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## 1ST MEETING OF THE CPMR TASK FORCE ON MIGRATION MANAGEMENT - 23 APRIL 2015 -

### - SUMMARY/MAIN CONCLUSIONS -

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#### Participants:

Region Skane, President Annika Annerby Jansson  
Gouvernement of the Azores, Melanie Silva  
Region of Sicily, Bruno Cortese  
Provences-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur, Alessandra Lepore  
Generalitat de Catalunya, Xavier Alonso  
Veneto, Davide Pedroni,  
Ministry of Gozo, Malta, Daniela Sabino and Mario Saliba  
Crete, Katerina Vlassaki  
CPMR (Alexis Chatzimpiros, Davide Strangis, Stavros Kalognomos, Lise Guennal, Timothee Pineau and Asa Bjering from Baltic Sea Geographical Commission).  
Excused: Balearic Islands, Tuscany, North Aegean, Abruzzo

**Note:** Sicily is the Leading Region of the Task force, Skane is the political rapporteur at CPMR Political Bureau Level. A core number of regions from Northern/Southern part of Europe have expressed their willingness to participate in this Task Force on migrations.

#### **1 - Introduction: Presentation of the TOR, previous work by the IMC and reminder of the regions interested for the moment in the TF by CPMR General Secretariat**

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Following the recent tragic days, the emergency summit of the EU council is also meeting on the same day, and will discussed a ten point plan. The main messages that are expected from the summit were presented by Alexis Chatzimpiros (CPMR), and are including the commitment of the EU to do their best to save all lives and to destroy the current business model of traffickers, a point that High Representative Ms. Mogherini will probably stress and propose to take action on this, the EU should also try to discourage migrants from coming, and discuss solidarity between Member States and how the burden will be shared.

The main task of the TF will be to develop a position of the CPMR Regions to be delivered. In other words, what can be done in term of policy and advocacy (best practices, pilot actions, accountability and effectiveness). A meeting should then be organised with Commissioner Avramopoulos.

Today's meeting aims at exchanging views on actions, setting up the timeline for the next months and physical meetings (i.e. a specific session on migrations is already scheduled during the IC GA, 25<sup>th</sup> June, Brussels).

### Previous actions of the IMC:

Davide Strangis (IMC-CPMR) introduced the work already done on this issue.

- ❖ The IMC is starting to work on issues at political level, a political position has been approved in December in Marseille. *Link: [http://www.medregions.com/pub/doc\\_travail/bp/186\\_en.pdf](http://www.medregions.com/pub/doc_travail/bp/186_en.pdf)*. The aim of it was also to create this task force at CPMR level, with a strong willingness to share the vision based on the solutions, not only on dealing with the emergency side but also with socio-economic integration.
- ❖ Already participated to the ARLEM report on the role of local and regional authorities in managing migration in the Mediterranean.

*Link: <http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/arlem/Documents/rapport-ecoter-migration-2014-en.pdf>*

- ❖ Now, following the dramatic events, there is a strong will of the PACA region's president, Michel Vauzelle and president of the Sicily, Rosario Crocetta, to undertake awareness raising actions, towards both the public opinion and European institutions. Mr Vauzelle was in Palermo, on 22 April, to hold a meeting and a press conference.
- ❖ Raising solidarity campaign with an open letter to the head of states is summarising the will of the regions to cooperate. This "solidarity awareness activity" should aim at improving the possibilities of the Member states to act in a more effective way after the action like TRITON which could not address the problem currently faced in the Mediterranean. This action should be in a more integrated and long-term process and include cooperation between the shores of the Mediterranean, trying to ensure a better situation for socio-economic development. The open letter also explains how the situation can be solved and proposes to gather the regions to exchange best practices concerning the emergency and the immigrations issues and represents a political message to be sent to the President of the European Parliament, Mr. Martin Schulz. The IMC is already in contact with him and he is keen to receive the delegation of the CPMR presidents (22<sup>nd</sup> of May) led by Presidents Crocetta and Vauzelle.
- ❖ Meeting in Sicily and a visit to a welcome centre for migrants are planned on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of May with the launch of the awareness campaign "We are all Mediterranean"

In this task force, the idea is to gather experts on migrations from the regions to work on specific activities.

## 2 - Interested Regions

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The Secretariat has received interest for participating in the TF from many regions.

Not exhaustive (the ones which manifested their interest for the time being): Sicily, Skane, Catalonia, Azores, Crete, PACA, Gozo, Veneto.

Balearic Islands, North Aegean, Tuscany, Abruzzo manifested their interest as well but couldn't participate to the first meeting.

Other potential interested regions are (tbc): Pays de la Loire, Umbria, Puglia, Andalucía, Calabria, Sardinia, Peloponnese, Rabat-Salé Zemmour Zaer, and other regions coming from the IMC, the Baltic Sea Commission as well as from other CPMR GC.

The TF should try to involve more regions from the North/Atlantic/Baltic and gather the experts on migration of the regions in order to have a technical exchange and build up a network of experts that could **help shape advocacy messages or technical messages**.

### **3 - Interventions by Sicily and Skane on their expectations from the TF and the situation in their Regions concerning migration (issues, emergency situations, potential and best practices/assets for improving socio-economic integration etc.)**

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**Bruno Cortese (Sicily)** explained they are organising a meeting in Palermo, they need a strong help from all regions concerned, any kind of help because the problem was stated yesterday. The main problem we are facing now is due to the lack of interest within the European institutions towards the immigration issue and migration flows. They are working hard to organise meetings with Mayors, Ministries, Member States, Local and Regional Authorities, in order to underline and to ask for a better comprehension of the situation. A contingency plan was already signed several years ago by regional ministers, Sicily commitment was very valuable as they have best practices for responding to emergency situations. The meeting foreseen in May should include participations of the EU institutions representatives and to explain to them the vital role play by Sicily and its best practices in dealing with the situation. They want to present this contingency plan to Brussels and to build up things together like inviting the World Trade Organisation and its unit for migration based in Venice, to come to Sicily in May.

**Annika Annerby Jansson (Skane)** expressed her sympathy for the extreme situation that the Sicily region has been facing for a long time, with many dramatic situations and the respect she has for the Sicily region in dealing with this extremely difficult situation. Their expectation on this TF, outlined in the paper voted in Nantes, is to be able to produce a policy position that the CPMR should present to the responsible commissioner and to work with best practices also concerning integration which is one of the most important issue to deal with for the next 20-30 years vis-à-vis integration of the migrants in the European society. As we will continue to receive new Europeans from non-EU countries, we will have to learn how to deal with this situation and to integrate those new members of our societies, how they can contribute and we can set up harmonious lives together. In Sweden they have the largest number of accepted asylum applications but they don't have the kind of dramatic situations that the EU Mediterranean coastal countries are currently facing. They are expected however this year a large number of asylum seekers, the highest since the war in former Yugoslavia, and particularly coming from Syria. Swedish laws and rules are very good, but they are not very good in practice, as it can take to an average of seven years for an immigrant who has received asylum to be integrated and to have a job, and a place in the society which a far too long time. The acceptance in the Swedish population is high also, even if there are opposition groups.

**Bruno Cortese (Sicily)** added that the Dublin regulation has to be changed as soon as possible, as it is unfair to Italy, Greece, Spain, Malta and other Mediterranean countries to do the major work, for example in the analysis of the documents for asylum seekers. He also added that in the framework of EXPO 2015 in Milan, they are pushing to have a meeting with Commissioner Arvamopoulos, in a dedicated panel to migrations and flows and we should join forces to make it happen as soon as possible.

### **4 - Interventions by the CPMR presidency and the other participating Regions/Geographical Commissions on their priorities and challenges concerning migration**

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**Melanie Silva, government of Azores** congratulated this initiative and expressed its support regarding the recent event. The government of Azores, under the Secretary of external relations, has been participating in the Metropolis project, a network of policy makers, researchers to develop policies on migrations, they have an international steering representative body gathering more than 40 countries. They could exchange examples of good practices in the area of migration. They have

also participated in international roundtables on integration of migrants. She also expressed that we should value the cultural identities for the integration. More information will be sent by email to summarise the project and the activities led by the Azores.

**Mario Saliba**, Ministry of Gozo, underlined that this meeting was taking place while the extraordinary meeting of the EU council was on the way and their Prime Minister was currently engaged in concrete discussions, so before making any proposals they were waiting for the outcomes of the EU council meeting. However, they think amongst the top priorities should be the fight against smuggling and human trafficking, the budget for the joint action Triton should be increased so that more assets can be deployed, in the long-term a fair distribution system should be developed but on the short term we should be able to agree at least on a short term mechanism. Last but not least, an increased cooperation with countries of origin and transit should be unquestionable.

**Daniela Sabino** (Malta), added that immediate actions is necessary, although the long term proposals are very good ones, action is needed now before speaking of integration which does not solve the immediate crisis.

**Annika Annerby Jansson (Skane)**, agreed that this question should actually be discussed further after the EU Council conclusions.

**Alessandra Lepore**, PACA region insisted on solidarity and intercultural dialogue and the commitment of their president, Michel Vauzelle. They are calling for the support of all regions, to stick together and be heard as a common voice by the EU institutions to deal with this situation.

**Katerina Vlassaki**, on behalf of Giorgos Alexakis, Region of Crete, expressed that facing this massive human tragedy, Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Greece, Spain especially, are facing a two sides problem: managing the migration flows, and take policy measures for social integration. In Greece, the national level is mostly responsible for dealing with migration flows but the regional level has authority to take policy measures on integration and inclusion, and measures for development. She reiterates the importance of a good cooperation between regions and also towards the southern Mediterranean countries, to build up common action plan to fight against poverty and social exclusion. This also include to fight against racism and xenophobia, and to give enough space for social development and social measures.

**Xavier Alonso**, Generalitat de Catalunya, expressed the possibility of developing the idea of MIPLEX projects, about integration index that works at national level to the regional level. He suggested sharing information about best practices, more specifically to find a solution on how to share best practices among us. A platform to share those already existing practices could be launched. Regions of the south should also be better included because they are actors in immigration and integration. Generalitat de Catalunya can draft a proposal on how to share those best practices before the next meeting in May. It obvious that accidents will happen again, the proposed measures will thus be short and long time ones.

#### ***Other angles to address Migration policy:***

Davide Strangis explained that a change from a paradigm of migration to mobility of people should be addressed, so legal way of migrations should be reinforced, with a shared controlled way with the country of origin. Moreover, the migration issue should also be put in a different perspective with several economic sectors, such as tourism. As Crete expressed, innovative way such as how to exploit immigration in the sector of tourism, how to exploit the potential of diaspora for intercultural dialogue and socio-cultural integration, could be addressed within an ETC project.

As far as the Neighbourhood Policy revision is concerned, including the Mogherini proposed consultation, the IMC Secretariat together with the CPMR are elaborating a first draft. The opinions of the regions are to be put together. Regions that are working on this will be asked to send their notes in order to merge them with our CPMR position papers that will be shared afterwards with regions. IMC will answer the consultation and integrate concept in its final GA declaration.

Region Sicily, added that they are also contributing, within the ARLEM to the response to the consultation as well, with an emphasis on migration policy.

## **5 - Wrap-Up: Next Steps and Proceedings**

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It is suggested to all regions to identify their experts on migrations and cooperate with them, develop proposals. Cooperation could entail exchanges on legal/soft measures of regions concerning migration and projects concerning exchanges of BP pilot experiences also dealing with socio economic integration and intercultural dialogue.

The session of IC GA dedicated to the theme of migration will also have an open political debate and could welcome the participation of regions from the task force. A more technical meeting could take place for discussing documents, technical actions, under the condition that some experts would have been identified by the regions and that the work could have started.

The awareness raising campaign will be launched and each region is encouraged to use it and spread it, to show also solidarity support.

### Calendar:

- virtual brainstorming/coordination between the CPMR General Secretariat and the most interested/available regions - April 2015 (DONE)
- communication to be sent to all the regions about the main actions and next activities/meetings planned (in order to actively involve them) - May 2015
- meeting in Sicily 18/19 May
- audition with Schulz mid-end May tbc
- meeting of the TF at technical level (26 June 2015 tbc) + thematic political session on migration in the frame of the GA of the Island Commission (back to back) - 25 June 2015, Brussels
- event on migration "Med frontiers" to be organized by Sicily in the frame of the Expo 2015 of Milan, 4<sup>th</sup> July with the participation of Commissioner Avramopoulos

For info the IMC will also address migration issues in the General Assembly of Nafplio 2–3 July and the COPPEM is organizing an event on migration in Sicily, 8<sup>th</sup> of June.

### Communications to be sent to the CPMR members:

A communication should be sent to the members participating in the TF + to all the members with:

- the summary/main conclusions, the TORS and IMC docs
- the letter for the States of the IMC
- Updated info on MIPEX -R

...inviting them to:

- join the TF, delegate an expert,
- participate in the event in Sicily and the others + in the awareness campaign
- send us information about some interesting experiences or cooperation projects/ideas in order to foster the cooperation of regions in the field of migration (emergency/reception + socio-economic integration) so we can have more materials to think about the future actions.

We should also invite them to send us the answers on migrations related to the EU consultation on the ENP and invite to send to the TF some specific ideas for future projects together with suggestions concerning calls or programme where they could fit.