including the use of the ‘community method’ of policy and law-making versus the rise of inter-governmentalism; the degree to which the interests of regions are understood and prioritized within these; the role of the Committee of the Regions as a voice for regional interests; ideas and proposals for reforms to the EU Institutions;
- *Role of the EU Budget in addressing new and existing challenges:* rationale for EU level intervention; challenges to traditional areas of expenditure; own resources proposals presented by Mario Monti; investment versus redistribution; importance of EU programmes and projects in making the EU relevant, and the role of regions in this;
- *Role of national/regional parliaments:* their formal status within the EU policy and law-making process, legislation and programming; whether there will be any reforms to strengthen this; and this would include regional parliaments;
- *Political visions on the overarching policy direction of the EU:* economic, security and foreign policies; level of intervention and control from Brussels (relates back to ‘integration’ model); role of the EU budget to support policy interventions; Social Europe versus austerity / conservative economic policies; use of central controls including ‘conditionalities’ in programming; commitment to ‘core’ EU values and how these position the EU in the global context.

Whilst much of the above is centred on an internal debate in the EU about its future direction and structure, this remains very relevant to the relations between EU and wider Europe, thematic pillar 3 described above, and the analysis we undertake will take this into account.

7. Organisation of the work

Modes of engagement

We envisage a number of different methods of gathering evidence and facilitating debate:

- Brainstorms in Brussels with reps from EU Institutions, academics, regional/national reps;
- Workshops/seminars in Brussels and in Member Regions;
- Geographical Commission: discussions/workshops at Political Bureau meetings and potentially dedicated events;
- Dedicated event(s) on potential impact of Brexit on CPMR regions.

We also propose to establish a **Web Forum** – in part inspired by the [UK in a Changing Europe](#) initiative¹. The idea of this forum would be to provide a space where academics and other experts, the CPMR Directors, the Geographical Commissions, and the CPMR Member Regions, could post analysis and research of relevance to the future of Europe debate. It would serve as both a research tool and a communication platform for the CPMRs initiative.

This Web Forum would be managed by the CPMRs Press and Communications Officer.

CPMR General Secretariat

The work will be coordinated by the CPMR General Secretariat, under the lead of the new Director of Finance and Programmes, Gregg Jones, and with the close involvement of the CPMR Policy Directors, CPMR Press and Communications Officer, and the Secretariats of the Geographical Commissions.

There will be regular reporting to the CPMR Political Bureau and the Geographical Commissions, and engagement of Member Regions on a day to day basis through a ‘Technical Expert Group’ (more on this below).

Geographical Commissions

The Geographical Commissions will play a central role in contributing ideas and background information into the preparation of the CPMR Manifesto and the technical analysis underpinning these. It is important that this work reflects and encapsulates the perspectives at the Geographical Commission level, within an overall CPMR position.

We invite each Geographical Commission to determine whether to cover one or more of the three pillars outline above to focus on in their reflections.

For phase 1 each Geographical Commission is invited to contribute ideas, analysis and suggestions to the preparation of the Technical Report for the AGM October 2017. We would propose that this be gathered through:

- High level discussion at the General Assembly meetings and/or at Executive Secretariat meetings of the Geographical Commissions between March and July;
- Potentially through dedicated ‘brainstorming sessions’ organized by the Geographical Commissions involving academics, experts and key stakeholder interests;
- Potentially (where feasible/relevant) adding a ‘future of Europe’ theme to other events planned by the Geographical Commission between March and July.

Each Executive Secretary would provide feedback to the CPMR General Secretariat, through a short report summarizing the key messages, conclusions and ideas coming out of these discussions. To ensure that this feedback is taken into account by the CPMR General Secretariat in preparing the Technical Report for AGM October 2017, this information should be provided by beginning of July at the latest (and for events taking place in July within a week of the session ending).

The Geographical Commissions are also invited (as per the next section – engagement of CPMR partners) to suggest names of academics and other experts, to the CPMR General Secretariat, and

¹An initiative financed by the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK bringing together academics from across the four UK ‘home’ nations, to analyse and discuss the UKs relationship with the EU in the context of Brexit.

to forward any analysis or research that they are aware of within their membership that is of relevance to the debate on the future of Europe.

For Phase 2 of the work we envisage the Geographical Commissions playing a role in animating wider consultation and engagement with stakeholders, through organizing dedicated workshops as part of the future of Europe debate. We would also envisage clear opportunities for co-operation with other organisations or networks active within the Geographical Commission areas in this debate on the future of Europe, such as the European Movement, youth organizations, student unions, sectoral interests etc. The CPMR General Secretariat will provide further guidance on this aspect of the work following discussions with the Geographical Commissions during Phase 1.

Engagement of CPMR partners

We are inviting expressions of interest from CPMR Member Regions about their interest in actively participating in this initiative.

We see participation taking place at a number of levels:

- **Political engagement:** confirmation of interest of regional politicians taking an active role in the initiative, at the EU/Brussels level, through the Geographical Commissions and through activities in Member regions;
- **Technical Expert Group** (established in February/March 2017): around 15-20 officials from Member Regions. This body would act as a sounding board to play an active role in shaping the work, and in facilitating participation from regional experts/academics. It would meet in Brussels and would also function through an e-mail group;
- **Academics/experts from Member Regions:** recommend and bring on board academics and experts from our Member Regions and Geographical Commissions who could play an active role in the initiative – including contributions of ideas, research and analysis, participating in events (in Brussels) and at the local/regional level. We are particularly keen to involve academics from Member Regions with expertise on the territorial dimension in key challenges and policy contexts;
- **Regional/local events:** this could include dedicated events animated and organized by CPMR Member Regions in the context of this initiative. It could also mean making the link between the CPMR's future of Europe initiative and other events planned for 2017 and 2018 that are of direct relevance, such as events being organized in the context of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, or in relation to rotating EU presidencies, or European Capital of Culture, and so on;
- **Partnership working:** as per the Geographical Commissions there is clear scope for co-operation at the Member Region level with other organisations, networks and sectoral interests, including European Movement and others.

To be actively involved in Phase 1 we ask CPMR Member Regions to inform us of their interest for engagement in the above areas as soon as possible (and ideally during February at the latest).

Engagement of young people

Connecting with young people, getting their views on the future of Europe is an important priority CPMR's work on the future of Europe. The Brexit vote in the UK saw a clear difference between the age groups in support for the EU, with strong support amongst younger people compared to the older generations. This, despite the impact of the social and economic crisis on young people, which has seen them bore the brunt in many ways.

We are particularly keen to encourage Geographical Commissions and Member Regions to consider how to engage young people in this debate, including through partnership working and through involving organisations active in representing young people. The Atlantic Arc Commission is inviting a group of young people, trainees within the Maritime sector, to participate in its General Assembly in March 2017, as part of a session dedicated to blue growth, and investing in skills and training, and this potentially provides a first such opportunity.

Wider partnership

The CPMR General Secretariat will be looking at opportunities to work in partnership with others at the EU level and in Brussels in this work on the future of Europe, including think tanks, EU associations, networks and other bodies (including Committee of the Regions) to share ideas, potentially organize joint events and other activities to raise the profile of our work.

We also propose to establish a wider pool of academics and other experts at the Brussels/EU level, to provide ideas, critical thinking, analysis and advice, in particular through the proposed brainstorm/workshops and the Web Forum mentioned above.

This is in addition to the opportunities for cooperation that we have already mentioned in regard to the Geographical Commissions and activities of Member Regions.

Annex 1: Addressing the challenges facing the EU

Discussion document AGM November 2016

The discussion document presented to the AGM in November set out the broad range of challenges that face the European Union at present, which provide the context in which the debate on the future of Europe is taking place.

These cover a number of new and emerging challenges as well as issues that have been on the EU agenda for a number of years. One of the issues we will face in our work on the future of Europe is determining which of these challenges are most important to CPMR, where we should focus our energy in setting concrete and clear messages for action.

By way of reminder the broad issues (and one or two additional ones that will provide the context for this work) are as follows:

New and emerging challenges:

- Brexit: the withdrawal of the UK from the EU has implications at many levels (trade, cultural, movement of people including students, researchers, tourists, businesses etc., transport and accessibility, the maritime agenda and share marine environment etc.) and will have a disproportionate territorial impact on parts of Europe, including in particular the Channel, Atlantic and North Sea coastal areas. Brittany published a report to scope out and measure the potential impact of Brexit on its territory and other parts of Europe are undertaking similar exercises;
- Deepening crisis in the democratic process with the rise of nationalism and populist movements, distrust of and resentment towards political institutions, experts and elites, which has increasingly played out as an anti-EU sentiment. This has been building up over a number of years, both pre- and post-2009 financial crisis, however, it has reached something of a climax with the Brexit vote and the Trump election across the Atlantic;
- Centralisation tendencies within many member states, placing challenges to regional and local institutions;
- Migration and refugee crisis and the pressures coming from the EU's immediate external borders. Like Brexit this is having a disproportionate territorial impact on some parts of Europe, and illustrates the 'shared' nature of European policy challenges;
- Geopolitical threats and instability in the near border of the EU, notably Russia and the Middle East. Again, there is a strong territorial dimension to this issue, particularly in the Baltic and the Central Eastern European area;
- Security and terrorism, which has become top of the agenda in 2015-2016 following the spate of attacks across Europe. This is inextricably linked to both the migration and refugee crisis and the geopolitical threats and instability on the near border of the EU;

Ongoing challenges include:

- Economic and financial crisis: lack of investment; austerity and pressures on public budgets; fragility of Eurozone economy, and individual Eurozone states;
- Ongoing high levels of unemployment, including youth unemployment, growing social divisions and wealth disparities between Member States and within Member States, and insufficient focus on the needs of peripheral areas;
- Climate change and wider sustainability agenda, including the commitments to delivering the UN's Sustainable Development Goals [more on this below];
- Growing disillusionment with the EU project: viewed as a 'distant and elitist project' (part of wider democratic crisis noted);
- Energy security including the Energy Union, and overcoming barriers to developing ocean and marine energy;

- Competitiveness of the European economy in a global economy: investing in research, skills, developing new economic sectors including the blue economy;
- Reforming the Single Market including digital single market, which has been a dominant theme under both Barroso and Juncker's Commissions. The angle the CPMR could pursue in this is ensuring that territorial cohesion underpins development of the Single Market reforms.

The status of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within EU policy-making, and within the future MFF is something that we will monitor. There is suggestion that these could be used as the basis for the successor to the Europe 2020 strategy. How this shapes a vision of the Future of Europe, and what impact this could have on CPMRs member regions is something we will consider in this work.



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The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) brings together some 160 Regions from 25 States from the European Union and beyond.

Representing about 200 million people, the CPMR campaigns in favour of a more balanced development of the European territory.

It operates both as a think tank and as a lobby group for Regions. It focuses mainly on social, economic and territorial cohesion, maritime policies and accessibility.

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