



CRPM CPMR

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MINUTES OF THE 34TH CPMR GENERAL ASSEMBLY
25TH/27TH OCTOBER 2006 - MURCIA (SPAIN)

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SESSION I: OPENING SESSION

The General Assembly was opened by **Mr. Ramon Luis Valcarcel Siso**, President of the Autonomous Community of Murcia. President Valcarcel described his region, emphasising the importance of the services sector (tourism accounts for 7% of regional GDP) and the profound changes undergone by the agricultural and industrial sectors (7.7% of regional GDP). His region is a test ground for the challenges that await us over the forthcoming period - globalisation, immigration issues, promotion of innovation and the knowledge-based economy, loss of biodiversity and the consequences of climate change.

He emphasised the major role that could be played by the CPMR in preparing to face up to these challenges and underlined the risks of the re-nationalisation of Regional Policy.

He hoped the work of the General Assembly would provide the beginnings of an answer to these issues.

Mr. Claudio Martini, President of the Tuscany Region and President of the CPMR, thanked President Valcarcel for his hospitality, highlighting the impression of dynamism in the Murcia Region reflecting the vitality that marks the construction of Europe.

He then paid homage to Mr. Anders Gustav, who was extensively involved in the CPMR and the Committee of the Regions for many years but who died early in 2006. Mr. Martini asked the meeting to maintain one minute's silence in memory of Mr. Gustav.

President Martini then set the scene for the General Assembly, describing the new period scheduled to begin early in 2007. He reminded the meeting that major risks have been avoided i.e. re-nationalisation, disappearance of Objective 2, abandonment of territorial cooperation etc. and specified that the CPMR's lobbying brought great weight to bear and, as a consequence, avoided any of the risks.

He informed the Assembly of the objectives awaiting the Regions - to reaffirm a European ambition with increased resources in order to face up to new challenges viz. demographic issues and population migration, climate change and globalisation.

He underlined the importance of relaunching the institutional construction of Europe and the need to restructure territories while remaining vigilant to ensure that the principle of territorial cohesion again comes to the fore when the institutional issue is looked at again. To succeed, he indicated that new approaches should be promoted, based on the capitalisation of interactions between Regions and their place in the globalisation movement. He also stressed the need to highlight the added value provided by the role of the Regions in European governance, through a link with the Committee of the Regions.

He finished by identifying the major issues awaiting the Member Regions of the CPMR:

- Development of links between regions in the world as part of the agreement reached with the UNDP and within the nrg4SD network for sustainable development;
- Success of Europe of the Sea, and creation of a clear maritime strategy by the end of 2007;
- Strengthening of the role of Regions in European governance;
- Involvement in major issues for Regions that are members of the CPMR i.e. transport, energy, competition, agriculture, fisheries, the environment and climate change, and maritime security.

The General Assembly approved the minutes of the 2005 General Assembly held in Madeira (PT) and the Agenda for the General Assembly in Murcia.

SESSION I: ACTIVITY REPORT AND OUTLOOK FOR THE CPMR

Mr. Xavier Gizard, Secretary General, presented the activity report.

- With regard to the adoption of financial prospects, he indicated that the most reticent Member States would not have reviewed their position in negotiations without action on the part of the Regions. He considered that the results are satisfactory because, even if the budget is limited, Objective 2 still exists;
- He indicated that the CPMR is currently working on the 2014-2020 period. The initial proposals will be presented to the General Assembly in Rome with a view to the Heads of State's meeting in 2008-2009;
- He reminded the meeting that the CPMR has also monitored the territorial dimension of the sectoral policies for the 2007-2013 period and considered that it is necessary to remain vigilant on these aspects, especially employment and human resources policies, transport (concerns regarding the establishment of the Motorways of the Sea and consideration of a European ports policy), research, the sea and maritime security, the common agricultural policy and rural development.

Debate on the Activity Report

Mr. Roy Perry (Hampshire) congratulated the General Secretariat and reminded the meeting that the consequences of a Wider Europe should not be swept under the carpet. It was not 30,000 people who came to the UK seeking work after the last enlargement but some 300,000. Maritime Regions have a great power of attraction and they generate major movements of population. The CPMR must take account of this in order to create benefit for everybody. He asked that these issues be added to the working programme.

Mr. Kevan Lim (East of England) asked for questions of research into renewable energy sources to be given greater importance in the working programme.

Mr. Roald Bergsaker (Rogaland) insisted on the introduction of the ecosystem approach for the management of maritime basins and on the necessary synergy between R&D programmes to find new sources of energy and improve energy efficiency with a view to finding solutions to the problem of climate change.

Mr. Harri Helminen (Kymenlaakso) asked for the question of relations with the Russian Federation to be taken into account as part of the Northern dimension.

Mr. Jérôme Polverini (Corsica) wondered whether the current guidelines on European construction are appropriate for Regions that are members of the CPMR, especially given the fact that the Gothenburg strategy has been replaced by the one hammered out in Lisbon. Are we in agreement with this? He raised a second issue, that of "earmarking". Are we really capable of dealing with this? Are the mechanisms credible when it comes to lessening disparities?

Responses supplied by the Secretary General

With regard to population movements, the CPMR shares this concern and is participating in a European Policy Centre think tank whose first conclusions will be presented at the next General Assembly.

With regard to energy issues, he indicated that the CPMR fully agrees with the points raised in the papers of Messrs. Lim and Bergsaker.

The Secretary General did not launch any discussion on relations with Russia. These are issues that have to be dealt with in the Black Sea and Baltic Geographical Commissions.

In response to the questions raised by Mr. Polverini, Mr. Gizard noted that territorial cohesion was no longer holding centre stage and this significantly hindered the success of the "earmarking" laid down in the texts. The development chances of territories should be placed on the agenda again for the post-2008 period.

President Claudio Martini submitted the Activity Report to the General Assembly which approved it by unanimous vote.

SESSION II: TOWARDS A EUROPE OF THE SEA

Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Chairman of Brittany Regional Council, opened the session by thanking Mr. John Richardson, Head of the Maritime Affairs Task Force, and his team for the Green Paper on the maritime dimension of the European Union. He recalled that this dimension is one of the fundamental bases of the

CPMR and that a new phase of debate is now opening which will allow the CPMR to study its position in greater depth at special-interest seminars in Livorno (on maritime governance), Stavanger (co-organised by the North Sea and Baltic Sea Commissions) and Gijón (transport). The Conference's guidelines will be validated at the Political Bureau in Poland in June 2007.

Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian then noted that the Green Paper shared a large number of points in common with the CPMR positions on the ecosystem approach, integrated coastal zone management, maritime security and the importance of tourism. However, there remain topics of concern, in particular on the place of the maritime sector in research and innovation, on transport, in particular the Motorways of the Sea, and on the place of the Regions in maritime governance.

More generally, he emphasised the political scope of the subject and stated that it demanded to be treated with as much vigour as the European space policy.

He concluded by saying that the CPMR had many hopes, a few concerns and great determination in its wish to see this new policy brought into play.

Mr. Rui Azevedo, Director of the Forward Studies Unit in Porto, then presented the results of work on the "Europe of the Sea" project undertaken by more than 50 Regions in the CPMR. He reminded the meeting that the aim of the project was to supply ideas for considerations of the maritime dimension, to participate in the selected guidelines and to identify priorities for interregional cooperation in this sector.

Mr. Patrick Anvroin, Director in charge of the "Europe of the Sea" project presented the actions that remain to be taken by June 2007. He stated the convergence and negative points of the Green Paper from the CPMR's point of view and indicated that the Regions wanted an implementation instrument based on tripartite contracts so that progress could be made in areas such as integrated coastal zone management, natural risks, coastal tourism and innovative maritime clusters. Finally, he specified that the CPMR wished to see the maritime basins selected as benchmark areas for the introduction of the conditions laid out in the Green Paper.

Mr. John Richardson, Head of the Maritime Affairs Task Force, began by indicating that the Green Paper had aroused much enthusiasm and many positive reactions. This being so, the result has already been achieved in terms of visibility. The CPMR played a large part in this and its commitment was greatly appreciated. Much remains to be done, especially to ensure good coordination with sectoral policies and the CPMR's determination is therefore welcome given the radical changes in the management of oceans.

Mr. John Richardson underlined the convergent points of view shared with the CPMR, especially on the need to create sustainable employment, the management of ecosystems and maritime clusters. He also emphasised the convergent opinions on climate change, the place of tourism and maritime security and stated that he expected support from the CPMR to ensure that the "Erika 3" packet was adopted. He also indicated his agreement on certain points that require further study i.e. reaffirming the maritime identity and expanding the analysis of the positive role of Extremely Remote Areas (ERAs) which should be seen rather more as advantages rather than burdens. With regard to the involvement of regional policy in this matter, he referred to the discussion with Commissioner Hübner.

Two priorities have emerged – how to improve the data and statistics to improve identification of priorities and knowing how funds for maritime projects are actually spent. Services should also be included when considering these issues. Mr. Richardson was very interested in a framework for discussions between Member States/Commission and Regions as proposed by the CPMR.

On the Motorways of the Sea project, it would be appropriate to involve the private sector and consider selective development of harbours, in the same way as terrestrial motorways have generated a concentration of population. With regard to this issue the Marco Polo programme should be of great help.

Turning to his disappointment when maritime research was not selected as part of the 7th FRDP, he stated that the Task Force had not yet said its last word on the matter and intended to help with the setting up of integrated research networks.

On the CPMR's programme of work, he indicated that the social aspects were central to the concerns of the Commission because nothing could be done unless living and working conditions were attractive, especially to young people. Climate change should also be seen as a crucial issue because radical changes are on the horizon. The question of maritime planning was raised and there was a need to see how an efficient planning system can be introduced for the sea, based on more information, more coastal planning and more reliable forecasts.

He ended by informing the meeting that the Task Force will be hosting joint seminars with the CPMR on the question of planning. At the end of 2007, the first concrete propositions will be tabled. Between now and then, he hoped that the Regions would continue to supply input for the debate, including in the Parliament and Council.

Debate on the "Europe of the Sea" Session

Mr. Uwe Döring (Schleswig-Holstein), *Rapporteur* to the Committee of the Regions on the Maritime Green Paper described his satisfaction at the involvement of the Regions in the initiative. He indicated that a plan for discussion with Member States would be proposed during the German presidency, in January 2007, and would continue under the Portuguese presidency.

The **representative** of Devon County Council suggested that more might be done during the German presidency. He emphasised that, in the United Kingdom, coastal regions, coastal communities and small fishing harbours have been in significant decline for decades. He asked for resources that would allow local players to become involved in the introduction of integrated coastal zone management. Finally, he emphasised the difficulties of managing offshore energy on a national level and asked for competence to be given to regions on this issue.

Mrs. Gunn Marit Helgesen, President of the North Sea Commission (Telemark), stated that, as far as the maritime sector was concerned, the Regions were best-placed to advance ideas. The regions round the Baltic and North Seas welcomed the Green Paper. They were very satisfied with it, while underlining the need for long-term management, the relevance of the ecosystem approach, and the importance of local identity and the cultural dimension.

Mrs. Helgesen asked the Task Force to strengthen the application of the Gothenburg Agenda and indicated that citizens should be involved in the process. She also highlighted the need for a flexible approach to resource management.

Mr. Leslie Angus (Shetland) asked for coastal communities to be fully involved in the consultation process and for emphasis to be placed on social well-being. He underlined the difficulties facing coastal communities and their determination to continue being able to make a living from agriculture and fishing.

Mr. Javier Velasco (Asturias) indicated that the CPMR and his region would be launching an action (of the tripartite contract/territorial pact type) as a think tank with the aim of showing how all stakeholders could be involved in discussions on the choice of regional strategies and priorities. He also intended to draft a benchmark of good practices and errors to be avoided for the Atlantic Regions.

Mrs. Annika Carlsson (Holland) indicated that, as far as carbon emissions were concerned, a Directive might be useful.

Mrs. Kathleen Matheson (Highlands) asked how to ensure that the Regions had a positive role in the introduction of regional policies.

Mr. Javier Morales Febles (Canaries) highlighted the unusual situation of the Canary Islands and Madeira which are located outside the zones proposed for the ecosystem approach even though the two islands (and the Azores) constituted a homogeneous area. To ensure that extremely remote areas are better taken into account, there is a need for a consistent maritime zone - Macaronesia.

Mr. Jérôme Polverini (Corsica) drew the meeting's attention to the situation of the Mediterranean and asked for the creation of an EEZ for this Sea to avoid the pillaging of natural resources and the destruction of ecosystems. He asked the CPMR to take account of this in its opinion on the Green Paper and to highlight the inadequacy of concrete protection measures.

Mr. Orhan Kirli (Canakkale) wanted to strengthen the aspects relating to illegal immigration in the Green Paper to create a more realistic position among the 25 European States and promote greater understanding of the situation. He also asked for a more realistic transport strategy.

Mr. Raymond Lauret (Ile de la Réunion) emphasised that extremely remote areas were Europe's active borders and that the maritime dimension represented an opportunity for these regions (the EEZ of the seven ERAs is as extensive as the Baltic and Mediterranean combined). It was, therefore, a great opportunity for the EU as a whole. This being so, the Green Paper should include an overall view of the role that ERAs might play in the maritime dimension.

Mr. Philippe Duron (Basse-Normandie) announced a regional contribution to the Green Paper focussing on three points – maritime security, sustainable coastal development and the fisheries and fish stock sector. He also argued in favour of recognition of a maritime entity known as “Channel”.

In response to these points, **Mr. Richardson** emphasised his belief in the strength of dialogue with the Regions and congratulated the meeting on the scope and quality of the discussions. **Mr. Gizard** indicated that the CPMR would support the setting up of a 7th Geographical Committee centred on the Channel.

A formal request for an addition to the CPMR’s draft report on the Green Paper regarding the role of the umbrella approach to maritime security was accepted by the Assembly. After a last request for comments, President **Le Drian** declared the draft report to be adopted.

SESSION III: EUROPE AND THE WINDS OF GLOBALISATION

Mrs. Christel Liljeström (Itä-Uusimaa) chaired this session and introduced the work by questioning the place of the Regions in the new global context. Do we need new networks? A new organisation? New means of cooperation?

Mr. Claudio Martini (Tuscany) informed the Assembly of the results of the seminar organised by the CPMR in the Azores on “Regions and Globalisation” which attracted regions from all five continents in June 2006. The global dimension is essential for most questions: immigration, energy, maritime security and agriculture which has become a global problem. All these issues have led us to adopt a global perspective in which the Regions have a role to play.

Three guidelines were developed:

- On an institutional level: Everything around us is changing except the institutions, which are not changing enough or quickly enough because democracy does not function at the same speed;
- Links between globalisation and regional and local identity: This is a very sensitive issue, a pendulum movement and a question of balance between the global dimension and local situations;
- Cooperation and partnership: There are numerous situations of inequality to which our societies must respond through solidarity and greater convergence.

He concluded by underlining the need to adopt a dynamic approach and vision to improve the unstoppable process of globalisation. Europe can contribute to this by taking on values linked to solidarity and democracy.

Mrs. Christel Liljeström then introduced three papers illustrating the main challenges of globalisation.

Mr. Gustavo Matias, Professor at the University of Madrid, described the implications of globalisation for the EU. He highlighted aspects such as the effects of commerce on the integration of capital, the global relocation of production processes and the phenomenon of income and technology convergence.

Mr. Patrick Géraud, Director of the EIB, described the European bank’s actions and the way in which it contributed to the Lisbon Strategy. He underlined the importance given to environmental and social issues, and the bank’s role in risk-taking ventures. He considered that Member States should make more strenuous efforts.

Mr. Ronan Uhel, Director of the European Environment Agency, presented a particularly dramatic view of the situation. Describing various incidences of climate change, he spoke at length of their many consequences for coastal regions and their populations. Mr. Uhel indicated that 80% of coastal regions are considered to be at risk, on a level ranging from moderate to high. He mentioned, among other things, the effects of the development of air transport, the increasing number of holiday homes or the lack of sediment deposits on the ocean floors. All this requires action at every level – local, national and European. Yet rare are the States whose approach to the situation is on a level with the issues involved.

Mr. Javier Morales Febles (Canaries Region) alluded to the problem of illegal immigration which is of particular concern to the archipelago. He described the conclusions of work resulting from the recent seminar on the management of immigration in islands, held in Tenerife.

Mr. Giovanni Camilleri, ART International Coordinator at UNDP, focussed on the common interests existing between the UNDP and the CPMR. He described possibilities for action which, in his opinion, should occur on all levels. The development of partnerships and exchanges of good practices should be

based on the territorial networks that exist in the various countries (while remaining aware that certain States have a very centralised regime). Whatever the situation, projects should be rationalised to avoid worthless repetitions.

Debate

Mrs. Sakina El Moussaoui (Andalusia) emphasised the need to talk of “irregular” immigration rather than clandestine immigration. Immigrants should be integrated in a bilateral manner, with an equal share of rights and obligations.

A British representative asked the representative of the European Environment Agency whether, in this respect, we really have reached a “point of no return”.

Mr. Ronan Uhel answered that we were indeed approaching critical points and that, by 2030-2050, there would be some zones in Europe in which life would be unbearable. As far as the water problem was concerned, the date was closer to 2020.

Mr. Antonio Fonseca Ferreira (Lisboa e Vale do Tejo) returned to the points raised by President Martini in his paper, in particular three key aspects i.e. the institutions, the global/local levels and the importance of partnership. He emphasised that the question of identity was also a fundamental aspect. Moreover, he reminded the meeting that the CPMR’s action was undertaken with the framework of European Institutions and wondered whether we should not begin by solving our own institutional problems before taking action.

President Martini replied that the institutions progressed more slowly than economic phenomena and that this created imbalances which were quite incomprehensible to the general public. He believed that there were two priority areas for action – the reform of the United Nations and the involvement of Institutions on a regional level. President Martini also described the situation of small businesses in Tuscany which have successfully adapted to globalisation.

Mr. Yavuz Mildon, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Council of Europe, described action taken to adapt Regions to globalisation. He reminded the meeting of the objectives and organisation of the Council of Europe and recalled some of the most recent actions taken by the Chamber of the Regions which is trying to introduce a mechanism for consultation with local and regional governments. Mr. Mildon wanted to strengthen cooperation between the Council of Europe and the CPMR, especially in the Balkans/Black Sea area. Moreover, he hoped to see active support for greater regional autonomy, since only strong regions can face up to the challenge of globalisation.

Friday 27th October 2006

SESSION IV: SUCCEEDING 2007-2013, PREPARING FOR 2014 - PROSPECTS FOR THE CPMR

President Martini welcomed **Commissioner Danuta Hübner**, thanking her for attending the meeting and congratulating her on the quality of discussions with the CPMR since she arrived in the European Commission as Commissioner for Regional Policy.

Mr. Philippe Cichowlaz introduced the session by detailing the Regions’ involvement in regional policy. He recalled the positive and negative points in the report on the financial negotiation agreed to by the EU for the 2007-2013 period and indicated the major issues that must be dealt with in the future to pave the way for the forthcoming period – regional ability and governance, central role of innovation and the tools made available to Regions to succeed in their development (competition, financial instruments, added value of networks).

He emphasised the challenges regarding demographic issues, competitiveness, technology and research, climate change and the territorial dimension.

He ended by indicating the next stages – a report on cohesion in spring 2007, a return to the constitutional project and a debate in 2008-2009 to prepare for the post-2013 period.

Mr. Claudio Martini described the current situation as regards the future of regional policy. He established a parallel between what was said in 1999 and what is being said today, now that work has begun to prepare for 2014.

He recommended a positive attitude in a fairly unfavourable situation marked by insufficiently controlled globalisation, a political Europe suffering from lethargy, Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies that have

instigated no action but have advantages e.g. a Europe open onto the world and a living regional democracy that is open to others.

For the Regions, the main essential is to remain united in order to promote a value model.

Ideas are beginning to emerge for the future:

- The unavoidable role of the Regions in global economic life, the need to innovate in intangible economies in a European framework that remains our benchmark;
- The demand for sustainable development and renewable energies;
- The new forms of policy governance, in particular the importance of the tripartite Europe/States/Regions approach;
- The requirement for territorial cohesion, an issue on which President Martini is calling for a States General of Territorial Cohesion.

Mrs. Danuta Hübner, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, thanked the CPMR for its involvement and its useful support, which has helped to maintain a satisfactory regional policy.

For the 2007-2013 period, more than 400 programmes and almost € 500 billion (€ 800 billion taking account of all sources of funding) will be invested in the Regions. These investments must, though, comply with two conditions. They must ensure convergence and take account of the current climate requiring competitiveness on a European and global level.

Is there a dichotomy between convergence and competitiveness? No. However, territorial cohesion must be an integral part of competitiveness and the European Commission will take steps to ensure that this is so within the framework of the Community Strategic Guidelines.

The transition to an intangible economy, which is characteristic of the forthcoming period (research/innovation, human resources, partnerships etc.), depends largely on regional contexts and each region must prepare for it as quickly as possible.

At present, one-half of expense in the research sector is concentrated in 35 regions (34 of them within the Europe of the 15) and 45 regions devote less than 0.5% of GDP to research. To cope with this situation, we must promote public investment for, without it, nothing can be achieved. This shows that territorial cohesion and competitiveness must be approached within the same reference framework.

The Commission contributes to this through integrated approaches and urban initiatives. The most powerful instrument, however, remains a multi-level partnership because it circulates development and innovation in remote areas thanks to an ability to work together. Regional networks are fundamental to success.

With regard to the similarities in the statements made today and in 1999, Mrs. **Danuta Hübner** considered that it would be a serious mistake to be overwhelmed by this and stated that a positive attitude was necessary. Giving the Regions a much greater role is essential and if it is true that citizens prefer decisions taken at the closest level, this tends to support the idea of revitalising the principle of subsidiarity.

She ended by hoping that there would be positive follow-up to the dialogue with the CPMR.

In his response, President **Valcarcel Siso** emphasised the need for a new competitiveness strategy for the Regions. They want to be present on the international stage and must adopt a development model that encourages a combination of technology and innovation. Other conditions must also be fulfilled to achieve this e.g. strengthening the links between research centres, promoting a non-discrimination culture early on, among schoolchildren, guaranteeing quality of life and seeking support from cultural identity.

Mr. Ramón Luis Valcarcel Siso (Murcia) considered that the keys to success lay in the Regions, including the added value from interregional cooperation and networks. Sectors of activity should be coordinated and "invisible borders" should be eliminated (this is a reference to the theory of selective disadvantages).

The old development model is now obsolete. A new model is emerging, based on competitiveness and including a long-term vision for the future.

He ended by hoping that the Regions would overcome their fears of entering the global society.

Mr. Alberto Navarro, Secretary of State for European Affairs in the Kingdom of Spain, reminded the meeting that Spain was celebrating 20 years' membership of the EU this year and that the country considered these two decades to have been the high point of its modern history.

With regard to the 2008-2009 negotiations, he noted that 85% of EU resources were not its own, proprietary resources. In this respect, Spain was in favour of the principle of adequacy of means (defining resources in terms of political commitments). It was also in favour of special treatment for ERAs and supported the principle of equity that takes account of wealth. It would be attentive to EU policies to ensure that they were

governed by quality and added value, with priority being given to regional policy and the CAP, fisheries, the environment, education, the immigration policy and energy.

Mr. Navarro indicated that Spain was ready to organise a conference on the future of the regional policy with the CPMR, bringing together all "Friends of Territorial Cohesion", in January 2008 in Seville.

He emphasised the need for a political Europe, a value-based Europe upholding democracy, non-discrimination and solidarity including global solidarity. There should be a Europe of citizens, a concept which requires the development of the notion of European citizenship. He ended by underlining the need for a transparent, efficient and standards-based Europe and by stating that this would require a strengthening of democracy.

Debate on the "Success in the 2007-2013 period, Preparation for 2014" session

Mr. Claudio Martini thanked Alberto Navarro for his suggestion of a meeting of the "Friends of Territorial Cohesion" in 2008.

Mrs. Christel Liljeström, President of the Baltic Sea Commission, thanked Commissioner Hübner for her "excellent paper, at the right time, for the right audience". She reminded the meeting that the Regions needed to strengthen their competitiveness and that, with this in mind, it was essential to link players from both the public and private sectors. On behalf of the Baltic Sea Commission, she asked the CPMR to take its share of this work by setting up an inter-commission working party on innovation.

Mr. Humphrey Temperley (Devon) asked how we could assist rural areas which are behind in their development.

Mr. Jorma Pitkälä (Paijat Häme) stated that there could be no discussion of EU regional policy without taking account of globalisation. He believed it was necessary to assess the factors of competitiveness in the various regions, and the effects of this. He called for major changes to regional decision-making in the next few years. A code of conduct more favourable to change should be introduced, providing greater creativity without destroying the environment. A central authority was essential, as was decentralisation, to underline specifically local characteristics. After 2013, the new legal framework governing relations between the EU and the Regions will have to be widely accepted and give a larger place to the Regions. Acquiring the best means of living in the world requires a critical mass of regional development.

Mrs. Gemma Amor Pérez (Comunidad Valenciana) was delighted to report that the Comunidad Valenciana had completed Objective 1 and she confirmed that her Region was ready to work successfully on Objective 2. She put her faith in innovation, social cohesion and competitiveness. In this respect, she was proud that the Comunidad Valenciana was the only region in Spain to be one of the Lisbon Strategy Regions. She also wondered about the introduction of a technology fund and an immigration fund.

Mr. José Ángel Zubiaur (Navarre) presented the conclusions from the "Energy for the Periphery" seminar. He stated that, in Navarre, the consumption of energy from renewable sources amounted to 14% in 2003 – hence his mandate from the CPMR in Stavanger in 2003 to coordinate a working party on the subject. In a small region whose GDP is 123% of the EU average, renewable energies have very significant spin-off benefits i.e. more than 6,000 jobs in the sector equal to 6% of the regional working population, more than 40 companies, restriction of carbon emissions etc. He considered that, in achieving this situation, the R&D policy played an important part but that the role of governance was equally fundamental to its success.

Mr. Tony Fitzpatrick (South of Scotland Alliance), speaking on behalf of the British members of the CPMR, indicated their concern over competitiveness and the Lisbon Agenda. They feared that the measures and funding for employment were mainly designed for urban areas, to the detriment of rural and remote areas. He asked Commissioner Hübner whether she thought that competitiveness could help territorial cohesion and wondered whether, on the contrary, there was not a risk of widening the gulf between town and country.

Mrs. Danuta Hübner responded to the questions asked:

- She appreciated the Baltic Sea Commission's idea of setting up a working party on innovation. She believed that this complied with the European Commission's ideas on cohesion and other policies, for innovation goes far beyond new technological products and services.
- With regard to the ERDF: She promised to contact the British delegates to find out about real problems in the field. She did not see any discrimination between rural communities and towns. All that was required was effective coordination between territories – in certain areas very clear boundaries were required between rural and regional funding. In other cases, choices had to be

made and coordination was necessary in the field to ensure that there was no doubling-up or overlap. We have to think in terms of sustainable development. The difference between urban and rural areas is no longer fundamental.

- With regard to technological funding: negotiations are underway with the States and the final distribution of funds will be done by the Member States. She considered that management should be clear – there are many funds for innovation and we have to see what can be done with each of them. She ended by indicating that agreement had been reached with the Spanish government on the need for a performance reserve

Mr. Alberto Navarro declared that discussions were currently underway in the Council on 3 funds for immigration:

- One fund for external terrestrial and aerial borders;
- One fund for the return of immigrants to their homeland, to be funded by Brussels from January 2007;
- One fund for the integration of legal immigrants and their integration into structures for new arrivals.

Coffee Break

Mr. Michel Delebarre, President of the Committee of the Regions, immediately highlighted the close links between the CPMR and the COR, leading in particular to the drafting of a joint programme of work. He also emphasised the similar positions on major issues, especially territorial cohesion.

He insisted on this last point, emphasising firstly that the COR would pay particular attention to all attempts to “unpick” the draft Treaty on this point and, secondly, indicating that it was not necessarily essential to have a Treaty and that political will would suffice.

The concept of territorial cohesion goes far beyond territories in difficulty; it is also a question of governance of policies, which requires us to rethink subsidiarity in terms of greater coherence based on the new legal tool of cooperation. President Delebarre proposed to combine the work of the COR and the CPMR within a territorial dialogue.

With regard to the challenges facing maritime regions, he considered that the maritime initiative was of major importance and that it was a very positive step towards sustainable development. The new policy must be integrated into the cohesion policy without endangering the foundations of regional policy.

On preparations for the new period, Mr. Delebarre emphasised that we do not have the right to make a mistake and that the most important thing is to prove the added value of regional policy since it is still living an endangered existence. To do so, we have to strengthen partnerships and join forces to counter any attempts at re-nationalisation.

For 2008-2009, the COR will present a draft perspective written by President Chavez (Andalusia). The report would be based on a wider concept of the effect of financial, institutional, strategic and integration leverage.

He ended by emphasising that the success of this ambitious policy required a different view of the Community budget which should be defined first and foremost in terms of necessary expenditure since this defined needs in terms of resources, including our own proprietary resources. He asked for CPMR assistance in considering this issue.

Finally, he indicated that the new challenges arising from globalisation created more opportunities than threats and that, given this background, the most fragile regions should receive support.

Mr. Antti Mykkänen, Secretary of State representing the Finnish President, specified the presidency’s priorities:

- to ensure that the cohesion policy is correctly implemented and indicates the challenges for the future;
- to strengthen competitiveness through the Lisbon Agenda;
- to increase the ability of the cohesion policy to respond to global challenges.

Expertise is found in Regions in which it is necessary to promote good practices in these areas, in innovation and working conditions in particular. Major involvement from partners is required if this is to be achieved. The question remains as to the contribution that can be made to this by cohesion instruments.

The Finnish Presidency also highlighted the importance of external cooperation, especially for border regions. Mr. Mykkänen ended by underlining the importance of the neighbourhood policy and cooperation across internal borders of the EU.

Turning to the question of maritime policy, he considered the Green Paper to be comprehensive and indicated that the Finnish presidency will promote discussions by targeting questions proving the added value of the initiative. In conclusion, he emphasised the need for Europe to open up to the rest of the world.

Mr. Adán Martín Menis, President of the Government of the Canaries, focussed his attention on the immigration issue. He began by stating that the problems have reached such a scale that neither the countries of origin nor the regions suffering the consequences of these population movements can take action alone; this is an issue with a European dimension. Yet the measures taken by the Commission to date remain too limited and constitute an inadequate response.

He identified the most urgent needs – to define an “illegal immigrant” status, to implement a specific policy for the islands, and to consider the introduction of quotas to meet regional needs in terms of employment.

The need for a sustainable, effective surveillance tool is palpable, as is the need for the introduction of a global plan of action integrating all the States concerned, with discussion of all the causes and all the consequences.

The current situation is serious and one of its characteristics is a certain powerlessness to act (unanimity has been impossible to achieve within the Europe of the 25). He ended by underlining the absurdity of a situation in which the Regions suffered the consequences and were required to provide answers without having the competence or resources to take action. He asked the Regions to mobilise and called upon the COR and CPMR to become fully involved in this issue.

Mr. Derek Martin, Director of International Affairs in the Netherlands, emphasised that the one aspect common to the challenges facing us was their effect on the territories. He stated that the response required more consistent policies.

He reminded the meeting that significant progress had been achieved over the last few years within the EU as a whole and took as examples the ICZM strategy, strategic frameworks, the setting up of ESPON, Green Papers etc. However, response times are still too long, given the increasing speed with which the challenges facing us occur.

He specified that new political initiatives were underway on territorial development through studies carried out by ESPON to identify trends and supply guidelines.

What can we do now? A “territorial agenda” (political document) is currently under discussion to promote territorial coherence and incorporate the results of ESPON’s work in reports on cohesion and urban considerations.

He called upon all players to contribute to this approach, which aims to identify the territorial repercussions of policies. He concluded with the following messages: the territorial agenda is a living, dynamic tool which Community policies require if they are to adapt to the challenges; an integrated approach is an urgent necessity; the Regions must identify their strong points in this respect and the CPMR has all the advantages, making it an efficient spokesperson.

President Martini hoped that the Regions in the CPMR would be involved in the work on the territorial agenda.

The representative of the Asturias clarified the results of the study on the Regions’ contribution to the employment and training objectives contained in the Lisbon Strategy under the aegis of the CPMR. They showed that the Regions were being required to play an increasingly large role and indicated that the good practices identified would be widely circulated.

Mr. Claudio Martini closed the session by summarising the morning’s work. Four ideas have emerged:

- The role of the Regions;
- The demand for sustainable development;
- The introduction of a new form of governance;
- The promotion of research and innovation.

All this should be designed within a strategy of alliance to give substance to the post-2013 debate.

Is our internal organisation capable of meeting the post-2013 challenges? In principle, yes, because we are sufficiently flexible. But the question must be asked and we must therefore launch internal discussions. This will be done, based on a questionnaire to be presented at the Political Bureau in Florence in February 2007, with responses presented at the Political Bureau in Podlaskie in June 2007. The practical conclusions will be discussed at the General Assembly in Rome in October 2007.

President Martini insisted on the need for the Chairmen of Regional Councils to be personally involved in the questionnaire.

Mr. Antti Mykkänen emphasised the increasingly important role of the Regions. He agreed, on behalf of Finland, to attend the meeting of the "Friends of Territorial Cohesion" proposed by Spain and the CPMR.

Mr. Adàn Martin Menis emphasised the need to apply policies once decisions had been made, to realise that we are in a global world and to be aware that there is a need for a clear immigration policy.

SESSION V: PRESENTATION OF NEW MEMBER REGIONS

Mr. David Parsons presented the East Midlands region in the UK. As a region, it is a link between London and Northern England. It boasts a high-quality environment, a rural setting and a port-based sector of activity. On the down side, the region has a number of pockets of poverty and a lack of training for workers. He is counting on the CPMR to develop the renewable energies sector and successfully implement a policy of social inclusion.

Mrs. Kjell-Arne Landgren presented the Skåne region. It is the most southerly region in Sweden, with links to the neighbouring regions in Denmark, Germany and Poland, and is densely-populated with a rich history and very diverse landscapes including 300 kms of coastline. The elected Assembly is responsible for health and economic development, has a budget of almost € 3 billion and cooperates with other regions around the Baltic Sea, especially on issues relating to maritime security.

SESSION VII: BUDGET DECISIONS

Messrs. Yves Morvan and **Jacques Boulau**, President and Treasurer of the Administrative Council presented the accounts.

2005 Accounts

They were approved by the Political Bureau in Gozo and by the General Assembly of the Administrative Council. The difference between the budget voted on (showing an estimated loss of - € 33,000) and the actual budget (accounting loss of - € 38,575 €) was minimal. The association's Fund shows a result of € 915,000 to 31/12/2005. Since no remarks were made or questions raised, the President asked the General Assembly to approve the 2005 accounts and the Assembly did so, unanimously.

Information on the 2006 financial year

The budget is produced at the same time as the forecasts. At this stage of the year, the annual projection realised shows a total income (CPMR, Geographical Commissions, cooperation programmes and CAAC) of € 3,238,060 and total expenditure of € 3,124,903.

After integrating the exceptional income and expenditure and setting aside the necessary reserves, there is a provisional loss of - € 36,498. The draft 2006 budget was adopted with a loss of - € 35,156.

Draft budget for 2007

It is a continuation of the 2006 budget. In accordance with the decisions taken at the General Assembly in Stavanger in 2004, the increase in subscriptions will be equal to the annual rate of inflation calculated on a European level i.e. 2.48%. Consequently, the scale of CPMR subscriptions for 2007 will be as follows:

€ 0.009508 per inhabitant

Minimum subscription: € 5,912 for Regions with a population of less than 621,760.

Mr. Boulau pointed out that, during their respective General Assemblies, the Atlantic Arc, Islands and Mediterranean Commissions also decided to increase their subscriptions based on the European rate of inflation.

Expenditure has been increased by 2% on average, except for travelling expenses for which it is proposed to introduce a decrease.

One exceptional item of expenditure has been scheduled: a contribution of € 5,000 to an event being organised by the North Sea Commission;

An exceptional item of expenditure corresponding to the implementation of the agreement signed with UNDP is proposed to the value of € 120,000 to be taken from the reserve fund for one year only.

The draft budget for 2007 was passed as being balanced with total income (CPMR, Geographical Commissions, cooperation programmes and CAAC) of € 2,916,270 and total expenditure of € 2,971,753 (unanimously passed).

President Martini reminded the meeting that the draft budget had been unanimously approved by the Political Bureau on the previous day and opened the debate:

Mr. Angus Campbell (Western Isles) and the representative of Andalusia asked for regional GDP to be included in budget documents.

Mrs. Josefina Moreno (Murcia) asked for future budget documents to detail expenditure on personnel, travel etc.

Mr. Xavier Gizard said he was in favour of including regional GDP for information purposes but reminded the meeting that there was already a sliding scale of subscriptions and that the GDP was not a feature of this calculation. With regard to the request from Murcia, he indicated that the financial documents already detail expenses, especially the documents drafted by the Auditor.

The representative of the Western Isles, supported by Hampshire, specified that his request referred solely to the provision of an additional piece of information.

President Martini took note of the question and asked for this point to be given consideration. He submitted the draft 2007 budget to the Assembly which approved it unanimously.

SESSION VI: EXAMINATION AND VOTE ON THE FINAL DECLARATION AND RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Patrick Anvroin presented the 4 amendments discussed and approved by the Political Bureau on 26th October referring to points 19, 20, 31 and 33 of the draft final declaration.

Observations:

Mr. Javier Morales Febles (Canaries) indicated that a seminar on immigration was held at the end of September and that this had prevented him from complying with time limits on the tabling of amendments. He asked whether there could be a reference to the results of the seminar in the draft Final Declaration.

President Martini asked if there were any objections in principle to the inclusion of such an amendment?

Mrs. Christel Liljeström (Itä-Uusimaa) and the representative of Aberdeenshire declared themselves to be in favour of upholding established procedure. Including such an amendment could create a dangerous precedent. It was proposed to refer the issue to the Political Bureau in Florence in February 2007.

The representative of the Canaries agreed to refer his request to the Political Bureau in Florence and informed the Assembly that the information on immigration was available in the delegates' conference packs.

President Martini submitted the draft Final Declaration to the vote and it was passed unanimously.

Resolutions presented by the Geographical Commissions:

Four draft resolutions were submitted to the Assembly for a vote.

- Draft resolution on maritime policy issues in the Baltic Sea and North Sea regions;
- Draft resolution on the Northern Dimension policy for 2007 and beyond;
- Draft resolution on fisheries referring to fishing grounds and protected areas;
- Draft resolution on the Inter-Mediterranean Commission.

President Claudio Martini moved that the Draft Declaration presented by the Inter-Mediterranean Commission be withdrawn.

This proposal was approved by the Assembly.

He also indicated that a new procedure for resolutions would be brought before the Political Bureau in Florence so that the General Assembly would only be asked to vote on texts that had been approved in their entirety by the Political Bureau.

He then submitted the other three draft resolutions to the vote and all three were unanimously approved by the Assembly.

SESSION VIII: PRESENTATION AND VOTE ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE ORGANISATIONAL CHARTER

The Secretary General presented a draft amendment referring to point 11.2a of the Charter, on funding. The aim was to re-establish an optional ceiling to the cost of subscriptions which would be considered by the Political Bureau on a case-by-case basis.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

SESSION IX: FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The next General Assemblies of the CPMR will be held in the following regions respectively:

- 2007: Mrs. Cinzia Felci, acting on behalf of President Marazzo, confirmed that the 2007 General Assembly would take place in the Lazio region, in Rome, from 17th to 19th October;
- 2008: Mr. Jean-Michel Arrivé, acting on behalf of President Rousset, invited the CPMR to the Aquitaine region of France for the 2008 General Assembly;
- 2009: the region of Västra Götaland in Sweden invited delegates to the 2009 General Assembly.

President Martini closed the General Assembly, congratulating delegates on the quality of the work and thanking them for their attendance.