CPMR ANSWER
To the EC Consultation on the EU Mobility Strategy

The Commission is preparing Strategy for a Sustainable and Smart Mobility. While taking into consideration the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector, the strategy aims to set a pathway for the sector towards the sustainable and digital transitions, building a resilient and crisis-proof transport system for generations to come and delivering on the ambition set out in the European Green Deal and Europe Fit for the Digital Age Communications.

In this context, the Commission has opened a public consultation to gather the views of citizens and stakeholders on the elements of the Strategy.

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Region (CPMR) welcomes the initiative. It echoes the messages adopted in its policy position of October 2019 on “Climate Neutral Transport for All”. Therefore, the CPMR believes that this future Strategy for Smart and Sustainable Mobility should:

- Contribute to reach the Green Deal’s objectives,
- Respond to the concerns about the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis,
- Ensure that sufficient means and efforts are dedicated to reaching the objective of climate neutral transport,
- Preserve and enhance territorial accessibility and cohesion,
- Bet on European know-how to deliver climate neutral transport.

Realising the European Green Deal ambition

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions called repeatedly for a strong EU climate ambition. Therefore, the CPMR sees a great opportunity in the Green Deal. Europe should indeed take “the global lead on the major challenges of our times”. EU must reach climate neutrality in 2050 at the very latest while ensuring a balanced transition and engage
considerable efforts at the soonest. It must deliver significant reduction of the carbon footprint of transport by 2030 in line with international agreements.

In that respect, the CPMR highlights the strategic role waterborne transport, including ports, especially for freight as a sustainable and efficient solution on the way to European objective of fighting climate change. The COVID-19 crisis has reminded us of the efficiency and importance of this transport mode to ensure the continuity of freight, especially in the most peripheral Regions where it is often the only way to ensure goods supply.

The CPMR reiterates that rail must be the backbone for a sustainable mobility Strategy. In that respect, it is essential to ensure a smooth and seamless circulation for freight trains, whose importance was demonstrated during the COVID-19 crisis and whose environmental performance is far superior to other modes of transport. Unfortunately, rail infrastructures are missing in some peripheral regions. In a few of them, especially islands and outermost Regions, rail is simply not an available option. This should not be forgotten. It demands tailor-made tools and measures to support the implementation of sustainable mobility in these regions.

**Tackling the impact of the COVID-19 Crisis**

When the Communication on the Green Deal was presented in December 2019, no one could imagine that a major global health crisis would arise in the next months. Considering the major impact it has had and it is still having on the transport sector, the future Strategy must include dedicated measures to ensure a swift recovery of the sector. Especially as several actors were already facing important challenges, such as the impact of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom to name only one of these challenges.

The crisis has generated connectivity gaps for peripheral maritime regions when movement restrictions were enacted, but at least essential goods kept moving. Today and in the weeks, months and years to come we will face the mid-term economic impact of the COVID-19. Indeed, it has endangered the very survival of companies (for instance airlines, airports, ports, maritime companies) that ensure the connectivity and essential services to peripheral maritime regions and thus their survival. This critical situation demands special attention to those companies that contribute to ensure territorial accessibility for peripheral territories and to the Regions where they operate and are based.

In the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, developing a strong and ambitious Strategy for Smart and Sustainable Mobility Industry would contribute to overcome some of its impacts. For instance, it would ensure that jobs in the transport sector are preserved and created in the Regions.

The passenger transport sector will demand support to adapt its offers facing both exceptional sanitary circumstances and a tendency from the users to change their behaviours, especially in urban areas. The future Strategy will have to take these changes into consideration as they tend to be coherent with a transition towards climate neutral transport solutions.
Providing the Strategy with the means for success

The future Strategy for Smart and Sustainable Mobility will have a positive impact only if it is paired with strong legislative and financial tools to be implemented. Nothing would be worst that an ambitious Strategy impossible to implement due to lack of resources and of a coherent framework. Reaching climate neutral transport as soon as possible demands massive investments in infrastructures, innovation, technological shift and development to provide sustainable solutions for all transport modes. Every available tool must be mobilised efficiently, from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), InvestEU, Horizon Europe, European Regional Development Fund and ReactEU to State aid rules, which should allow for greater flexibility in the transport sector. Furthermore, the EU should develop incentive tools to ensure efficient and sustainable mix between transport modes. However, considering the cuts CEF 2.0 has suffered, the CPMR share its doubts as to its ability to provide the necessary support to the European transport sector, especially, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis that has already severely impacted its economic stability.

Access to clean energy is a major enabler towards climate neutral transport. Therefore, a wide-spread accessible and clean energy infrastructure promoting interoperability and reducing energy isolation must be developed while better fostering synergies between TEN-T and TEN-E.

Preserving and enhancing territorial accessibility

The future Strategy should foster territorial accessibility, aiming at bringing the European closer together. A key objective must consist in providing sustainable mobility for all the European. It means an affordable, efficient and accessible mobility. The Strategy must, therefore, couple accessibility and sustainability. Peripheral maritime Regions should benefit from sustainable transport and accompanying measures, not suffer from unfitted standards that would increase the costs of transport modes they rely on and ultimately see their accessibility deteriorated. Especially in the current context as the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis put at risk the connectivity of peripheral maritime Regions.

The Strategy should be adapted to the different Regions and territories Europe has, as well as on their strengths and specificities. It should therefore avoid a prescriptive approach to favour a place-based approach that would better answer regional and local challenges in terms of mobility planning, energy mix and industrial strategy.

The transition towards climate neutral transport is an opportunity for the Regions. Innovation efforts and deployment of cleaner transport modes must be spread all-across Europe. Support to the peripheries needs to be ensured so for them to make the best out of their resources and thus, benefit from the transition.
Betting on our know-how

It is crucial that the future Strategy is to be paired with a Strategy for Smart and Sustainable Mobility Industry. This Strategy for mobility industry should support the development of existing regional cluster, by valorising the experience and know-how of our territories, their industrial culture, their industrial and innovation ecosystems. In this context, peripheral maritime regions should be considered as innovation labs. They have proven their ability to develop innovative mobility solution already. A key to the success of the Strategy will be the ability to up-scale such innovative mobility solutions from a single Region to all the others where it could be adapted.

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) represents more than 150 regional authorities from 24 countries across Europe and beyond. Organised in Geographical Commissions, the CPMR works to ensure that a balanced territorial development is at the heart of the European Union and its policies.

Rond-Point Schuman | 1040 Brussels, BELGIUM
info@crpm.org | +32 (0)2 612 17 00

6, Rue Saint-Martin | 35700 Rennes, FRANCE (siège) info@crpm.org | +33 (0)2 99 35 40 50