



CPMR and aviation: Summary of the member Regions' priorities and next steps

At its meeting in Stavanger on 22 June 2017, the CPMR Political Bureau agreed to conduct a survey of member Regions in order to find out which air transport issues they would like to see addressed as a priority. The CPMR is stepping up its efforts on air transport within the overall transport policy area.

This summary of the responses to the questionnaire (presented in the [June 2017 Technical paper](#)) highlights the issues prioritised by the Regions: State aid, connectivity, Public Service Obligations, infrastructure funding, and sustainable development. These will form the basis of an Action Plan to be drawn up early in 2018.

The Action Plan will be proposed by the General Secretariat and implemented with the support of experts with relevant experience from within the regional authorities that are members of CPMR.

1. Analysis of the survey results

1.1 Geographical breakdown of the responses

Responses were received from 19 Regions:

- 7 from the Intermediterranean Commission;
- 5 from the Baltic Sea Commission;
- 3 from the North Sea Commission;
- 2 from the Atlantic Arc Commission;
- 6 from the Islands Commission;
- 2 Outermost Regions, including Guyane, giving the priorities for the Outermost Regions as a group.

It is only possible to use 16 of these responses, since three of the Regions considered they were not in a position to respond, either because the Region does not have competence in this area or because aviation was not considered to be a priority in terms of their investment in CPMR.

1.2 Priority themes

The following list of options was proposed, but the Regions were offered the possibility of adding other priorities:

- Connectivity;
- State aid for airports and airlines;
- Public Service Obligations (PSO);
- European funding for airport infrastructure;
- Cooperation projects.

From this list, State aid is the priority shared by the highest number of Regions (12 replies), ahead of Connectivity (8), Public Service Obligations (8) and Infrastructure funding (7). No Region mentioned cooperation projects.

The additional priorities suggested by the Regions can be grouped together as follows:

- **Sustainable development, climate impact, type of fuel:** 6
- Safety and security: 3
- Bilateral agreements, intercontinental routes: 3 Regions, island Regions and Outermost Regions
- Intermodality, connectivity with other regional transport systems: 2
- Innovation, performance of air traffic control: 1
- Impact of Brexit: 1
- Airport taxes: 1

1.3 Comments

It is admittedly difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the priorities of a network of around 150 Regions on the basis of a sample of only 19 of them. However, there does appear to be a unifying element to the themes that have been prioritised, all the more so in that the responses provided arguments justifying the reasons for prioritising them.

There is clear justification for highlighting the theme of “**aviation and sustainable development**”, given that it was not included in the original list of options.

The fact that cooperation projects were not mentioned in any of the responses may be attributed to the fact that the Regions consider this issue to be more appropriately addressed at the operational level of the Geographical Commissions, rather than at that of the CPMR, which is perceived as the “EU-lobbying” level.

2 Operational follow-up: towards a CPMR Action Plan on air transport

2.1 Calendar

- 28 November 2017 in Brussels: meeting of the CPMR “Intercommissions” working group on transport; a session will be given over to air transport
- February 2018: adoption of the Action Plan by the CPMR Political Bureau.

2.2 Participation of the Regions in the drafting and implementation of the Action Plan

The CPMR Regions, by their very nature, face the challenge of air transport accessibility, and they have a significant and crucial potential in terms of their expertise and capacity to bring forward proposals on the issues mentioned, some of which are highly complex and technical. It is therefore advisable that those Regions which have such experience and expertise should contribute to the proposals for the changes that CPMR wishes to see in European policy and regulations.

Between now and 28 November, and during the meeting of the transport working group, we should aim to identify, for each theme, one Region (or two Regions, in order to cover the range of geographical situations) able to provide support for the CPMR General Secretariat’s work in analysing the issues and developing proposals.

In addition, the work carried out by the Geographical Commissions on these themes (in particular the Islands Commission which is very active on air transport) could be pooled.

2.3 Partnership with outside experts

As indicated in its June 2017 technical paper, CPMR will pursue its relations with experts and organisations which share some or all of CPMR’s priorities, such as the ARC - Airport Regions Conference – whose General Secretary gave a presentation on [the connectivity challenge](#) at the CPMR transport working group on 6 June 2017. It will also debate with the member Regions during the General Assembly in Helsinki.

The General Secretariat is following up other contacts, who will be asked to make a contribution in due course. These will provide a useful input into the organisation’s preparatory work, but CPMR will retain a free hand in expressing its own positions.

2.4 Proposed priority themes

2.4.1 State aid and Public Service Obligations

We suggest grouping together these two themes, highlighted as priorities by the Regions in their responses to the survey. The issues are related, in that they both concern the use of public funding to support air transport, either for infrastructure or for services. The work to be done could focus on monitoring EU legislation, especially:

- Regulation (EC) 1008/2008 of 24 September 2008 on common rules for the operation of air transport in the Community. There is a Commission proposal to modify this Regulation, and the European Parliament has just nominated a rapporteur on this text.
- The General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER), which has just been revised by the Commission to include “state aid for regional airports” among the categories of aid already listed in the Regulation.

2.4.2 Connectivity

The European Commission is working on the development of an EU indicator for connectivity, for possible future use in defining the implementation parameters of air transport policy instruments. We should be proactively monitoring this process, since the results will certainly have an impact on territorial cohesion.

In relation to connectivity, an important element in the EU rules is **the Regulation on time slots**. The European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions have invited the Council and Member States to move forward on the review of this 2009 Regulation. A recast of the Regulation was proposed in 2011, but is currently blocked. This is one of the issues highlighted by the Regions in their responses to the CPMR survey.

Questions relating to **intermodality** could also be dealt with under this heading, as well, obviously, as questions of **accessibility** (outermost regions, islands, specific territories).

2.4.3 European funding for airport infrastructure

The core network of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), which concentrates funding from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), will be reviewed, starting in 2023. CPMR and its Geographical Commissions therefore have quite a long timeframe in which to assess the possibility of lobbying in favour of a modification of the list of airports in this core network.

Although no change is planned to the TEN-T maps in the short term, the CEF Regulation will shortly be modified for the post-2020 period, on the basis of a Commission proposal expected in spring 2018. CPMR has already drawn up and published – in March and June 2017 – its proposals on maritime transport, but not yet for air transport.

2.4.4 Air transport, sustainable development and climate change

This theme will need to be defined in greater detail with the Regions which listed it as a priority, and in particular the Region or Regions which will agree to provide expert support to the General Secretariat. This theme could include, in particular:

- monitoring of international and European negotiations on CO₂ emissions in air transport and the consequences for the peripheral regions;
- the environmental impact of airports.



Contact person: Patrick Anvrouin, CPMR Director
Email: patrick.anvrouin@crpm.org

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

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