



The Tenor !

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Welcome to Murcia!

THEY ARE ALL USEFUL, BUT NONE OF THEM “DOES” DEVELOPMENT ALONE

Wherever they occur, poverty, conflicts and political instability affect the lives of all. In a globalised world solving such problems is also important for us in Europe. The EU is the largest donor of humanitarian aid, and its external assistance programmes help to promote peace, democracy and wellbeing worldwide.

Francesco De Angelis, a director at EUROPAID in the European Commission, met us and expressed curiosity and interest for our dynamic organisation.



The European Commission has a leading role in the field of humanitarian assistance and has contributed to creating a European model envied by all, a model of peace, high standards of living, respect for human and individual rights, the rule of law and legal safeguards. This model is certainly the product of the democratic commitment and of the long consolidation of civil rights in its Member States; it is also the product of a range of organisations like the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) which ensure dialogue; and of simple groups of citizens prepared to fight for mutual respect, freedom, transparency and democracy.

Europe is at the forefront of efforts to assist developing countries, but it lacks an ability to coordinate this assistance, and it lacks an organising capacity to prevent “excessive” resources and opportunities being wasted.

This organising capacity is growing thanks also to EUROPAID: The Paris declaration was signed in 2004 by 100 countries, including all the member states of the EU, together with the European Commission, a number of UN agencies, and the World Bank. The idea is to increase efficiency by coordinating and harmonising aid. Donor countries agree to speed up their procedures for granting assistance, and beneficiary countries agree to “take responsibility” for development aid and draw up national poverty reduction strategies. In other words, instead of flowing through various separate channels, aid is paid to the state and becomes part of the national budget. Officials are trained to manage public finances and, with donor oversight, conditions are put in place for development to become an integral part of a country's policies. The role of the European Commission and EUROPAID is to coordinate these activities.

Regions, Provinces and Municipalities all have a presence on the ground, and all have an impact on development. All are useful, but none of them, alone “does” development! That is why it could be useful to work together, Regions, Member States, European Commission and International Organisations, to pool efforts rather than work in isolation.

This is another example of globalisation: a region reaches development assistance agreements with third countries, helps to build schools and hospitals on the other side of the world, but is unaware of the work of other donors.

That is why the UN ART initiative is such a good idea. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has recognised that assistance is more effective if it is distributed to a given geographical area rather than tied to a given theme. This is the future of aid, a future that is already with us! ART is an excellent tool for coordinating local authorities in donor and recipient countries; a tool which was also presented at EUROPAID by Luciano Carrino, Executive Representative of the Scientific Committee for Human Development Cooperation, during a special information day. Cooperation agreements such as that between CPMR and UNDP are particularly welcome. CPMR can offer UNDP its experience at the local level and knowledge of specific issues, and UNDP can help concentrate resources where they are most needed.

ENRICO MAYRHOFER

EUROPE CANNOT BE BUILT WITHOUT ITS CITIZENS

Message from the President of the Autonomous Community of Murcia



From 25th to 27th October 2006, the Murcia region will be hosting the 34th General Assembly of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), making it a centre for discussion and reflection on topics of specific interest to our regions because of their two common characteristics i.e. an ongoing maritime history and a peripheral geographical location.

The Region of Murcia, an Autonomous Community consisting of a single province, has a population of 1,363,000. After years as a predominantly agricultural region far from the decision-making centres, it has become a service region enjoying boom development and, as such, is looking forward to a future based on progress, development and the well-being of all its citizens.

I have always considered that Europe could not be built without its citizens. This is why I believe that the Regions have to maintain an increasing presence and be actively involved in agencies such as the CPMR which, throughout its thirty-year existence, has succeeded in making its voice heard by Community bodies through political representatives on levels closest to the population as a whole, and close to local and regional stakeholders. The CPMR's role has been essential in this respect. All the proposals resulting from reflection and discussions like the ones that we are going to have the pleasure of leading in Murcia have played their part in this.

Further to the launch of the new budgetary programming period, the European Union now finds itself in an institutional “cul-de-sac” which is slowing down the process of reflection launched after the “No” votes in the referenda organised in France and the Netherlands on the European Constitution. This could lead us to look inwards again, concentrating our efforts on the domestic politics of Member States and risking the re-nationalisation of regional politics. We have the impression that there is concern about these points and our General Assembly will provide an opportunity to express it in the presence of European Commissioner, Mrs. Danuta Hübner.

We will also be able to formalise the contribution of Europe’s maritime regions to the public consultation launched by the European Commission on the Green Paper on Maritime Policy, in our efforts to make it a successful, ambitious policy that serves territorial balance and sustainable development.

The controversies on the subject of globalisation, the difficulties and challenges facing us, the opportunities resulting from them, the role of the Regions and the introduction of necessary dialogue with regions in the rest of the world and with the large institutions on a global level are another of the key themes on which we will be required to reach a decision in Murcia.

In short, the great challenges facing us today (global economy, transition towards a knowledge-based economy, aging population and increasing immigration) require a response on our part. And this response must, based on the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies and the European strategy for employment, include innovation and economics for growth, the protection of the environment, the prevention of risks and access to communications and services of general interest.

We, the Regions within the CPMR, have another opportunity to make progress and draw the attention of EU institutions to a number of basic elements for serious, constructive consideration. Based on our guidelines, we want European policies to continue to advance, providing a response to these challenges so that the Regions can continue to play the fundamental role that is theirs and face up to the challenges that await them.

I hope that all of you attending this 34th General Assembly of the CPMR will enjoy your stay and discover a new region, Murcia, which is competitive, dynamic, modern, young, entrepreneurial and deeply European.

RAMÓN LUIS VALCÁRCEL SISO

THE REGIONS GIVE A BOOST TO EUROPE’S MARITIME AGENDA

Two years ago Joe Borg was – at last – mandated to draw up an integrated maritime policy for Europe. The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) welcomes the speed with which the European Commission has taken on this challenge. In close cooperation with the Regions a Green Paper was published on 7 June 2006, a broad consultation process begun and a deadline date set for the end of 2007.



A programme of action will then be submitted to the Parliament and to the Council, the aim of which will be to enable Europe to utilise all its resources to make the most of its maritime, ocean and coastal potential, while respecting the three pillars – economic, environmental, and social – of sustainable development.

The CPMR, taking an active part in this process, has continued to develop and is now putting the finishing touches to its own proposals. It will outline its policy position on the Green Paper at its General Assembly in Murcia, on 26 and 27 October, highlighting the key issues that it believes should be the focus of the final stages of the consultation process. On 6 November 2006, in the presence of the Commissioner for Maritime Affairs, Joe Borg, the CPMR will open a debate in Tuscany on Governance and the future EU maritime policy: which role for the Regions?. Other seminars will be organised, on topics such as the ports and maritime transport, the place of tourism in integrated coastal zone management, etc.

The CPMR will also provide support to the Finnish and German presidencies of the EU to help them materialise their involvement in this policy area.

The EU's calendar is set out well in advance, as we know, and the Regions are adapting to this. However, we still need to anticipate, and to start preparing now for the review of the community budget in 2008-2009. If we miss this opportunity, the European maritime project could be delayed by a number of years and could risk being completely abandoned, pushed aside by other, short-term priorities.

How might the current community instruments be adapted to allow partnerships and budgets to be mobilised in the future, for example – along the lines of what the USA's Ocean Act offers the its States – enabling the regions to implement the maritime policies appropriate for their territory? How might we actively encourage joint actions at the level of the sea basins, which – as everyone admits – are the appropriate level of action for achieving sustainable maritime development?

While continuing to make the most of their indispensable technical expertise on sectorial questions, the regions should start thinking now about what they want tomorrow's tools of governance and implementation to look like.

PATRICK ANVROIN

THE BALTIC SEA – CONNECTING AND NOT DIVIDING!



For centuries the people around the Baltic Sea have been trading and exchanging ideas. Cultures have met and bonds have been created between individuals. Fifty years of East-West division caused a break in the lively cooperation, but after the fall of the iron curtain and through the enlargement of the European Union to central and eastern European countries, the perspectives for both eastern and western regions look now better than ever before, with growing economies and stabilized democratic institutions. The enlarged European Union around the Baltic Sea strengthens not only the Union itself, but also opens up new prospects for economic development and gateway positions of the regions in the Baltic Sea Area.

The rich cooperation culture and traditions also reflect on the manifold network of cooperation organisations from different thematic sectors around the Baltic Sea basin. There are several cooperation organisations working on national, regional and local levels. The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission is one of the most relevant Pan-Baltic organisations representing the regional political level in the Baltic Sea area.

There is a large number of different Baltic Sea-wide organisations, as well as networks, and the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission cooperates closely with a dozen of them.

On a national level the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission cooperates closely with HELCOM (Helsinki Commission), the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), Baltic 21, VASAB 2010 and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC). But on a regional level, to strengthen practical working relations and by exchanging relevant information between the main Pan-Baltic regional organisations under the initiative by the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), cooperation meetings are now organised two times a year. The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission (CPMR-BSC), the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC), the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC), B7 (Cooperation of seven Baltic Sea islands), the Baltic Development Forum (BDF) and the CBSS meet regularly to discuss how to develop different ways of political and practical cooperation with each other.

These organisations prove that it is very important to develop the Baltic Sea Region together. The open and trust exchange of information supports this development. Joint working groups on chosen thematic fields where thematic experts and politicians from different organisations may meet and discuss the current important topics are considered very important. This would also enable stronger commitment of these Pan-Baltic regional organisations on a European level. Joint cooperation through a common working group or close cooperation of working groups would also enable partner searches and joint project work in the future. The role and possibilities for the private sector to participate in this cooperation should also be strengthened. In the latest meeting of the Pan-Baltic regional organisations in connection with the 11th General Assembly of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission in Karlskrona, Blekinge (S) the discussions brought results on future cooperation in several thematic sectors: transport and infrastructure; environment; human resources and health; the Northern Dimension and European Maritime Policy.

As this short description shows the historical background has created an environment in the Baltic Sea Area which is very rich in contacts and cooperation. This has created numerous natural ways of cooperation throughout the centuries between different actors, and the lively and productive organisational cooperation today reflects these traditions and close ties. We may indeed say that despite cultural and lingual differences (11 languages are spoken in the Baltic Sea Area) the Baltic Sea is connecting and not dividing!

More information on various Baltic Sea organisations is available through the Baltic Sea Portal www.balticsea.net

MARKO MÄLLY

A SAILBOAT FOR THE TREATY OF ROME TOUR OF EUROPE 2007

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome, signed 25 March 1957, a 50 foot sailboat, skippered by Philippe Hanin is preparing to leave for a tour of Europe, with the moral and financial support of the European Institutions.

The boat, which will be officially presented to the Council of the European Union in Brussels in March 2007 at the 50th anniversary celebrations, will be an extraordinary symbol of the European Union. After its launch, it will start its "Tour of Europe" which will take it from Helsinki to Athens, some 6500 nautical miles, meeting young Europeans in twenty or so principal ports, many of which are among CPMR regions.

The promoter for this project is "Sail for Europe", an association founded in 1976 by a group passionate about the sea, sailing and Europe. "The objective is to improve the comprehension of the role of European organisations and to allow various crews of youngsters from all member states of the European Union to meet other young people and to persuade them that their common futures will find fulfilment in the construction of a united Europe," stated Philippe Hanin, skipper and founder of Sail for Europe, when confirming his attendance at the General Assembly in Murcia. The project benefits from sponsorship by the European Confederation of Nautical Industries and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe. The project also counts on several private sponsors who are contributing to the financing of the initiative.

CPMR Regions interested in this initiative can contact the Association "Sail for Europe" at info@sailforeurope.org.

Further information is available online at www.sailforeurope.org

LEJLA BECIROVIC