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## MINUTES OF THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU MEETING 23 JANUARY 2009 – AARHUS (MIDTJYLLAND, DK)

**HostRegion:** Aleksander AAGAARD, Vice-President, Midtjylland Region (DK)

**Guests:** Emil HORSICKA, Director General, National Coordination Authority and European Affairs Division, Czech Ministry for Regional Development

**President:** Claudio MARTINI, Presidente della Regione Toscana (Italy)

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President:** Gunn Marit HELGESEN, President of the North Sea Commission - Mayor of Telemark (NO)

**Vice-Presidents:**

Xaralambos KOKKINOS, Secretary General of Notio Aigaio (South Aegean, GR)  
Kevan LIM, Member of Europe & International Affairs Panel, East of England Regional Assembly (UK)  
Ramon Luis VALCARCEL SISO, represented by Juan Antonio MORALES RODRÍGUEZ, Director General de Relaciones Institucionales y Acción Exterior, Comunidad Autónoma de Murcia (ES)

**Fullmembers:**

Denmark	Henning GJELLEROD, Regional Councillor, Region of Midtjylland
Estonia	Toomas KIVIMÄGI, County Governor of Pärnumaa
Finland	Marjatta VEHKAOJA, Member of the Board, Regional Council of Ostrobothnia
France	Jean-Yves LE DRIAN, President of Brittany Region
Germany	Reinhard MEYER, Head of the State Chancellery Mecklenburg-Vorpommern represented by Sebastian SCHRÖDER, State Secretary, Ministry for Transport, Building and Regional Development of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Greece	See Vice-Presidents
Ireland	Enda BONNER, Councillor, Donegal County Council
Italy	See President
The Netherlands	Rinske KRUISINGA, Member of the Executive Board of the Province of Noord-Holland represented by Wim STOOKER, EU Representative, Province of Noord-Holland
Sweden	Annelie STARK, Councillor, Västra Götaland Region
United Kingdom	See Vice-Presidents

**GeographicalCommissions:**

**Atlantic Arc Commission:**

Roy PERRY, Deputy Leader and Executive Member, Hampshire County Council (UK), Alternate Member  
Fabien MESCLIER, Executive Secretary (FR)

**Balkan & Black Sea Commission:**

George TSIOTRAS, President - Secretary General of Central Macedonia Region (GR)  
Anthony PAPANIMITRIOU, Executive Secretary (GR)

Baltic Sea Commission:

Christel LILJESTRÖM, President – Chairman of the Regional Council of Itä-Uusimaa (FIN)  
Poul MULLER, Regional Councillor, Region of Midtjylland (DK), Alternate Member  
Anne STAHL-MOUSA, Executive Secretary (SE)

Islands Commission: Jean-Didier HACHE, Executive Secretary (FR)

Intermediterranean Commission: Josefina MORENO BOLARÍN, Executive Secretary (ES)

North Sea Commission

Gunn Marit HELGESEN, President - Mayor of Telemark (NO)  
Lars HAUKVIK, Executive Secretary (NO)

Representative of the Outermost Regions:

Rodrigo OLIVEIRA, Regional Undersecretary of European Affairs and External Cooperation,  
Government of Autonomous Region of Azores (PT)

Alternatemembers:

Denmark Henrik Ringbaek MADSEN, Regional Councillor of Nordjylland  
Finland Talvikki KOSKINEN, Member of the Regional Board of South-West Finland  
Germany Reinhard BOEST, Director, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Information office in Brussels  
Greece Sotirios VOSDOU, Secretary General, Region of Ionia Nisia (Ionian Islands)  
Norway Kent GUDMUNDSEN, County Councillor, Troms County Council  
United Kingdom Leslie ANGUS, Councillor, Shetland Islands Council

CPMR General Secretariat

Xavier GIZARD, Secretary General  
Patrick ANVROIN, Director  
Enrico MAYRHOFER, Director in charge of Communication  
Marie-Ange ORIHUELA, Director  
Damien PÉRISSÉ, Director  
Giuseppe SCIACCA, Project Officer  
Carol THOMAS, Director of the CPMR Brussels Office  
Marie-Agnès CHARON, Director of the CPMR Secretariat

Observers:

Niels Erik ANDERSEN, Head of International Relations, Midtjylland Region (DK)  
Theodora AVGOULIDOU, Expert Adviser to the Secretary General, Region of Central Macedonia (GR)  
Peder BANG, International Officer, Region of Midtjylland (DK)  
Gérard BODINIER, Conseiller du Président Vauzelle, Conseil Régional de Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (FR)  
Piero DI MAGGIO, Dirigente Presidenza Regione, Regione Sicilia (IT)  
Lina Maria JAN, Chefe de Divisão da Cooperação Inter-Regional, Comissão de Coordenação e  
Desenvolvimento Regional Alentejo (PT)  
Paolo GIANNARELLI, Consigliere del Presidente, Regione Toscana (IT)  
Spiros KOLLAS, Advisor to the Secretary General, Region of Ionia Nisia (Ionian Islands, GR)  
Cécilia LAGERDAHL, International Officer, Västra Götaland Region (SE)  
Martijn LUCAS, Assistant to Mrs Rinske Kruisinga, Province of Noord-Holland (NL)  
Joseph MICALLEF, Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Gozo (Malta)  
Malou MUNKHOLM, International Development Officer, Midtjylland Region (DK)  
Henrik Eybye NIELSEN, Chief Consultant-MPA, Bornholm Region (DK)  
Michael NIELSEN, Head of International Unit, North Denmark Region-Nordjylland (DK)  
Michal PODBIELSKI, Director, Podlaskie Voivodship Marshal's Office (PL)  
Asta RAUGALIENE, Deputy Director of Regional Development Department, Klaipeda County (LT)  
Bjørn REISZ, Chief Planning Officer, Telemark Fylkeskommune (NO)  
Keijo SAHRMAN, Ass. Of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (FI)  
Geir SØR-REIME, International Co-Ordinator, Rogaland County Council (NO)  
Sally SPENCE, European Officer, Shetlands Islands Council (UK)

## OPENING SESSION

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The minutes of the Political Bureau meeting held on 2 October 2008 in Bayonne were unanimously adopted.

The Political Bureau approved the meeting's draft agenda

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After welcoming the Bureau Members, President Claudio MARTINI (CPMR) thanked Aleksander Aagaard (Midtjylland), for the welcome extended to the CPMR. He stressed that the day's discussions would focus on core matters of concern for the CPMR and its Geographical Commissions. Mr Claudio Martini then passed the floor to Mr Aleksander Aagaard.

Mr Aleksander AAGAARD (Midtjylland) presented the apologies of Bent HANSEN, President of the Region of Central Denmark, who was unable to take part in the meeting but who would take part at the dinner that evening. During his presentation, Mr Aleksander Aagaard highlighted that Aarhus was the second largest city in Denmark after Copenhagen and that it was a town steeped in history and culture. He highlighted several issues on the day's agenda, in particular the EU's energy and climate change package, an issue that would be under the spotlight during discussions at the COP 15 meeting scheduled for the end of the year in Copenhagen. This was an issue of key concern to all and Danish regions were seeking to play a key role in these discussions. Mr Aleksander Aagaard presented several examples of where Danish regions were making important progress in confronting the challenges of energy security and climate change. Much of this work was being undertaken in a cross-border context.

Important administrative reform had taken place recently and local and regional authority elections were due to be held soon. Administrative reform had led to the creation of five new regions in the last two years. These new regions had taken charge of key issues including healthcare, social and education policy and it was vital to assess how well they were performing. In conclusion, Mr Aleksander Aagaard underlined the importance of CPMR membership for Danish regions, given its place as a forum where they could discuss important European policies of common interest.

Mr Claudio MARTINI thanked Mr Aleksander Aagaard and then passed the floor to Mr Xavier Gizard for his presentation on the CPMR's activities since the last General Assembly meeting in Bayonne and on the CPMR's work programme for 2009.

### PRESENTATION OF THE CPMR WORK PLAN FOR 2009

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Mr Xavier GIZARD (CPMR) began by thanking the Danish authorities for their hospitality. He stated that this was likely to be his penultimate political bureau meeting and that the one in Odessa would be his last. In his view it was unreasonable to consider staying on as Secretary General beyond 2009. A new European Commission and Parliament would arrive at the end of 2009 and this would mark the start of the next round of discussions on the EU's multi-annual budget for the period 2014 to 2020. Given these developments at EU level, it would seem unacceptable for the current CPMR Secretary General to become engaged in such important debates, and then not hold the position for the conclusions on the budgetary discussions. It was important for the next Secretary General to be given the opportunity to develop close and fruitful working relationships from the start of the next negotiating period with the new Commissioners, Member State representatives, elected representatives and European Parliament officials.

Turning his attention to the 2009 Work Programme, Mr Xavier Gizard reminded Members of the objective to prepare a package of CPMR proposals in time for the General Assembly in Göteborg (1/2 October 2009). These proposals would ensure that the CPMR was well positioned to enter the next round of EU budget negotiations. In addition, the idea was being considered to organise a major event to present the CPMR proposals for the period 2014-2020, similar to the event organised to launch the CPMR proposals for the current programming period. Although details remained to be worked out, the aim would be to organise the event with the new CPMR Secretary General, either towards the end of 2009 or early 2010. The event would be held in Brussels and the target audience would be the new Commissioners, European Parliament Members etc. In conjunction with such an event, continued Mr Xavier Gizard, a summary of the CPMR's proposals could be produced in the form of a book, outlining the expectations of the EU's maritime regions as regards the European Union's future architecture.

He went on to inform Members that the CoR planned to organise a Summit of Regions and Cities in Prague on 5/6 March 2009. Furthermore, it had been agreed that the final declaration of the Summit would be drawn up on the basis of a true partnership between the organisations representing Europe's cities and regions. It had been agreed that the signing of the final declaration would take place during a formal ceremony between the Presidents of the organisations of regions and towns and Luc Van den Brande, CoR President. This would allow an important reinforcement of efforts between organisations promoting similar interests. According to Mr Xavier Gizard, the draft final declaration was due to be sent shortly and it would certainly call for the role of regions and cities to be strengthened within the framework of a model of good governance, particularly important during this period of financial and economic crisis.

On the theme of innovation, the CPMR planned to organise a seminar during the Swedish Presidency, probably in Skåne Region. In addition, the CPMR had several contacts with other Associations of Regions such as the Association of Border Regions, or organisations such as the Article 158 group, that could possibly generate further exchanges and actions with them. The CPMR is also setting up a working group on research and plans were being made to hold a CPMR Scientific Council meeting towards the end of this year on the "Place of Regions in the Context of the EU's Research Policies". This would be followed by a major conference to be organised under the Spanish Presidency.

On EU internal cooperation activities, the CPMR secretariat was currently examining proposals received from the Geographical Commissions, in particular on maritime and governance issues. It was highlighted that Mr Giuseppe Sciacca was now responsible within the general secretariat for coordinating the CPMR's internal cooperation activities.

On maritime affairs, plans were being discussed for the organisation of a seminar in cooperation with Commissioner Joe Borg. It might be held in July 2009 and the aim was to draw up conclusions on progress towards an integrated Maritime Policy over the past two years. This could provide the basis for discussions on the next stage of CPMR work in this field. The Aquamarina working group was mandated to operate for a period of 2 years and it was necessary to consider whether or not the working group's mandate should be extended and also whether the group should continue to be chaired by Brittany Region.

As regards the fisheries dossier, a CPMR submission had been made to the call for projects under the FAR-NET programme and the outcome of the call was expected shortly. This submission concerned AXIS 4 of the European Fisheries Fund which concerns the "sustainable development of coastal fishing areas". Also the Commission's Green Paper on sustainable fishing was eagerly awaited. The CPMR would prepare a position paper on this issue for consideration and adoption at the Political Bureau Meeting in Odessa.

In the field of employment and training the CPMR's working group was continuing with its work. Furthermore, this working group had been requested to boost its efforts by producing clear proposals for the improved use of European Social Funds to support regional employment and training initiatives that would fit in more clearly with regional strategic plans. These proposals were to be examined at the Göteborg General Assembly.

On governance, the CPMR continued to work closely with the CoR whose Constitutional Affairs Committee, currently chaired by Mr Claudio Martini, was preparing a White Paper on the participation of regions and cities in the governance of the EU. This White Paper was to be adopted at the CoR's plenary session in June, prior to the official launch of proposals by the EU's Regions and Cities on 22<sup>nd</sup> September in Brussels. According to Mr Xavier Gizard, this promised to be a key battleground for Europe's cities and regions for the coming years. It was necessary to push for real progress in the governance of public policies which recognised the true role played by regions and cities.

The on-going work of the CPMR's working group on tourism was briefly mentioned.

Mr Xavier GIZARD then summarised two key recent developments in the area of EU external policies. Firstly, in October 2008 the Commission had published a Communication on the place of the EU's local and regional authorities in the field of EU development aid. Prior to the publication of this communication, the CPMR has published two position papers to highlight the tangible and important support provided by regional and local authorities in development. Part of CPMR requests were taken into account in the EU communication. In addition, as already mentioned, the CPMR is one of the main partners of the newly created "Platform of European Regional and Local Organisations for Development", a forum that was promoted by the Commission. This Platform has to become the representative body for European regional and local authority players active on development issues. It is chaired by the Council for European Municipalities and Regions. Other members of the Platform included the Association of European Regions

as well as the Association of Border Regions. The CPMR had agreed, under the aegis of the Platform, to organise a seminar on the roles of regions in a new global framework. This event will take place in Marseille on 29<sup>th</sup> May.

Furthermore, plans were under discussion for the organisation of a CPMR seminar on Neighbourhood policies and the place of regions in the future development of these policies. This event should take place either at the end of this year or in early 2010 under the Spanish Presidency. The CPMR secretariat would work closely with the Geographical Commissions of the Baltic Sea, Balkan and Black Sea and the Intermediterranean in the organisation of this event. It was possible that the Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions might also become involved given their notable experience in addressing neighbourhood issues.

Mr Xavier GIZARD concluded by saying that a number of important decisions would be taken and position papers adopted at the June Political Bureau meeting. He drew the attention of Members to a document that had been added to their dossiers and which served to illustrate more clearly how membership fees were accounted for on the basis of time devoted by the CPMR secretariat to working on individual policy areas. There were plans for comparisons to be made between the years 2007 and 2008 on time spent covering the various CPMR priorities.

Mr Claudio MARTINI thanked Mr Xavier Gizard for his presentation. Before opening the floor to Members for their questions and comments on the work programme, he underlined how efforts had been made to ensure that all policy areas considered as priorities for the CPMR were being afforded the necessary time and attention. This was demonstrated, he added, by the number of seminars organised, position papers produced and the discussions underway in the working groups.

Ms Christel LILJESTRÖM (Itä-Uusimaa - Baltic Sea Commission) thanked Mr Xavier Gizard for his presentation. She questioned whether it was appropriate to encourage the Article 158 group of regions to collaborate more closely with Association of Border Regions. In her view, peripheral regions and the Article 158 Regions did not necessarily share the same interests and therefore, she requested further information as to what was planned.

Mr Xavier GIZARD clarified that his earlier comment concerning closer collaboration between these various groups applied strictly to the place of regions in the innovation field. He reminded Members of the existence of the CPMR's innovation working group. In addition, he said, the informal group of regions known as "Article 158 Regions" was starting to work on specific policy themes, including innovation. The Association of Border Regions was also looking to organise an event to discuss cross-border cooperation on innovation in Vigo on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Therefore, the aim was to encourage these various partners to join forces where appropriate and on a pragmatic basis since this could only strengthen the outcome of their various activities.

Ms Josefina MORENO (Intermediterranean Commission) requested clarification on the nature of the various seminars to be held in the field of external cooperation activities during the coming months and the extent to which they were linked to FOGAR.

Mr Xavier GIZARD clarified that the seminar in May would be organised by the CPMR, but on behalf of the Platform, the body that acted as the main body to represent the interests of regional and local authorities in discussions on development issues with DG Development. The event would discuss the territorial approach to development and given FOGAR's privileged links to partners in regions from other continents, a certain number of regional authority partners from the FOGAR network would be invited to take part in this seminar. Secondly, on 10/11 May in Brussels, Commissioner Danuta Hübner would organise a seminar on regions, governance and globalisation. The Commission had requested that FOGAR chair the seminar's proceedings, which would last one and a half days. This was a commitment that has been undertaken by FOGAR and for which it hoped some remuneration would be provided.

Mr Xavier GIZARD went on to outline plans that had been referred to earlier at last year's General Assembly meeting to organise a seminar on the world food crisis either to take place at the end of this year but more probably in early 2010. This would improve recognition of the investment made by a number of CPMR Members to help regions from other continents tackle their food security problems. The FAO had been particularly supportive of the CPMR's efforts and on the basis of the mandate agreed in Bayonne, discussions were underway with respect to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the FAO and the CPMR on the one hand and the FAO and FOGAR on the other. In the meantime an invitation had been received from the President of Senegal, Mr Wade, for the organisation of the seminar in Dakar.

Ms Josefina MORENO expressed her satisfaction with the response she had received to her question.

There were no further requests for the floor and so the Political Bureau Members adopted the CPMR Work Programme for 2009.

Ms Marie-Ange ORIHUELA and Mr Damien PÉRISSÉ were then invited to take the floor.

#### TERRITORIAL COHESION, THE BUDGET REVIEW AND THE FUTURE OF REGIONAL POLICY

Before going on to outline the contents of the CPMR's draft position paper on the Green Paper concerning territorial cohesion, Ms Marie-Ange Orihuela began by setting out the various initiatives undertaken since the last General Assembly in the field of regional policy, on the EU budget review and in support of territorial cohesion.

She highlighted the CPMR's participation in several working groups on regional policy and governance organised under the French Presidency. The CPMR had also participated in the two major conferences that took place during the French presidency on this issue, i.e. the Cohesion Forum at the end of October and the informal Ministerial meeting in Marseille. During the Cohesion Forum, Mr Claudio Martini, Mr Xavier Gizard and Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian all had the occasion to make a speech and this provided opportunities to communicate some early key CPMR messages on the future of cohesion policy. The CPMR had been continuing its discussions with the EU Institutional partners. It had also taken part in the seminar entitled "Reforming the Budget, Changing Europe" that was held to launch the debate on the reform of the EU budget.

Ms Marie-Ange ORIHUELA (CPMR) then highlighted a number of points linked to the current state of play on the future of EU regional policy. Thus, there appeared to be widespread support for the continuation of an EU-wide regional policy applying to all regions and that this policy should be adapted to tackling global challenges. Moreover, an effective regional policy required implementation tools to achieve true multi-level governance. However more worrying were views being openly expressed that regional policy was an out-dated policy that accounted for a disproportionate amount of the EU's budget. It was important to address comments such as these, stressed Ms Marie-Ange Orihuela.

She then went on to outline methods used by the CPMR secretariat in preparing the CPMR response to the Commission's Green Paper. The secretariat had worked closely with the Geographical Commissions to ensure their input to the process. Discussions had been held with Mr Van Nistelrooij, the European Parliament's Rapporteur on the Territorial Cohesion Green Paper. The CPMR was the only interregional organisation that was asked to take part in an EP hearing on this policy area. Meetings had also been held with the expert that was working with the President Jean-Yves Le Drian on the CoR's response to the Green Paper.

The CPMR draft position paper was then presented. Territorial cohesion was fundamentally a political principle, stressed Ms Marie-Ange Orihuela. In addition, it was essential that the publication of the Green Paper be followed up by the publication of a White Paper. Yet current indications coming from within DG Regio pointed to a less ambitious follow up. It is feared that while there were plans for a follow-up document in spring, this document would have little political weight.

The European model of territorial cohesion was based on an implicit political pact between the Member States and their territories where competences and responsibilities were shared between the various tiers of government. In stark contrast to this vision, the Commission's Green Paper presented territorial cohesion as an essentially technical concept. It was important not to turn this discussion on territorial cohesion into a drawn out debate on the definition. Rather, the aim was to agree on how and the extent to which it should be applied. Territorial cohesion was about a long-term aim of achieving solidarity between territories and the means by which this solidarity manifested itself in legislative, budgetary and fiscal terms. The definition of territorial cohesion in the CPMR draft position paper focused on the key issues of equity between EU citizens and territories whilst recognising that obstacles remained for citizens in realising the full potential of EU membership due to real geographical barriers in accessing goods and services.

The application of territorial cohesion required an ambitious approach and therefore, territorial cohesion should apply not only to the EU's Cohesion Policy but also to other European policies with important territorial dimensions. In addition, territorial cohesion should be applied on an EU-wide basis. It was not a

concept whose application should be limited to regions of a certain type or characterised by geographical handicaps.

Governance was an essential element that underpinned territorial cohesion. It was important to mobilise the efforts of all actors responsible for implementing EU policies and therefore, it could only be achieved through multi-level governance, underlined Ms Marie-Ange Orihuela. For the CPMR territorial cohesion was viewed as a means to complement economic and social cohesion and moreover, the goal of achieving territorial cohesion was not incompatible with the goal of achieving competitiveness. On the contrary, the pursuit of territorial cohesion could help achieve improved EU competitiveness.

An important aspect absent from the Commission's Green Paper was the need to work towards territorial cohesion at the EU's borders. As regards territorial cooperation, concluded Ms Marie-Ange Orihuela, the CPMR proposed new rules of governance so as to allow improved opportunities for local and regional authorities who wished to work with Member State partners or the private sector to be able to do so more effectively.

Mr Damien PÉRISSÉ (CPMR) began by emphasising the need to gain an improved understanding of how territorial cohesion was driven by the outcomes of sectoral policies. Further analyses could for instance be undertaken by ESPON. The draft CPMR position paper on territorial cohesion demonstrated the link between territorial cohesion and some sectoral policies, but did not represent an overall and conclusive CPMR position statement on these policies.

As regards EU agriculture policy, there was currently very little recognition of territorial cohesion by this policy. This was highlighted by the system of direct aids that should ensure that farmers from different regions benefited from equal treatment but that in fact this was not the case. Similarly it was important to examine how rural development initiatives impacted on territorial cohesion. These various issues had not been addressed in the framework of the CAP Health Check proposals of last year.

In the transport field, it was stressed that whilst the CPMR fully shared this EU aspiration for reduced levels of greenhouse gas emissions, it was nevertheless important to recognise that peripheral regions may be more reliant on forms of transport that were responsible for producing higher levels of greenhouse gases. Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) took very little account of territorial cohesion since the prime concern was to address the congestion points of major transport axes within the European Union.

Important differences also existed between EU regions, which were not all in a position to achieve the same environmental or energy consumption reduction goals.

The Common Fisheries Policy also had potential strong impact on territorial cohesion. Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund provided one of the best examples of the implementation of the territorial cohesion approach.

Much could be done in the framework of the EU Research Policy without putting at risk the aim of achieving excellence in the research field. Better analysis of participation in the Framework Programme of the European Union through a regional perspective was an example of an important objective. Likewise as regards innovation policy, it was important to develop a broad approach that matched the needs of the regions concerned, which could for instance be carried out through the European regional policy. Innovation policy should not simply provide assistance to the strongest regions.

Lastly, the final version of the framework for regional state aid - reviewed in 2005 - finally took better account of regions' needs than initially foreseen. Further adaptations that could be made following the current economic crisis needed to take the territorial cohesion objective into account.

Mr Claudio MARTINI thanked Ms Marie-Ange Orihuela and Mr Damien Périsse for their presentations. The floor was then passed to Mr Emil Horcicka (Czech Ministry for Regional Development) to present the priorities for the Czech Presidency in the field of Regional and Cohesion Policy.

The Czech Presidency had set itself three priority objectives and the first was to pursue discussions on the future of Cohesion and Regional policy post-2013. Secondly the Czech Presidency would take forward the discussions on the concept of territorial cohesion, concentrating on the issues highlighted by the Commission Green Paper. The third priority was to pursue the objectives of the Leipzig Charter on the Territorial Agenda. In this respect, a series of meetings and events were to be organised by the Czech Presidency. In addition, a meeting of the Ministers with responsibility for regional affairs was scheduled for the end of April. A major conference devoted to the future of Cohesion Policy would take place at the end of March in Prague, explained Mr Emil Horcicka.

The Commission's Green Paper had launched a wide-ranging public discussion on the notion of territorial cohesion, he continued and the consultation process would be concluded at the end of February 2009. The CPMR's contribution to the discussions was warmly welcomed, said Mr Emil Horcicka. The preliminary results of this consultation process would be presented by Commissioner Hübner at the Informal Ministerial meeting in April. This would also be the time for discussions on the possibility of a White Paper to follow the Green Paper.

The Regional Policy conference scheduled for the end of March was intended to launch a wider debate on the future EU Cohesion Policy and to prepare the ground for the Informal Ministerial meeting. It would not only be the opportunity to discuss future cohesion policy but also the concept of territorial cohesion. Other events highlighted included the Summit of Regions and Cities in early March in Prague.

The Czech Presidency was also leading efforts on legislative changes to help the EU confront the severe problems of the economic and financial crisis. A package of legislative proposals had been received from the Commission which aimed to simplify existing Structural Fund programmes and to speed up spending. In conclusion, Mr Emil Horcicka hoped that the final proposals would be ready in the next weeks in order to facilitate the implementation of all desired legislative changes.

Mr Claudio MARTINI thanked Mr Emil Horcicka for his presentation. He then passed the floor to Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, CoR Rapporteur on the Green Paper.

Mr Jean-Yves LE DRIAN (Brittany) began by reiterating certain key political aspects linked to this subject. It was essential that the objective of territorial cohesion be entirely integrated into the Lisbon Treaty. The progress made on this issue was due in large part to the efforts of several actors, including the CPMR and President Martini, in the context of his work within the CoR's Constitutional Affairs Committee. The Commission had adopted a highly cautious approach in its preparation of the Green Paper which was underlined by its decision not to include a definition of territorial cohesion in the text. This cautious approach was also mirrored in the discussions that had taken place in the CoR. During the debate on the draft opinion, many amendments had been submitted seeking to restrict the document from including a definition. It was essential that the CPMR remained bold in its expectations and its demands during the discussions that lay ahead, underlined Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian.

He then highlighted three specific points. Firstly the issues where there was clear convergence between the views expressed by the CPMR and the draft CoR opinion that was scheduled for adoption in February 2009. Secondly, issues that still needed to be integrated into the CoR draft text. Thirdly those aspects of territorial cohesion which required further debate.

On the points of convergence, Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian agreed that territorial cohesion was a political concept and that the Commission's Green Paper should be followed-up by a White Paper. Also territorial cohesion did not only concern cohesion policy, but that it was a concept which must be taken into account by all EU sectoral policies. Moreover it was ludicrous to develop a territorial cohesion objective if the EU's sectoral policies then disregarded the need to take account of this principle. Funds available under the EU's Cohesion Policy were not simply available to mitigate for the damages reaped by sectoral policies. Multi-level governance was crucial in this respect, yet while subsidiarity was fully supported, this should not be used as a pretext for renationalising EU policies. Also the territorial cohesion objective should not be limited to the EU's border but should also be used to reinforce the neighbourhood policies.

Mr Jean-Yves LE DRIAN presented several issues that he believed should be taken on board in the draft COR text prior to its final adoption at the February plenary. These included the idea of establishing a European Territorial Pact, however, he stressed that the idea required further work at this stage. The EU's Maritime Policy too needed to be taken into account by the objective of territorial cohesion.

Mr Jean-Yves LE DRIAN then outlined four areas where he felt further analysis was needed. The first concerned indicators particularly in light of growing inequalities between regions and even within regions. This underlined the need for more complex ways of measuring territorial cohesion than just using the GDP indicator. The second concerned the request for all sectoral policies to undergo territorial impact studies. The question remained as to how to put this into practice. The third issue concerned the relationship between services of general interest and the objective of territorial cohesion where a number of legal uncertainties remained to be resolved. Finally, there remained the question of how the package of measures agreed by the Member States to help re-launch the EU would be implemented whilst at the same time taking account of

territorial cohesion. The discussions about territorial cohesion had only just begun and the CPMR had a key role to play in the outcome of this debate, concluded Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian.

Mr Claudio MARTINI then invited comments and questions from the floor.

Ms Annelie STARK highlighted that Västra Götaland Region had put forward proposals for the cultural sector to be included in the list of sectors characterised by a strong territorial dimension. It was requested that this point be included in the CPMR's position paper.

Mr Claudio MARTINI acknowledged the amendment and endorsed the request for the inclusion of this point in the CPMR text.

Mr Kevan LIM (East of England Regional Assembly) stressed that points 32 and 33 of the current text dealing with research and innovation matters, would need to be revised. The current wording implied that peripheral regions were prevented from developing their technological know-how due to accessibility problems. Furthermore, the CPMR position paper appeared to suggest that RTD programmes should be prioritising non-technological developments. The key issue was unrelated to issues of peripherality, but instead concerned a region's ability to gain access to communication systems. Also it was important to further acknowledge that the RTD Framework Programmes afforded huge opportunities to peripheral regions, notwithstanding the statistical problems that were evident.

As regards points 20 and 21 that dealt with transport and TENs, the problem of the proximity of medium-sized towns with major conurbation areas needed to be flagged up. In the case of the East of England Region it was in direct competition with London and so it was difficult to promote alternatives to these preferential itineraries for transporting goods. Also on transport there was the issue of how best to promote the successful development of the Motorways of the Sea. The CPMR's paper should stress that only through prioritising short sea shipping routes would this help the development of small ports.

Lastly on the issue of renewable energies, it was incorrect to state that peripheral regions were faced with disadvantages in terms of their production. Peripheral regions had enormous opportunities in this area however the major problem concerned how to gain access to the national grid for this energy supply. Therefore, accessibility was the real issue that should be highlighted.

Mr Leslie ANGUS (Shetland) underlined that the present period was critical for the economic and social future of European regions. Furthermore the vast majority of the EU's policies worked against the spirit of regional cohesion and this was highlighted by the example of negative developments in fisheries sector. Furthermore the lack of regard for territorial cohesion was demonstrated by serious maritime security problems experienced in the EU. Huge amounts of EU state aid was being poured into banks whilst at the same time it was deemed unacceptable to provide support to the EU's maritime industry. As peripheral maritime regions we needed to clarify our expectations from these discussions on territorial cohesion rather than on focusing on the need to provide a definition of the concept.

Ms Gunn Marit HELGESEN (Telemark - North Sea Commission) stressed the importance of adopting a positive and ambitious approach in these discussions. Territorial cohesion should not be limited to the least developed areas of the EU but all EU territories should be able to benefit from the territorial cohesion principle. Furthermore, the aim must be to achieve sustainable growth and balanced development across the whole of the EU and not to concentrate this growth in the prosperous areas. Concern for territorial cohesion must be reinforced in sectoral policies other than regional policy and true multi-level governance of policies would ensure that regional and local authorities were more tightly involved in the decision-making process. It was also important to involve the private sector. Cultural heritage was a key component of territorial cohesion and the point made by Västra Götaland needed to be integrated into the CPMR position. Finally, it was important to take account of a broad set of indicators to provide an accurate measure of territorial cohesion.

Ms Christel LILJESTRÖM highlighted the extensive work done in this area by the Baltic Sea Commission. Territorial cohesion should include the development of the border regions in order to ensure security in Europe and this point needed to be taken on board in the CPMR draft position paper. Also the points made by Ms Annelie Stark and Mr Kevan Lim were entirely endorsed by Mrs Christel Liljeström.

Mr Kent GUDMUNDSEN (Troms) recognised the work of the CPMR which was an effective basis to draw attention to the regional dimension of the EU. This cohesion policy was particularly important for the Northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland. In November 2008 the Commission had adopted a

Communication, which highlighted the effects of climate change and human activities in the Arctic and this paper proposed a coordinated response towards an EU Arctic Policy. This demonstrated how over time the world was turning its attention northwards. There were huge resources to be found under the seabed of the High North and it was crucial for this vast resource-filled area to be managed in a holistic way. Therefore, it was requested that policy developments in the Arctic and in sparsely populated areas be integrated into the CPMR paper.

Ms Marjatta VEIKAOJA (Ostrobothnia) flagged up paragraphs 16 and 17 which focused on sectoral policies. The conduit used for much of the EU's regional financial support was sectoral policies and therefore, it was important to concentrate discussions on these sectoral policies in future. Should the CPMR's position paper not be restructured so as to place the focus of the debate on the policies where regions were competent and directly involved, rather than following the structure as set out in the Commission's Green Paper? It was important for the CPMR paper to include all policy areas that were the focus of the CPMR's work.

Mr Roy PERRY (Hampshire) explained that his comments would represent those of the Atlantic Arc Commission which was currently finalising its position on the Green Paper. He stressed the importance of the CPMR's paper, highlighting the problems faced by all maritime areas whether or not they were peripheral. Also the position paper made little reference to maritime cross-border areas, such as those between France and England and that greater attention needed to be paid to these types of borders. Also the promotion of external cooperation activities and neighbourhood policies needed to be extended to cooperation with Canada and the US. The recent change of administration presented an opportunity to foster closer working relationships across the Atlantic.

Mr Sebastian SCHRÖDER (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) focused his comments on the idea of a European Territorial Pact. He opposed this proposal since this posed a risk with respect to the distribution of competences between various tiers of government for the management of public policies. Additional work was needed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different tiers of government. As regards point 18 of the document on the Common Agricultural Policy, he was unable to support this proposal also. For Mr Sebastian Schröder the CAP was a complex matter and it was not advisable to propose that territorial cohesion be applied to this policy area.

In response to several of the comments and questions Xavier Gizard underlined that the CPMR's position paper could not cover all sectoral policies. The ones that were included were purely to provide examples of policies where territorial cohesion had an impact. There would be opportunities in the future for in-depth and wide-reaching discussions on the raft of policies such as innovation policy, maritime policy, agricultural policy, etc. The aim of the CPMR paper was simply to identify a number of policies that had an important territorial dimension which needed to be taken into account. The paper did not represent a comprehensive set of CPMR views on the individual sectoral policies highlighted.

Mr Damien PÉRISSÉ shared the view expressed by Mr Kevan Lim that it was possible to take an optimistic and enthusiastic view towards the EU's activities in these areas. Several examples highlighted how regions in a rural, peripheral or a cross-border context could benefit enormously from investments in innovation and research, and from EU's policies in these fields.

However, some CPMR Regions expressed their fear that due to their peripheral or rural nature they faced the problem of accessing high technology. With regard to the EU's Framework Programme for Research, it was presently impossible for the Commission to analyse the link between this programme and territorial cohesion due to statistical problems.

The wording used in the CPMR's paper and its rationale were to consider what further developments were required of EU's research and innovation policies from the viewpoint of territorial cohesion. There was no contradiction between the views of Mr Kevan Lim and those highlighted in the CPMR text, which could certainly be modified to reinforce the positive aspects of the research and innovation programmes.

In response to points raised concerning energy matters, Mr Jean-Didier HACHE agreed with the views expressed by Mr Kevan Lim and that discussions on renewable energies should focus on the positive. Nevertheless, it was true that the issues such as security of energy supplies or pollution were matters that were felt particularly acutely by peripheral regions or regions located along borders. If left unattended the impact of these problems in peripheral areas would grow to the point where Europe as a whole would be

impacted. It was important therefore, to tackle problems at the periphery before they had the chance to become more widespread.

Mr Patrick ANVROIN (CPMR) underlined that Mr Kevan Lim's points regarding transport touched on a whole series of sensitive and pertinent issues in the transport field. These were all matters that would be examined by the CPMR TEN-T Working Group which had been set up recently and was now operational. Nevertheless, certain modifications and some redrafting of the CPMR position paper could be undertaken.

In response to the points made by Mr Sebastian Schröder on the Common Agricultural Policy, Mr Patrick Anvoin stressed that the contents included in the CPMR draft position paper represented the CPMR's adopted position for many months. These included demands for the CAP to take greater account of territorial cohesion and that improved tools were needed to analyse the territorial impact of the CAP and to ensure the genuine place of regions in these discussions. The main thrust of the CPMR's approach was to push for greater flexibility in agricultural programmes and better tools of governance for their implementation. Given their competences in this area German Länder had clear leadership responsibilities and would therefore benefit from these new tools of improved governance. From a technical viewpoint he felt there was no need to modify the contents of the text.

Ms Marie-Ange ORIHUELA agreed that the point proposed by Västra Götaland be integrated into the CPMR's texts. Likewise and as long as the Bureau Members agreed, there would be no problem with modifying the draft CPMR text to take account of the points made by the Baltic Sea Commission and those of Mr Jean-Didier Hache concerning the geostrategic importance of peripheral regions.

On the point concerning the inclusion of sectoral policies in the text, the aim was not to provide an exhaustive list of sectoral policies. However, in the more generic part of the document, i.e. points 16 and 17, some wording could be added to point out the existence of other sectoral policies that were also impacted by territorial cohesion (tourism and social affairs, for example). It was nevertheless important that the final document remained of a reasonable length.

As regards the notion of a European Territorial Pact, it was clear that much work was needed to be done but it was important at this stage to have clearly identifiable messages. The main elements of a European Territorial Pact were to highlight that territorial cohesion concerned not only cohesion policy but also the sectoral policies. In addition it was essentially based on political and not technical principles which drew upon the participation of all levels of governance in implementing it, from local and regional governments through to the level of Member States and the European Union. Furthermore multi-level governance would ensure the effective and coherent involvement of all levels of governance. There was certainly no intention to call into question sub-national governance arrangements that currently existed.

Mr Xavier GIZARD agreed that much remained to be done as concerned recognising the geostrategic importance of the Arctic. He suggested the idea of establishing some joint work between the North Sea Commission, the Baltic Sea Commission and the World Wide Organisation of Arctic Regions, in order to help the Arctic Regions amplify the voices of those bodies that represented their interests. As for the proposal of closer cooperation by the Atlantic Arc Commission with those across the Atlantic, Mr Xavier Gizard stressed that the development of this collaboration should not only extend to North America but also to Latin America. He suggested that the Atlantic Arc Commission consider possibilities to strengthen its work in this field using funds from the Atlantic Arc's internal interregional Interreg programme.

Mr Xavier GIZARD then asked Mr Emil Horcicka whether the CPMR could be invited to intervene during Regional Policy conference scheduled to take place at the end of March in Prague. In addition, since the Germany Presidency in 1999, the CPMR had systematically been invited to take part in the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for regional development. Mr Xavier Gizard hoped therefore, that the CPMR would be invited to the Informal Ministerial Meeting to be held at the end of April.

Mr Emil HORCICKA (Czech Ministry for Regional Development) expressed his thanks for having been able to sit through the CPMR discussions which he had found particularly useful. The CPMR was invited to take part in the meeting at the end of March. One of the sessions would focus on territorial cohesion and the CPMR's contribution would certainly enrich that debate. Furthermore, as regarded the Informal Ministerial Meeting, the CPMR would be afforded the same opportunities to participate in the discussions similar to its participation at the last Informal meeting in Marseille.

Providing some closing remarks, Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian stressed that the debate on territorial cohesion was only just starting and that it would not be as straightforward as was perhaps thought, given the diversity of views of the actors concerned across the EU. As concerns the fundamentals of this discussion, it was crucial to insist that territorial cohesion went to the core of the EU's principles.

Mr Claudio MARTINI summarised the necessary changes that needed to be made to the draft text. He endorsed that the proposals regarding the role of culture in territorial cohesion be integrated into the text. Those Members who were requesting modifications of wording in the text were invited to submit alternative wording for the points concerned by the afternoon, so as to enable examination and adoption of the modified document later. However, it was not possible to include in the CPMR position paper all the sectoral policies that were the subject of CPMR activities. The aim of the document was to highlight core political principles.

He thanked Mr Emil Horcicka for his presence and his intervention. He also expressed warm appreciation for the invitation extended to the CPMR to attend the Informal Ministerial Meeting at the end of April. It was now a tradition that the regions were invited to take part, clearly as observers but were afforded the opportunity to provide their input. He thanked everyone for their contribution to the debate and then invited Mr Jean-Didier Hache to begin his presentation on the recruitment of the future Secretary General.

## RECRUITMENT OF THE FUTURE SECRETARY GENERAL - PROPOSED PROCEDURE AND JOB DESCRIPTION

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Mr Jean-Didier HACHE (CPMR Islands Commission) presented the proposed procedure and job description of the future Secretary General. He stressed in particular that:

- The Political Bureau would have to designate someone to be in charge of the recruitment procedure.
- The call for applications would be circulated as follows:
  - By the CPMR General Secretariat, which would publish it on the CPMR website and place advertisements or announcements in the Agence Europe and Europolitique journals and in one leading French-language and one leading English-language newspaper. The expenses incurred would be covered by the CPMR's general budget;
  - By the CPMR's Geographical Commissions, notably via their websites;
  - By the CPMR's member Regions themselves, each Region being free if it so wished to circulate the call for applications in its country's regional or national press, or by any other means (e.g. website). Any costs incurred would be covered by the Region concerned.
- In the job description, it would be specified that:
  - The Secretary General's duties were to be carried out in Rennes and in Brussels;
  - The Secretary General of the CPMR was also the Secretary General of the CPMR's Administrative Council;
  - The Secretary General must have the confidence of the CPMR's Political Bureau and General Assembly.
- The Short-listing Panel would be made up of a mandated representative of the President of the CPMR and the President of each Geographical Commission; a representative of the Administrative Council; the Secretary General in office of the CPMR; the Director of the Secretariat in Rennes.
- The Panel would be tasked with selecting a maximum of 5 candidates from among the applications received. The candidates would be selected by consensus agreement among the Panel members. In the event of disagreement between the Panel members, each candidate would be selected on the basis of vote by an absolute majority (in the first instance) or by a relative majority (in the second instance).
- The 5 candidates short-listed by the Panel would be interviewed by the Political Bureau at its meeting in Odessa in June 2009, which would have to choose the future Secretary General and a substitute candidate. The voting procedure would be as follows:
  - Vote by secret ballot deposited in a ballot box, and counting of the votes after mixing the ballot papers;
  - In the first round, election by an absolute majority of votes cast;
  - If this was not achieved, elimination in the following round of the applicant or (in the event of a tie) applicants with the least votes, and a new vote held, repeating the procedure until a candidate was elected by an absolute majority of votes cast;

- If, after the vote, none of the applicants had been awarded the absolute majority of votes cast, the Political Bureau would vote on whether to issue a new call for applications or to ratify the choice by a relative majority.
- The candidate selected by the Political Bureau in June 2009 in Odessa would be presented to the General Assembly in October 2009 in Göteborg (Sweden). The candidacy would have to be ratified by an absolute majority of the votes cast. If this were not the case, the Assembly would have to vote upon whether to issue a new call for applications or to ratify the choice by a relative majority.

## Discussion

President Claudio MARTINI thanked Jean-Didier Hache for his presentation and gave the floor to Ms Christel Liljeström.

Ms Christel LILJESTRÖM underlined the importance of the clause stating that the future Secretary General must have the confidence of the Political Bureau and General Assembly. She also requested that the expression “assisted by” at the bottom of page 2 of the technical paper be replaced by “in dialogue with”. She indicated that, in order to obtain a maximum number of applications, it was most important that the future Secretary General should have a command of English. Knowledge of another European language, especially French, should be considered an added advantage rather than an essential criterion. Lastly she emphasised that the Short-listing Panel should be made up of elected representatives, i.e. the President of the CPMR and the Presidents of each Geographical Commission, and that they alone should have the right to vote. She invited the Political Bureau to designate Mr Jean-Didier Hache as the person in charge of the recruitment procedure.

A representative underlined that the Panel should not be made up only of elected representatives, and that the term of office of the new Secretary General should be 7 years rather than 5 years.

Mr Kevan LIM asked that the Administrative Council set an upper limit on the future Secretary General’s salary. He also held the view that the Secretary General in office should not be a member of the Panel.

President Claudio MARTINI proposed that the Short-listing Panel be made up of the President of the CPMR and the Presidents of the Geographical Commissions (or their representatives). The Panel should be able to benefit from the collaboration of Mr Jean-Didier Hache and the expertise of the Secretary General in office, the representative of the Administrative Council, and the Director of the CPMR General Secretariat.

Ms Gunn Marit HELGESEN stressed that it was important to have officials on the Panel as well as elected members. She welcomed Mr Kevan Lim’s proposal of an upper limit on the future Secretary General’s salary. She also underlined that the future Secretary General should have a command of English as well as French and that his/her personal qualities should be considered as more important than his/her intellectual credentials. Lastly, she agreed that the short list should consist of 5 candidates at the most.

Mr Roy PERRY indicated that at the end of the short-listing procedure a maximum of 5 candidates should be presented to the Political Bureau and that all should demonstrate a good knowledge of English and French. He said it was important to decide on the place of work where the new Secretary General would be based, in view of the difference in social costs between France and Belgium. Lastly he agreed that identifying an upper limit for the future Secretary General’s salary was essential.

Mr Enda BONNER (Donegal) thanked Mr Jean-Didier Hache for all his work. He argued that the Secretary General in office should be on the Short-listing Panel, and that the term of office of the future Secretary General should be limited to 7 years.

Mr Xavier GIZARD emphasised that limiting the term of office to a specific period of time would allow the CPMR’s political bodies to periodically verify that the activities carried out by the Secretary General still had the members’ confidence. He also underlined that the choice of a period of 5 years would link the Secretary General’s activities to the life of the EU institutions. As for the administrative aspects, he pointed out that French employment legislation made it impossible to stipulate a fixed-term contract. There were two possible solutions:

- to set aside funds in provision for severance pay;
- to nominate the future Secretary General as “Manager” of the Association.

Mr Jean-Didier HACHE welcomed the compromise solution proposed by the Political Bureau under which the Short-listing Panel would be made up of 7 voting members: the President of the CPMR; the Presidents of the Geographical Commissions (if the Commission Presidents were unable to attend the meetings they would be represented by their alternate representative, and if the latter were unable to attend they would have to nominate a substitute). The other members of the Committee would have an advisory role. He emphasised that the function of the Administrative Council representative on the Panel would be to provide an idea of the salary intended for the future Secretary General.

He noted that a majority of the Political Bureau agreed that the future Secretary General should preferably be a bilingual English-French speaker. He accepted the responsibility for the recruitment procedure of the future Secretary General and thanked the Political Bureau for this mark of their confidence.

He ended by saying that it should be made perfectly clear that, at the Political Bureau meeting in Odessa, in line with the Organisational Charter, only full members of the Political Bureau would be entitled to vote, or in the event of their absence, their alternate representative, or in the absence of the alternate representative, then a person specifically nominated by the full member.

President Claudio MARTINI summed up by saying that the Short-listing Panel would be made up of the President of each of the Geographical Commissions and the President of the CPMR, and that the Panel would be able to draw on the technical, scientific and practical support of the Secretary General, the President of the Administrative Council, and the representative of the General Secretariat. He invited Mr Jean-Didier Hache to request from the Administrative Council a note setting out the different suggestions regarding salary-related questions.

He proposed to bring the discussion on the recruitment of the future Secretary General to a close and invited Mr Jean-Didier Hache to present the results of the enquiry into the future of the CPMR.

#### FOLLOW-UP TO THE ENQUIRY ON "THE FUTURE OF THE CPMR"

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Mr Jean-Didier HACHE explained that the Executive Secretaries of the Geographical Commissions and the Secretary General had decided to meet in Marseille in December 2008 in order to draw up a series of proposals concerning the future of the CPMR, on the basis of the results presented to the Bayonne General Assembly. The main conclusions of this brainstorming session were as follows:

- The majority of members did not wish to change the name of the CPMR, since both the maritime and peripheral dimensions were still considered to be key objectives for the organisation's future. However, the possibility of making a small change - including the conjunction "and" in the name - had come up during the enquiry. The name of the CPMR would then become the "Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions of Europe". However, members did not view this proposal as urgent.
- The thematic priorities which CPMR should address in the coming years were:
  - o Territorial cohesion (which because of its cross-cutting nature impacts various different EU policies, including regional policy, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), State Aids, and transport policy). The enquiry results also pointed to the existence of a common position among members regarding the need to boost the CPMR's expertise in relation to some of these themes (State Aids, for example);
  - o Energy/climate change and the environment: members appeared to be in agreement on the strategic importance of a global approach to environmental and climate change challenges. For this reason they welcomed the close cooperation between CPMR and global partners through its active involvement in the nrg4SD network;
  - o Maritime policy (with its various strands on integrated maritime spatial planning, maritime safety, fisheries, tourism, etc.);
  - o The economy (issues such as employment, education and training, research and development, globalisation, and innovation). Members agreed that these areas should be actively monitored since they have a tangible impact on the policies that are key priorities for CPMR;
  - o Governance: in view of the strategic importance of governance in the implementation and efficiency of EU policies, the CPMR would afford special attention to this subject, if necessary seeking outside expertise.

- Cooperation: this theme could be extended to include issues such as immigration for example.
- With regard to CPMR's activities in the area of cooperation, a distinction needed to be made between the respective roles of the General Secretariat and the Geographical Commissions. To be more precise, the General Secretariat should be concerned with developing the policy aspects, aiming to promote cooperation either between EU Regions or with non-EU Regions. The General Secretariat could also be active on projects involving key issues which have a direct impact on the CPMR's political priorities. In all other cases, the role of the Geographical Commissions should be to manage cooperation projects. These could be of interest either to neighbouring countries or to other Geographical Commissions, or even have a link with other organisations. Any CPMR involvement in cooperation activities beyond the boundaries of the EU, in neighbouring countries, would have to be funded from outside the CPMR budget and be evaluated and decided on by the Political Bureau and the General Assembly, on the basis of very detailed proposals.
- The staff of the Brussels Office should be strengthened, with a view to increasing CPMR's activities while maintaining a strong presence vis-à-vis the European institutions. As far as the main office of the CPMR was concerned, there appeared to be a unanimous consensus among members for this to be maintained in Rennes.
- The short-listed candidates to the post of Secretary General who would be interviewed by the Political Bureau in Odessa should be asked to express their views on the priorities that emerged from the enquiry on the future of the CPMR and on their own views of what the priorities of an organisation such as the CPMR should be.
- The future Secretary General should ensure close collaboration between the General Secretariat and the Geographical Commissions. He should also be politically accountable for his activities to the Political Bureau and General Assembly. For this reason the CPMR Organisational Charter should be modified so as to enable these bodies to carry out, every five years, a consultation on the situation and mandate of the Secretary General.
- The Geographical Commissions should be strengthened and better integrated into the work of the CPMR. The General Secretariat should not seek to designate one particular director to follow the activities of the Commissions, but rather select the most appropriate person on the basis of the areas of expertise addressed by the Commissions. The Executive Secretaries should also be involved in each CODIR (Management Committee) meeting, and have the opportunity to meet together and with the Secretary General to discuss any relevant issues. They could work part-time for the General Secretariat (as was already the case with the Energy Working Group) and, lastly, they should be subject to the same rules as those applied to the Secretary General (vote of confidence every 5 years).
- The discussion on future membership criteria had resulted in a proposal to retain the status quo. Mr Jean-Didier Hache did however say that in the event of the number of non-maritime member Regions increasing in the future, we would need to consider whether to review membership criteria.

## Discussion

President Claudio MARTINI thanked Mr Jean-Didier Hache for his work and invited comments from the floor.

Ms Marjatta VEKKAJA welcomed the comprehensive character of the document and the high quality of the analysis that had been carried out. She insisted however on the importance of the maritime dimension for the future of the CPMR and, because of this, requested the following modification in Mr Jean-Didier Hache's note: the maritime theme should be shown as the first priority, before territorial cohesion.

Mr Roy PERRY agreed that it was necessary to strengthen the Brussels office. He also suggested that the CPMR organisation chart identify a group of people tasked with presenting the CPMR's activities to regional authorities of regions that were not members of CPMR.

Mr Kevan LIM invited the Political Bureau to adopt the General Secretariat's technical paper. He also said that this document was a good starting-point for developing discussions that would lead to the drafting of a final document to be submitted to the Göteborg General Assembly for consideration and approval.

President Claudio MARTINI asked whether there were any further comments, and then gave the floor to Mr Xavier Gizard.

Mr Xavier GIZARD stressed that it was essential to take into account the differences between the members' perception of the organisation, their expectations, and the political opportunities that could arise during the future negotiations. He reminded those present that in 2003 only 30% of CPMR member Regions had wanted to work on the maritime dimension of Europe, compared with 80% today. He invited the Political Bureau to take account of the results of the enquiry into the future of the CPMR, but also to allow the Conference the necessary leeway to be able to adapt to changing political contexts.

President Claudio MARTINI thanked Mr Xavier Gizard and gave the floor to Mr Henrik Ringbæk Madsen.

Mr Henrik Ringbæk MADSEN (Nordjylland) shared Mr Xavier Gizard's opinion. He also emphasised that if the main office of the CPMR remained in Rennes in the future, travel expenses would increase. He therefore invited members to consider the idea of progressively relocating the General Secretariat to Brussels.

President Claudio MARTINI agreed that political objectives had to be constantly reassessed in the face of an ever-changing reality. He welcomed the initiative proposed by his fellow-Presidents, aiming to ascertain whether a common solution existed at European level that would allow the Regions to work together to address the challenges of the economic crisis. Lastly he invited members to adopt the proposals as a plan of work.

Mr Jean-Didier HACHE agreed that the priorities listed were not ranked in any order of importance. He also offered to draft an amendment to the CPMR Organisational Charter introducing a clause concerning the political confidence that the future Secretary General would have to obtain before extending his term of office, at the end of each 5-year period. The amendment could be discussed by the Geographical Commissions and the result debated in Odessa.

Lastly he emphasised that he did not have the impression, from the debates of these last few months, that a majority of members shared Mr Henrik Ringbæk Madsen's opinion concerning the relocation of the General Secretariat from Rennes to Brussels.

## THE ENERGY/CLIMATE PACKAGE

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Mr Jean-Didier HACHE was pleased to report that the European Parliament had, at the committee stage, shared a significant number of the concerns highlighted by CPMR with regard to the package of climate change measures. He pointed out for example that concerning the CCS Directive (Doyle report) the necessity to further adapt the monitoring requirements to the uncertainty and operational difficulties associated with managing carbon capture and storage technologies in the marine environment had been highlighted.

He mentioned the major political confrontation that had taken place in December 2008 involving certain Member States and powerful European lobby groups (the cement and chemical industries etc.), which had resulted in a significant lowering of expectations in terms of the directives on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and on the emissions allowance trading system. He also indicated that although the ceiling target for reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions had been maintained at 20%, a large number of exonerations had been introduced into the emissions allowance trading system and this weakened the impact of the text.

He underlined the role played by the French EU Presidency in the ratification process of this package of measures. The effectiveness of the measures would, he said, depend above all on arrangements for the market for emissions permits.

He was satisfied with the CPMR's lobbying of the Council and Parliament, which had resulted in the inclusion in the energy/climate package of legislative proposals promoting:

- an enhanced role for the regional authorities;
- prohibition of discrimination in the transport of renewable energies, which was of crucial importance for the peripheral Regions and the islands;
- the simplification/improvement of the legislative context concerning the production of renewable energies;
- increased awareness and recognition of situations in which there was a conflict between the environmental situation of certain territories and the development of renewable energies;

- harmonisation between actions to promote biofuels and certain sustainable development practices.

Lastly he pointed out that the conclusions of the Copenhagen summit could have an important impact on the effective implementation of the energy/climate package. He therefore called upon CPMR to closely monitor developments in the international debate on climate change.

He concluded by outlining the future work programme of the Energy group, which intended to organise:

- seminars and workshops on the implementation of the energy/climate package in the peripheral Regions;
- a workshop on biofuels (in particular to address the issues concerning production and distribution in the peripheral Regions);
- a meeting on the subject of innovation in the peripheral maritime Regions;
- possibly a meeting on the theme of energy security (further to the request made by Mr Kevan Lim).

President Claudio MARTINI thanked Mr Jean Didier Hache and gave the floor to Mr Xavier Gizard.

## NEGOTIATION OF THE COPENHAGEN PROTOCOL, RESULTS OF THE SAINT-MALO SUMMIT AND THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES IN POZNAN

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Mr Xavier GIZARD addressed the meeting on behalf of President Jean-Yves Le Drian, who had had to leave. He first spoke about the European Commission's forthcoming Communication on adapting to climate change. Once this had been published, he said, the CPMR would prepare a position paper on the place of the Regions in combating climate change. The position paper, which would be submitted to the Political Bureau meeting in Odessa for consideration and approval, would stress the regional and local dimension to be promoted in the lead-up to the Kyoto II negotiations (Copenhagen 2009).

He highlighted the success of the nrg4SD summit, organised on 28 & 29 October 2008 in Saint-Malo at the initiative of Brittany Region. This had been attended by nearly 800 delegates, representing a large number of Regions from across the world. Representatives of the European Commission, the Climate Group, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environment Facility had also taken part. He particularly welcomed that fact that the Summit had facilitated the Regions' participation in the UN climate change conference in Poznań.

President Claudio MARTINI invited comments from the floor on the presentations given by Mr Jean Didier Hache and Mr Xavier Gizard.

### Discussion

Mr Henning GJELLEROD (Midtjylland) paid tribute to the work of the energy group and thanked the city of Aberdeen for having organised the seminar last autumn. This had provided an opportunity for an interesting and useful exchange of views in the presence of representatives of the European institutions, notably the Commission and the Parliament. He also welcomed Mr Xavier Gizard's comments, and stressed that there would be follow-up and an "after-Copenhagen" to monitor the impact of this new policy on the Regions.

Mr Kevan LIM welcomed the fact that a large number of the amendments submitted by the CPMR had been accepted. This showed that CPMR was able to exercise considerable influence in relation to its size. Coming back to the question of the impact on the territories, he said that certain European Regions would be unable to develop renewable energies because they lacked access to the market. He also underlined the fact that Europe would still be dependent on foreign sources of energy for another 20 or 30 years, and evoked with regard to this the recent deadlock between Russia and the Ukraine concerning the supply of gas.

There was a worrying possibility, he said, that certain governments could exploit this situation to exercise greater influence over their neighbours. He therefore thought it was necessary to look again at the way in which Europe dealt with the question of security of supplies, pending a shift towards renewable energy sources.

As people started to lose access to energy, to gas supplies, he stressed, it would increasingly be in their interests to shift to renewables, and governments would therefore turn to other alternative sources. He pointed out that certain European countries which did not have gas were turning to nuclear energy, and he saw this as only a first step.

President Claudio MARTINI said that the contributions had been very interesting and provided much food for thought. They would help the CPMR in preparing its participation in the Copenhagen Summit at the end of the year, which was a clear political objective for the Conference and its Geographical Commission. The Copenhagen Conference would also be, for him personally and for Tuscany Region, the last opportunity to present a political and institutional vision to the new players, in particular the new Commission, the new Commissioner for energy, etc.

#### THE GREEN PAPER ON FISHERIES

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Mr Xavier GIZARD indicated that since the Commission's Green Paper had not yet been published, this item would be tabled for discussion at the next meeting of the Political Bureau in Odessa.

#### THE EUROPEAN MARINE AND MARITIME RESEARCH STRATEGY

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Mr Patrick ANVROIN began by recalling that the European Commission had adopted a two-year maritime policy action plan, running until the end of 2009. He highlighted the fact that the action plan's priorities for 2009 coincided with certain priorities adopted by the CPMR and its Aquamarina working group. These included maritime spatial planning and governance. He gave details of four workshops the Commission was organising, to be held between 26 February and September 2009, and said that CPMR and its Geographical Commissions would endeavour to take part in these important events.

He then spoke of the European Commission's intention to develop the maritime dimension in other sectoral policies. He also welcomed the work carried out by DG Transport and Commissioner Antonio Tajani, leading to the publication of two Communications: "Towards a European maritime transport area without barriers" and "Strategic goals for EU maritime transport policy up to 2018". He was pleased that CPMR had been the first organisation to publicly support this initiative, thanks to its Communications Director.

He announced that the Committee of the Regions was preparing two reports: one on maritime spatial planning and one on the future of the maritime policy after 2009. The CPMR would be contacting Mr Michel Delebarre's team to highlight the concerns of the maritime Regions.

He thanked Brittany Region for its close collaboration in the work of the Aquamarina group. This group had organised three plenary meetings in 2008, and additional meetings had been organised by the thematic sub-groups, on clusters and maritime research, maritime spatial planning, etc. The next Aquamarina plenary meeting (3 March 2009) would also discuss the positioning of the CPMR with regard to the European maritime dimension after 2010, and the group's future (its mandate ends at the end 2009).

Lastly he mentioned that in November 2008 the CPMR had signed the Venice Declaration, the purpose of which was to set up a European advisory body which could be consulted by DG MARE.

Mr Damien PÉRISSÉ outlined the main points in the Policy Position on marine and maritime research:

- Stepping up the regional dimension of marine and maritime research: the paper stressed that action by the Regions was fundamental in order to exploit the assets of the territories in the field of marine and maritime research. It indicated that the results generated by marine and maritime research were of wider benefit to the European territories, far beyond the peripheral and maritime Regions alone. There was no contradiction between the European research policy's goal of excellence and policies pursued by the Regions; on the contrary, it was quite appropriate for the Regions to be fully involved in the integration of the European Research Area, especially in the field of marine and maritime research.
- Capacity-building: the paper underlined the CPMR member Regions' support for the Commission's proposal for research capacity-building and also welcomed the fact that studies by ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure) had taken on board certain issues related to marine and maritime research. It also indicated that all European research communities should be able to benefit from ESFRI infrastructures and that these should therefore also be accessible to those research communities located in territories other than those in which these infrastructures are situated. The CPMR member Regions were asking the Commission to make a point of examining the relevance of setting up special EU funding arrangements for networking between ESFRI infrastructures. The paper emphasised that the CPMR welcomed the recent publication of a report on the regional

dimension of ESFRI, calling for regional infrastructures to be identified that could potentially work alongside ESFRI facilities.

- Integration: the paper stated that the CPMR member Regions wanted a specific analysis to be made of how far integration had been achieved in the field of marine and maritime research in Europe, particularly with the backing of FP7, and that this should be cross-fertilized with the regional sea approach. It underlined that the CPMR also wanted effective coordination to be introduced between the different EU-led initiatives designed to integrate research activities (Networks of Excellence, Technology Platforms, Joint Technology Initiatives, etc.) and initiatives designed to integrate research funding schemes (ERA-NET).
- Synergies: The paper pointed out that the CPMR member Regions supported the aim to ensure greater synergy between the different funding schemes for marine and maritime research, especially in the framework of the ERA-NET projects. It underlined that this type of project only involved Regions to a small extent, and this led the CPMR to call for the following options to be examined, on the basis of an analysis of the marine and maritime research sector:
  - o creating new, more accessible funding schemes;
  - o or strengthening the existing mechanisms, giving the Regions a greater role;
  - o or improving coordination between the regional authorities and the actors involved in the ERA-NET schemes.
- Governance: the CPMR member Regions supported the European Commission's wish to create a stakeholders' Forum for marine and maritime research, and believed that careful consideration should be given to opening up the Forum to regional maritime groupings (clusters).

## Discussion

Mr Leslie ANGUS welcomed the results of the Aquamarina initiative and emphasised that this should enable a certain number of questions related to maritime spatial planning and maritime transport to be developed. He said that the Aquamarina group should also take into account other issues such as training for seafarers and maritime safety.

Mr Patrick ANVROIN thanked Mr Leslie Angus for his suggestions and pointed out that an Aquamarina sub-group on maritime safety had been launched, coordinated by the Swedish Region of Blekinge. He also said that the question of training for seafarers would be added to the agenda of the next Aquamarina meeting, on 3 March.

President Claudio MARTINI asked whether there were any amendments to the draft Policy Position on the European strategy for marine and maritime research. No amendments were proposed, and Mr Martini therefore asked the Political Bureau to adopt the Policy Position.

The Political Bureau unanimously adopted the Policy Position on the European strategy for marine and maritime research.

## THE FUTURE OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY, PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WORK LED BY CPMR

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Mr Patrick ANVROIN began by saying that each Member State had, before 1<sup>st</sup> June next, to negotiate an agreement on the new system of direct aid for the period after 2010. He wondered to what extent all the Regions, in their specific national context, would be able to influence the decisions of their respective agriculture ministers, with a view to obtaining a more balanced and more regional- or territory-based system. He went on to say that, following the failure of the French EU Presidency to reach an agreement between Member States on the future of the CAP, the Czech Presidency had decided to organise an informal meeting of agriculture ministers in the spring, aiming to reach agreement on a joint text before 1<sup>st</sup> June. He asked the representative of the Czech Presidency, present at the meeting, whether it would be possible for CPMR to take part in this informal council meeting.

He pointed out that a Final Declaration had been approved by the meeting in Nantes on 23 October 2008, which provided an interesting basis for the CPMR's future activities. He added that, following the decision taken by the CPMR General Assembly in Bayonne (October 2008), an inter-Commission working group on agriculture and rural development had been set up, under the joint coordination of Andalusia and Pays de la Loire. The purpose of the group was to prepare CPMR positions concerning the next review of the CAP. The

group would meet as and when required in line with the EU agenda, and would be made up of two representatives from each Geographical Commission as well as representatives from the two coordinating Regions, the CPMR Presidency (Tuscany Region) and the General Secretariat.

He asked the Political Bureau to consider whether it was appropriate to include an outermost region as a member of the group (this was not clearly specified in the terms of reference).

President Claudio MARTINI asked whether there were any amendments to the terms of reference of the agriculture and rural development group. No opposition was expressed and Mr Martini therefore asked the Political Bureau to adopt the terms of reference of the agriculture and rural development inter-Commission working group.

The Political Bureau approved the terms of reference of the agriculture and rural development working group.

Mr Patrick ANVROIN pointed out that, as stated in the Nantes Declaration, the CPMR member Regions supported the creation of a specific platform on the future of the CAP, which could also involve regional organisations such as AER and CEMR as well as other more specialised organisations. The General Secretaries of these organisations planned to meet on 2 March 2008 to endeavour to agree on a joint programme of work. Mr Anvroin also said that Mr Michel Barnier, the French Agriculture Minister, supported this initiative and stressed that the annual meetings of the platform should take place in the presence of the European Commission as well as the Parliament and Council.

Lastly he mentioned that the technical paper included a section on the role of the Regions and regional networks such as FOGAR in the setting up of international partnerships on the issue of the food crisis.

President Claudio MARTINI pointed out that the technical paper contained full details concerning the "Memorandum of Understanding" signed by the CPMR and the FAO. The adoption of this memorandum would, he said, give the CPMR an opportunity to obtain observer status with the FAO on work concerning questions relating to the CAP and European agriculture.

#### LAUNCH OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE TEN-T REVIEW

Mr Patrick ANVROIN reminded members that the General Assembly in Bayonne in October 2008 had tasked Aragón Region with setting up, chairing and coordinating an inter-Commission working group, the purpose of which was to prepare a CPMR position on key issues relating to the forthcoming review of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T). These issues included the place of the Regions in the "infrastructure" strand of the European Union's economic recovery plan, the environment and climate change, territorial cohesion, funding, relations with non-EU countries, coherence of the transport corridors and the participation of the Regions.

The group, composed of two members from each Geographical Commission with expertise in the field of transport, especially the TEN-T, and a representative from Brittany Region as chair of the Aquamarina group, met for the first time on 11 December 2008. Mr Anvroin also invited the outermost Regions to choose a representative who could take part in the meetings of the working group.

Mr Anvroin said that at its next meeting, on 17 April in Zaragoza, the working group would be able to discuss the conclusions of the CPMR Scientific Council meeting which was to be held on 16 April, also in Zaragoza. Lastly, he underlined that coordination between these two events could help to better prepare the CPMR's reaction to the Commission's Green Paper on the Trans-European Transport Networks.

#### Discussion

Mr Kevan LIM asked how Regions that wished to take part in the reflections of the TEN-T working group but were not themselves represented on it would be able to liaise with the group.

Mr Patrick ANVROIN clarified that if a Region wished to make its specific priorities known in the context of the group's work, it could do so by contacting its Geographical Commission representative.

Mr Xavier GIZARD said that the General Secretariat would do its utmost to ensure that information concerning the group's activities were circulated via the CPMR website. He also underlined that a seminar would be organised in 2010, probably in Aragón, under the Spanish Presidency of the EU. The aim of the

seminar would be to bring together around the same table all the peripheral and maritime Regions, the Commissioner in charge of Transport, newly-elected MEPs and the Spanish Presidency.

Ms Josefina MORENO welcomed the creation of the working group and proposed that, in addition to the Executive Secretaries, a representative of each Geographical Commission should be delegated in line with the theme (maritime or road transport, etc.) to be addressed in the group's meetings. She therefore proposed that each Commission be allowed to select a minimum of three experts (on sea, road, and air transport) who would attend the meetings in turn.

Mr Patrick ANVROIN proposed that Ms Josefina Moreno's request be discussed at the next meeting of the TEN-T group.

President Claudio MARTINI asked whether there were any amendments to the terms of reference of the inter-Commission working group on the review of the Trans-European Transport Networks. No opposition was expressed, and Mr Martini therefore asked the Political Bureau to adopt the terms of reference.

The Political Bureau unanimously approved the terms of reference of the inter-Commission working group on the review of the Trans-European Transport Networks.

#### ADOPTION OF THE CPMR POLICY POSITION ON THE GREEN PAPER ON TERRITORIAL COHESION

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President Claudio MARTINI opened the session and gave the floor to CPMR Directors Marie-Ange Orihuela and Damien Périssé.

Ms Marie-Ange ORIHUELA and Mr Damien PÉRISSE presented the amendments to the draft policy position on the Green Paper on territorial cohesion.

Mr Kevan LIM pointed out that the amendment to point 20 should be moved to a different place in the same paragraph.

President Claudio MARTINI put the amended Policy Position to the vote.

The Political Bureau unanimously adopted the Policy Position on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.

#### CPMR'S COMMUNICATION POLICY: PROPOSALS FOR PARTNERSHIP IN PARTICULAR WITH EURONEWS

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Mr Enrico MAYRHOFER (CPMR) began by underlining the important position held by Euronews in the spectrum of international digital news broadcasting. For example, he said, Euronews was broadcast in 139 countries, its programmes were translated into 8 languages, and it was watched by 17% of European citizens at least once a week.

Mr Mayrhofer outlined Euronews' proposal for a programme entitled "SHORES". This involved the making of six 8-minute documentary reports showing examples of best practices in the Regions on various aspects of maritime affairs. Each region would be asked to contribute € 30,000 to the costs of each programme. This included all the costs of producing the programme, translating it into 8 languages, and broadcasting it on the Euronews channel daily for one month.

#### Discussion

Mr Roy PERRY thought the data concerning Euronews' distribution and audience were over-optimistic. He said however that the proposed collaboration could be more advantageous if it were extended to include private firms, which could help to cover the costs charged to the Region for producing the programmes.

Mr Enrico MAYRHOFER emphasised that he had confidence in the reliability of the data on Euronews' audience and distribution. He said that he would enquire about the possibility of private firms participating in the project through some sort of sponsorship scheme.

Mr Kevan LIM supported the proposal to get private firms involved in the "SHORES" project. He also asked for further details as to the daytime slot in which the programme would be shown.

Mr Enrico MAYRHOFER said that the programmes would be repeated several times. He pointed out that the cost of making the programmes was not excessive if we took into account the opportunity they offered to show, for example, the success of the island of Samsø in Denmark in the field of renewable energies several times a day and over a period of one month.

President Claudio MARTINI thanked Mr Enrico Mayrhofer for this interesting presentation. He underlined the possibility of keeping in contact with Euronews in order to obtain further information, pending the Regions' reaction to this initiative.

#### NEW MEMBERSIPS / WITHDRAWALS

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Mr Xavier GIZARD said there were no admissions or withdrawals. As was the case nearly every year there were a few Regions, notably Calabria, Campania and Lazio, and some small Regions from Morocco and Cyprus, with outstanding membership dues. He was pleased to be able to announce that the CPMR should in principle receive two applications for membership before June, from a German Region and a Dutch Region.

With regard to the 2008 accounts, he explained that the chartered accountant would start examining these the following week and that a first analysis would be carried out by the auditors mid-February. The Administrative Council would meet in April to examine the 2008 accounts. These would then be submitted to the Political Bureau meeting in Odessa in June 2009.

#### VARIOUS FINANCIAL QUESTIONS: CONTRIBUTION TO THE "ANDERS GUSTÅV MEMORIAL FUND"

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Mr Xavier GIZARD asked the Political Bureau to consider the idea of making a small donation to the "Anders Guståv Memorial Fund". Mr Guståv had been a Vice-President of CPMR and a very active representative of Stockholm Region in the Baltic Sea Commission, of which he had been President.

President Claudio MARTINI emphasised that Mr Anders Guståv had always played a very active role in the CPMR and welcomed the creation of a Memorial in his honour. On the basis of the indications given by the Political Bureau, the fund would be contacted with a view to making a contribution from the CPMR.

He also thanked Mr Emil Horcicka, representing the six-month EU Presidency, for his contribution to the Political Bureau's work.

#### CONCLUSIONS

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President Claudio MARTINI warmly thanked the Region of Midtjylland for its welcome, and declared the meeting closed.