



CRPM CPMR

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## CPMR EXTERNAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP 24 SEPTEMBER 2014 - UMEÅ (SE)

### - MINUTES -

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#### Attendees:

#### **EUSKADI - BASQUE COUNTRY (WG Lead Region)**

Mikel ANTON, Director of European Affairs

Jugatx ORTIZ, Policy Officer Basque Government Delegation to the European Union (by skype)

**AQUITAINE (FR):** François MAÏTIA, Vice-President of the Regional Council

**CCDR NORTE (PT):** Nuno ALMEIDO, Head of Strategic Cooperation Unit

**PELOPONNESE (GR):** Apostolos PAPFOTIOU, Deputy Governor, Deputy Head of Culture

**PROVENCE-ALPES-COTE D'AZUR (FR):** Philippe CICHOWLAZ, Deputy Director General in charge of Europe & International; Michel TARRAN, Advisor to President Vauzelle; Guillaume HUET, Head of Mediterranean Mission

#### **CPMR GENERAL SECRETARIAT**

Eleni MARIANOU, Secretary General

Lucas BOSSER, Policy Officer

Maruxa CARDAMA, Adviser to the External Cooperation Working Group

Alexis CHATZIMPIROS, CPMR adviser on Energy and Islands

Pauline CAUMONT, Executive Secretary, CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission

Stavros KALOGNOMOS, Policy Officer

Damien PERISSE, Director for Maritime Affairs

Davide STRANGIS, Executive Secretary, CPMR Intermediterranean Commission

Claire STREET, Policy Assistant

#### Apologies:

Paul ORTEGA, Director- Basque Country Development Cooperation Agency

Camila DE EPALZA, European Union Policy Officer (Development Cooperation and Multilateral focal point), Basque Government Delegation to the European Union

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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**Eleni Marianou**, CPMR Secretary General, welcomed the participants and gave a brief introduction to the meeting. Under the leadership of the Basque Government, the CPMR External Cooperation Group was being reshaped and one of the aims in particular is for its work to be inclusive of the international dimension of CPMR's core policy areas, especially the link with climate change and energy and maritime issues, from the perspective of decentralised cooperation.

Through the Group, the CPMR is also continuing its work on Development Cooperation within the framework of Platforma, in particular towards the Strategic Partnership for the coming years, currently under development with the European Commission. The new Terms of Reference approved by the Group were presented for information to the Political Bureau on Thursday 25 September 2014. Eleni also reiterated the Group's wish to encourage greater geographical balance in its membership. In that context Eastern and Northern regions are particularly encouraged to join the Group. On the following day Ms. Marianou personally conveyed the encouragement to widen the geographical coverage of the Group to the meeting of the Bureau.

Eleni noted that the Commissioner designate for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement negotiations is Mr Hahn, with whom the CPMR enjoys a good rapport from his previous position as Commissioner for Regional Policy.

**Mikel Anton** (Euskadi/Basque Country) passed on apologies from Mr Paul Ortega from the Basque Agency for Development Cooperation and Ms. Camila de Epalza from the Basque Delegation in Brussels who were unable to attend the meeting. He thanked all regional and CPMR participants for their assistance.

Mikel noted that the Basque Country has undertaken the coordination of the External Cooperation Work Group with enthusiasm and responsibility, and aware of the opportunity that the EU currently opens for decentralised cooperation as well as the work and challenges that lie ahead. The European (European Cooperation Year 2015, Assises for Cooperation 2015, negotiations of strategic partnerships with the EU, etc.) and international agendas (Post-2015 Development Framework, Climate COP21.), as well as close communication with relevant partners, set the guidelines for the Group's work. Likewise, the Basque Country underscores the potential of joint work on the ground by CPMR regions and their partners, as well as of regions' participation in strategic European initiatives.

Mikel thanked Catalonia for their contribution as former Lead Region and indicated that the Basque Government is leading the Group through its Agency for Development Cooperation, the Basque Delegation to the EU, and the Basque Government's Directorate for Foreign Affairs, with the assistance of the CPMR General Secretariat.

Since the Basque Country assumed the coordination in July, the Group's work has intensified with the aim of responding to the high expectations that its members expressed during the transition meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. With the support of the CRPM Secretariat, the following, among other activities, has been developed: preparation of the Plan for Action and of a matrix of priorities of the members to identify synergies; adaptation of the Group's Terms of Reference; negotiations with Platforma towards the Strategic Partnership with the European Commission; participation in preparatory conferences for the 2015 European Year for Development; response to the public consultation by the United Nations Development Programme and the EU Committee of the Regions on the "Localisation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda", and submission of a proposal for participation of the Group in the 2015 EU Assises for Decentralised Cooperation. Mikel

indicated that 80% of the targets set out in the Action Plan are expected to be achieved by the end of the year.

Mikel underlined that the Basque Country will seek to promote the activities of the Group in close coordination with its the members and aiming at initiatives with added value that:

- (i) Profile the importance of decentralised cooperation and new cooperation processes within the EU;
- (ii) Promote the mainstreaming of cooperation within CRPM policy areas as appropriate, and
- (iii) Reinforce the exchange of practices among members in order to encourage peer learning, innovative approaches and efficiency, while open new collaborative initiatives.

**Maruxa Cardama**, Adviser of the Working Group in the CPMR Secretariat, informed the Group that Croatian MEP Davor Ivo STIER has been appointed European Parliament Rapporteur on the Global UN Post 2015 Development Agenda and that it would be important for the CPMR to engage in this parliamentary process. Maruxa also indicated that ongoing negotiations with Platforma where shaping the engagement of the CPMR in the future Strategic Partnership towards the themes of: a new generation of decentralised cooperation, with a focus on innovation, smart specialisation and public-private partnership; as well as the Southern Neighbourhood.

## **INFORMATION POINTS BY CPMR STAFF**

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### **ENERGY AND CLIMATE**

**Alexis Chatzimpiros**, CPMR adviser on Energy and Islands highlighted the possible synergies and added value that can be created between the External Cooperation working group and the CPMR's inter-Commission Working Group on Energy and Climate Change, as well as with the Islands Commission. More than 6200 local, regional and/or island authorities have joined voluntary European initiatives and have committed to exceed the EU energy and climate targets for 2020, while the forthcoming UN 21st Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP21) is expected to mark a decisive stage in the negotiations towards a future international agreement. Alexis highlighted that islands being the most vulnerable to climate change, offer an incomparable context as incubators, where results are easier to monitor, external variables easier to control and the cost of primary energy supply strongly encourages international cooperation. Alexis underscored that islands are keen on contributing as laboratories to develop and demonstrate new energy technologies and methodologies to reduce CO2 emissions globally. Therefore, the External Cooperation working group would be an useful platform to promote the regional tier in a new and more sustainable system of global climate governance. The Group could also host a dialogue on the potential for decentralised island and regional cooperation on climate change.

Alexis indicated that ongoing UN initiatives and the work of the CPMR's member Regions on EU Horizon 2020 (and 2030) could provide concrete points for collaboration and follow-up within the External Cooperation Group. Synergies could be found for example with the UN-led initiative "Sustainable Energy for All". Finally, Alexis draws attention to the Group that the new EU Commissioner designate Mr Arias Cañete holds the combined portfolio for Energy and Climate.

### **MARITIME ISSUES**

**Damien Périssé**, Director for Maritime Affairs at the CPMR General Secretariat, presented opportunities for including the international dimension of maritime issues in the work of the External Cooperation Group. Three main areas are identified:

- Maritime dimension of the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda (following Millennium Development Goals)
- Maritime dimension and international negotiations on climate (COP 21) – (see also above)
- International maritime dimension of CPMR thematic activities

See the [PowerPoint Presentation](#) prepared by Damien for more details.

The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is an extremely important element, since it will shape the Union's position on maritime issues at international level. The CPMR's positions on the MSFD can provide a basis for the Group's work on the international dimension of maritime issues.

## INTER-MEDITERRANEAN AFFAIRS

Regarding the Mediterranean area, **Davide Strangis**, Executive Secretary of the CPMR's Inter-Mediterranean Commission (IMC) highlighted that climate challenges are a subject of particularly important to Med Regions. One of the IMC's working groups is currently focusing on the promotion of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency in buildings. Davide noted also the important link with the Post 2015 sustainable development agenda and the Climate COP21. Preparation of COP21 from the Mediterranean perspective is in progress and the conference organised by the Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur in Marseille next 11<sup>th</sup> December is marking an important milestone.

Davide advocated for the importance of practical exchanges to gather information on members' actions, priorities and guidelines. A meeting of the Intermediterranean Commission working group in July on decentralised and bilateral cooperation showed that the areas of science and innovation are of particular relevance to the area, and could constitute a good basis for reflection for the External Cooperation WG.

Last but not least Davide informed that the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly ARLEM had proposed a capacity building project for integrated and sustainable regional development. This implies capacity building for local and regional administrations, which is an important area of development cooperation where Regions can bring added value.

## DISCUSSION

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**Philippe Cichowlaz and Guillaume Huet from Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region PACA** (France) presented the Mediterranean contribution to COP21. PACA Region was engaged with the French government to organise climate events in the run-up to COP21 and the first one will take place in Marseille next 11<sup>th</sup> December.

The December event is being held in the framework of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Political Bureau on 10<sup>th</sup> December and the UCLG Council on the 11<sup>th</sup>. A joint session will be held as is expected to attract around 150 political representatives. A political statement is to be adopted by the two political bodies and sent as input to COP21. Contributing to the event are "Plan Bleu" (body for Environment and development in the Mediterranean), French Research & Development institutions, the World Bank, Platforma and the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development nrg4SD. A second event (with an expected bigger audience of 400 participants) is to be held over 1 ½ days in May 2015, targeting climate action decision-makers operators in the Mediterranean.

**François Maitia from Aquitaine Region** (France) indicated his interest in knowing the state of play regarding the profile of European Regions in the international arena. He feels it is important for European regions to have a strong influence at global level and export the values of solidarity,

social cohesion and sustainability that articulate their actions in Europe. In this context he enquired about the engagement of the CPRM with the Forum of Global Associations of Regions ORU-FOGAR and recalled that that the CPMR in the past had invested efforts in having networks of influence within international bodies.

**Philippe Cichowlaz** (PACA) responded by highlighting the difficulty in mobilising such networks and the frustration to see the little coordination among global networks, for instance around the topics of climate and energy. Regions around the world are evolving in very different universes and there seems to be a particularly difficult context to organise coordinated action. Even when in Europe 20% of the European Regional Development Fund is allocated to energy efficiency actions, Regions are not being able to make their voice heard in the international negotiations on energy and climate change, while they are being asked to coordinate huge investments in this area.

**Nuno Almeida** from Norte Region (Portugal) indicated that he was new to the group and was interested in receiving more information. In his Region he is responsible for defining international actions and setting guidelines for development cooperation in an EU context. The Region has cooperation with Latin America and is especially interested in working on cross-border aspects within development cooperation. There has already been some exchanges of good practices within the Association of European Border Region (AEBR), and the CPMR could also take advantage of strategies and projects in this field.

## SUMMING UP

Maruxa Cardama concluded the meeting by stating that the Group would continue to implement the six-month work plan until the end of the year, and notably:

- Engage in unfolding the concrete activities agreed on the Action Plan and hence help pave the way for enhanced decentralised cooperation action from Regions
- Finalise the Strategic Partnership proposal within Platforma, including strong dimensions on a new generation of decentralised cooperation and the Southern neighbourhood and Mediterranean dimension
- Aim to continue synergetic collaboration with other Geographical Commissions, with a focus on the decentralised cooperation dimension of thematic areas such as climate change and maritime, as appropriate

## TIMETABLE OF SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

Action	Lead	Timeline
Minutes of this meeting and next meeting	CPMR Secretariat	To be adopted by the Working Group at 15 October meeting
CPMR Secretariat negotiations towards the finalisation of the Strategic Partnership proposal with Platforma	CPMR Secretariat in consultation with Euskadi as Lead Region and with WG members as appropriate	Proposals to be reviewed by the WG on 15.10  The calendar shared to date by Platforma follows: 17.10 - Submission of 3 <sup>rd</sup> draft proposal to EC 31.10 - Comments by EC to Platforma 14.11 - Full & Final version sent to EC December: signature of Strategic Partnership, most likely at CEMR Congress on Citizenship

		January '15: Beginning of Strategic partnership:
Kindly consult the Work Group's Action Plan for more info on planned activities and actions		