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JUNE 2015

CPMR POLICY POSITION

OPINION FROM THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU

*(Approved by the CPMR Political Bureau, 12 June 2015, Crete-Greece)*

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change constitutes one of the most important challenges for the sustainable human development of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, since it impacts on and is impacted by global issues of socio-economic nature; these include poverty and inequality, economic development, population dynamics and migration, energy production and provision, resource management, consumption & production patterns, and food security. At the very heart of the response to climate change, however, lies the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to changes that might occur.

Studies show that climate change enhances phenomena such as aridity, forest fires and heavy precipitation, and also accelerates secondary effects, such as soil erosion, desertification and floods, respectively resulting to aggravation of the differences between dry and wet areas. Peripheral and maritime Regions located in all sea basins, notably the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and particularly island regions, being in the frontline, are vulnerable to intense phenomena, such as floods, coastal erosion, aridity, heavy storms etc., and to more severe impacts from climate change compared to central European regions. The severe risks that Regions face on their economies and also on social cohesion require the bottom-up development and implementation of adaptation policies and plans.

Experience during the last decades shows that on the one hand a clear territorial dimension and on the other hand cooperation initiatives among different levels of governance (local, regional, national) can enable tailor-made actions adapted to the population dynamics and to local realities and needs, and can also improve the successful formulation of climate policies and targets ensuring the most effective outcomes in tackling climate change at subnational level.

**Having this in mind, we the peripheral and maritime Regions of Europe declare that:**

1. Our responsibility for the development and implementation of laws, policies, strategies, standards, programmes and often fiscal mechanisms in areas that directly influence the levels of greenhouse gas emissions and also addresses impacts of climate change is significant; coupled with our proximity to the citizens and our greater flexibility compared to national Governments, it confirms that our mitigation initiatives can represent an important source of greenhouse gas emissions reduction; it also illustrates the crucial importance of a comprehensive territorial dimension in climate adaptation action.
2. Having assumed this responsibility we have developed territorial climate action plans (e.g. Horizontal Climate Action Plan in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Basque Climate Change Strategy 2050, Plan Climat Energie Territoire of Brittany, Framework Plan for Mitigation and Strategy for adapting to climate change of Catalonia, Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, Valencian Strategy against Climate Change 2013-2020, North Sea Region 2020 action plan, Climate Change Strategy for Wales, etc.); we have implemented concrete policy measures for mitigation of climate change; we have funded the research on key topics related to adaptation. In consequence, we claim an enhanced role in the development and implementation of adaptation strategies.

3. The calibre and impact of our initiatives urge on the one hand increased resources, decentralisation and subsidiarity, i.e. autonomy, exclusive or shared competences, self-rule, greater financial and human resources for our regional and local authorities and on the other hand a real territorial dimension in all international and national initiatives concerning climate action. Macro-regional strategies can be an important tool for enhanced territorial cooperation.
4. Marine and maritime economic activities, such as maritime industries, marine renewable energies and coastal and maritime tourism, are strategic priority sectors with large and untapped potential to contribute to climate change mitigation. They can boost innovation and investments in our territories and eventually create jobs and sustainable growth. In addition, they can also support Europe's leadership in research and innovation in renewable energy, as prioritised in the Energy Union framework, in view of the 2030 climate goals. Therefore, it is of great importance that relevant frameworks, such as Blue Growth, as set by the European Commission, are strongly supported by all stakeholders and further expanded.
5. Adaptation of our territories to climate change should be seen as an equally important element to mitigation actions already engaged. Adaptation covers key areas for action such as resilience, risk management, tourism, coastal areas management, biodiversity and protected areas, aridity, water management, infrastructure and transport, data mapping, safety of people and goods, finance and insurance, territorial planning and urban development, water resources, agriculture and food security, forests and fisheries management, etc.. Effective implementation of strategies require reinforcement of the vertical coordination between all the administrative levels, as well as of the horizontal coordination across departments with responsibility for adaptation to climate change.
6. Global processes on climate change, such as Carbon<sup>n</sup> Climate Registry, Carbon Disclosure Project's reporting platform, Making Cities resilient, the Covenant of Mayors and the Pact of Islands enhance transparency and monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions and should be further encouraged and enabled by the EU and other international institutions.
7. We expect the on-going negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to deliver a reinvigorated, broad, balanced and durable international climate change agreement in COP21 in Paris. The latter must fulfil the expectations of citizens and become "legally binding" and "applicable to all", setting an important step in the international negotiation process concerning climate issues beyond 2020.
8. We welcome the recognition by the UN in the international negotiations of local and regional governments as one of the nine major groups/non-state actors of civil society for the implementation of sustainable development. In recognition of our essential role, we highlight our capacity as governmental stakeholders to design effective policies on mitigation and adaptation through a bottom-up approach. We also claim our direct engagement in the decision-making stages, and accordingly a specific role in the implementation, monitoring and review of global climate agreement.

**The Regions commit to keep climate change high in the political agenda and also raise awareness among all stakeholders, and hereby:**

9. Endorse the [Nantes Declaration of Mayors and Subnational Leaders on Climate Change](#), issued on 28 September 2013 in Nantes, France
10. Endorse the [Islands Declaration on Climate Change](#) issued in La reunion island, France on 25 June 2014
11. Endorse the [Declaration on Climate by Local and regional Authorities in the Mediterranean](#), issued in Marseille, France on 11 December 2014
12. Endorse the [Local Government Climate Roadmap 2013-2015](#) of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
13. Endorse the nrg4SD key messages for COP 20, issued in Lima in December 2014
14. Endorse the Working Document of the Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy of the Committee of the Regions on the Protocol of Paris, issued in Brussels, Belgium, on 4 May 2015 at the

occasion of the event co-hosted by the CoR, nrg4SD and the AERF "From Lima to Paris. Towards a successful climate agreement-What place for regions and cities in the COP 21?

15. Support the "Forum of the Mediterranean Civil Society towards COP21 in Paris- Towards an inclusive agenda of Mediterranean actors", which will take place on 4-5 June 2015, in Marseille - Villa Méditerranée, France
16. Support the Compact of States and Regions fostered by The Climate Group, nrg4SD, the CDP and R20 as an ambitious initiative launched in September 2014 in NYC aiming at creating a reliable and public inventory of GHG for subnational governments
17. Support the World Summit of Territorial Climate Action with Civil Society, which will take place on 1-2 July 2015, in Lyon, France

**We, Regional representatives undertake, according to our means and resources, to:**

18. Intensify our efforts and initiatives at political level towards our National Governments for the promotion of an ambitious agreement where the role of Regions in both mitigation and adaptation will be clearly recognized.
19. Increase framework cooperation within sea basins (e.g. Bologna Charter for the Mediterranean area, Baltic Sea Macro-regional strategy etc.), and identify, collect and share relevant good and bad practices and case-studies, in addition to promote peer-review for the potential for scaling up and replication within and between sea basins, prioritizing key areas where threats are faced, as for instance floods, water management etc.
20. Further promote the use of inventories and monitoring methods of our greenhouse gas emissions, as well as transparent reporting procedures.
21. Mobilise funds, build capacities and strength institutional support to develop and implement adaptation and mitigation plans and strategies in favour of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, developing new, more sustainable energy solutions, facilitating whenever possible maritime energy production technologies, setting the example of an industrial model paradigm shift by boosting a low carbon and circular economy, and adapting to climate change in continuation of the Mexico Pact (2010). These initiatives and strategies are also great opportunities for both wealth and job creation in our Regions.
22. Support and contribute to the creation of effective multilevel governance models to enhance the implementation of policies related to climate change mitigation, as for instance stated in the [Ljubljana Declaration](#) for enhancing energy efficiency in buildings in the Mediterranean.
23. Further encourage and enable the implementation of concrete projects on the ground across our territories on mitigation, with emphasis on renewable energy, energy efficiency and transport, including maritime transport, as well as on adaptation.
24. Get further involved in innovative climate initiatives, such as Climate-Knowledge and Innovation Communities (Climate-KIC), and also strengthen our alliances with other stakeholders and engage in joint initiatives with key like-minded actors within the framework of the international negotiations, e.g. intergovernmental networks and NGOs.

**We, Regions urge our National Governments to:**

25. Lead to the signing of an ambitious and binding agreement in compliance with the increasingly pressing alerts from the scientific community; the urgency of the situation requires a strong and collective reaction, utilising local solutions and know-how.
26. Assume their active role in the implementation of the blue economy making the EU a world leader in research and innovation at the sea. Adopt a bottom-up approach and set priorities that will release the potential of Regions in the Blue Growth pillars, based on their smart specialization strategies, and promote at the European level maritime projects that can be included in the European Fund for Strategic Investment.

27. Adopt a bottom-up approach for the development of their Adaptation Plans and identify specific and shared responsibilities for Regions in the implementation of these plans, facilitating multilevel cooperation, coordination and allocating the respective resources.
28. Promote innovative and effective policies adapted to local markets for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
29. Promote research and eco-innovation in all economic sectors to seek greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and energy and resource efficiency.
30. Ensure linkages and synergies between the Climate and the post-2015 development agendas at the level of political decision, technical operationalisation and partnership setting. A strong link has to be established between the various intergovernmental processes. The fight against global warming and poverty, fostering sustainable development and preparation for resilience and disaster management, fall within the same logic of universal sustainable human development, and needs converging strategic actions.
31. Deliver on existing financial pledges and ensure further financial contributions to the various funds and especially the Green Climate Fund. The active participation of developing countries and vulnerable communities in reducing greenhouse gas emissions will not happen without appropriate financial support.
32. Adopt and enable mechanisms for direct access to these global funds for local, insular and regional governments. And, more generally, ensure that a meaningful percentage of global, European and national funds be ringfenced to territorial climate action.
33. Require and enforce that climate actions become an integral part of all projects financed by different stakeholders across our territories.