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## MINUTES OF THE 33RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CPMR 2/4 NOVEMBER 2005 – FUNCHAL (MADEIRA, PORTUGAL)

Thursday 3 November 2005

### Opening session

**Claudio Martini**, President of the CPMR, thanked Alberto João Jardim, President of the Government of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, for organising the CPMR's 33rd General Assembly and declared the General Assembly open.

**Mr Jardim**, President of the Government of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, welcomed all the participants. He said that it was the second time that the Region of Madeira had hosted a CPMR General Assembly. He paid tribute to Georges Pierret, who was the CPMR's Secretary General from 1973 to 1995 and to Xavier Gizard, who succeeded him in 1995.

Mr Jardim emphasised the importance of the contribution to be made by President José Manuel Barroso, who is working at a difficult time in the European Union's history. He recognised that President Barroso is striving hard to relaunch the EU integration process. During the current phase, the regions' contribution is vital, notably owing to their extensive experience and their closeness to problems encountered on the ground. Mr Jardim said he believed there will be no success for an enlarged Union without the mobilisation of citizens or a central role for the regions.

**Mr Martini** acknowledged that European integration is currently in an impasse. He stressed that the European Union is at key moment in its history and he hoped that the current period of debate does not lead to a regrettable step backward, but rather that it will be used positively to enable the European Union to bounce back again. Discussions during the CPMR's General Assembly would focus on the themes of cohesion, closeness to citizens and the maritime dimension.

### SESSION I: CPMR assessment and outlook

According to **Xavier Gizard**, the General Assembly was taking place in a specific historical context, bearing in mind the rejections of the draft Constitutional Treaty at the referendums which took place earlier this year in France and the Netherlands, and the failure, to date, of the financial negotiations for the EU's budget for the 2007-2013 period.

Mr Gizard went on to provide a summary presentation of the CPMR's activities in recent months.

President **Martini** thanked Mr Gizard for his comprehensive report and opened the floor to discussion.

## Debate

**Jérôme Polverini**, Executive Councillor, Corsica Regional Council, wanted to have more information about the results of the discussions concerning the proposed changes to the guidelines for regional state aid. He was worried about the limited progress made by the European Commission concerning the flexibility of state aid regulations for helping EU regions penalised by natural handicaps.

**Joan Mitchell**, Councillor, South of Scotland Alliance, pointed out that the CPMR has worked on a fairly wide number of subjects over recent months. She asked for details on the CPMR's three major priorities for the coming months.

**Richard Westlake**, Councillor, Devon County Council and CPMR Vice-President, congratulated Xavier Gizard and the CPMR General Secretariat for the extensive work on policies dealt with over the year. He said that climate change is a topic which covers several priority areas and wanted to know whether this subject would be included in the list of the CPMR's priorities.

In response to the question from Mr Westlake, **Xavier Gizard** outlined two areas in which activities are being prepared. Firstly, on 2 and 3 February 2006, the CPMR is planning a seminar on climate change to discuss the main issues which need to be taken into consideration. This is being organised with Paul Vergès, President of the Regional Council of Réunion (F) and Michel Vauzelle, President of the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Commissioner Dimas, responsible for the environment at the European Commission, is invited to this seminar. Secondly, there are some ongoing initiatives over the coming months under the aegis of the nrg4SD network. Mr Gizard added that the CPMR's General Assembly in 2006, which will be held in Murcia, will present an opportunity to discuss the CPMR's long-term approach to the issue of climate change.

Concerning the CPMR's three main priorities for the coming months, it will firstly be necessary to ensure that discussions concerning the European budget for 2007-2013 have been concluded successfully and that the overall budget is sufficient. Secondly, the Europe of the Sea project must be pursued as a major priority. Thirdly, the CPMR Secretariat will continue to promote European sectoral policies aiming to improve our member regions' competitiveness and help them achieve the objectives set by the Lisbon Agenda.

In response to the above-mentioned question on the guidelines for regional state aid, **Jean-Didier Hache**, Executive Secretary of the Islands Commission, replied that the European Commission's proposals on areas with a permanent handicap are currently unsatisfactory. Several member states continue to be highly dissatisfied with the proposed arrangements, including Greece, Spain and France. The Commission should arrive at a final decision in December 2005.

**Mr Gizard** concluded on the Secretariat's future tasks by informing CPMR members about the forthcoming updating of the CPMR's work programme. He hoped that the current discussions on the budget would be concluded by the end of the year. As from January 2007, the Secretariat will start working on the priorities of following financial perspectives.

**Francesco Attaguile**, Director of Sicily's regional representation office in Brussels, felt that European neighbourhood policy should be included in the CPMR's priorities. He said it is vital to take account of the effects of neighbourhood policy when developing maritime policy. This point of view is shared in the Mediterranean area.

**Xavier Gizard** took this opportunity to read out a text outlining the key results emerging from the discussions held at the recent meeting of the Council of Ministers. In his assessment of the text's content, Mr Gizard anticipated that the discussions on the EU budget appeared to be close to achieving the same results as those which would have been obtained under the Luxembourg Presidency last June. However, certain problems concerning the level of resources are yet to be resolved.

Furthermore, **Mr Gizard** believes that the danger of the budget's 1B heading disappearing completely is receding. Concerning the next transnational cooperation strand, it is vital to continue lobbying if people want to obtain sufficient funds from the budget.

According to **President Martini**, the discussions seem to be advancing towards key conclusions and decisions, which are likely to be taken in the coming weeks. The CPMR will continue to push for an ambitious EU budget. The results achieved under the Luxembourg Presidency were perceived as being unsatisfactory and Mr Martini stressed this point at a recent meeting between President Barroso. It is important for the CPMR to maintain its position. The fundamental points concern not just the quantity of resources available but also the quality of projects which could be undertaken with these resources. The CPMR must continue to fight on both of these fronts.

He added that "it is not yet time for the regions to cease lobbying, and we must all continue to seize opportunities to do so, not just with regard to the British presidency, but also as far as our respective governments are concerned. We currently have an opportunity to pause for thought. However, is it nonetheless vital to remember the progress accomplished since the creation of the European Union, most of it due to the efforts of European regions."

However, Mr Martini believed that this pause should be used positively and spent thinking about the future direction European policies should take. Furthermore, it is important that CPMR members should insist on the need for local and regional authorities to take an active part in this debate.

He concluded by asking the members to adopt the CPMR's activity report.  
The report was adopted.

## **SESSION II: The future of EU integration**

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**President Martini**, in the chair, opened the session.

### **Speeches**

Speech by **John Palmer**, Political Director of the European Policy Centre

**Mr Palmer** considers that the EU is at a crossroads. In spite of spectacular progress accomplished over the last twenty years, there are serious concerns about its future. He stressed that the EU integration model generates considerable interest across the world and, in the context of globalisation, the EU must adopt ever clearer positions on subjects such as security, terrorism, climate change, etc.. This entails the need for "more Europe" and not "less Europe", which even certain Eurosceptics seem to acknowledge. For Mr Palmer, the objectives of social cohesion and sustainable development advocated by the EU do not conflict with the market economy, and they should even open up new opportunities. In this regard, it is important to appreciate the particularly important role which the European Investment Bank should play. Specific opportunities must be exploited, for example regarding the EU's experience of conflict resolution, the assets provided by the wealth of its culture, and even its ability to promote highly specialised activities, something which is essential for coping with competition from cheap mass market production. There are naturally numerous difficulties and uncertainties. It is not easy to manage the phenomenon of global interdependence. The notion of excellence in our universities still needs to be defined. Substantial financial resources must be made available for a Globalisation Adjustment Fund. The emergence of EU policies in areas such as energy, justice and security is generating "tectonic" change. Above all, it is important to understand how EU citizens can cope with all of this, and they must feel that they have real freedom to choose.

While the EU has managed to come through its adolescence, it is clear that it will continue to develop. This phenomenon of upheaval is particularly exciting.

Speech by **Mr Xavier Gizard**, Secretary General of the CPMR, on "How the regions can contribute towards a fresh impetus for Europe", which raises the issue of its historical context [see paper].

The floor was opened to debate after these two speeches.

## Debate

**Jérôme Polverini**, Executive Councillor, Corsica Regional Council, congratulated the speakers and wondered whether economic priorities should not be relegated to the rank of past EU objectives. He wondered whether protection of the social model, which is part of Europe's historical heritage but lacking in other countries, should be Europe's driving force in the future.

**Roy Perry**, Executive Member, Hampshire County Council, was not as confident about the future. He particularly stressed the issue of the EU's financial resources, saying that the means for implementing EU policies must continue to come from the member states and should not be based on a direct taxation system.

**Francisco Javier García Valledor**, Councillor for External Relations, Asturias, believed these various reflections to be very interesting, but felt that they were distant from EU citizens' possible perception and analysis of European integration. Four points would currently seem to be important: the failure of the Lisbon strategy, which requires a fresh impetus; failure of the EU's external policy; paralysis of the integration process owing to lack of clear leadership (which the failure of the French and Dutch referendums bear witness to); and finally the budget crisis. At the end of the day, two models are coming into conflict with one another: one in which the development of economic competitiveness entails undoing social progress, and another in which growth goes hand in hand with social and territorial cohesion. The conflict between these two approaches is also reflected at political level.

**Mr David Parsons**, Chairman of East Midlands Region, stressed the importance of listening to the opinions of those who voted "no" in the referendums, because they were expressing real discontent. In this regard, the regions have an essential role to play in helping the EU to become more relevant to its citizens, although to achieve this it is necessary for the benefits of belonging to the EU to be clearly felt at regional level. He also said he believed that EU finances are insufficiently controlled.

A participant said that citizens are divided between their national and European identities. European identity is unfortunately too vague. There is also the issue of knowing where the ever-larger EU's "ultimate borders" will be. This is important because the value of EU solidarity has to be clearly understood by citizens.

**Richard Westlake**, Councillor, Devon County Council, stressed the importance of choosing between a European economic model open to the outside world and one based on protectionism. What the EU does and what citizens want are two different things. He furthermore felt that EU policy for managing external conflicts still needs to be developed.

**John Palmer** replied to the various speakers in the debate, point by point.

**Peter Straub**, President of the Committee of the Regions, made the session's closing speech, in which he provided an overview of the situation, highlighting positive and negative aspects of the current phase of EU integration. He acknowledged the existence of a democratic crisis and stressed the fact that citizens need to feel they are part of the European project. Mr Straub spoke of the importance of local and regional work for EU integration and stressed that this is a long-term undertaking. He mentioned the importance of joint action by the CPMR, the AER and the Committee of the Regions, and referred to various events to be organised in the coming months, which the regions will be involved in. Mr Straub also talked about the importance of having a cohesion policy with sufficient funds, which acknowledges the situation of regions in difficulty so that there can be balanced competition between EU territories. He hoped that ratification of a constitution would bring about necessary political stability, and said he believed that the regions need a united Europe, just as a united Europe needs its regions.

## **SESSION III: the place of the regions in the European integration process**

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### **Speeches**

Speech by **Fernando Riccardi**, Leader writer for the Europe Daily Bulletin

Mr Riccardi introduced the subject of the debate by stressing how rapidly the regions' place on the European stage had evolved in recent years, despite the diversity of institutional situations. Before giving the floor to the panel of regional presidents who had come to present their views on the place of the regions in the new Europe, he gave the floor to the representative of DG Regio for a prior update on progress being made in the debate on future regional policy for 2007-2013.

**Anastassios Bougas**, Head of Unit at DG Regio firstly said he wanted to thank the CPMR, its President, its General Secretariat and all of the CPMR members for their unwavering support during the various stages of negotiations on the future of regional policy, and for both the quality of proposals and the extent of political mobilisation. He hoped that this would help maintain total funds of €310bn in the future European budget, as far as the COREPER discussions lead one to suppose.

He said that the existence of regional policy continues to provide the regions with their entry ticket to the life of the Union, notably owing to Article 158 of the Treaty, while observing that although the regions have primarily been a level for implementation, they are increasingly coming to become involved in the policy-making phase. This contribution is thoroughly essential for maintaining European momentum, and it should continue to be built on in order to improve the European Union's institutional and economic performance. Concerning the future programming period, the Commission's approach was to improve the link between European, national and regional strategies, notably through the draft Community Strategic Guidelines, to which the national strategies - developed in close cooperation with the regions - should have been appended. Unfortunately, this framework for strategic reflection has met with rough treatment from the member states, and it is currently fading away, in spite of the collective mobilisation of the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the CPMR.

Mr Bougas then provided some information on progress being made in the negotiations on the regulations. The negotiations have progressed well, bearing in mind the prospective adoption of the financial perspectives, notably on the partnership, proportionality, financial control and performance reserve, which is now being abandoned. Everything has been organised so that an agreement in December will ensure no time is lost in implementing the funds in 2007. However, if the negotiations were to go on into the next half-year period, the deadlines would be extremely hard to meet, bearing in mind the legislative work, which cannot be made shorter. He spoke of the main priorities of future regional policy in terms of content and notably the clear focus on the Lisbon objectives. Lastly, he stressed that the definitive adoption of the Community Strategic Guidelines will be the last stage of the process. DG Regio has taken good note of the CPMR's numerous reactions on the subject. To conclude, he stressed that it is difficult to not take account of the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty when examining these issues.

**Janusz Krzyzewski**, Marshal of Podlaskie, provided an interesting account of the way a Polish region is currently preparing to implement future regional policy. He stressed how much the institutional landscape has changed in order to adjust to this prospect. Regional policy has had a radical impact on the development of regions in Poland. He pointed out that regional strategy has notably established the priority of improving access of the territory in the Baltic context.

**François Maïtia**, Vice-President of Aquitaine Regional Council, relayed the main messages of President Rousset concerning his opinion on the Community Strategic Guidelines, notably by emphasising the absence of any territorial dimensions, the latent risk of renationalisation, the low degree of involvement of the regions, the wide gap between ambitions and means and, lastly, the sharp decrease in funds for the territorial cooperation strand. Taken together, these signs are not conducive to an increased role for the regions in EU governance. Lastly, he described the added value of territorial cooperation for his regions, under both the cross-border and transnational strands.

**Ramon Luis Valcarcel Siso**, President of Murcia Region, focused his presentation on Europe's new identity in the context of globalisation of the economy and the new cooperation opportunities this presents for the regions. He emphasised the growing importance of the external dimension of Union policies and the insufficient consideration given to the added value of cooperation projects run by the regions. He notably mentioned the interest of the nrg4SD, which the CPMR supports. He said that he believes decentralised cooperation will be particularly valuable for the European project when it engages with the global economy.

**Ferdinando Riccardi** reacted to these initial contributions to the debate, notably stressing the impact which changes in the CAP and the Union's trade policies will have on the EU as a whole, and therefore on the regions. He wondered whether there is any guarantee that all three of the planned regional policy objectives will be maintained at the end of the negotiations.

**Anastassios Bougas** said that a vast majority of Members of the European Parliament voted in favour of the three objectives in one area, notably for the ERDF, for which it has powers of co-decision. To not take account of the future regional competitiveness and employment objective would be absurd and would meet opposition from several member states.

**Claudio Martini** said it would be important to use post-2006 funds as best as possible, while continuing to call for a credible minimum budget for the next financial package. He stressed that one cannot emphasise enough the benefit of regional policy for the net contributors, and that the distinction between the notions of cost and investment is poorly made. Lastly, following his discussions with the British Presidency, he emphasised the importance of the regional level when it comes to implementing the Lisbon Strategy and the need to be able to draw on the growth reserves offered by intermediate European regions. He spoke of the new international competition his region is faced with and the need to distinguish oneself from the competition. It will not be possible to provide the right conditions to help territories adjust to market globalisation without support from the European Union and a coherent strategy developed by all levels of government.

#### *Coffee break*

**Gunt Marit Helgesen**, Vice-President of the CPMR, President of the CPMR's North Sea Commission and President of Telemark County, opened the remainder of the discussion by highlighting progress made regarding North Sea territorial cooperation and the fundamental role played by the regions in this context. It is a truly a laboratory for territorial innovation, and the effects are widely felt in the regions. After eight years of pilot projects, the regions are beginning to draw substantial benefits from this area and they find it hard to imagine that this fundamental aspect of Europe's development could be brought to a halt.

**F. Javier García Valledor**, Councillor for External Relations, Asturias, wanted to get away from the notion of regions as being merely administrative units for economic purposes, as this would be to take a far too minimal view. He spoke of the great expectations attached to the draft Constitutional Treaty and urged the regions to keep up their efforts on this issue. The regions contribute to the Union's diversity, offer an active source of proposals and must be involved in the Union's governance on a fully-fledged basis.

**José Antonio Campos Correia**, President of Algarve Region, described the highly particular situation of his region in the European context by highlighting the specific issues of regions which are highly dependent on tourism: freezing of investment for a very short period of the year, overestimation of GDP, low direct financial returns for the regional economy.

**Anthony Papadimitriou**, Executive Secretary of the Balkan and Black Sea Regional Commission, apologised for the last minute absence of **Michalis Angelopoulos**, Secretary General of Anatoliki Makedonia Thraki Region and President of the Balkan and Black Sea Regional Commission. He wanted to relay a message on the equal need for innovation regarding the geometry of territorial partnerships, notably along the Union's current borders, whether this be in the Mediterranean or in the Balkan and Black Sea area. He spoke of the great expectations attached to the transfer of the PHARE cross-border cooperation (CBC) programme to the Union's neighbourhood policy.

**Vasco Cordeiro**, Regional Secretary of the Azores Presidency, called for the regions to be more involved as stakeholders in the Union's future, in spite of the failures of the French and Dutch referendums.

**Michael Allen**, Member of the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) said he had difficulty in exploiting the content of this debate for his region. He wondered whether it would be preferable to be more specific in the debates.

**Xavier Gizard** said that the General Assembly format is a recurrent theme year after year, and that while the Stavanger General Assembly last year had been highly focused on recent development regarding ongoing thematic negotiations, a different option had been chosen this year, bearing in mind that each option has its supporters. The Political Bureau was asked to give an opinion on the agenda for this assembly and it was adopted at its last meeting in Galati last June. The main aim was to enable as many regions as possible to express their views on the failure of the referendums and their place on the European stage.

Following some specific contributions regarding recent developments, **Claudio Martini**, President of the CPMR, brought the debate to a close by outlining some points he believes to be essential. All European countries are currently seeking to relaunch the Treaty, but it is clear that nothing will happen in France or the Netherlands without some changes being made. While there now clearly appears to be a need for a pause, this does not put an end to ambitions and expectations. The regions are lucky in that they are not constrained by the need for diplomacy and can express themselves freely. This freedom should be used. A balance should be struck between the modernisation path advocated by the British Presidency and the current framework. It is important to remain open-minded about changes in the debate.

**Mr Riccardi** concluded with a touch of pessimism by saying that "Guy Verhofstadt, the Belgian Prime Minister, no longer believes that a middle way is possible. However, for those of you who continue to believe that it is, do not hesitate to go out and play your traditional role as a dynamo".

## MEETING OF THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU (17.30 - 19.00)

**Claudio Martini** listed the four points on the agenda.

### 1- Adoption the draft Final Declaration and accompanying annexes

**Patrick Anvroin**, Director at the General Secretariat, explained the composition of the Resolutions Group which had ruled on the various amendments proposed. After successive votes, the political declarations and statements were adopted as follows:

- a. Final declaration: unanimously
- b. Energy: unanimously
- c. The three declarations submitted by the North Sea Commission: unanimously
- d. Ship-to-ship transfers of dangerous goods: unanimously
- e. With the courage to innovative: unanimously
- f. Territorial cooperation: 12 for, 1 against and 5 abstentions

### 2- Financial decisions: Adoption of the draft 2006 budget and financial situation for the current year

**Yves Morvan**, President of the Administrative Council, provided information on the status of the budget as of 1 July 2005. He pointed out that it was very close to forecasts. He also provided details of this year's extraordinary expenditure. He then presented the 2006 budget, which will be subject to a 2.6% increase in dues, in line with the European inflation rate published by Eurostat. The budget was adopted unanimously.

### 3- Consideration of new applications for membership and withdrawals

**Xavier Gizard**, Secretary General, presented each of the six membership applications received by the CPMR:

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| - Chaouia-Ouardigha (Morocco) | - Rabat Salé Zemmour Zaer (Morocco)   |
| - Nordjylland (Denmark)       | - Primorsko Goranska County (Croatia) |
| - Saida (Lebanon)             | - Aragón (Spain)                      |

The six applications were adopted unanimously.

One member, the Isle of Wight, was removed from the membership list at its request.

#### 4- Next CPMR Political Bureau meeting and General Assembly

The next CPMR Political Bureau meeting will be organised in Brest on the morning of 18 February, the day after a seminar with Commissioner Borg on Europe of the Sea. The following Political Bureau meeting will be held on the Island of Gozo in Malta on 5 May 2006, which Commissioner Borg will also attend. Finally, the next General Assembly will take place in Murcia from 25 to 27 October 2006.

Lastly, Richard Westlake (Devon) is withdrawing from the CPMR Political Bureau. He will be replaced by the current alternate member, Kathleen Matheson (Highland), who therefore becomes a full member. The post of alternate member is taken up by Roy Perry (Hampshire), so he therefore becomes the alternate member of the Political Bureau for the United Kingdom.

**Mr Gizard** lastly spoke of the proposal by the Ionian Islands to create a group on sustainable tourism. Kathleen Matheson (Highland) confirmed that she was interested in participating in the work.

### Friday 4 November 2005

#### **SESSION IV: Preparing for a European maritime policy**

**Jean-Yves Le Drian**, President of Brittany Regional Council, introduced the session by saying how pleased the CPMR is that a Green Paper on the Union's maritime policy is being drafted. He presented the key ideas contained in the CPMR's first contribution to the Green Paper. The text will be further developed before being approved at the plenary meeting in Brest on 17 February 2006. He called on the member regions to submit their proposed amendments to this text by the end of November 2005.

He opened the discussion by raising two key questions:

- What compromise needs to be found between environmental issues and the maritime economy's contribution to the Lisbon strategy?
- How can sea basins be given a greater role to play in maritime governance, and how can they become fully-acknowledged partners?

#### Speeches

**John B. Richardson**, Director of the European Commission's Maritime Affairs Task Force, presented the key issues at stake in the EU's future integrated maritime policy:

- *Protection of the marine environment.* He regretted that the economic needs of Europeans have had to be satisfied at the cost of environmental destruction, and asserted that it is now necessary to change the terms of the equation. The EU's new marine strategy obliges the member states, existing organisations and neighbouring countries to cooperate in order to repair ecosystems and reduce the impact of economic activities on marine environments over the next 15 years.

- *Governance.* He stressed that the Green Paper will only be a success if a consensus is found between all of the member states. The EU's coastal regions have a major role to play in achieving this consensus. Efforts must be made to examine the various sectors and policies, to foster synergies and avoid conflicts of interest. It will also be necessary to manage the land/sea interface and to ensure that all stakeholders participate.

- *Research and development.* To ensure that the European maritime sector remains world leader, it will be necessary to focus research and development programmes on the development of a network for exploiting results. Researchers and scientists must provide a "toolbox" to guide political decision-makers.

- *Employment.* Improvements in the well-being of citizens in coastal areas are interrelated with the preservation of maritime activities in these areas. It is important to exploit the coastal economy's dynamism and enable these regions to make the most of coastal tourism by avoiding the dangers that threaten them. However, it is also necessary to bear in mind that maritime-related employment is not just located along coasts.

**Manuel Lobo Antunes**, Secretário de Estado de Defesa Nacional e dos Assuntos do Mar do Portugal (Portuguese minister for defence and maritime affairs), believed that the sea offers a unique source of opportunities and development potential which must be exploited. He therefore urges the EU and its member states to accept the consequences of the maritime dimension. Mr Lobo Antunes considered

governance to be a fundamental pillar of maritime policy, and said he believes it is necessary to set up integrated management mechanisms between sectors and levels of government. However, he felt that maritime policy should also exploit particular territorial circumstances, notably island ones. He said that Portugal had a Mission for Maritime Affairs which coordinates public bodies and is currently drawing up a model for modern, light and flexible governance. This will promote more efficient work. Lastly, he repeated Portugal's desire to work with the member states and the CPMR.

**Paulo Casaca**, Member of the European Parliament and member of the Parliament's Committee on Fisheries, said that Parliament's Fisheries Committee is very committed to maritime policy. He believed that the protection and conservation of stocks is very important and that it is essential to coordinate maritime policy and marine strategy. He said that much remains to be discovered in our oceans, notably new species with major pharmaceutical potential. Lastly, he considered that a good maritime policy must be a governance-based spatial policy.

**Roald Bergsaker**, President of Rogaland County, presented Europe of the Sea seen from the perspective of regions from the north of Europe. He felt it to be important for Europe's future maritime policy to be developed in cooperation with non-EU countries. As far as long-term results of maritime policy are concerned, he called for the impact of climate change to be taken into account. He believed in the need for an impact study on the consequences of increased temperatures in the Arctic Ocean. Lastly, he invited all of the CPMR member regions to a seminar to be organised in Bergen on 16 and 17 January 2006 under the aegis of the Europe of the Sea project.

**Thomas Engelke**, Adviser, Land Schleswig-Holstein, presented the report produced at the initiative of the Committee of the Regions on the Union's future maritime policy, for which Uwe Döring, Minister for European Affairs of Land Schleswig-Holstein, is rapporteur.

**Ricardo Magalhães**, Vice-President of the North Portugal Region, hoped that the Green Paper and White Paper would be considered as the embodiment of a policy on competitiveness and the environment which takes account of the sea. He considered that it is necessary to develop an integrated vision by overcoming conflicts resulting from the scattering of resources and by identifying who does what at which level. He believed that it is vital to develop a modern management structure for the oceans. This is a challenge for the 21st century, necessitating better knowledge of the sea.

## Debate

**François Maïtia**, Vice-President of Aquitaine Regional Council, believed that it is necessary for analysis of the marine environment by scientists to be carried out in coordination with maritime sector professionals. He also believed that, in future, there should be a greater assessment of the socio-economic impact of sea-related measures adopted by the European Commission in the framework of a coordinated maritime policy.

**Leslie Angus**, Councillor, Shetland Council, raised the issue of how far fishing communities are being taken into account in the EU's maritime policy. To avoid putting them in danger, the Union must understand the realities such communities face. It should review some of its policies and establish a clear management framework for fisheries and their fishermen. He considered the regional approach to be important in the maritime field. Local authority action over the last 30 years has notably helped to limit coastal pollution.

**Christine Channon**, Councillor, Devon County Council, said she was pleased with the emphasis given to good management of the sea, and recommended improved management of data systems and meteorological systems. However, she regretted that the member states have committed themselves to drafting green papers on the sea despite the fact that some of them do not apply some of the measures aiming to reduce pollution and improve security at sea. She called for such measures to be complied with.

On the issue of marine cartography, **Ann Bell**, European Fishing Officer, Aberdeenshire Council, considered that three dimensional maps of fisheries should be drawn up for fisheries, in the same way as they are for sub-sea bottom energy resources. She stressed how important it is for the Council to discuss these matters before it takes any decisions, and said she was at Mr Richardson's disposal should he wish to discuss them.

**Torill Selsvold Nyborg**, Mayor of Hordaland County, wondered what steps the North Sea Commission should take to help stop current waste problems in northern seas and to limit floating waste in fisheries.

**Richard Westlake**, Councillor, Devon County Council, asked how the Green Paper is taking account of the effects of climate change. It is certainly necessary to review and coordinate coastal plans and improve waste management to avoid pollution of waters. However, the work should start by protecting future generations and taking measures to avoid a global ecological disaster.

**Georges Pierret**, former Secretary General of the CPMR, said that the CPMR has been fighting to bring about Europe of the Sea since it was created. The first maritime safety measures taken by the European Commission were taken on the basis of a CPMR memorandum, following the sinking of 30 oil tankers in the 1970s. The European Coastal Charter was later subject to a European Parliament Resolution.

**Sylvain Bolinois**, Vice-President of Martinique Regional Council, insisted on the need to take account of the remoteness of ultraperipheral regions and their specific characteristics: higher employment; different nutritional habits; and waters which still have plenty of fish stocks. He regretted that European rules have to be uniformly applied without taking account of certain territories' specific circumstances.

**Mr Richardson** responded to the questions raised:

- He emphasised that it necessary to organise consultation between maritime sector professionals and scientists during the decision-making process;
- He admitted that fisheries policies have never, to date, managed to preserve stocks. Under an integrated approach, it will be necessary to examine the possibility of coordinated action by the European Parliament and Council. He was in favour of mapping fisheries resources, stressing that a huge database will be needed for this to be achieved, and envisages the creation of an observatory for scientific marine research and research on climate change;
- He considered that action plans must be developed at local level. However, national policies continue to be a major asset and efforts should be made to ensure they are compatible with the Green Paper;
- He stressed the value of developing good practice regarding sea management, and mentioned the possibility of creating a system of prizes and awards for the best practices.

**Mr Lobo Antunes** concluded the session by welcoming the existing consensus on the need for EU maritime policy to be coordinated with national policies. He believed that the regions must participate in the development of this maritime policy, in compliance with the subsidiarity, which must prevail. On the basis of the indications provided by the Commission, this policy must be implemented at national and regional level. He called for an ambitious but realistic, step-by-step approach.

## **SESSION V: Regional involvement in maritime safety bodies**

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**Jean-Yves Le Drian**, President of Brittany Regional Council, opened the session.

### **Speeches**

**Mr Måns Jacobsson**, IOPC Funds Administrator, outlined the close links which exist between maritime safety and compensation. Compensation is organised in two stages, on the basis of two international treaties signed in 1992. Firstly, compensation is paid by the ship's owners or their insurers, but the responsibility is limited in accordance with the size of the ship. Additional compensation of up to €250m is paid by the IOPC Funds. These funds are financed by all states which transport crude oil by sea. Mr Jacobsson stressed the importance of the global dimension of the IOPC Funds dimension, bearing in mind the cross-border nature of maritime transport and the environment. However, he regretted that IOPC Funds compensation is insufficient in the case of major disasters, as was the case for the Prestige. Even though the compensation ceiling was raised to 50% in 2003, or as much as €250m, such amounts continue to be insufficient. Europe, Australia and Canada have asked for the Funds to have resources to cover any disaster, but some countries refuse this. A third voluntary bracket was therefore created in 2005 for states which want additional protection: €900m are available for each disaster. He estimated that the IOPC Funds can be considered as

being satisfactory because they currently have 96 members, and the system has been replicated in other areas.

Mr Jacobsson insisted on the need to develop a dialogue with compensation claimants so that claims can be dealt with rapidly. The IOPC Funds need the support of local authorities and regional and local representatives. This is why it was delighted that the CPMR applied for observer status in 2002.

**Jean-François Fontaine**, Vice-President of the Poitou-Charentes Region and CPMR representative on the IOPC Funds, felt that the purpose of the regions' action should be to meet the demands of citizens when they say "Never again" after each disaster. He considered that it is now necessary to move towards prevention policies and more rapid reaction to disasters. He therefore wants the (HNS) Convention - which applies the IOPC Funds model to hazardous and noxious substances - to be adopted as quickly as possible, and for maritime safety policy to be strengthened, notably through the Erika III Package and the work of the European Maritime Safety Agency. He said he believes that cooperation plays a vital role in the maritime safety field.

**Emilio Martin Bauza**, Head of Unit at the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), presented the objectives of the Agency, which was created in 2002 to cope with the growth in maritime transport and the need to introduce rules to be respected. He outlined EMSA's main tasks, which, in the absence of any legislative powers, entail providing the European Commission, Norway and Iceland with technical assistance in order to improve maritime transport in Europe. Among other things, these tasks consist of ensuring uniform compliance with safety standards in all member states and promoting innovative new programmes.

**Christel Liljestrom**, President of Itä-Uusimaa Regional Council and Baltic Sea Commission representative on HELCOM, presented the Conventions main activities.

**Pierre Delfaud**, Adviser at CESR Aquitaine, presented the results of the maritime safety report produced by the RTA (Network of Atlantic Economic and Social Advisory Boards). He said that regional action is not direct in the regulatory and economic fields. The regions cannot provide support for actions organised by states and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), which are responsible for this area. However, the regional level does intervene directly in two fields: the human and social field on one hand, and the cultural and organisational field on the other hand. He recommended that the regions should do more to exploit the results of research in these areas, that they should draw up systematic prevention plans (which only currently exist in Great Britain) and reflect upon how to improve coordination between "command structures".

## Debate

**Yann Helary**, Regional Councillor, Pays de la Loire Regional Council, asked Mr Jacobsson how the IOPC Funds are introducing changes to simplify settlement of claims and enquired about the criteria used for evaluating the ecological impact of disasters.

**Antonio Fonseca Ferreira**, President of Lisboa e Vale do Tejo Region, said that a working group on maritime safety had been set up within the Atlantic Arc Commission.

**Leslie Angus**, Councillor for Shetland Council, said that the sinking of an oil tanker of the Shetland Islands' coasts had had a major impact on local fisheries and aquaculture. At the time, the IOPC Funds set up a local office which helped to ensure a rapid and efficient response. However, the damage claim, which was estimated at £0.5bn, was rejected by the IOPC Funds.

**Mr Måns Jacobsson** assured everyone that everything is being done to ensure that the HNS Convention is adopted as quickly as possible. As for the IOPC Funds, he stressed that the ceilings for compensation are as high as the international system permits. The difficulty of compensating disaster claims lies in how to assess the cost of ecological damage. Only economic costs are currently taken into account. This is why prevention is so important.

## Speech by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission

**Claudio Martini** welcomed President Barroso and expressed his delight that, for the first time, a President of the European Commission was attending the CPMR's General Assembly. He delivered a message with three key words:

- Commitment to EU integration;
- Concern about the financial perspectives, especially the future of cohesion policy;
- Collaboration between our regions and the Committee of the Regions and European institutions.

He also said that the Sea is a real force bringing the CPMR's regions together, and it should not be considered as being of a marginal or peripheral nature.

**President Barroso** said that Madeira is an excellent example of what Europe can do for the regions. His speech focused on two points:

- *The EU's future maritime policy.* An integrated, comprehensive and sustainable policy is needed, and it should be supported by scientific opinion. The Green Paper will launch one year of major consultations. Several areas for progress are identified: development of synergies between maritime policies and/or sectors; improvement of our understanding of seas and oceans, notably through oceanographic research; improvement of the management of sea-related economic activities under the aegis of the Lisbon strategy; well-being of citizens; and fisheries. Mr Barroso said he believed that cooperation between member states on maritime issues is vital. In this context, the peripheral maritime regions are key stakeholders with whom he would like to continue working.
- *Future cohesion policy.* Coming from the Hampton Court meeting, Mr Barroso was pleased with the positive welcome given to the Commission's proposal. He asserted that the shared objective was to adopt a budget before the end of 2005 and he believed that this constitutes a test of credibility for the enlarged Europe, and a test of its capacity to function and maintain its values. Now, more so than in June, the conditions for adopting the financial perspectives before December have been met. However, he emphasised that everybody must make an effort to compromise.

Lastly, he felt that the peripheral maritime regions' "concern" must turn into confidence, and he said he was counting on regional leaders to overcome the current pessimism.

## **SESSION VI**

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### ➤ Presentation of the new CPMR member regions

Two of the regions which have become members of the CPMR since its 2004 General Assembly wanted to make a presentation on their region: Primorsko Goranska County (Croatia), whose membership application was formally approved at the Political Bureau meeting in Madeira on 3 November 2005; and Blekinge (S), whose membership application was formally approved at the Political Bureau meeting in Galati (RO) in July 2005.

### ➤ Presentation of the new CPMR website

**Fanny Harling**, Communications Director, presented the CPMR's new website. The main innovation is that it is better adapted to needs identified by users and has a number of new sections.

### ➤ Scrutiny and vote of the Final Declaration and Resolutions

Following a count of the number of regions attending with voting rights (62) and the number of people with a proxy vote (6), the Resolutions (Final Declaration and Sectoral Resolutions) were presented by **Patrick Anvroin**, the CPMR Director responsible for the Resolutions Group which met the day before to examine requests for amendments submitted by members and then adopted by the Political Bureau meeting on 3 November.

The Final Declaration and six sectoral resolutions out of seven (Energy, Interdependence Lisbon-Gothenburg, Maritime policy, New chemical products, Ship-to-ship transfers and "With the courage to innovate") were adopted unanimously.

The resolution on territorial cooperation was adopted unanimously, with six abstentions.

Patrick Anvroin presented the amendments to the territorial cooperation resolution which had not been approved by the Resolutions Group and Political Bureau: an amendment presented by Murcia requesting

more possibilities for maritime cooperation, and an amendment presented by the Atlantic Arc Commission proposing that each cooperation area be allocated an ERDF budget, as opposed to the current system is based on allotment of funds per country involved in the area.

➤ Changes to the Organisational Charter

This minor change concerned the number of CPMR Vice-Presidents, which increases from two (2) to four (4). The change was submitted to a vote of the General Assembly at the initiative of President Martini and further to a proposal by the Political Bureau.

Question by Mr Andersson (S): Will the next Political Bureau meeting in Brest in February 2006 take place before the new nominations?

Answer from the General Secretary: our Charter stipulates that nominations for President and Vice-Presidents come under the responsibility of the Political Bureau. The Secretariat will therefore ask the next Political Bureau meeting to confirm the nomination of the two people put forward, who are Giovanna Debono (Gozo) and Sergios Tsiftis (Voreio Aigaio)

The change was submitted to a vote and approved.

➤ Presentation of the 2005 accounts and draft 2006 budget

1. **Yves Morvan**, President of the Administrative Council, presented the current status regarding execution of the 2005 budget, emphasising two preliminary remarks:

- i) The overall budget and separate budgets for each Geographical Commission, cooperation programmes and the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities have been brought together in the presentation of the accounts;
- ii) The different budgets are subject to joint liability (which is regulated by strict rules).

As of 1 July 2005, the budget was as follows:

- Income (regions' dues) = €2.378m (taking account of the 4% increase in CPMR dues approved by the 2004 General Assembly in Stavanger); financial receipts are slightly lower than forecasted; the final total for receipts is expected to be €2.928m;
- Expenditure: there is a slight increase for staff costs, a slight decrease for operating costs, with the exception of rental costs, owing to the Brussels liaison office having moved.

The result will be a deficit of approximately €110,000, which will be reduced through recovery of dedicated funds, providing a final expected result of -68,000 € (compared with the €45,000 deficit approved in Stavanger).

It should be noted that the Political Bureau meeting in Galati (July 2005) approved the following extraordinary expenditure:

- Participation in the organisation of the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona process for a sum of €30,000;
- Development of the new CPMR website for a sum of €25,000;
- Contribution to the Europe of the Sea for a sum of €72,000.

The total sum of €127,000 will be taken from the CPMR's reserve fund.

2. Draft 2006 budget: **Mr Morvan** presented the draft 2006 budget, which is based on the principle of continuity. CPMR member regions' dues will increase by 2.6% in line with the EU25 inflation rate (Eurostat data), which represents a scale of dues of €0.009278 per inhabitant (minimum dues: €5,769 for regions with less than 621,760 inhabitants) and will bring in €1.785m; dues of the Geographical Commissions will be €687,000, dues of the CAAC will be €171,000 and cooperation programmes will bring in €302,000.

Total receipts for 2006 will be €2.982m (against €2.927m in 2005);

2006 expenditure: staff: +2.1%; travel: +€4,000; Equipment: -€3,000; Rent: €+19,000; Entertainment expenses: -€3,000.

Total expenditure for 2006: €3.017m

This translates into a forecasted deficit of €35,000 for the 2006 accounting year.

The draft budget for 2006 was put to the vote of the Assembly and adopted unanimously.

### 3. Approval of accounts for the 2004 accounting year.

The Assembly unanimously approved the statutory auditor's report on the CPMR's accounts for 2004.

#### ➤ Presentation of the General Secretariat's Quality Management System (ISO 9001-2000)

**Philippe Cichowlaz**, CPMR Director, presented an overview of the quality system adopted to comply with ISO standard 9001-2000, for which the CPMR General Secretariat has just received certification.

This quality system will notably make it easier to take account of and deal with member regions' requests in the interest of information transparency and security.

He emphasised the CPMR's two core missions, which are to prepare policy positions and organise events.

#### ➤ Miscellaneous items

The next CPMR General Assembly will take place in Murcia (E), at the invitation of President Ramón Luis Valcarcel Siso, from 25 to 27 October 2006.

## **Closing session**

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In his closing speech, President Martini highlighted three points:

- The CPMR has a duty to fulfil its commitments. We are interested in what is on the negotiating table, and no solution seems to be emerging. Much will therefore depend on our action and ability to influence decisions. The priority is to move the draft Constitutional Treaty forward, but there are considerable risks of going wrong. Our duty is therefore to renew dialogue with citizens. .
- We urgently need the financial perspectives. The CPMR must therefore widen its commitment in the interest of making competitiveness and cohesion compatible with another. We must send the British Presidency a message demanding that an agreement be reached so that everyone in Europe can move forward towards shared goals.
- The maritime dimension offers an extra opportunity for progress for the whole of the continent. This is a broad approach, and not a just a sectoral interest. It can help everyone to become more competitive: the maritime dimension illustrates that competitiveness and cohesion can go hand in hand.

Mr Martini brought the work of the General Assembly to a close by thanking all of the participants and the Autonomous Region of Madeira for its warm welcome. He also thanked Murcia Region, which will be responsible for hosting the next General Assembly in 2006.