



**CPMR
CRPM**

Final Declaration

4 November 2016

44th CPMR GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3-4 November 2016, Ponta Delgada (Azores, Portugal)

The Peripheral Maritime Regions listed below met for the 44th CPMR Annual General Assembly in Ponta Delgada (Azores, Portugal) on 3-4 November, 2016:

ABERDEEN CITY (UK), ABERDEENSHIRE (UK), ABRUZZO (IT), AÇORES (PT), AKERSHUS (NO)*, ANATOLIKI MAKEDONIA THRAKI (GR), ANDALUCÍA (ES), ASTURIAS (ES), , AUST AGDER (NO), BALEARES (ES), BUSKERUD (NO), BORNHOLM (DK), BRETAGNE (FR), CALARASI (RO), CAMPANIA (IT), CANARIAS (ES), CANTABRIA (ES), CATALUNYA (ES), CORNWALL (UK), DYTIKI ELLADA (GR), EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT), FLEVOLAND (NL)*, GALICIA (ES), GÄVLEBORG (SE), GENERALITAT VALENCIANA (ES), GOTLAND (SE), GOZO (MT), GUYANE (FR), HALLAND (SE), HELSINKI-UUSIMAA (FI), HIIUMAA & SAAREMAA (EE), IDA-VIRUMAA & PÄRNUMAA (EE), KENTRIKI MAKEDONIA (GR), KRITI (GR), KYMENLAAKSO (FI), MADEIRA (PT), MELILLA (ES), MIDTJYLLAND (DK), MØRE OG ROMSDAL (NO), MURCIA (ES), NAVARRA (ES), NIEDERSACHSEN (DE), NOORD NEDERLAND (NL), NOORD-HOLLAND (NL), NORDJYLLAND (DK), NORDLAND (NO), NORRBOTTEN (SE), NORTHERN & WESTERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (IE), NOUVELLE AQUITAINE (FR), OCCITANIE (FR), ÖREBRO (SE), ORKNEY (UK), ØSTFOLD (NO), OSTROBOTHNIA (FI), OULU (FI), PÄIJÄT-HÄME (FI), PAÍS VASCO/EUSKADI (ES), PAYS DE LA LOIRE (FR), PELOPONNISOS (GR), PODLASKIE (PL), PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR (FR), RABAT-SALE-KENITRA (MA), ROGALAND (NO), SHETLAND (UK), SKÅNE (SE), SØR-TRØNDELAG (NO), SOUTH-WEST FINLAND (FI), STOCKHOLM (SE), TELEMAR (NO), TIRANA (AL), TOSCANA (IT), TULCEA (RO), UMBRIA (IT), VÄSTERBOTTEN (SE), VÄSTRA GÖTALAND (SE), VEST-AGDER (NO), VESTFOLD (NO), VOREIO AIGAI (GR), WALES (UK), ZUID-HOLLAND (NL)

* OBSERVER

The Regions attending the General Assembly warmly thank Vasco Cordeiro, President of the CPMR and of the Azores Government, for kindly organising and hosting the event.

The CPMR President extends his thanks to the regional authorities and honoured guests from the EU institutions and Member States who took part in the proceedings of the Conference, and in particular to the Portuguese State Secretary for European Affairs, Margarida Marques, and MEP Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar.

On behalf of its members, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, gathered for its 44th Annual General Assembly in the Azores, Portugal, adopted the following Final Declaration

This year's General Assembly was held in a challenging context for the European project. 2016 is a pivotal year, launching both a long-term reflection on the future of the European Union and kick starting discussions for the post-2020 European Budget and policies.

Regarding discussions on the future of Europe, the CPMR:

1. Notes the outcome of the UK European Union Membership referendum, which has brought about a new challenge for the European Union. This calls for unity between European countries' heads of States, and Governments and European institutions alike, over what the European project should be about.
2. Calls upon the European institutions and the British government to negotiate a Brexit deal that causes as little harm as possible to the peripheral and maritime regions and to European unity and cooperation. The CPMR further wishes to:
 - Express its hope that the difficulties caused by this decision may be amicably resolved;
 - Invite UK member Regions to participate in the work of the CPMR, which will remain relevant and useful to them, whatever the outcome;
 - Express support for UK member Regions who wish to find a way to maintain participation in the European project.
3. Asks the European Commission to consider closely the maritime challenges with regard to the UK leaving the European Union. The peripheral and maritime Regions are indeed directly affected by changes to the EU's borders or to the scope of the Exclusive Economic Area, and the consequences on the management of fish stocks or on cooperation in areas such as energy, transport or research.
4. Calls on European leaders for solidarity as ongoing discussions are defining the future of the European Union project. A fragmented Europe would be particularly detrimental to growth and jobs prospects in peripheral and maritime regions, and to EU external action.
5. Will contribute to the debate on the future of the European Union as it starts its own reflection with its Members at the CPMR 44th General Assembly in the Azores.

Regarding the mid-term review of EU budget, the CPMR:

6. Notes that the mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework, proposed by the Commission on 14 September, suggests a number of short-term adjustments whilst paving the way for the post-2020 EU Budget. The CPMR also wishes to point out that the lack of clarity of the proposals is damaging the European Union's possibilities for good communications with its citizens.
7. Is concerned that the discussion on the EU budget post-2020, does not include a revision of the long-term objectives for the economic, social and environmental development of Europe. The

Europe 2020 strategy has been translated into regional policy documents and needs to be followed up and replaced by a new strategy.

- 8.** Welcomes the European External Investment Plan (EIP) in principle, but wishes it to be solidly linked to the European Neighbourhood Policy, Development and Cooperation Instruments, the Agenda for Migration, the European Fund for Sustainable Development and European Territorial Cooperation programmes involving regional and local authorities. The European Neighbourhood Policy should be adapted to mirror the Cohesion Policy model, increasing the participation of regional and local authorities in its management, implementation and responsibilities.
- 9.** Welcomes the additional €1bn funding concerning the Youth Employment Initiative for 2017 – 2020, though clearly the additional funding is no match for challenges facing young people in Europe.
- 10.** Welcomes, in principle, the new measures to simplify the delivery of the European Budget, though it remains to be seen whether these will translate into real simplification on the ground.
- 11.** Is concerned by the underlying criticism of funds under shared management (e.g. European Structural and Investment Funds), which contrasts sharply with an overwhelmingly positive assessment of funds managed centrally by the Commission.
- 12.** Reminds the European Commission that the current delays impeding the delivery of the ESI funds operational programmes were partly caused by an inter-institutional agreement on the Cohesion Policy legislative package which only happened in December 2013, resulting in most operational programmes being ready to deliver funding as of mid-2015 only.
- 13.** Urges the European Commission not to assume that these delays mean that funds under shared management are inefficient. They should not in any way influence negatively future Commission plans for the post-2020 European Budget regarding Cohesion Policy and other funds under shared management.
- 14.** Is worried at the prospect that Member States will be offered additional flexibility to transfer ESI funds for projects funded under other EU programmes centrally managed by the Commission (e.g. CEF, Cosme, Horizon 2020), as proposed by the Mid-term Review of the EU Budget, with no consultation with regional authorities.
- 15.** Opposes the proposal to drastically reduce payment appropriations for Cohesion Policy in 2017, as proposed in the 2017 draft Budget of the EU. The CPMR hopes that such a move does not prefigure further plans from the Commission for more flexibility within the EU budget headings which could lead to further reductions for the Cohesion Policy budget.
- 16.** Is opposed to the application of macroeconomic conditionality under Cohesion Policy as per article 23 of the Common Provisions Regulation, in relation to a possible suspension of European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds to Spain and Portugal. The inability for Member States to respect their obligations under the Stability and Growth Pact cannot penalise regions. In addition, the CPMR fears that a suspension of ESI funds in countries that do not respect the Pact could have a negative impact on the implementation of operational programmes. The CPMR stresses the need to put in place sound economic management at national level, as a precondition for an effective use of ESI funds.

- 17.** The CPMR asks that investments realised in regions in the framework of Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund should be exempt from EU Member States debt and deficit calculations.

Regarding the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) and the future of European investment, the CPMR:

- 18.** Notes that the Commission proposes to extend the EFSI until 2020 and to renew it for the post-2020 period, and welcomes the efforts from the European Commission to improve synergies between the EFSI and ESI funds at technical level.
- 19.** Strongly regrets the lack of mention of ESI funds contributing to the EU's investment effort in Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union speech on 14 September, particularly as Cohesion Policy is the EU's main investment policy with its mission strongly anchored in the EU Treaty.
- 20.** Notes that the Commission proposes to supplement the allocation of CEF-transport by €0.4bn, but recalls that the original allocation had been reduced by €2.2bn to finance the EFSI.
- 21.** Calls on the Commission to develop a long term European strategy for growth and jobs for the post-2020 period, bringing together the combined strengths of the EFSI and Cohesion Policy and to streamline procedures. The EFSI on its own cannot be a substitute for Cohesion Policy for the post-2020 period¹.
- 22.** Considers that such a strategy should prioritise the potential of strategic sectors of the European economy, such as the maritime economy and blue growth which is of pivotal importance to peripheral and maritime regions and the whole of Europe.
- 23.** Urges the Commission to carry out a thorough evaluation of the EFSI to assess its additionality and European added value, particularly as Cohesion Policy funded projects are subject to a much more rigorous and transparent evaluation.

Regarding the future of Cohesion Policy, the CPMR:

- 24.** Strongly believes that Cohesion Policy articulates European policies and objectives at all territorial levels and is essential so that local and regional authorities (in conjunction with the private sector) take ownership of the European agenda.
- 25.** Is alarmed that the perception of Cohesion Policy in parts of the European institutions and some Member States is that of an inefficient budget line within the EU budget, which does not reflect the long term and positive impact of Cohesion Policy.
- 26.** Clearly considers that Cohesion Policy is vital for EU objectives to be realised everywhere in Europe and should therefore cover all European regions after 2020 and include significant resources for European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. Cohesion Policy also plays a key role in developing macro-regional strategies.

¹ See [CPMR Policy Messages on the Juncker Plan](#), adopted in February 2015

27. Is convinced that Cohesion Policy plays a crucial role in fostering investment in all of Europe's territories. The right balance needs to be achieved at the regional level between grants and financial instruments for the post-2020 period for the sake of efficiency, added value and territorial realities.
28. Welcomes the concept of smart specialisation as the main framework for innovation driven economic growth. Smart specialisation strategies and their implementation foster regional innovation ecosystems providing also a tool for benchmarking between regions.
29. Urges the European Commission to improve the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy mentioned under article 174 TFEU and pay particular attention to island regions and according to the accession treaties for Sweden and Finland the northernmost regions with very low population density, as well as to outermost regions mentioned under article 349 TFEU in order to effectively implement a place-based approach to Cohesion Policy.
30. Looks forward to developing detailed proposals on post-2020 Cohesion Policy, based on the CPMR Principles for post-2020 Cohesion Policy Position Paper to be adopted at the CPMR 44th General Assembly in the Azores, and presenting them in the framework of the Maltese Presidency in 2017.

Regarding European transport policies, the CPMR:

31. Notes that 86% of the budget allocated from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) to transport projects is already exhausted.
32. Notes that the implementation of the CEF has largely benefitted the 9 priority corridors, neglecting therefore peripheral, maritime and island regions, and asks that the selection of projects on the core network corridors should also be assessed against their impact on accessibility to peripheral and maritime regions.
33. Requests the Commission to explore the possibility of increasing financial allocations to the comprehensive network of the TEN-T, and dedicate an increased share of the budget for projects on this network.
34. Asks for shorter delays for adequate implementation of already planned infrastructures on certain corridors, in particular for their connections with the TEN-T ports, and for the Commission to actively continue its work to connect the TEN-T with the networks of Neighbouring countries including those of the outermost regions.
35. Recalls that transport infrastructures in the peripheries are costly and cannot be co-financed by the EU through financial instruments or blending facilities alone.
36. Notes that the Commission is launching a call for CEF for cross-border projects, and invites the Commission to propose a specific call dedicated to projects in the peripheral and maritime regions and based on an objective territorial assessment of the 2014 and 2015 calls. It would provide assistance to peripheral, island and outermost ports development and their link to major port facilities and allow modal shift towards maritime transport for freight and passengers.

- 37.** Calls on the Parliament to support CPMR efforts to make CEF implementation and governance more geographically balanced and inclusive, also allowing for the involvement in core network corridor forums of regions, ports and transport hubs not located directly on the corridors.
- 38.** Calls on the European Commission to implement the Motorways of the Seas scheme (Article 21 of the TEN-T guidelines) in a way which is adapted to territorial and neighbourhood specificities for calls for proposals until 2020 and beyond especially allowing for island regions to link up to one another and to be connected to the big cities within their respective sea basin. It would imply a better access for comprehensive ports to the programmes.
Appropriate project selection criteria should be integrated and applied to any calls for proposals launched before 2020, as well as to the next programming period
- 39.** Calls on the Commission to develop proposals to support maritime transport services for the post-2020 period to follow up on the Marco Polo programme, which was supporting the shift from road to waterborne transports, but ceased its existence in 2013. In line with its climate change objectives, the EU should maintain sustainability as a priority of its transport policy and therefore make available appropriate instruments both to support modal shift and to make maritime transport cleaner.
- 40.** Will prepare concrete proposals for adjusting the definition of the TEN-T Core and Comprehensive Network in future reviews, with a view to including more ports and transport corridors in peripheral regions in the core network and strengthen the links between the different layers [core-comprehensive] of the network.

Regarding European Maritime policies, the CPMR:

- 41.** Calls on the EU Member States to adopt an ambitious ministerial declaration on European Maritime policies during the Maltese EU Presidency in 2017. Such declaration should build on the [Limassol declaration](#) and [the European Parliament report on innovation and the blue economy](#), and set out principles for future maritime policies in the context of the MFF review and discussions on European policies post-2020.
- 42.** Considers that the above-mentioned ministerial declaration should include the following messages:
- a.** To increase the capacity of the EU institutions to address maritime policies via the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP).
 - b.** To develop the blue growth strategy further reflecting the trends of the maritime economy, and for EU policies to support effective interactions between emerging and existing sectors, and integration between economic and environmental objectives. Recent steps in the initiatives managed by DG MARE such as Maritime education, Maritime Spatial Planning, and Coastal data are welcome.
 - c.** To underline the strategic importance of a skilled workforce and the related education and training, to maximize the potential of the Blue Economy. In this perspective, the maritime dimension of the European Skills agenda should be strengthened, with the objective to create a European common framework, from vocational training to master. In parallel, concrete initiatives should be supported, such as networks to strengthen cooperation

between vocational training institutions and the private sector, at European and sea-basin levels.

- d. To welcome the recent development of sea-basin strategies and initiatives in Europe (such as the “West Med”), though regretting the slow development of the EU preparatory action for the North Sea.
- e. To ensure that maritime policies, in line with a cross-cutting blue growth strategy, are underpinned via all relevant EU programmes. The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) budget needs to be maintained for the post-2020 period, supporting both the Fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and the IMP at European and sea-basin levels.
- f. To include the IMP part of the EMFF more under shared management, so that it complements the maritime dimension of the ERDF. A specific CPMR’s study revealed that maritime issues are a very strong priority in smart-specialisation strategies.
- g. To recall that initial feedback from regional authorities regarding the implementation of the EMFF shows that simplification is needed.
- h. To call the European Commission for a thorough analysis of implementation of new measures introduced in the Common Fisheries Policy that have potential socio-economic impacts. These concern for example:
 - the discards ban to adapt future legislation if necessary. Unresolved problems, especially in fishery dependent communities, need to be addressed, and a flexible and workable landing obligation must be implemented in close cooperation with stakeholders, mainly through Advisory Councils.
 - the impact of management arising from the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). The CPMR notes that the exploitation and management of marine resources at levels guaranteeing the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) are crucially important factors for the maritime Regions. However, it draws attention to the short-term impacts that reduced fishing opportunities arising from MSY management may have on the economic viability of some regions, particularly the outermost ones, with serious consequences for their unemployment and development levels.
- i. To remind the European Commission of the importance of guaranteeing financial support for the development of sustainable and responsible fishing practices (e.g. in the case of some traditional fishing techniques). Indeed, these practices play a strategic role in the development of fisheries-dependent coastal communities especially in the outermost Regions.
- j. To underline the urgency, especially in the outermost Regions, of giving the possibility to fund the construction and purchase of new fishing vessels via the EMFF given the average age of the European fleet.
- k. To call for the governance of the Common Fisheries Policy to rely on regions to a greater extent, which should be full members of the EU Advisory Councils which concern their fisheries or their production.
- l. To support the efforts of the European Commission to better ocean governance enhancing Europe’s key strategic role at international level. The CPMR is currently active within the International Oil Compensation Funds, where it has observer status, to ask for the creation of a specific fund to compensate for ecological damage.

Regarding migration challenges, the CPMR:

43. Notes that the common security and migration challenges are far from being resolved and require strong and coordinated action from the European Union.
44. Reminds that these challenges have led to restrictions to the free movement of people, as well as to the accessibility of regions due to border controls.
45. Notes the European Commission's proposals of 13 July 2016 for the reform of the Common European Asylum System and stresses that the revision of standards for the qualification of migrants as beneficiaries for international protection, in particular with regard to temporary residence permits, may have an impact on on-going medium- or long-term integration initiatives at regional level.
46. Emphasises that many CPMR Regions recognise the positive contribution of migration on development from demographic, social and labour market points of view. They have also taken on responsibilities in human rights and, in particular, in international protection. They have also taken concrete steps to welcome refugees, contrasting with the failure of the EU mechanism to relocate migrants and refugees across Member States (only 3.6% of the planned 160,000 refugees have been relocated at the time of writing), and that such efforts should be recognised and supported at European level.
47. Calls on the Commission to increase the involvement of regional and local authorities in the EU migration policies as they are on the front line for dealing with migration and refugee issues and especially the problem of unaccompanied minors for whom special measures need to be introduced.
The recognition of the status of refugees is the responsibility of the States but Regional and Local Authorities (RLAs) could acquire increasing responsibilities on policies of reception and integration, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. In this perspective, the Commission should further encourage the Member States to facilitate and ease this participatory process, in particular concerning the reception procedures. The EC and the States should also increase the involvement of RLAs in particular in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.
48. Calls for a territorial dimension of EU Migration policies, based on the principle of shared multilevel governance and a higher level of assistance and resources for Regional and Local Authorities (RLAs) to deal with the challenges posed by migration. In this sense, also asks the Commission and the States to consider the possibility for the RLAs to establish complementary mutual agreements concerning reception and integration measures for asylum seekers and refugees and to support the implementation of humanitarian corridors on the ground.
49. Calls on the Commission to consider the fundamental support and role that regional and local authorities, including those at Europe's southern borders such as certain outermost regions, could play in setting up concrete actions under the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa in favour of the promotion of social policies, integration and the prevention of radicalisation.
50. Insists on the importance to further involve regional and local authorities alongside the national level in the process regarding the new tailor-made compacts with third countries related to the Migration Partnership Framework, especially European regional and local authorities with diasporas from the countries covered by the partnership.

Regarding the territorial dimension of climate and energy European policies, the CPMR:

51. Welcomes the entry into force of the Paris Climate agreement on 4 November 2016 and looks forward to its successful implementation.
52. Points out that addressing the global challenge of climate change requires the mobilisation of all levels of governance, and presents an opportunity for regions for broader and deeper cooperation.
53. Reminds that energy efficiency, the renewable energy sector and the maritime industry offer a considerable potential to contribute to the climate goals to diversify the economy, as well as a major opportunity for enhancing European leadership in innovation and boosting growth and jobs.
54. Points out that the expansion of offshore renewable energy requires national level leadership for agreements on standards as well as for on-shore off-shore and cross-border network infrastructure that would increase the cost-effectiveness of the energy transition.
55. Believes that for the delivery of the Energy Union the new Renewable Energy Directive should provide an enhanced role for regional authorities and encourage cooperation at macro-regional level. It should also ensure that the exploitation of the renewable energy sources potential in island regions, regions with a low population density and outermost regions are not unfairly disadvantaged in comparison with more central and more densely populated area.
56. Highlights the importance of differentiated treatment under this directive for islands and outermost regions, due to the strong outside dependency on fossil fuels with very high procurement costs and increased difficulties in accessing the trans-European networks.
57. Highlights that - considering water scarcity in many territories and its condition as a public and social good - the EU, National and International Institutions shall further support the Regions in their efforts to improve the full exploitation of regenerated urban waters, as well as the measures and treatments for water regeneration, desalination plants, together with the use of renewable energies and innovative technologies.

Adopted unanimously



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.

www.cpmr.org

CONTACT:

6, rue Saint-Martin, 35700 Rennes
Tel: + 33 (0)2 99 35 40 50

Rond-Point Schuman 14, 1040 Brussels
Tel: +32 (0)2 612 17 00

Email: Secretariat@crpm.org; Website: www.cpmr.org

Ref.: CRPMDFR160002