



CONFÉRENCE DES RÉGIONS PÉRIPHÉRIQUES MARITIMES D'EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS OF EUROPE

6, rue Saint-Martin 35700 RENNES - F
Tel. : + 33 (0)2 99 35 40 50 - Fax : + 33 (0)2 99 35 09 19
e.mail : secretariat@crpm.org - web : www.crpm.org

SEPTEMBER 2006

ACTIVITY REPORT 2005-2006

Foreword: The *activity report 2005-2006* presents a qualitative analysis of the main policy areas and technical issues addressed by the CPMR General Secretariat between the General Assembly in Madeira in October 2005 and the General Assembly in Murcia in October 2006. It gives a report on the main issues dealt with in line with the medium-term strategic guidelines adopted at the Stavanger General Assembly (2004). It is supplemented by two additional documents:

- *A synoptic activity table* presenting a list of the year's main activities by policy area, i.e. policy papers, technical papers, seminars and high-ranking meetings;
- *A table of meetings* giving an exhaustive list of contacts made by the General Secretariat over the past annual period (not including emails and telephone conversations).

Policy areas are classed in the same order and layout as on the CPMR website (www.crpm.org).

I. TERRITORIAL COHESION

I.1. COHESION

a) Report

The past year was mainly marked by the agreement on the financial perspectives for 2007-2013 which was reached on 15/16 December 2005 under the UK presidency. The General Secretariat's action consisted in following the last stages of the negotiations and mobilising its member Regions on a case-by-case basis to influence the final rounds of talks as far as possible. The same efforts were then employed with the European Parliament to ensure our presence throughout the process leading up to the interinstitutional agreement. Against a background of reduced EU ambitions, cohesion policy turned out in the end to be the one that was best safeguarded in the final negotiations (cf. technical paper "*Impact of the Council's budget agreement on 2007-2013 regional policy and its post-2013 future*" and the Political Bureau's opinion "*Financial Perspectives and the Institutional Future of the Union*").

Furthermore, the CPMR has continued its work on preparing for the delivery of 2007-2013 policy, notably through:

- An opinion on the urban dimension of cohesion policy;
- A number of successive opinions and follow-up of the negotiations on the content of the Community Strategic Guidelines with a view to giving them a more territorial dimension.

Finally, a complex benchmarking operation was organised on the delivery of regional policy 2007-2013, giving rise to an opinion of the General Secretariat entitled "*Regional Involvement and Territorial Cohesion in Europe: one step forward, two steps back*" that will be tabled for adoption at the General Assembly: This work shows that although certain Member States have finally agreed to maintain a regional policy for all European Regions, this is sometimes translated in practice by an urge to re-nationalise its delivery.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

- Preparing for the 2008-2009 debate on the financial perspectives after 2013. The CPMR will need to be ready to put forward some initial considerations as its 2007 General Assembly in Rome;
- Close follow-up of the delivery of regional policy 2007-2013 and especially the priority that is meant to be placed on innovation;

- Re-launch of an inter-governmental initiative on the territorial dimension of EU policies planned during the German presidency in the first half of 2007 (follow-up to the ESDP and ESPON programme 2007-2013)

I.2. INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

a) Report

At a political level, the General Secretariat's action firstly consisted in lobbying the European Parliament to allocate more resources to territorial cooperation within the framework of the interinstitutional agreement. This action resulted in a 300 million euro increase in the budget. Secondly, in close collaboration with each of the Geographical Commissions, work has consisted in following discussions on the boundaries and content of the future transnational cooperation programmes.

From a technical point of view, activity in this area was marked by the completion by the General Secretariat of a certain number of cooperation projects and the formalisation of new methods for processing requests for the General Secretariat to participate in cooperation projects.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

- CPMR's involvement in future thematic programmes for interregional cooperation (in relation with priority policy areas);
- The General Secretariat's involvement in assisting certain transnational projects.

I.3. COMPETITION

a) Report

2006 saw the implementation of the main lines of the Commission's action programme, particularly the regulation on regional state aid giving rise to another position statement from the CPMR since the General Assembly in Madeira. The main grounds for satisfaction regarding the CPMR's political action were that zoning has been maintained under Article 87.3.c. Added to this are a certain number of other significant areas of progress for the regions:

- Increased capacity for aid directed at SMEs and SMIs at regional level by increasing ceilings under the de minimis rule (from 100,000 to 200,000 euros over a three-year period);
- New measures in favour of venture capital taking into account a territorial dimension;
- Clarification of the framework on aid for innovation in relation with the priorities defined under regional policy 2007-2013.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

- Application on a country by country basis of the new regional state aid map for 2007-2013: a Europe-wide assessment should be drawn up with regard to the principal of territorial cohesion;
- The pending future framework on aid for environmental protection.

I.4. SERVICES OF GENERAL ECONOMIC INTEREST (SGEI)

a) Report

The CPMR General Secretariat has not addressed this area on account of it falling outside of the scope of the work agenda fixed after the Stavanger General Assembly. There has been little political headway however following the successive publications of the green paper and white paper.

| |
|-------------------------------------|
| II. BALANCED COMPETITIVENESS |
|-------------------------------------|

II.1. EMPLOYMENT/ HUMAN RESOURCES

a) Report

The General Secretariat's action in 2006 concentrated on finalising the interregional cooperation project "Regional contribution towards the employment and training objectives of the Lisbon Agenda", undertaken by twelve member Regions at the initiative of Stockholm and Asturias and under the coordination of the Maritime Peripheries Forward Studies Unit (MPFSU). The report highlighted a raft of good practice and experiences from a number of European regions in the fields of employment, training and social inclusion.

These experiences represent valuable achievements and know-how for designing and delivering employment and training policies. The initiative shows that the Regions are keen to contribute more actively towards the Lisbon objectives and provide added value to the design and delivery process of these policies. The CPMR General Secretariat is currently making contacts with the departments of DG Employment and Training to present the results of this action. A final conference to present the findings of the project will take place in Asturias next March.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

- Taking forward the action of the employment and training working group: should the group be extended to include other interested regions? More targeted development of issues and experiences?
- Interregional benchmarking within the CPMR on employment and training issues;
- Stepping up the presence and positions of the CPMR among EU bodies in charge of this area. A schedule of contacts is already planned for the end of 2006;
- Close follow-up of European employment and training trends.

II.2. TRANSPORT

a) Report

Action led in 2006 continued along the same lines as it has since 2001, the year in which the European Commission published its White Paper on the future of transport for 2010. This has included promoting motorways of the sea and improving the way the Trans-European Transport Networks contribute towards territorial balance. Faced with a reduced budget for TEN-T for the 2007-2013 period and the delays in implementing motorways of the sea, the CPMR has:

- alerted the EU institutions to the need to prioritise the TEN-T in terms of improving accessibility;
- stressed that this budget might act as a supplement to the ERDF in the regions, including those eligible under the convergence objective;
- asked for the Regions to be more involved in the multiannual programming;
- organised in association with Andalusia Region and DG TREN a seminar on the effective and spatially balanced implementation of motorways of the sea.

In the light of recent documents produced by the European Commission, especially the draft new financial regulation for TEN-T, campaigning has failed to deliver the results we had hoped for, especially in view of the lack of priority given to maritime transport.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

The place of the Regions in the European air transport sector is an issue that deserves to be addressed by the CPMR, firstly by drafting a basis of common principles to improve how air transport can contribute towards regional development, and then by drawing up and adopting an action programme. Positions could then be established on this basis to influence EU legislation and regulations, e.g. slot allocation, public funding and public service obligations, and liberalisation.

After much to-ing and fro-ing between EU institutions, the "Eurovignette" Directive was finally adopted in 2006. However, it fails to provide for any financial encouragement for maritime transport. In 2008, the European Commission will publish a general proposal on the pricing of infrastructures extended to include all modes of transport (the current Directive only concerns road tolls). The CPMR will need to pay close attention to any further risks of penalising maritime transport.

The CPMR could take forward its work on motorways of the sea in relation with the Geographical Commissions, by proposing eligible sea links and involving Regions in the selection process.

With regard to TEN-T, the end of 2006 will see the adoption of the financial regulation on TEN-T and the indicative Multiannual Programme for 2007-2013. The CPMR and its Regions need to take action to make sure that their priorities are taken on board.

II.3. RESEARCH

a) Report

Most of the General Secretariat's activity was focused on the drafting of the new framework programme to support research, development and innovation activities in the European Union. The "Knowledge Regions" pilot programme now forms an integral part of the new programming period for 2007-2013. The most

important aspects of the seventh framework programme for the Regions were addressed in a technical paper prepared by the General Secretariat and sent out to the member Regions in March 2006.

More recently, the CPMR General Secretariat campaigned to secure a place for marine and technological sciences within the seventh framework programme, something the European Parliament unfortunately failed to agree to maintain in its report. During the summer, the CPMR lobbied hard with the European Commission's cabinets and the Finnish presidency to stress the importance of this aspect and to promote a future maritime policy for the European Union.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

- How to take forward a policy on the link between research and local authorities (governance in regional research policies);
- Research/innovation link in the regions under future regional policy;
- Opportunity for a research-based approach within the maritime sector.

III. MARITIME ISSUES

III.1. MARITIME POLICY

a) Report

2006 has been a decisive year in the move towards introducing a joined-up EU maritime policy. The actions listed below clearly positioned the CPMR as a leader in spearheading regional involvement in this policy and more generally as a key point of contact for the European Commission, Parliament, Council and Committee of the Regions:

- Seminar on 17 February 2006 in Brest (Brittany);
- Meetings of the scientific council;
- Interregional cooperation project - results to be communicated at the General Assembly in Murcia.

The CPMR contributed in this way towards the EU thought process before and after the publication of the European Commission's Green Paper.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

The consultation period on the Green Paper is to come to a close in June 2007. Between now and then, the CPMR and the Regions will need to specify their expectations on the content of future maritime policy and the associated instruments. A series of seminars will contribute towards this, notably:

- 6 November 2006 in Livorno (Tuscany) on governance;
- Early 2007 in Gijón (Asturias) on EU policy on ports and maritime transport.

The General Secretariat proposes that priorities in this area focus especially on:

- The social dimension: living and working conditions on board ships, safeguarding jobs in the navigation sector, etc.
- Promoting the regional seas as a tier of governance;
- Developing experiences in integrated coastal zone management;
- Using tripartite contracts between the EU, State and Region as instruments for delivering this policy at regional level.

Moreover, it is necessary to drive forward the reflection within the EU institutions – particularly the European Parliament which is reluctant to address this area – and the Council under the Finnish, German and Portuguese presidencies.

III.2. FISHERIES

a) Report

Two main forms of action have been undertaken with regard to fisheries policy:

- i) The continued organisation of interregional meetings for which the General Secretariat is commissioned under contract by the DG for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs;
- ii) Work led by the Fisheries Intercom Group chaired by Shetland.

Regarding the first point, three meetings were organised/are planned in 2006: the first took place at the end of June in Porto (P) regarding the implementation of axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund and focused on

"The sustainable development of fisheries areas"; the second was held at the end of September in Vaasa (FI) and concerned the innovative actions led under the FIFG; the third will be held in Seville in early December and will once more focus on the arrangements for implementing axis 4 of the EFF.

The minutes of these meetings can be downloaded from the Fisheries DG website.

These meetings bring together national government officials from 25+2 EU Member States in addition to representatives from the fisheries groups of the CPMR Geographical Commissions. The level of regional attendance varies depending on the issues addressed but is always assured.

Regarding the second point, the CPMR Fisheries Intercom Group met three times in 2006. The main issues addressed were the examination of the EFF provisions, preparation of cooperation projects in the fisheries sector and the setting up of Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) introduced under the CFP reform. Regular contacts have also been made with the Fisheries DG.

It is worth noting that in 2006, the Mediterranean fisheries group was resumed with Marche region acting as the interim chair.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies.

- Further interregional meetings will be organised in 2007 as commissioned by the Fisheries DG (4 meetings are scheduled);
- The Intercom Group will take forward its work on the conditions for implementing the EFF, the RACs and interregional cooperation projects under Objective 3. A policy position paper on these points will be prepared and submitted to the Political Bureau then the General Assembly in Rome;
- The General Secretariat will be preparing a bid in response to the Fisheries DG's wish to set up a structure for managing and monitoring fisheries areas covered by axis 4 of the EFF.

III.3. MARITIME SAFETY

a) Report

Work led in 2006 mainly consisted in continuing to implement the strategy adopted by the CPMR in this area, i.e.:

- Promoting partnerships with bodies responsible for this policy area;
- Promoting the Union's maritime dimension as a basis for stepping up the enforcement of maritime safety regulations (see above chapter on MARITIME ISSUES);
- Developing transnational and interregional cooperation in this field.

With regard to the first point, as an observer member of the IOPCF, the CPMR appointed the senior Vice-President of Poitou-Charentes to act as its representative on this body. Conditions concerning this representation need to be revised in order to ensure an effective participation of the CPMR in the future on bodies for which the Conference has asked to be represented.

The second point was addressed under the "Europe of the Sea" cooperation project as part of the expert analysis on transport issues.

Regarding the third point, the results of the fact-finding mission on transnational cooperation projects and maritime safety were disseminated and promoted in association with the Interreg IIIB Atlantic Area Secretariat.

Furthermore, the General Secretariat has begun looking at two new areas related to maritime safety: **i)** the introduction of a regulation for container ships; **ii)** creation of a ship dismantling industry for vessels at the end of their life.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies.

- In accordance with the commitments made at the Nantes seminar, the General Secretariat will carry out an assessment in 2007 on how maritime safety regulations are being applied. To this end, a seminar will be organised on this issue in Cantabria (ES);
- Arrangements concerning the CPMR's involvement on maritime safety bodies will be examined, with a view to a more efficient participation;
- A formal proposal will be put forward to the Political Bureau and General Assembly in 2007 on the two regulation issues concerning container ships and a ship dismantling industry;
- Application for observer status on the International Maritime Organisation will be made through the "nrg4SD" network.

IV. GOVERNANCE

a) Report

Following the French and Dutch no-votes on the draft Constitutional Treaty, the core activity on governance issues has been put on hold. Pending a serious resumption of debates, the CPMR's activity this year has focused on:

- Territorial dialogue which is now systematically organised between the European Commission (President and Commissioners), the Committee of the Regions and the main organisations representing regional and local authorities;
- Stepping up the partnership with the Committee of the Regions (*see attached CPMR-COR cooperation agreement*);
- A more detailed examination of how Regions are involved in delivering a certain number of EU policies (regional policy, competition, rural development) in order to prepare proposals for the future programming period.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

- Re-launching the debate on territorial cohesion and the place of the Regions in EU policies (resumption of debates on the future of the Constitutional Treaty)
- Continued benchmarking initiatives on regional involvement in EU policies (forms and conditions of involvement);
- Promoting a tool to capitalise on good practices in regional governance regarding territorial development at EU level.

V. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

V.1. AGRICULTURE/RURAL DEVELOPMENT

a) Report

Following the Political Bureau meeting in Galati in June 2005, the Secretariat presented a work programme on the forthcoming reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and its impact for the Regions at the Political Bureau meeting in Malta (2006). A first round of consultation is under way with the main players involved in this policy before embarking on a more intense working phase in 2007. The challenges at stake here involve:

- Gauging the possible changes that may be brought to the CAP during the 2008-2009 debate on the post 2013 budget, and their possible consequences on regional fabrics;
- Deepening the links between the first and second pillar and the place of rural development policies.

From this point of view, the CPMR organised a benchmarking initiative in 2006 on the delivery of rural development policies and the related aspects of regional governance and territorial cohesion. The findings highlighted the extreme diversity in the way Regions are involved in these policies, though no formal correlation could be made with the nature of the institutional systems in force. These results already show many channels for improvement for the forthcoming regulation.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

- Implementation of the work programme adopted at the Political Bureau meeting in Malta 2006

V.2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

a) Report.

Work in the area of sustainable development focused on the following points:

- Adaptation to climate change;
- Integrated coastal zone management
- "Mediterranean 2020" initiative;
- State of the coastal environment in Europe;
- Participation in the nrg4SD network.

Regarding the first point, a seminar was organised in Marseille in February 2006 in order to make an assessment of the consequences of climate change for the Regions. The proceedings of the seminar are available on the CPMR website.

Further to this event, the CPMR was involved in work led by the Commission with a view to drafting a Green Paper on adaptation by the end of 2006 (second component of tackling climate change). To this end a questionnaire was prepared and sent out to the Regions; the summary of replies constitutes the CPMR's contribution towards the Commission's work.

With regard to integrated coastal zone management, the General Secretariat was involved in the evaluation work initiated by the Commission on the implementation of the Parliament's and Council's Recommendation on a European coastal zone planning strategy. This assessment will lead to proposals from the Commission at the end of 2006/beginning of 2007 on arrangements for taking forward this strategy, especially with regard to the possibility of introducing a binding instrument.

Within the framework of the "Euromed" Partnership, the Commission intends, through the "Mediterranean 2020 initiative", to introduce measures to clean up the Mediterranean Sea by 2020. To achieve this, it has created the conditions for establishing a broad-based partnership bringing together all stakeholders from within the area. The CPMR represents regional authorities within this partnership; in this respect the General Secretariat has helped to draw up the position of the Regions (in relation with Catalonia) and has followed the work led by this group.

The state of the coastal environment in Europe was the subject of an initial report published at the end of June 2006 by the European Environment Agency. The CPMR took part in the drafting of this report as part of its partnership with the Agency and disseminated it among its member Regions.

The CPMR carried out its task as Treasurer of nrg4SD (Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development) and attended the Steering Committee meetings. It is also involved in preparing the network's General Assembly which will be held in Brittany in September 2008.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies.

- Policy position on the Green Paper on adaptation to climate change;
- Policy position on the proposals for taking forward the European strategy on integrated coastal zone management;
- Preparation of cooperation projects in the two above-mentioned policy areas;
- Taking forward work on the 2020 initiative and on coastal environment data;
- Drafting of a policy position on maritime policy on behalf of the nrg4SD network.

V.3. ENERGY

a) Report

The General Secretariat continued to assist the Energy working group throughout 2006 with the organisation of two seminars (in the Western Isles and Leeuwarden), serving as a basis for the preparation of a major conference in Navarre on "Energy for the Periphery".

The CPMR decided to set up the Energy working group in response to the wishes expressed at its annual General Assembly in Stavanger in 2004, and is now considered as a key contact by the EU authorities. Following the publication of the Green Paper on "A European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy", our organisation was invited by the European Commission to take part in a public consultation in Brussels designed to prepare for the review of EU energy strategy. Commissioner Piebalgs' cabinet has informed us of his interest in the development of renewable energies in the Peripheral Maritime Regions, and a meeting with a CPMR delegation is currently being prepared. The CPMR intends to take this opportunity to raise with the Commissioner a series of points that are of vital interest to our Regions and which will determine how we might further our activities in this area.

b) Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies

- Adequate development of the Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-E) in the maritime peripheries in the light of their major potential;
- Greater flexibility in environment legislation to take into account the need to develop renewables;
- Development of the state aid system for environmental protection.

a) Report

In addition to the activities on sustainable development led as part of nrg4SD, the CPMR General Secretariat has been focusing its efforts on three types of activity:

1) *Arrangements for Delivering Neighbourhood Policy*

After 7 years in which sustainable instruments for cooperation between European regional authorities and our closest neighbours were virtually non-existent, 2006 finally saw confirmation of the implementation of a new cooperation instrument by regional sea area for the Baltic, Black Sea and Mediterranean. The General Secretariat, in relation with the Geographical Commissions most concerned, has been involved in considerations on how to implement future cooperation instruments, particularly in the Mediterranean and Black Sea where the arrangements are particularly complex. In December 2006, the CPMR assisted Catalonia in the organisation of regional seminar to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The CPMR is currently looking at whether it is technically possible to ensure a greater sustainability of these programmes.

2) *The link between Regions and Globalisation*

The General Secretariat's policy watch on the main forecasts concerning the future of Europe shows a marked acceleration in the globalisation process in all areas studied, especially the economic sector. This is also the focus of discussion within the EPC task force "2025: Europe beyond Lisbon" in which the CPMR regularly takes part, and the observation recently highlighted in the report by DG ECOFIN on the place of Europe in globalisation. The Regions must be part of this reality and cannot neglect its impacts on their territories, whether these be measured in economic, demographic or societal terms. It is in this context that the General Secretariat organised an international seminar last June in the Azores on the place of the regions in globalisation. This event was attended by representatives from 5 continents (see the minutes of the seminar and the accompanying technical paper on the CPMR website).

3°) *Collaboration between the CPMR and UNDP*

Based on the evidence that European regions are becoming increasingly involved on the international scene, the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) approached the CPMR to examine together the possibility of promoting the use of regional strategies in decentralised development aid policies. The CPMR was picked out on account of its network's competency in regional development, its culture of intervention to aid the most disadvantaged regions and also the experience of some of its member Regions in working closely with the UNDP. On this basis, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the UNDP, and some very concrete cooperation activities are currently being identified that could then serve as pilot actions for all members. A seminar to discuss and exchange experiences on the territorial dimension of decentralised cooperation between regional authorities will be organised in March 2007 in Marseille by Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, the UNDP and the CPMR.

b) **Short and long-term prospects to be discussed within the political bodies**

- Continued negotiations to develop instruments designed for regional authorities to aid EU external cooperation (particularly for Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean and possibly the ACP states);
- Implementation of pilot actions for 5 or 6 projects within the framework of the memorandum of understanding with the UNDP;
- Organisation of the Conference of Regions in March 2007 in Marseille;
- Assistance in delivering neighbourhood policy;
- Organisation of a meeting of Chairs of continent-wide regional organisations in Florence in November 2006;
- Discussions on organising new world meetings in 2008.