

DANUTA HÜBNER WITH US IN MURCIA

INNOVATE!

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This is the “buzzword” of the upcoming 2007-2013 programming period for regional policy which opens on the 1 January next. There are now less than three months left for the Regions to reflect on the issue of “**how to innovate as effectively as possible?**”

The Commission has offered new ideas to help the Regions in this task, for example the communication of 13 September on European innovation strategy (*Putting knowledge into practice: a broad-based innovation strategy for the EU*) as well as the publication by the Directorate General for Competition of the regulations *Research, Development and Innovation* and *Draft Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation*, which is going to outline the nature of aid that regional policy will be in a position to finance for the 2007-2013 period.

No doubt that these elements provide extra clarification in relation to the very broad guidelines set out in the community strategic guidelines which will be adopted in October 2006, though without much enthusiasm. Yet the scope for action is such that it is up to regional partnerships to invent new forms of governance in the area of innovation, between classic interventions in support of the industrial fabric (economic aid), traditional interventions in favour of the research sector and innovation support structures.

The management of these interfaces, between administrative appropriations and investment funding, will no doubt have an influence on how effective regional action will be, especially given that the regions have responsibility for “economic development” in a growing majority of EU member states. We are currently reflecting on how to disseminate, as effectively as possible, the most outstanding regional experiences across Europe, in order to help share best practice in the delivery of future regional policy. As such, we are relying to a great extent on the new interregional cooperation instruments to act effectively in this direction. It is in the context of this reflection by all our member regions, that we eagerly await the Commissioner responsible for regional policy **Danuta Hübner**, at our next General Assembly in Murcia on 27 October next.

Philippe Cichowlaz, Director

34th CPMR GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 26-27 OCTOBER 2006

On 25, 26 and 27 October 2006, the region of Murcia will host the next CPMR General Assembly. The peripheral maritime regions of Europe will meet, for the 34th time, to define their goals for the year to come and to look back on 2006. The General Assembly takes place at the invitation of **Ramón Valcarcel Siso**, President of the Autonomous Community of Murcia and first speaker of the opening session. Some of the speakers who have already confirmed their attendance include **Danuta Hübner**, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, **John Richardson**, Director of the Maritime Affairs Task Force of the European Commission, as well as the President of the Committee of Regions, Mr **Michel Delebarre**. The Spanish State Secretary for European Affairs, Mr **Alberto Navarro** and State Secretary representing the six month Finnish presidency of the EU, Mr **Antti Mykkänen** are also among those invited.

Regional Policy, maritime issues and globalisation are the key issues to be addressed by the 154 regional leaders invited to take part in the discussions. This is a crucial time for Europe: **Claudio Martini**, President of Tuscany and of the CPMR, has defined the European Union's break for reflection, launched following the no vote of the French and Dutch referenda "more of a break than a reflection...!" In this situation, where regional policy risks being nationalised, the CPMR wishes to make its contribution to the 2014 preparations and, of course, to succeed in the 2007-2013 period. Mrs Hübner has, several times, demonstrated her will to listen to the regions and to lobby for a powerful and entirely European cohesion policy. However, certain member states are ready to sacrifice cohesion in their national budget, without taking into account the position of their regions. The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe is trying to mobilise its regions and by inviting Danuta Hübner, is giving the regions the opportunity to express their views and demonstrate their post 2014 expectations and their concerns for the 2007-2013 period.

Another key issue that the CPMR will address during the General Assembly discussions is that of "the maritime dimension". A consultation is now in progress which started with the presentation of the Green Paper in June. The peripheral and maritime regions have contributed to the preparation of this Green Paper through their expertise and suggestions to Commissioner Borg and John Richardson, Director of the Task Force, during several seminars and conferences organised on the subject. But we need to progress further! In future years, the sea has to resume the important role it always played in Europe in the past. The consultation is designed to feed into the Green Paper and the CPMR is keen to contribute towards it with important elements such as maritime transport, which at present, still does not constitute a major part of the document. For **Xavier Gizard, Secretary General of the CPMR**, the Green Paper should not run the risk of being too "green". *"The environment is very important for the future of the sea and the European continent, and the CPMR is aware of this difficulty, but the economic factor linked with growth and competition cannot be forgotten. The sea can help us meet the Lisbon challenge if it is perceived as an economic opportunity and not merely an area to safeguard! Of course, the environmental aspect is not at all secondary and it is for this reason that the CPMR has often highlighted the difficulties linked to climate change."*

Globalisation is the final subject which will be discussed in Murcia. **Michel Barnier**, former French Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Commissioner, participating in the first global meeting of regions which took place in the Azores in June, stated that, *"We are still a long way off from successful and positive globalisation! However, we are not afraid of the differences and diversities, because we are together and are learning to respect one another. This is why it is important to establish dialogue between European regions and regions from the rest of the world."* Thirty years ago, the CPMR acknowledged the urgent need to structure a mouthpiece for the

regional level within a European Union in the process of being set up. Today, in seeking alliances with Regions from other continents, the voice of Europe's Regions shares the same concerns within the emerging circles of future world governance, such as the World Trade Organisation, International Maritime Organisation, Kyoto Protocol and United Nations General Assembly.

Enrico Mayrhofer, Director

ENERGY FOR THE PERIPHERY

The conference “Energy for the Periphery”, which takes place on 5/6 October 2006 in Pamplona at the invitation of the Regional Government of Navarre, marks the emergence of the CPMR in the highly strategic domain of EU Energy Policy.

This event, which responds to the expectations of the Peripheral Maritime Regions expressed at the General Assembly in Stavanger (NO) in 2004, is not just a one-off initiative, but the outcome of eighteen months work by our organisation, and above all, by our Energy working group.

Formed by the Political Bureau at Santiago de Compostela (ES), chaired by the Region of Navarre and led by a Steering Committee, this group has been examining this policy area as a whole, marked by three seminars focusing on specific areas, (Cornwall in September 2005, Western Isles in February 2006 and Friesland in April 2006). These findings allowed preliminary works to be carried out on the subject and gave the CPMR the means to take policy positions on sensitive issues, and in particular to reply to the consultation organised by European Commission on the Green Paper “A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy”.

This action has paid off, since the CPMR has been invited to participate in the public hearing focusing on the review of EU energy strategy, which takes place in Brussels on 22 September. Mr Enrique Diaz Moreno, from Navarre Region will represent our organisation and express the points of view ratified by the CPMR Political Bureau in Gozo (Malta) several months ago.

The conference “Energy for the Periphery”, will allow, not only to report on the group’s activities, but above all to inform on various technical or political issues presenting a particular interest for the maritime peripheries. Some of the areas to be addressed include the possibilities offered by the use of liquid hydrogen, the problems posed by grid access and the on-going conflicts surrounding the development of wind farms in certain regions.

The Pamplona conference will also provide the opportunity to initiate discussions with leading players, (to name but a few), the European Parliament represented by its Vice President, Mr Alejo Vidal-Quadras, as well as other MEPs; the Energy Directorate General of the European Commission, with Mr Gonzalo Molina; the Competition Directorate General, with Mr Ungerer, the Director in charge of energy; and on a national level, experts such as Mrs Teresa Costa from the National Energy Commission (CNE) Spain, and Mr Brian Wilson former Energy Minister for the United Kingdom.

Field trips organised by the CENER (Spanish Centre for Renewable Energies) and the CENIFER (Spanish Training Centre for Renewable Energies), amongst others, will highlight the spectacular results of the ambitious energy policy led by Navarre for several years.

The work of the CPMR will of course not stop with the end of the Pamplona conference. Commissioner Piebalgs, who will not be able to attend in person in Navarre, has informed the CPMR through his cabinet, of the importance he places on the development of renewable energy in the peripheral maritime regions of the European Union. A formal meeting is already scheduled between Commissioner Piebalgs and a CPMR delegation which will include President Claudio Martini and the President of Navarre, Mr Miguel Sanz Sesma, during which the conclusions from the Pamplona conference will be presented.

Jean-Didier HACHE, CPMR Energy Working Group Coordinator

OPEN DAYS COMING SOON

The “OPEN DAYS – European Week of Regions and Cities 2006”, is a major event in the EU’s regional calendar. It will take place from 9 to 12 October 2006 in Brussels under the headline “Investing in Europe Regions and Cities – Public and Private Partners for growth and jobs”.

The OPEN DAYS is a true knowledge exchange forum for Europe’s Regions and Cities. More than 5,000 participants are expected to attend, including members of the European Commission, high-level politicians, business leaders and regional policy experts who will be taking part in the programme of activities which includes 111 seminars and 70 events.

New features of the “2006 OPEN DAYS” will be the **Investors’ Café**, (located in the headquarters of the Committee of the Regions at 99-101 Rue Belliard, Brussels), a state-of-the-art meeting place which offers excellent networking opportunity for investors and regional government decision-makers, **an exhibition village** (located also in the headquarters of the Committee of the Regions), intended for exhibitions of business, innovating and tourism projects, **32-seminar programme** and **media centre**.

For the first time this year, the OPEN DAYS will be open to participation from the private sector: companies, banks and civil society organisations will be welcomed.

In comparison with last year’s event, the number of workshops this year has more than doubled from 70 to 181. These workshops are based on five different themes, in which **CPMR member regions** are strongly involved:

- Investing in competitive enterprises and high quality jobs
- Fostering regional innovation
- Investing in sustainable use of resources and environmental technologies
- Supporting public-private partnerships for larger infrastructure projects
- Cutting red tape: Managing the Structural Funds between 2007 and 2013

The full programme for the “2006 OPEN DAYS European Week of Regions and Cities” and details of how to register for workshops and seminars can be found at www.opendays.europa.eu

Lejla Becirovic

SEA TECH WEEK - 16-19 OCTOBER 2006, BREST (F)

Sea Tech Week offers a program of **conferences, symposia and workshops** which bring together the top specialists in the world from different **maritime research** disciplines. This event facilitates interaction between subject areas - representation of ocean depths, sea rescue, corrosion, EU maritime policy, AUVs, etc. - which will be tackled during the week.

Sea Tech Week is also a **professional trade fair**. Exhibition space is open to companies and laboratories working at the cutting edge of maritime technology and provides the opportunity for professionals to meet top-level representatives over three days and to promote their expertise and specialist areas.

<http://www.cub-brest.fr/seatechweek/2006/gb/index.html>