# Table of Contents

| 1 | Foreword | 03 |
| 2 | Policy Work | 04 |
| 3 | Geographical Commissions | 14 |
| 4 | Projects | 18 |
|   | Cohesion Policy | 04 |
|   | Transport & Accessibility | 06 |
|   | Maritime & Fisheries | 08 |
|   | Climate Change & Energy | 10 |
|   | Migration | 12 |
Dear Readers,

The start of the new decade has been rough. During the past months, the world has faced a massive public health emergency. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every region, every sector, every citizen. The playing field has drastically changed, and although this Activity Report covers the work the CPMR has carried out since October 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced our activities to a great extent.

The negotiations carried at EU level on the next Multiannual Financial Framework – the European Budget that is to support the European project and ambitions over the following six years – and around which the CPMR has been carrying out extensive policy analysis and advocacy work, have been turned upside down. A new priority is now centre stage: European Recovery. European leaders have reached a historical agreement by supporting the ambitious financial package put forward by the European Commission to help Europe on its path towards recovery and long term sustainability. In this context, the work of the CPMR has been directed to strengthen the involvement of regional authorities in the deployment of the recovery instruments, and to ensure a territorial dimension across all the extraordinary measures put forward as well as a central role for Cohesion policy.

The CPMR has achieved important successes on issues of crucial importance to our member regions during this past year, both before and since the coronavirus outburst. In the following pages you will read about the work that we have accomplished in our priority areas – Cohesion policy, Transport, Maritime and Fisheries, Climate and Energy, Migration – as well as our biggest achievements. For instance, carrying out strong and successful advocacy efforts on the Multiannual Financial Framework, securing increased EU support for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, launching the “Regions Act!” initiative to showcase how regions are acting for a climate neutral society and contributing to the European Green Deal.

Another important highlight of the working period has certainly been the renewal of the SEArca Intergroup of the European Parliament for the next four years. Our position as Secretariat provides our member regions and geographical commissions with a privileged platform of discussion.

Through the numerous events we organise and take part in throughout the year, our involvement in cooperation projects, our participation in initiatives from different European institutions, as well as our cooperation and partnerships with like-minded platforms and associations across geographical areas, the CPMR ensures that the voice of peripheral and maritime regions is well heard in Europe.

2020 and the years to come will certainly continue to be challenging and difficult for our citizens and our regions, but the spirit that unites us as an organisation that favours cooperation, common action and debate to overcome existing challenges must continue to preside over the actions that we need to take to overcome these challenges.

Happy reading!

Vasco Cordeiro
President of the CPMR and President of the Government of the Autonomous Region of Azores

Eleni Marianou
CPMR Secretary General
Cohesion policy is at the core of CPMR members’ interests as the main EU investment policy and is set to acquire even greater salience in the context of the post-COVID recovery.

The CPMR maintained a strong focus on the Cohesion policy legislative package 2021-2027 negotiations. At the same time, particular attention was dedicated to the legislative measures put forward in relation to the Green Deal (Just Transition Fund) and in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis (Corona Investment Initiatives, React-EU, Recovery and Resilience Facility).

On all these issues comprehensive analyses of the regulatory elements and constant updates of the legislative process were provided to the CPMR members. In addition, the CPMR continued to produce updated statistical analysis on theoretical allocations, including under the new recovery instruments.

As part of the advocacy work, the CPMR organised meetings and was regularly in contact with key decision-makers and EU officials, issued political statements and published opinion pieces on European and national media, and tabled numerous elements to the legislative proposals under discussion (Just Transition Fund, Recovery and Resilience Facility).

A stronger EU Recovery plan for CPMR regions | The CPMR forcefully advocated an strong EU response to the COVID-19 crisis and an ambitious recovery plan to tackle its fallout with a strong involvement of regional authorities. To this end, it published a series of open letters in major EU media outlets, political statements and policy papers to stress these messages. Updated briefings on the response measures under Cohesion policy and on the main features of the recovery instruments were regularly provided to its members via the Cohesion Core Group emails. In the same vein, exchanges of views with relevant European Commission officials (DG REGIO and DG BUDGET) were also organised. The work of the CPMR was directed to ensure a territorial dimension across all the extraordinary crisis measures put forward. In this respect, concrete proposals were developed, and amendments were shared with relevant decision-makers in order to strengthen the involvement of regional authorities in the deployment of the recovery instruments.

Influencing the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) | The CPMR monitored the MFF negotiations systematically providing an extensive analysis of the successive Council “Negotiation-Box” proposals, in particular focusing on the budget allocations and policy provisions related to the CPMR core areas of interest such as Cohesion policy or transport. This work attracted considerable attention among decision-makers, analysts and media, positioning CPMR as a prominent actor in the debate on the future EU budget. In terms of advocacy, the CPMR organised an exchange of views in September 2019 with the EU budget attachés of nine Member States to present its messages on the EU long-term budget. In early 2020, when the MFF negotiations were stalling, the CPMR put on the table concrete proposals for a “contingency plan” to avert a disruption of funding under shared management between the two periods. The REACT-EU regulation is reported to have been influenced by these lobbying efforts, amongst others.

Moreover, a delegation of Presidents of regions from the CPMR met with the European Commissioner for Budget and Administration, Johannes Hahn, to discuss a number of key issues from the perspective of the regions on the EU Recovery Instrument and the MFF 2021-2027 ahead of the European Council in July when EU leaders reached an agreement.

Cohesion policy regulations and the Just Transition Fund | The CPMR continued to monitor and influence the inter-institutional negotiations over the Cohesion policy regulations 2021-2027 and to engage with relevant decision-makers. These efforts contributed to
The CPMR participated in several events with the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Elisa Ferreira, in the framework of the #CohesionAlliance, a coalition of leading European associations of cities and regions and the European Committee of the Regions to defend Cohesion Policy as a pillar of the EU’s future. The exchanges of views with the Commissioner focused on several issues concerning Cohesion policy issues (January 2020) and to present to her the renewed #CohesionAlliance Declaration (June 2020) in view of the upcoming decisions on the EU’s next Multiannual Financial Framework and the EU Recovery Plan.

In the months to come, the CPMR will keep track of the final stages of the negotiations on the MFF, the Cohesion policy regulations and the recovery instruments. At the same time, it will increasingly focus its activities on the implementation aspects of the new period. A crucial file which will be the target of dedicated advocacy is the new Guidelines on regional State Aid. In 2021 the CPMR plans to launch an overarching reflection with its members and relevant experts on the future of Cohesion policy.

The Just Transition Fund gathered significant attention as the headline initiative of the new European Commission to bring its climate ambitions under Cohesion policy. The CPMR carried out a thorough analysis of both the legislative proposal presented in January 2020 and the specific investment guidelines, including assessing the impact from a territorial angle. A meeting was organised between CPMR members, MEP Nicklas Nienaß and high-level European Commission officials in order to exchange views and concerns on the new fund.

a positive outcome of the trilogue on several regulatory elements, for instance on the mandatory partnership agreement and the 150KM rule for eligibility under maritime cross-border programmes. In January, the CPMR presented its position on Cohesion policy before the Committee on Regional Development in the European Parliament at the invitation of its Chair MEP Younous Omarjee.
Connectivity and territorial accessibility are at the core of CPMR member regions’ interests, they are a key pillar of EU solidarity and cohesion.

After having dedicated most of its efforts in 2018-2019 in influencing the CEF 2.0 to ensure that the Programme will be balanced and will offer opportunities to enhance territorial accessibility in Europe, the CPMR followed the MFF negotiation closely while turning its attention towards the revision of the Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) and the transport and mobility pillar of the Green Deal. The efforts have been concentrated on advocating for maximising territorial cohesion while ensuring that Europe meets the Paris Agreement’s objectives.

The unexpected COVID-19 crisis that struck the whole world generated a new stream of activities relating to Transport. The CPMR monitored the initiative taken by EU Institutions to answer the challenges of the crisis and raised the issues its member regions were facing.

Engagement with EU institutions | Our messages have been widely shared among Members of the European Parliament, Member States representatives and European Commission officials.

The CPMR shared the Policy Position adopted in Palermo during its 2019 General Assembly with the newly elected members of the European Parliament, as well as with Commissioner Valean and her Directorate General for Transport and Mobility.

The CPMR had the opportunity to meet with members of the Transport Committee of the European Parliament to share its views on the TEN-T revision as well as on aviation-related dossiers. Although the lockdown imposed by the sanitary crisis this spring made it challenging to organise a high-level meeting with MEPs, the CPMR kept in regular contact with those involved in the own initiative report on TEN-T.

The CPMR is also member of a Maritime Transport Expert Group chaired by Professor Bodewig, Coordinator for Motorways of the Sea (MoS). It participated in a number of meetings focusing on the future of MoS and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on maritime transport. During these meetings, the CPMR, thanks to the contribution of its Transport Working Group, shared several suggestions on how to improve MoS and tackle the impact of the crisis. Most of our messages were included in the final version of the Detailed Implementation Plan for MoS presented in July.

Paving the way towards a revised TEN-T and a new Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy | The CPMR pursued its work initiated in 2019 to influence the revision of the TEN-T. In addition to regular exchanges with the relevant Units of the Directorate General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission, the CPMR met Mr Gieseke MEP, Rapporteur of the TRAN Committee on TEN-T as well as few of his Shadow Rapporteurs to highlight the importance of taking into account the challenges of peripheral maritime regions. The other side of the “mobility and transport” coin during this term is the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy; that is, the mobility pillar of the Green Deal that will shape European policy for the next few years. The CPMR took a first stand by answering the public consultation in September to highlight for instance the importance of leaving no territory miss-connected, of developing a place-based approach to mobility innovation and of adapting to unforeseen challenges such as COVID-19 and Brexit.
The CPMR also contributed to the consultation on the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (AFID) revision which is crucial to achieve the EU’s climate and energy goals and sustainable transport. In its contribution, the CPMR underlined the need for an alternative fuels’ infrastructure network that is widespread and deployed in all European regions avoiding isolation, that builds on the strengths and specificities of the territories and supports regions efforts to decarbonise transport and its infrastructure.

**Facing COVID-19** | The COVID-19 crisis prompted the CPMR General Secretariat to be reactive and to ensure that the challenges and difficulties that our member regions were facing were tackled by the EU. The CPMR pointed out the critical situation regional maritime and airline companies were facing, while underlining their key role in ensuring territorial accessibility for maritime peripheral regions. To this day, the European Commission considers that the adopted package of measures aiming to provide relief to the transport sector will suffice to bring Europe back on the path to recovery. However, the CPMR will remain extremely attentive to the development of the situation considering the long-term effect on those companies as well as their crucial role for our member regions.

The CPMR has sent a Declaration focusing on the impact of the sanitary crisis on transport and territorial accessibility to the European Institutions calling for strong coordinated action at European level to recover from the crisis.

2020 has brought many challenges. The CPMR will continue to defend the interests of our member regions in the context of the sanitary crisis to ensure that it will not jeopardise their connectivity in the long term. In addition to the reaction to the pandemic, the CPMR will pursue its efforts to influence both the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy and the TEN-T revision as well as monitor general developments related to the transport infrastructure decarbonisation. It will continue engaging with the EU Institutions in that respect. In parallel, the CPMR will present the results of its work on territorial accessibility in 2021 and run an ex-post evaluation of the 2014-2020 Connecting Europe Facility aiming to identify potential gaps and improvements to bring up at the occasion of the 2021-2027 mid-term review.
The maritime sectors constitute the beating heart of CPMR Member Regions’ regional economies. For this reason, the CPMR aims at placing regions at the heart of EU maritime policies’ decision-making.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the CPMR contributed to shaping EU emergency measures to support the maritime sectors and paved the way for a better alignment between regions’ needs and the EU Green Deal legislations.

An increased EU support for the recovery of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors | The fisheries and aquaculture sectors have suffered greatly during the COVID-19 crisis. For these reasons, the CPMR proactively contributed to put in place an adapted framework of EU emergency measures for fisheries and aquaculture. Mr Georges Alexakis, CPMR Vice-President in charge of Maritime Affairs and Vice-Governor of Crete sent a letter on 24 March 2020 to Commissioner Sinkevicius, the European Parliament and the Council representatives. It conveyed CPMR’s proposals to modify the 2014-2020 European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, to better support the sectors in this difficult context. Many proposals from the CPMR were taken on board in a second package of EU emergency measures agreed in April 2020.

On 29 May 2020, a CPMR delegation of political representatives from all sea basins met with MEP Pierre Karleskind, Chair of the Fisheries Committee at the European Parliament and Stylianos Mitolidis, Head of Unit at DG MARE, to share how these emergency measures were implemented in the regions. Delegates expressed their visions on the adaptation of the future EMFF and State Aids for the recovery of the sectors. They reiterated the need for an increased role for regions in the EMFF management.

As this meeting occurred two days after the publication of the EU Recovery Plan, CPMR regions reacted upon the proposed increased EMFF budget of €530 million additional funding. They highlighted that this proposal still leaves the budget below the amount called for by the CPMR and asked the Commission to consider extending EMFF emergency measures beyond 31 December 2020. These messages were included in the Draft Opinion of the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament on the draft general EU budget for the financial year 2021.

Under the leadership of Claire Hugues, Councillor for Pays de la Loire Region and new Coordinator of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Working Group, the CPMR shared these messages to Charlina Vitcheva, the new Director General of DG MARE, on 29 September 2020.

An increased recognition at EU level of the impact of COVID-19 on maritime industries | Maritime industries, such as coastal tourism, shipbuilding and offshore energies, are severely hit as activities stopped and investments have been postponed. In this context, the CPMR led successful initiatives to voice the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on maritime industries.

First, the CPMR renewed the SEArica Intergroup at the European Parliament for four additional years. Thanks to CPMR’s role as Secretariat of the Intergroup, SEArica has been a strategic instrument to highlight the impact of COVID-19 on maritime sectors.

Secondly, the CPMR worked to give a greater access for regions to EU financial instruments dedicated to maritime sectors. The CPMR promoted the role of regions as financial intermediaries towards the European Commission. This lobbying action was backed up by the results of the CLIPPER project, which aims at developing better public policies to support the competitiveness of maritime Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises. It contributed to the launch of an EU Call dedicated to financial Intermediaries under the new Blue Invest Fund.
The CPMR will lead an in-depth reflection on the revision of the Common Fisheries Policy planned in 2023. The CPMR will also influence the revision of State Aid policy for fisheries and aquaculture planned in 2021. It will help regions to maximise the use of EMFF, by organising exchanges of views on the implementation of 2021-2027 EMFF operational programmes.

On maritime investments, the CPMR will support regions in identifying the opportunities offered by EU policies and programmes, in the framework of the EU Recovery Plan, the Green Deal and the new EU Industrial Strategy. In this respect, it will boost dialogue and cooperation between CPMR Geographical Commissions on blue investments. It will continue to make strategic use of the SEArica Intergroup and will take part in the discussions of the Board of the new Horizon Europe “Ocean Mission”, through the participation of Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, Regional Councillor of Tulcea and Acting President of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission.

In December 2019, the SEArica intergroup was successfully renewed for four additional years, bringing together 107 MEPs from 23 different Member States and 6 political groups.

More than ever in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the SEArica intergroup has been a pertinent instrument at the heart of relevant EU policies for maritime areas, such as the Blue Growth Strategy, Sea Basin Strategies, Maritime and Fisheries Fund, and more recently the Green Deal and the COVID-19 recovery plan. It has stimulated discussions and proposed solutions for a fair and sustainable maritime sector across Europe.

In April 2020, the intergroup published a SEArica Declaration on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and called for action to support the maritime sector. This initiative led to a productive meeting on 19 May 2020, proposed by the Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius, in order to discuss the needs of the sector in the crisis and post-crisis context.

The intergroup has also remained active in the organisation of several events including CPMR Member Regions from all the sea basins.

- “Mission Clean Oceans: How can science and innovation tackle ocean pollution?” in collaboration with JPI Oceans, IUCN and Ocean Plastics Lab (17 February 2020);
- “How is our health linked to the ocean?” in collaboration with the European Marine Board and Blue Health (8 June 2020);
- “Towards Sustainable Tourism in the Maritime and Coastal Regions of Europe” in collaboration with the Travel Foundation (7 July 2020).

The CPMR secretariat for SEArica will continue to provide its full support to ensure the promotion of concrete actions and respect of the territorial specificities of maritime regions of Europe.
CPMR Member Regions are ready to act for a climate neutral Europe

The European Green Deal is Europe’s long-term growth strategy and cornerstone of our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis as stated by the European Commission President Von der Leyen. In the last year, the CPMR has focused on ensuring that the role its Member Regions have to play in the transition to a competitive, resilient and climate neutral society is fully recognised.

The CPMR has contributed and advocated for a strong role of regional authorities in the implementation of the European Green Deal goals through consultations and engagement with the European Institutions, as well as by launching the “Regions Act!” initiative showcasing how they are acting for a climate neutral society. The CPMR has also advocated for an ambitious (European and international) climate policy that has a territorial approach and leaves no one behind.

Regions are indispensable partners and no territory should be left behind | The CPMR called for the European Green Deal, in its Policy Position “CPMR Regions at the heart of the European Green Deal”, to deliver four enablers to ensure a transition for a prosperous, competitive, and fair climate neutral society for all regions in Europe:

• An ambitious Climate policy;
• A long-term adequately funded growth strategy;
• Full involvement and partnership with Regions;
• A fair and just transition.

These four enablers have and will continue to guide the CPMR work in engaging with the European institutions and its contribution to different proposals, initiatives, revisions and strategies that have been and are being launched in the European Green Deal.

The CPMR has successfully advocated for a responsible and balanced increase of the 2030 climate targets from 40% to 55% in terms of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) through its contributions to open consultations and engagement with the European Commission, including through the Coalition for Higher Ambition.

The CPMR is also contributing to the new EU Adaptation Strategy and to the EU Offshore Energy Strategy. In its contributions, the CPMR has been stressing the need for an approach that has regions’ specificities at its core and that fosters growth and resilience, whilst ensuring a just transition to a climate neutral continent. However, as underlined by the CPMR in its contribution to the European Climate Pact, the European Green Deal can only be achieved if regional authorities are fully involved in policy making.

Regions Act! | The CPMR has launched the “Regions Act! – CPMR Member Regions acting for climate neutrality” initiative, in order to show the contribution and engagement of CPMR Member Regions to the European Green Deal objectives.

The Regions Act! initiative will show, through an interactive map, to the European Institutions the on the ground and concrete action that CPMR Regions are undertaking to deliver a prosperous, resilient and climate neutral future and to counter the increasing and worsening impacts of climate change that they are faced with.

The initiative focuses not only on targets or on mitigation measures and strategies aimed at reducing GHGs emissions, but also on measures that CPMR Regions are implementing to adapt to the increasing challenges of climate change. The initiative also looks into the use of cohesion funds for climate action, as well as strategies to include territorial socio-economic actors.

The initiative also aims at fostering the exchange of best practices between Member Regions and at nourishing and strengthening the CPMR action.
COP 25 | The CPMR participated with a delegation led by Cees Loggen, Vice-President for Climate and Energy and Regional Minister of Noord-Holland, in the 25th session of the Conference of Parties (COP 25) of the UNFCCC in Madrid (December 2019). The CPMR also hosted jointly with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) a side event at the EU Pavilion at COP 25 attended by the EU institutions, labour and trade-union associations, climate and youth associations and CPMR Member Regions.

During COP 25, discussions focused on the need to ensure policies tailor-made to the territories and their strengths, exchange of best practices as well as on the important role that regions have to play to achieve the Paris Agreement objectives.

At its side event, the CPMR, represented by Vice-President Loggen and Ferran Rosa, Managing Director of the Instituto Balear de la Energia, underlined the need to ensure a transition to carbon neutrality that is fair for all and that is delivered in full partnership with all stakeholders, from regional authorities, civil society to youth and that pays particular attention to coastal areas.

The challenges and opportunities ahead in the transition to a climate neutral Europe are manifold. The CPMR is going to continue to promote the role of its member regions in the European Green Deal and related legislation and strategies by underlining the importance of the regional level and of a territorial approach and the huge potential of peripheral and maritime regions. It will ask for a recovery that is green and territorially balanced and will monitor and scrutinise the up-coming Adaptation and Offshore Renewable Strategy, as well as contribute to the revision of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Directives.
Migration policy figures among the top priorities of the new European Commission.

The announcement of a new Pact on Migration & Asylum attests to its will to move forward on this common policy area, taking stock of the lessons learnt from the 2015 crisis and adopting a comprehensive approach that addresses both internal and external dimensions. In this perspective, the CPMR, in collaboration with the regions of its Migration Task Force, has stepped up its advocacy work to promote the multi-level governance and multi-sectoral approach to migration management and highlight the needs and added value of regional action.

The CPMR sees the complementarity of proposed EU funding instruments to support cross-cutting actions dealing with migration issues as a step in the right direction. It is continuing to analyse and monitor the opportunities available to regional authorities in the EU structural and investment funds, Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF) and Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), to ensure that they provide adequate support.

Go Local Conference | On 3 December 2019, several CPMR member regions and the General Secretariat took part in the conference “Go Local: Supporting regions, cities and rural areas in migrants’ integration”, co-organised by the European Committee of the Regions and European Commission. Annika Annerby Jansson, President of Region Skåne and Chair of the CPMR’s Task Force on Migration Management participated in one of the panel sessions. The new Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, addressed the conference, reconfirming the will to keep working with regions and local authorities as key stakeholders in the successful integration of migrants and stressing the need to maintain the budget at the level of expectations and accessibility for territorial stakeholders.

REGIN Project | February 2020 saw the launch of the REGIN Project (Regions for Migrants and Refugees Integration), coordinated by the CPMR as leader of a consortium of ten partners involving six of its member regions (Azores, Campania, Catalonia, Murcia, Puglia, Skåne) and a wide list of associated partners including more regional authorities and key stakeholders. The two-year project co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) aims to develop tools for regional authorities to improve policy performance, develop the EU knowledge base and build capacities on migrant inclusion. The six pilot regions will be testing indicators, capacity-building tools and developing innovative integration actions. The CPMR – through its Migration Task Force and its external network – will play a crucial role for the next two years, coordinating the project, collecting and showcasing regional practices on integration and inclusion and disseminating project results through its members’ network and associated partners.

COVID-19 Response | In the spring of 2020, the spread of COVID-19 brought to the fore the health risks faced by migrants and refugees especially in overcrowded camps and reception centres. It also indirectly slowed down asylum procedures and put migrants in situations of great vulnerability. On 9 April, Presidents of 20 CPMR regions from France, Germany Greece, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden, sent a letter to the European institutions expressing their concerns while urging for the adoption of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum and ambitious EU budget with a view to implementing sustainable common policies in this area.

Click here to read the letter to the European Institutions
The CPMR intends to keep up its advocacy work with the European Commission, including its formal reaction to the forthcoming publication of the Pact and the possibility of holding specific meetings with Commissioners Johansson and Schinas during the second half of 2020. The CPMR is also establishing relations with several MEPs supportive of the regional cause and following EU migration related legislation, including the Chair of the LIBE Committee, Juan Fernando López Aguilar.

The CPMR will contribute to the recently launched consultation that will shape the European Commission’s Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion due to be published by the end of 2020. In particular, the CPMR has been invited by DG HOME to take part in informal discussions on the topic.

In the context of the MFF 2021-2027, the CPMR will closely monitor developments on the new funding instruments for migration-related actions (EU structural and investment funds notably ESF+ and ERDF, AMF and NDICI). Areas of focus will include:

- importance for regions to be involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the different programmes;
- regions’ access to direct funding under the thematic programme of the AMF;
- support targeted at regional authorities under the NDICI for actions to tackle root causes of irregular migration, especially in light of the European Parliament’s proposal to include regional and local authorities alongside civil society organisations as beneficiaries of one of the thematic programmes;
- clarification on how territorial cooperation programmes will deal with migration.

Finally, the CPMR will continue to monitor new project opportunities, keep exchanging political views and experiences and develop synergies with other European and international stakeholders on topics of common interest.

Responding on behalf of Ursula von der Leyen, Commissioner Johansson expressed gratitude for our input stating “Your support is very important to us. European regions play a significant role in the area of migration, both in times of crisis and in a longer-term perspective as required, for instance, for integration efforts.”

#Regions4integration

The CPMR is an active partner of the European Committee of the Regions initiative “Cities and Regions for Integration”. The initiative aims to provide a political platform for cities and regions to develop and put forward proposals for EU policies and funding for the integration of migrants. The CPMR is encouraging its members to contribute by sharing their best practices, including outreach activities to their migrant populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
CPMR GEOGRAPHICAL COMMISSION UPDATES

ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION

COVID-19 x BREXIT

2x IMPACT
- TOURISM
- FISHERIES
- TRANSPORT

Projects:
- CLEAN ATLANTIC & SAFER

BALKAN & BLACK SEA COMMISSION

PROMOTING COLLABORATION
- BALKANS
- DANUBE
- BLACK SEA

BALTIC SEA COMMISSION

COVID-19 BRINGS MANY CHALLENGES
OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM & IMPROVE

INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION

SUPPORT LOCAL & REGIONAL AUTHORITIES
EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL
TOURISM BADLY HIT

NORTH SEA COMMISSION

OPENING NEW CHANNELS OF COOPERATION & SOLIDARITY
NORTH SEA REGION 2030 STRATEGY
SUSTAINABILITY
BREXIT
YOUTH PARTICIPATION

ISLANDS COMMISSION

ISLANDS DIMENSION:
- COHESION
- TRANSPORT
- ENERGY TRANSITION
- SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

ONLINE & OFFLINE MEETINGS
Contribution to shape an EU support to face the double economic shock caused by Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic | The AAC sent a letter to Commissioner Ferreira and key representatives of the European Parliament and the Council on 20 May 2020 calling for concrete measures to support Atlantic regions in the face of the double shock. On the occasion of its General Assembly, held online on 26 June 2020, the AAC met with Commissioner Ferreira to discuss these proposals. The AAC also kept in close dialogue with MEP Manuel Pizarro, member of the SEArca intergroup, responsible for the Atlantic portfolio, to share these concerns. MEP Pizarro raised these concerns with Commissioner Sinkevičius on May 19, 2020, during the SEArca Board meeting.

Thanks to this work a special Brexit Adjustment Reserve of €5 billion was created within the EU Recovery Plan, aimed at supporting those sectors worst affected by Brexit.

Looking forward | The AAC will focus attention on the implementation of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve to the benefit of its member regions and will continue to fight to strengthen cooperation in the Atlantic post-Brexit. The revived Tourism and Culture Working Group will kick-start its work by contributing to EU proposals for the green recovery of this sector.

A increasing membership | The BBSC keeps welcoming new members from both the Balkans and the Black Sea, working on common priorities and challenges such as brain drain or unemployment, in order to create societies that benefit from policies aimed at improving the situation of citizens, economies, well-being, and all that makes life positive in the area.

Looking forward | For the next period, priority will be given to main policies in the area and cooperation projects. The AI-NURECC PLUS Initiative will be the main means to promote collaboration and membership in the Balkans. The maritime projects in the wider Black Sea region will help the BBSC to implement its priorities in the field and extend its network of partners.

The Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3), new thematic area under the Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation (S3P-Industry) of the European Commission, will be used to address emerging topics of interest and enlarge its partnership and potential membership in both the Balkans and the Black Sea region. The BBSC will benefit from the EU projects that will be possibly approved in the next period as well as from the Memoranda of Understanding and agreements already in place with: the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Black Sea Association of Maritime Institutions (BSAMI), and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS). It will also explore the possibility of establishing MoUs with other key organisations active in the Balkans and the Black Sea region.
"Continuing close cooperation to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, such as restoring trust between neighbours after border closures and contributing to sustainable development while making our voice heard at European level are our top priorities for making a stronger Baltic Sea Region."

Jari Nahkanen, Board Member, Council of Oulu Region
Presidency of the Baltic Sea Commission

"The solidarity of the IMC regions during this period of economic, social and climate crisis shows our willingness to work together on new solutions for greater resilience in our lifestyles and societies. The lessons learned should encourage us to remain open to new avenues of cooperation and committed to citizens and territories."

Carole Delga, President of Occitanie Region
Presidency of the Intermediterranean Commission

The Mediterranean regions are more than ever convinced of the need to pursue efforts to propose a more responsible and sustainable local tourism, a blue growth respectful of ecosystems and humans.

**Involvement in EUSBSR** | The Baltic Sea Commission has been strongly involved in the revision of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region through its Task Force, lead under the chairmanship of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The key contribution of the BSC Task Force, in a joint effort with other regional actors, helped to ensure a strong regional perspective in the revision process of the scope, implementation and objectives of the EUSBSR Action Plan, which is now in a final stage. Within the revision, the BSC also advocated for stronger synergies between the EUSBSR and Cohesion policy instruments.

With regard to the internal functioning of the Commission, the BSC has this year recruited a new Executive Secretary. Lucille Ehrhart took up office in August with the mission to ensure a close link between BSC Members and the CPMR General Secretariat while strengthening lobbying actions towards the EU-decision makers. Looking forward,

**Looking forward** | The BSC will put a particular focus on finding solutions to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for its member regions on key sectors affected by the outbreak while continuing its efforts to achieve the EU Green Deal goals, related to their areas of work such as energy, transport, maritime affairs and tourism.

**Intermediterranean Commission Youth Council** | Created at the end of 2019, its main aim is to transmit the vision of youth on issues such as environment, employment, and equality to the highest political level. To this end, the IMC has developed a survey to sound out its members on their practices in terms of youth, and the scope granted to young people in the life of their territories. The survey also showed that young people in our regions are interested in key topics relating to the economy of the sea, sustainability and cooperation. Working more with young people within the IMC would increase their interest in issues relating to the Mediterranean basin, whilst ensuring a process of democratic participation within Mediterranean and European networks.

**Towards a full integration of the Mediterranean basin** | Beyond the unprecedented health crisis that has hit the Mediterranean regions since the spring of 2020, the Members of the Intermediterranean Commission will continue their work and efforts towards ever greater cooperation and solidarity in the basin. In the context of the elaboration of the 2021-27 European Programmes, ensuring a better integration of the regions in their governance will be the main objective of the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance (#MedCoopAlliance), of which the IMC is one of the founding members. As project carriers and the first building blocks of European cooperation, the regions are essential laboratories for assessing the impact of the Cohesion Policy and Community Programmes on the territories. Today, the regions are keen to optimise the resources available to respond to the main local and regional challenges, in line with the Sustainable Development Objectives and the European Green Deal. They are therefore positioning themselves as key players in the revision and reinvention of European Programmes.
This year, the outbreak of COVID-19 has more than ever highlighted the vulnerabilities of island territories and as a result, certain priorities were put at the forefront of the IC’s work: such as transport, accessibility and sustainable tourism. The unprecedented crisis coincidental with the approval of the EC’s Green Deal has also demonstrated the necessity to further push for the energy transition and the decarbonisation of insular economies.

A busy working year | The Islands Commission followed the EC’s proposal on the new MFF and Recovery Plan and called for a specific recovery and development strategy for EU Islands, ensuring that insularity and its specific challenges are fully considered. In addition, it continued to support a strong Cohesion policy and Just Transition Mechanism for a sustainable economic recovery in Islands. The IC also joined the MAESHA project (H2020) for innovative solutions towards the energy transition in 4 pilot islands and continues to contribute to the CIVITAS-DESTINATIONS, WINTERMED and DESTIMED+ projects.

Looking forward | The Islands Commission will continue to ensure that the islands’ dimension is considered in the EU Recovery Plan and to advocate the unique capacity of Islands to be at the forefront of the energy transition. Hence, the IC will keep strengthening its efforts and alliances with its network of external partners to collaborate in key initiatives, such as the second phase of the Clean Energy for EU islands Secretariat. In this next period, special attention will be given to sustainable tourism, blue growth, circular economy and clean hydrogen – including synergies with the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking – as solutions for a green recovery in Islands.

Contribution to new Interreg Programme | The Interreg North Sea Region Programme is a close cooperation partner to the NSC. The programme provides funding for achieving the goals of the NSC and its members, and many projects give valuable input to NSC’s policy discussions. NSC has voiced its strong support for a continued North Sea programme in the 2021-2027 period, which is now secured, and contributes actively to the discussions on the priorities of the programme.

Maintain cooperation in the post-Brexit era | The focus for the NSC will be to maintain and increase transnational cooperation in the area despite Brexit, despite COVID-19 and despite the lack of a macro-regional strategy. There are existing and emerging transnational cooperation structures in for example maritime spatial planning, offshore wind power, the marine environment and maritime research, where the NSC is the collective voice of regional governments. Particular emphasis will be on involving councils in the UK even more to mitigate negative Brexit impact. NSC actions will be guided by its North Sea Region 2030 Strategy, due to be adopted at the Annual Business Meeting in November 2020.
The collaboration with NECSTOUR and its academic partner NIT continued. As result, the project has formulated ten practical guidelines to support authorities willing to implement sustainable mobility solutions in tourist destinations. These recommendations have been presented in different webinars during the year. Continuous work has been provided to expand the project platform of followers and webpage documentation. At the beginning of 2020, two Calls for interest were launched to support the transfer and replication in other EU cities of a number of selected DESTINATIONS tools or methodologies.

CLIPPER: creating a leadership for maritime industries - New opportunities in Europe

The overall aim of the project is to develop better public policies to support the competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) working in maritime industries in Europe. The CPMR organised exchanges between CLIPPER partners (that are also Member Regions) and newly elected MEPs to advocate for a stronger EU policy for maritime industries. In the next few months, which are also the last months of the project, CLIPPER will be pursuing its efforts to engage with MEPs and EU institutions, contributing to the dissemination of CPMR messages on maritime industry and preparing the organisation of the project’s final event in Pays de la Loire in June 2021.

REGIN: an innovative project putting regions at the core of migrants’ and refugees’ integration and inclusion

Launched in February 2020, REGIN develops a set of tools to enable regional actors to use evidence-based research to underpin their policy-making and outcomes on migrants’ and refugees’ integration. Highlighting initiatives led by partner regions (Azores, Campania, Catalonia, Murcia, Puglia and Skåne), the REGIN website, brochure and newsletter have been disseminated to enhance the visibility of the regional authorities’ crucial role in integration. Desk research, a meeting with regional experts and guidelines for an evaluation framework of integration practices represent main project activities so far. In the coming months, discussions on integration challenges will be organised in each participating region.

What’s in it for CPMR members?

CPMR members will benefit from the results of this project, which include an improved system of indicators and advocacy activities improving the role of the regions in Integration policies.

What’s in it for CPMR members?

CPMR members will benefit from the project’s policy recommendations and possibly be directly involved in the testing of some specific measures on their respective territories.

What’s in it for CPMR members?

CPMR members can follow the activities of the project related to the CPMR work on Marine Energies & Maritime Industries and benefit from its results and their long-term use.
The Next2Met project: digitalisation to fill the gap between regions

Started in August 2019, Next2Met is an innovative interregional exchange project which aims at increasing attractiveness - for knowledge, opportunities, and capital - of territories located close to metropolitan areas. In order to achieve this, Next2Met partners focus on soft digitalisation measures, making sure that public policy supports an increased attractiveness of its territories. This first year enabled partners to identify their assets and challenges, and 7 stakeholder’s meetings and 2 Policy Learning Events were organised to share digital good practices, paving the way for potential collaborations across Europe. A third Policy Learning Event will be organised in autumn 2020.

The Atlantic Arc Commission is fostering a Greener Seafood Sector and a Cleaner Atlantic Ocean!

AAC regions adopted political recommendations for a SAFER and Greener Seafood Sector at their General Assembly on 26 June 2020, in the presence of DG MARE. Work will continue with DG MARE and policy-makers to reinforce the messages. Later this year, the SAFER catalogue, a mapping of best practice in innovation in the seafood sector across the Atlantic Area will be published. The AAC presented CleanAtlantic with a quiz on marine litter at the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Forum, 6-7 February 2020, Brussels. In the autumn, a high-level event with the European Parliament SEArica intergroup and the launch of the CleanAtlantic Knowledge Tool are planned.

The MINE-EMI project: Maritime Innovative Network of Education for Emerging Maritime Issues

The MINE-EMI project aims to bridge the gap between emerging maritime issues and educational training in order to achieve efficient, safe, secure and environmentally-conscious tackling of maritime issues, through: - promotion of the quality of education and training in the Maritime Education and Training (MET) sector to address the specific maritime challenges and prepare future managers and experts applying innovative methods; - facilitation of the mobility for students and teachers; - cooperation between MET organisations and industry to upgrade competencies of students and adapt to new requirements of the maritime industry. To this end, a survey is being carried out to determine the needs of the maritime sector. You can consult it by clicking in the document icon below.

What’s in it for CPMR members?

The project will create a policy framework in the participating regions that focuses financial resources and innovation chain activities on promoting regional attractiveness. It will also create the necessary conditions to design, develop and commercialise digitalisation products.

What’s in it for CPMR members?

CPMR Atlantic Arc members will be able to follow the activities and results of the projects through their dissemination activities, and benefit from the results/recommendations regarding innovation and protection of the biodiversity in the Atlantic Area.

What’s in it for CPMR members?

The project will organise International Conferences involving Regional Authorities, which will present the opportunity to capitalise on the untapped potential of the wider Black Sea area and examine innovative and competitive entrepreneurship methods that could help to alleviate common challenges.
**ONGOING PROJECTS**

*BEST MED and SMARTMED: towards a stronger cooperation for a better governance of sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean*

The two PANORAMED’s Strategic Projects on Coastal and Maritime Tourism kicked off at the beginning of the year. Focusing respectively on sustainability and empowerment of tourism actors, BEST MED and SMARTMED aim to implement sustainable tourism models and improve different aspects of integrated tourism planning in the Mediterranean, making the most of their exceptional complementarity. In this context, a structured and enhanced interaction with the Sustainable Tourism Community and PANORAMED was promoted through dedicated meetings, including those organised in the framework of the MED Coordination Mechanism, launched by the Interreg MED Programme to foster synergies and develop future joint initiatives.

*Towards strong and efficient Biodiversity Protection and Blue Growth communities in the Mediterranean*

The Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community (MBPC) builds on the efforts of PANACeA (2016-2019). Through its "Biodiversity Protection Declaration" it facilitates multi-sectoral dialogue with the scientific community to ensure an effective policy-management-science interface in the Mediterranean related to biodiversity protection and sustainable development. The Blue Growth Community (BGC) seeks to strengthen its Community of projects and actors beyond the project consortia for improved transferring and capitalisation processes. BGC provides adapted communication, community building, transferring and capitalisation tools and methods for the cross-fertilisation and exchange of good practices, results, and outputs among relevant actors. Both communities are working towards fostering transferring and capitalisation of relevant projects’ outcomes and methodologies to improve policymaking in the Mediterranean.

*HERIT-DATA, WINTER MED, DestiMED Plus: transforming Mediterranean tourism*

The HERIT-DATA project aims to reduce the impact of tourism activities on cultural heritage, by taking advantage of technology and data exploitation. Via on-site tested tools it supports decision-making processes run by public administration and tourism or heritage managing bodies. WINTER MED tackles the current seasonality of demand of M and C tourism by capitalising on EU projects towards a transition from the over-exploited summer tourist season to a responsible and sustainable all year round offer in MED islands. DestiMED Plus fosters the integration of Tourism and Nature Conservation Policies and promotes integrated planning in Mediterranean coastal tourism, specifically focusing on Protected Areas.

**What’s in it for CPMR members?**

The projects enable CPMR members to activate synergies and cooperation to share specific solutions on integrated, sustainable and responsible management of tourism ecosystems.

CPMR members can directly benefit from the results of the Communities. Their transferability potential will be analysed, aiming at a maximum policy integration at territorial level including local and regional dimensions.

CPMR members can follow the activities and results of the project through its dissemination activities, and benefit from the results/recommendations concerning cooperation, joint and integrated planning and conflicting interests’ management.
The CPMR and its North Sea Commission were involved in the SEANSE project from 2018 to 2020. The CPMR organised in May 2019, in conjunction with Shom, a knowledge-sharing workshop on the challenges of maritime spatial planning in the North Sea area, focusing on the French/Belgium region, in Antwerp, Belgium. It also participated in the final conference, in January 2020 in Rotterdam.

**CO-EVOLVE and MITOMED+: recommendations and tools for more sustainable tourism management and planning in touristic coastal areas**

CO-EVOLVE and MITOMED+ respectively ended in October 2019 and January 2020. Both projects produced some tools and a series of recommendations to improve sustainable tourism planning and management in Mediterranean destinations. CO-EVOLVE partners notably designed a sustainability toolkit to assess the sustainability of tourism; strategic planning guidelines as well as a plan of transferability of results. MITOMED+ issued the tourism data indicators system, the Green Beach model, as well as a management model for tourist destinations (the elaboration of which was coordinated by the CPMR). The CPMR is also trying to keep these projects alive through new opportunities and recently approved projects, namely SMART MED and BEST MED.

**SHERPA: Integrated Strategies for the Energy Renovation of Public Buildings in the Mediterranean**

SHERPA has achieved great results towards reinforcing the capacities of public administrations at regional and sub-regional level so as to improve energy efficiency in their public buildings’ stock and address difficulties related to energy efficiency in buildings’ projects in the Mediterranean area. In order to do so, SHERPA developed around 165 ERB project proposals at regional and local level, created thanks to a transnational, holistic and peer-to-peer model designed through 4 different working groups: governance, information, awareness and training, and financing. The project also developed the MED ERB Joint Action Plan aiming at setting up a common framework for integrated strategies for the Energy Renovation of Public Buildings (ERPB) in the Mediterranean area.

**What’s in it for CPMR members?**

CPMR members can replicate SHERPA’s methodology by mainstreaming the project’s policy recommendations into their Energy Efficiency in Buildings (EEB) policies and strategies.

CPMR members can participate in, learn, adapt or replicate the methodology tested in the projects’ pilot areas (tourism sustainability toolkit, green beaches model) and mainstream the policy recommendations into their regional policies.

CPMR NSC members will be able to benefit from the results of this project, which include the Dataportal which is a tool set up to share transboundary Maritime spatial Planning knowledge and to explore the gaps and solutions to solve them.