Background

Directive 2014/94/EU on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure (the so-called AFID) is currently under evaluation by the European Commission with the aim to propose a revision in 2021.

The decarbonisation of the transport sector and of its infrastructure, as well as of the energy system have been identified as topics of interest by CPMR Member Regions as underlined in the CPMR Policy Positions “Towards a climate neutral transport for all in 2050, at the latest” and “CPMR Regions at the heart of the European Green Deal”, as well as during CPMR meetings (e.g. Climate Task Force and Intercommission Transport Working Group meetings).

The AFID, by setting a common framework of measures for the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure in the European Union, plays an important role in delivering a clean transport and in achieving the European Green Deal objectives.

For instance, it aims at mitigating the environmental impact of transport, in particular of vehicles and vessels, through the development of a network of alternative fuels infrastructure (e.g. recharging and fuelling points) along urban areas and nodes and the core network of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). In order to do so, Member States are required to set up National Policy Frameworks, in which Regional Authorities are to be consulted ‘as adequate’.

As discussed during the CPMR Intercommission Transport Working Group held on the 29th of May 2020, the CPMR General Secretariat would submit a contribution to the European Commission open consultation on the AFID.

This document represents the CPMR contribution to the evaluation. The contribution is based on previous CPMR policy positions and technical notes, as well as on the discussion on the AFID during the 29th of May CPMR Intercommission Transport Working and on input to the draft contribution text.
CPMR Contribution to the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (AFID)

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) welcomes the revision of Directive 2014/94/EU on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure (AFID), as it would align it to the new climate objectives set in the European Green Deal and support a clean transport for all European territories.

The CPMR believes that the revised AFID should:

• Ensure territorial accessibility;
• Rely on Regions;
• Guarantee a fair transition towards a clean transport.

Ensuring territorial accessibility

The AFID needs to ensure and promote territorial accessibility. It needs to foster the development of an alternative fuels’ infrastructure network in all European regions and avoid the isolation of disconnected regions, such as sparsely populated areas, rural, islands and outermost regions. A clean transport for all relies on an alternative fuels infrastructure that is widespread and allows everyone to benefit from it. No territory should be left behind in the transition to a clean transport and a climate neutral Europe.

The AFID should incentives Member States in the deployment of an alternative fuels’ infrastructure also on areas outside the TEN-T core network to foster better territorial cohesion, whilst reaching the objectives set in the European Green Deal. For instance, support should be provided to Regional Authorities that are planning, developing and adopting strategies for the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructures and/or strategies and policies for mobility and transport decarbonisation.

Furthermore, the AFID should ensure better interoperability between modes of transport and at cross-border level. A seamless travel experience between different modes of transport should be further fostered, as well as between different Member States, in order to ensure better network connectivity.

Rely on Regions

The involvement of Regional Authorities has been uneven in the National Policy Frameworks. A clearer and stronger mention of the need to involve regional authorities is needed in the Directive. As mentioned in the evaluation roadmap of the AFID, “several regional authorities have adopted or are planning to adopt ambitious strategies and policies”, therefore Regional Authorities should be fully involved in the development of the National Policy Frameworks. Regional Authorities can not only provide ambitious policies and/or strategies, best practices and innovative solutions, but they can also foster the development of a coherent and widespread network in the territory, which would not only focus on major agglomerations but also on connections within the territory.

Peripheral and maritime regions can be innovation laboratories for the development of innovative solutions in the development of renewables and consequently in the deployment of an alternative fuels’ infrastructure. Their role in the energy transition to a cleaner transport is to be better recognised, as infrastructure and renewables development in such areas would not only have possible positive spill-over effects at EU level, but also ensure that such territories would have access to a more affordable and clean transport.
Guarantee a fair transition towards to clean transport

The AFID should foster a transport that is clean, but that also takes into account and builds on the strengths and specificities of the territories. The AFID should promote the deployment of fuels that effectively contribute to the climate neutrality objective. Technological neutrality is to be maintained, not only to foster innovation, but also to foster context-based solutions. A one-size fits all cannot work, given the different potentials and specificities of the different territories, such as in the case of the rail infrastructure where all possible clean technologies are to be promoted. Specific solutions based on the territories’ strengths are to be found in the deployment of an alternative fuels’ infrastructure, in order to allow all the territories to contribute and benefit from such infrastructure.