



CPMR External Cooperation Working Group

Teleconference Briefing - Thursday 2 February 2017

ATTENDEES:

Camila DE EPALZA AZQUETA, European Union Policy Officer, Delegation of the Basque Country to the EU (Lead Region)

Souad BAHRI, Nouvelle-Aquitaine Brussels Office

Mircea IORDACHE, Public Officer, Tulcea County Council

Mireia SOLÉ I LLORT, EU Policy Adviser, Government of Catalonia - Delegation to the EU

Maruxa CARDAMA, Advisor to CPMR External Cooperation Group

Stavros KALOGNOMOS, Policy Officer in charge of the Balkan & Black Sea Commission, CPMR

Claire STREET, Policy Assistant, CPMR (by teleconference)

Apologies:

Remedios BORDIU, EU Adviser, Principado de Asturias

1. Welcome

Maruxa Cardama, CPMR Adviser in charge of the CPMR External Cooperation Group, and Camila De Epalza on behalf of the Basque Delegation, welcomed participants to the teleconference.

A special welcome was given to Mircea Iordache from Tulcea County County Council who was participating in the group for the first time.

The President of Tulcea County Council, Mr Teodorescu, is the CPMR's Vice-President in charge of Neighbourhood Policy. Therefore, the participation of Tulcea in the group would support CPMR's reflections on Neighbourhood Policy and especially the Eastern Partnership.

2. Update on Platforma Activity and Calls for Experts

([LINK](#) to Summary of CPMR activities under the Specific Grant Agreement)

As a reminder, the European Commission signed Strategic Partnerships between several international organisations of Regional and Local Authorities in 2015. The partnership has a duration of 7 years and is based on a new approach to work with regional and local authorities (RLAs) in the field of development cooperation.

PLATFORMA the network of European regional and local authorities for development, represented by the CEMR, has signed one of these Strategic Partnerships with the European Commission. The CPMR is a long-standing partner of PLATFORMA and participates in its Strategic Partnership with the following **three main activities**:

- **Training module “Delivery of public services with a territorial integrated approach in the Mediterranean.”**
- **Research Study:** “Shaping a new generation of decentralised cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability.”
- **Research Study:** “Public-private partnerships for decentralised cooperation.”

The three documents will follow think tank and advocacy approaches; and feature a combination of desk research and identification of practices to provide lessons and recommendations.

2.1 Elaboration of a Training Module on the “Delivery of public services with a territorial integrated approach in the Mediterranean”

The **CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission** is leading, in collaboration with the CPMR External Cooperation Working Group member regions, the elaboration of a **Manual** on this topic, that will also be the object of a **Training Session** in the Maghreb (Morocco or Tunisia).

Following a call for experts launched in October 2016, we have appointed Mr Federico Martire to carry out the work. He is currently working closely with Davide Strangis, Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission.

The timeline and deliverables of the training module are as follows:

- First draft of the manual in the spring (April/May)
- Final version of the manual in the summer
- Training session to be delivered within 2017.

The first draft of the study will be circulated for members to contribute. All members are invited to give their feedback (not just limited to Intermediterranean Commission members).

2.2 Study about “Shaping a new generation of decentralised cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability”

Following a call for experts launched in November 2016, we have appointed Mr Agusti Fernandez de Losada, to carry out the work.

In this study, we are looking for **innovation** and **freshness**. The aim is to reinforce **new processes** and not to duplicate what already exists. We are keen to elevate our member regions’ experiences and lessons learned in order to formulate policy recommendations.

We therefore strongly encourage input from our External Cooperation Working Group members

- **Reply to questionnaire open until 3 March 2017.** [LINK TO QUESTIONNAIRE](#)

The questionnaire aims to collect experiences of decentralised cooperation from regional and local authorities worldwide. The questionnaire is not complex but it requires detailed answers. The replies will provide the basis for the study.

- **Consultation on structure and content of the study**

Maruxa and Camila are already working with Agustí on the outline of the study (chapters and concepts to be addressed in each section). We will shortly open a consultation among our members so they may have a say on the content and structure of the first draft study.

The timeline and deliverables of the first study are as follows:

- Questionnaire open until 3 March 2017.
- Analysis of responses to questionnaire
- First draft of study within April 2017
- Finalisation of study in June/July 2017 and presentation at the Assises of Decentralised Cooperation (Brussels, 11-12 July 2017)

2.3 Study “Towards a new generation of public-private partnerships for decentralised cooperation”

This second study is complementary to the first one. Maruxa and Camila will be drafting the Terms of Reference and the Call for Experts in the coming weeks. Replicating the same process followed last autumn to commission the Training Module and the first Research Study, we will circulate the draft ToRs to the group members and the PLATFORMA secretariat to seek input before their finalisation for publication.

The timeline and deliverables of the second study are as follows:

- Call for experts published in March.
- Appointment of expert by Easter.
- First draft of study in June/July 2017
- Final version by end 2017.

3. Eastern Partnership

The participation of **Tulcea County Council** in the CPMR's External Cooperation Working Group will provide the opportunity to enlarge the geographical scope of the working group; as well as to deepen reflections and activity on the Eastern neighbourhood area, more specifically through the CPMR's Balkan and Black Sea Geographical Commission.

Tulcea is geographically relevant as it borders with two Eastern Partnership countries: Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. It has a good presence in the area and wants to drive forward cooperation actions.

This geographical area presents very specific economic, political and social challenges (Moldovan election, situation in Ukraine, etc.). However, Tulcea believes that there are good opportunities to develop work at regional cooperation level.

The CPMR Secretariat and the Basque Government, via Camila, will work with Tulcea to ensure how best to take into account the reality of this area in the CPMR's work on external cooperation. The two Research Studies above mentioned present a first good opportunity to identify regional experiences in Eastern Europe.

Recent Activity

Stavros Kalognomos, CPMR Policy Officer, participated in the [PLATFORMA Eastern Neighbourhood Coordination Seminar](#) in Tbilisi, Georgia on 15-16 December 2016. He presented the CPMR's Balkan & Black Sea Commission's (BBSC) actions to help develop the work of the Eastern Partnership. The seminar aimed to develop further reflection on fostering cooperation in the wider Black Sea region and making better use of upcoming opportunities. ([LINK to presentations](#))

Future Actions and Opportunities

- Stavros will contact some Eastern neighbourhood partners to inform them of the questionnaire on decentralised cooperation.
- The next PLATFORMA Eastern Neighbourhood Coordination Seminar will be held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova in September 2017 (3rd or 4th week – date tbc). The CPMR Secretariat together with Tulcea will prepare a contribution to this event.
- Tulcea is a member of the [Association for Cross Border Cooperation 'Lower Danube Euroregion'](#) and has been working for many years in particular with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. Stavros and Maruxa will look into possible synergies between the CPMR and Lower Danube Euroregion association with a view to a possible joint event.

- Tulcea County plans to sign a bilateral cooperation partnership with an Armenian province in late spring 2017. This initiative could be of interest for the research study to identify the added value of such a decentralised cooperation partnership.
- The CPMR Balkan & Black Sea Commission will prepare some concrete results for the upcoming Bulgarian and Romanian Presidencies of the EU in 2018 and 2019 respectively.
- In the next months, the CPMR will open an office in Istanbul. This will give the Secretariat better access to the Black Sea area to promote more active involvement of Regions within the Eastern neighbourhood area.

4. Letter of Complaint on DEAR Calls

(LINK to [Letter](#))

Under the current DEAR call for proposals, there were many local and region governments, including the CPMR itself and some of its member Regions, that were excluded in the first round on purely administrative basis owing to the very strict application of the rule that only one application per organisation (per lot) would be accepted in the 2016 DEAR Call for Proposals.

The CPMR co-signed a letter of complaint initiated by the organisations CIR, AUR and Südwind. The letter regrets the unfair treatment and proposes improvements to the administrative process for future calls. The letter was sent by the Austrian NGDO platform Global Responsibility on behalf of 13 CSO platforms/networks, 17 Local Authorities (LA) and LA associations and 71 CSOs and universities (totalling 101 CSO/LA) in November 2016.

We have not yet heard back from the European Commission and are hoping to receive news and comments.

Camila mentioned that the Basque Country had been involved in several meetings between the European Commission, [CONCORD](#) (European NGO confederation for Relief and Development) and PLATFORMA in which they had discussed the DEAR problems. As a positive outcome of these discussions, they detected the need for more close collaboration between CONCORD and PLATFORMA - or between big platforms in general. Therefore CONCORD and PLATFORMA aim in the future to be more coordinated to check which entities are submitting to different calls. This will allow them to have a clearer picture of their partners' participation in projects.

5. Assises of Decentralised Cooperation. 10-11 July 2017, Brussels.

<http://lra4dev.cor.europa.eu/portal/Pages/5th-Assises-of-Decentralised-Cooperation.aspx>

This event, facilitated by the Committee of the Regions and European Commission, is THE place to be for decentralised cooperation.

Camila is taking leadership with regard to the participation of the Basque Government/CPMR. The event will be a good opportunity to showcase and influence, in particular by promoting the research studies and training manual.

Once again this year, the CPMR will be proactive in the 2017 edition. The last edition of the Assises had a certain emphasis on the local level. This year we want to further highlight the regional level. Under the leadership of the Basque Country, the CPMR will be involved in two important parts of the programme of events at the Assises:

- **The institutional table at the opening session to introduce key transversal messages.** This is a crucial opportunity for us to introduce the conclusions of the first study on a new generation of decentralised cooperation.
- **A Workshop** co-organised with PLATFORMA and other partners from Africa.

Camila is working on a brief for circulation shortly, with more detailed information.

6. European Development Days. 7-8 June 2017, Brussels

(<https://eudevdays.eu>)

One of the selected topics of the European Development Days (EDD) this year is Migration.

The CPMR has submitted a joint proposal with PLATFORMA and the UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) to organise an auditorium debate on this topic. Maruxa has worked on the proposal in collaboration with Alexis Chatzimpiros from the CPMR Secretariat, who oversees the coordination of the CPMR's Task Force on Migration.

Many Regions are willing to support the integration and mobility of the migrants they welcome with limited support. Our member Regions also work in countries of origin through their decentralised cooperation actions.

If the proposal is selected, we will need to mobilise high-level political representatives. Though we expect the CPMR to be given 1 speaking slot, we would explore ways to involve all Regions wishing to contribute. It may also be appropriate to draft a political statement on this occasion or to organise a fringe workshop with a background technical paper.

Camila proposed to check with colleagues on the Basque Government's interest in this initiative since the Basque President had recently presented proposals on migrant issues.

7. EC Policy Update

Camila provided some information on recent meetings with the European Commission. She expressed surprise to hear that the Commission under its development cooperation policy plans to work more with the military and that a special budget line would be dedicated to military support actions on migration and security issues.

For more information:

- Communication from the European Commission (5 July 2016): "Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform"

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0031>

- Legislative Train Schedule: Europe as a stronger global actor. Security Sector Reform:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-europe-as-a-stronger-global-actor/file-security-sector-reform>

8. Follow-up Actions and Next Steps

Follow-up Actions

1. Questionnaire for the study on a new generation of decentralised cooperation

Launch date Friday 3 February. Open until 3 March 2017. (Flexibility will be allowed for regions requiring more time.)

Member Regions kindly asked to take time to respond and circulate the questionnaire to their partners. The Secretariat will also be chasing Regions to make sure that we reach a critical mass of responses and the study is based on the reality and experiences of our Regions.

Stavros will contact some Eastern neighbourhood partners to inform them of the questionnaire on decentralised cooperation.

2. Further discuss and brainstorm Eastern neighbourhood dimension.

Tulcea could participate in the next Eastern Neighbourhood Coordination Seminar organised by PLATFORMA in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova in September 2017 (3rd or 4th week – date tbc).

Camila to share ideas on how to reinforce this geographical dimension in the External Cooperation Working Group and on some specific collaboration initiatives.

Stavros and Maruxa will look into possible synergies between the CPMR and Lower Danube Euroregion association with a view to a possible joint event.

3. Participation in European Development Days. CPMR/UCLG auditorium debate on Migration

We will inform members as soon as we receive the response from the European Commission on our joint application with PLATFORMA and UCLG for an auditorium debate on migration. If the proposal is successful, we will work with the CPMR External Cooperation Group and Task Force on Migration to get a good mix between the development cooperation angle and the purely migration angle.

4. Participation in the Assises of Decentralised Cooperation.

Camila will continue representing the CPMR/Basque Government in preparation talks with the European Commission and Committee of the Regions. We will keep members informed of progress and share the announced info brief by Camila as soon as it becomes available.

Next steps for the coming months

1. **Progress on elaboration of the Study about “Shaping a New Generation of Decentralised Cooperation for Enhanced Effectiveness and Accountability”:** First draft in spring.
2. **Progress on the Training Module on the “Delivery of public services with a territorial integrated approach in the Mediterranean”:** First draft in spring.
3. **Progress on the Study on “Public-private partnerships for decentralised cooperation”:** Call for experts to be published in March for appointment of expert by Easter.
4. **New European consensus on development policy:** The CPMR responded to the EC consultation in August 2016 and will continue monitoring the dossier as it transits through the European Parliament and the expected interservices communication is published in June.
5. **Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) in the EU** - After a 1st communication by the European Commission in November 2016, further works are expected in 2017 towards the announced (i) long-term debate about the alignment of the EU budget and Multi Annual Financial Framework and (ii) the launch of a multi-stakeholder platform for exchange on implementation practices.
6. **Next meeting of the External Cooperation Working Group:** As per standard practice in the group we will contact members in advance to set a date for a next meeting or teleconference briefing. In the meantime, we will continue to send regular information letters.



CPMR External Cooperation Working Group

Chaired by  EUSKO JAURLARITZA
GOBIERNO VASCO

Contacts:

Camila De Epalza Azqueta

European Union Policy Officer
Basque Government Delegation to the European Union
camila-deepalza@euskadi.eus

Maruxa Cardama

Adviser – Global Agendas
mxcardama@hotmail.com
Tel: +32 2 612 17 00 | +32 475 844 339

Claire Guillotin Street

Policy Assistant
claire.street@crpm.org
Tél. : + 33 (0)2 99 35 40 50 / Fax. : + 33 (0)2 99 35 09 19

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