At its General Assembly in Bayonne from 1 to 3 October 2008, the member regions of the CPMR gave their Political Bureau and General Secretariat a mandate to devote all their efforts to preparing “the key year of 2010”, that is, to pursuing discussions with the new European Commission and European Parliament on the budget review and future EU policies.

Work since then has been accomplished in a context marked by three main factors:

- the non-completion of the ratification process for the Lisbon Treaty continues to create uncertainty about the institutional framework in which these negotiations will take place,

- the global crisis, which was firstly a financial crisis and the became an economic and social crisis, has forced regional officials to rethink their short to medium-term development strategies,

- the same applies with regard to the consequences of climate change and the policies required to deal with it.

The Gothenburg General Assembly will be the place to draw together some thematic proposals which the CPMR can use as the basis for its dialogue with the Commission, Parliament and Council, especially during the Swedish, Spanish and Belgian EU presidencies.
1. EMERGING STRONGER FROM THE CRISIS

The impact of the global crisis on our member regions’ economies and jobs has had significant consequences for work on the future of European regional policy and, more widely, European policies with a major territorial impact.

The Political Bureau meeting in Aarhus on 23 January 2009 asked the General Secretariat to make necessary arrangements so that the member regions could debate and propose solutions on how to take stock of the consequences of the crisis and explore ways of emerging from it:

- In March 2009, at the Summit of Regions and Cities organised by the Committee of the Regions, CPMR President Claudio Martini proposed that a European response to the crisis should take the form of a Territorial Pact involving all levels of public authorities in the Union,
- This proposal was also submitted to the President of the European Commission.

A survey was organised among our member regions and the results were published in June 2009.

♦ Once these results had been analysed, there was a workshop on 16 July 2009. This was chaired by Vicente Areces, President of Asturias, and involved a representative sample of regions, the European Commission’s Director General of Regional Policy, the Forward Studies Unit of the Committee of the Regions, the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) which reports to the President of the European Commission, and the OECD’s Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate.

♦ At the same time, 17 member regions launched a Draft Manifesto entitled “Emerging Stronger from the Crisis: a European Territorial Pact,” which the CPMR’s other member regions and other European regions are invited to share.

♦ During this General Assembly, there will be a presentation and discussion on a Technical Paper from the General Secretariat entitled “Emerging Stronger from the Crisis: Territories at the Heart of Medium-term European Policies.”

♦ Once further developed, this paper will provide a starting point for a seminar on “The Regions and the Crisis” which will be open to all member regions. It will take place in Marseille and be hosted by Michel Vauzelle, President of Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region.

During the same period, the General Secretariat has closely followed ongoing work on the future of regional policy carried out at the initiative of the European Commission. It sent the member regions a summary analysis of the report produced by an independent expert, Dr Fabrizio Barca, entitled “An agenda for a reformed Cohesion policy.”
On 23 January 2009, the Aarhus Political Bureau adopted the **CPMR’s response to the European Commission’s Green Paper entitled “TERRITORIAL COHESION: Turning Territorial Diversity into a Strength.”**

Also with a view to galvanising the territories into action, the General Secretariat, with support from a working group of member regions led by Nord-Pas de Calais, published in July 2009 some initial thoughts on the targets, structure and running of **TERRITORIAL COOPERATION** after 2013. Pending some more detailed proposals, a technical paper has been prepared on “The involvement of the regions in **EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PARTNERSHIP policy.**”

In parallel, the CPMR has continued its work on how to **enhance the key factors of regional competitiveness** by proposing greater participation of the regions in current and future European policies:

- The General Secretariat took part in a seminar organised by the Directorate-General for Regional Policy on the role of **INNOVATION** in Seville in May 2009. It made an active contribution to a seminar on this topic organised by the Swedish EU Presidency in partnership with Skåne Region in Lund on 15 September 2009. An open event for all member regions will be organised by the CPMR with a Spanish region and European Commission officials during the first half of 2010. A technical paper on clusters is submitted to this General Assembly.

- The Political Bureau meeting in Odessa on 12 June 2009 adopted the terms of reference for a working group on the **regions’ involvement in European RESEARCH policies.** Midi-Pyrénées Region agreed to lead the group. The work will be developed on the basis of the technical paper submitted to the Gothenburg General Assembly entitled “**Areas of Work for the CPMR in relation to the European Policy for Research.**”

- The member regions continued their work on the **development of HUMAN CAPITAL** under the leadership of Aquitaine Region (for employment and training) and Skåne Region (for social inclusion). A technical paper with the results of the survey of member regions on the future of the **European Social Fund** will be examined by the General Assembly.

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In accordance with the mandate given in Bayonne, a working group chaired by Aragon Region was set up to ensure that the CPMR would participate in the review of the TRANSEUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORKS (TEN-T), which the European Commission must undertake in 2010. A Scientific Council meeting was held in Zaragoza in April 2009 to discuss this subject. A seminar for our member regions, with the European Commission and the EU Presidency, will take place in Aragon in the spring of 2010.

The Directorate-General for Transport invited the CPMR to make a contribution to a European Commission consultation on the liberalisation of short sea shipping.

In the same vein, the working group run by Pays de la Loire and Andalusia regions undertook to follow up the seminar on the future of the COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP). This had been held in Nantes in October 2008 and involved our regions, the French EU Presidency and the Agriculture Commissioner, Mariann Fisher-Böel. It should be emphasised that this was the first ever meeting between regional officials and officials from the European Commission, the Council and farmers unions, and it constitutes the start of a dialogue on the CAP’s territorial dimension. A further seminar open to all of the member regions will take place during the Spanish EU Presidency.

The working group on ENERGY POLICIES chaired by Navarra Region worked on a couple of major issues at two seminars:

- How to reconcile the goals of territorial cohesion with a sustainable energy policy? (Aberdeen, November 2008),

- How can the EU ensure that innovation in maritime energy technologies increasingly benefits peripheral maritime regions? (Cornwall, October 2009).
2. The Maritime Advantage

The CPMR has continued to actively support the EU’s First Action Plan for Integrated Maritime Policy through the Aquamarina working group led by Brittany Region.

More detailed work has been done on the issues of maritime clusters, maritime training and maritime indicators.

The CPMR has actively taken part in the seminars on maritime spatial planning organised by the DG Mare.

The working group will complete its work aimed at supporting the Action Plan by holding a final meeting in late 2009 on the future of European maritime policy, at which some proposals will be made.

The substance of these proposals was prepared at an ad hoc brainstorming workshop held in Faial at the invitation of the President of the Azores, Mr Carlos César, on 6 July, on the issue of “Maritime Policy – One of the Keys to Europe’s Future.” This meeting entailed in-depth discussion within a representative group of CPMR member regions under the leadership of the Vice-President, Gunn Marit Helgesen, Commissioner Joe Borg and the Director-General of DG Mare, Fokion Fotiadis. The minutes of this workshop are submitted to the members of the Gothenburg General Assembly.

The CPMR’s proposals will be widely disseminated on Maritime Day on 20 May 2010, which will take place in Asturias, at the invitation of its President. The CPMR General Secretariat is involved in the Steering Group that is preparing the meeting with officials from DG Mare and the Spanish EU Presidency.

3. Efforts To Tackle Climate Change

To ensure that regional authorities fully participate in global negotiations on future measures aimed at tackling the risks generated by climate change, the CPMR devoted considerable resources to the preparation and organisation of a World Summit of Regions on this subject, at the initiative of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD) and at the invitation of the President of Brittany Region, Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian. The event took place in Saint-Malo on 29 and 30 October 2008, and was organised in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR).
The conclusions of this Summit provided the basis for a joint declaration, which was adopted in March 2009 at FOGAR’s General Assembly by the main global networks of regions as the basis for their involvement in negotiations on the texts that will be adopted by the COPENHAGEN Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in December 2009. Since then, these networks have joined forces with cities to secure the inclusion of amendments acknowledging the role of sub-state levels of government in the texts being prepared. If these proposals are accepted by the negotiators, it would be the first time the regions had their role fully recognised in an international treaty. A letter has been sent to all of our member regions and all the member regions of the other global networks to ask them to convey their support for these proposals to the governments of their respective countries, so that the latter take them into consideration.

In parallel, the CPMR has been following the preparation of the European Commission’s White Paper on ADAPTATION to climate change.

A special session on this work, covering both the European and global dimension, will be organised at the Gothenburg General Assembly.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH REGIONS FROM OTHER CONTINENTS

Further to the European Commission’s Communication of 6 October 2008 on the role of local authorities in European DEVELOPMENT AID policy, the CPMR has become involved in the European Platform of Regional/Local Authorities for Development led by the CEMR, alongside the AER and AEBR. It participated in the European Development Days in Strasbourg on 15-17 December 2009, and the Platform’s first seminar in Brussels on 10 and 11 March 2009. It also organised a seminar entitled “Regions and Development: the Role of Regions in a New Global Framework”, which was hosted by Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur in Marseille on 29 May 2009. At the end of this event, a declaration was adopted and circulated to the European authorities.

A working group of member regions on EXTERNAL COOPERATION, led by Catalonia, has also been set up. Its terms of reference were approved by the Odessa Political Bureau meeting.

As the European Commission has decided to organise a decentralised cooperation conference each year under the aegis of the Committee of the Regions, the CPMR has been invited to contribute via the Platform. The first conference will take place on 2 and 3 December 2009. The CPMR will also take part in the European Development Days organised by the Swedish EU Presidency in October 2009.
In order to take into account the global dimension of the Common Agricultural Policy, a cooperation agreement was signed by the CPMR and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The CPMR’s participation in the FAO’s Committees on Agriculture and Fisheries is currently being considered.

In accordance with the mandate given at the Bayonne General Assembly, the CPMR is lending its support to the preparation and organisation of the Summit of the World’s Regions on FOOD SECURITY, which will take place Dakar on 18 and 19 January 2010, at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Senegal.