



**CONFERENCE DES REGIONS PERIPHERIQUES MARITIMES D'EUROPE**  
**CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS OF EUROPE**

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## **CPMR REPORT**

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CPMR activities this year have been organised to serve its two main objectives:

- reducing peripherality ie promoting a more balanced development of the EU
- enhancing the maritime dimension of Europe

But 2005 is a special year which will be very telling about the nature of the European Union and how it is evolving.

- On 16th and 17th June the Heads of State or Government will meet in Brussels to adopt the financial perspectives for 2007-2013 - or so we hope and consequently design the future of the cohesion policy.
- It is the year of the ratification of the constitutional Treaty (by referendum or approval by the Parliaments). There is still an important question on the answer that could be given to the results of the French referendum.
- It is the year of the launch, by the European Commission, of a green paper on European Maritime Policy.

### **I. THE ENHANCEMENT OF EUROPE'S MARITIME DIMENSION**

In order to contribute to the Green Paper on European Maritime Policy, CPMR set up the project called "Europe of the Sea" with now more than 50 partners and succeeded in establishing a close relationship with the task force in charge of this green paper (Joe Borg, Commissioner in charge of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs came to the CPMR Political Bureau in Santiago de Compostela in January, the coordinator of the Task Force came to a working session at the General Secretariat in Rennes).

The CPMR Scientific Council is participating in this work too and held 2 meetings in Portugal with high level experts (October 2004 Lisbon, April 2005 Faro).

Regarding the Common Fisheries Policy, the CPMR's working group is working on arrangements concerning regional government participation in the Fisheries Advisory Committees and more generally, organising a partnership between the maritime regions and political and socio-professional bodies involved in the Fisheries sector. In addition, the European Commission has commissioned the CPMR to organise interregional meetings and thematic conferences on the common fisheries policy (follow up of the PESCA programme).

On the maritime safety side, at its 9th Session, the Assembly of the IOPCF decided to grant the CPMR the status of permanent observer. A delegation of the CPMR met the IOPCF Administrator, Mr Mans Jacobsson, in order to step up joint action between the two organisations. Moreover, the results of the fact-finding mission on transnational cooperation and maritime safety in which the CPMR took part have been presented to the European Commission and member States.

So we are hopeful that the maritime dimension will be better enhanced at the European Union level for the benefit of our maritime regions.

### **II. SECTORAL ISSUES**

Following the European Agenda, CPMR expertise has been dedicated to:

- Research and innovation.

CPMR organised a seminar in Valencia, last 11 March, in partnership with Eurada, on the basis of the results of their common working group, led by Västra-Götaland/Valencia. The conclusions were made in due time to influence the preparation of the FP7 with the aim of securing an appropriate place for the regions, and introducing cohesion and the maritime dimension.

- Regional state aid.

CPMR organised a seminar in Oviedo on 18 April. Taking as its basis the contents of the consultation launched in January 2005 by the DG for Competition which undermines the principles of economic, social and territorial cohesion. The seminar aimed to draft proposals leading to a system of aid that would be effective and fair in the future Europe of 27. Further to this seminar, DG Competition expressed interest in further contact.

- Territorial cooperation.

The CPMR and AEBR (Association of European Border Regions) jointly organised a seminar on "European Territorial Cooperation after 2006: Proposals from the Regions" in Taormina (Sicily - I) on 21 & 22 October 2004. The concrete proposals CPMR made came just at the right time to enhance the European Commission's proposals and provide input for the discussions on this issue within the European Parliament and national governments.

### **III. THE FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES AND THE FUTURE OF COHESION POLICY.**

Since 2000, CPMR has been campaigning for a fair and ambitious regional policy. It scored an early victory by managing to have the Commission take on board as its own the proposals it made on the future of regional policy. A second victory was won when it came to the European Parliament report and the opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the Third report on Social and Economic Cohesion.

CPMR is now continuing its work, trying to convince the parties involved in the negotiations of the importance of having an ambitious regional policy in an enlarged Union for the 2007-2013 period.

It has therefore organised a series of meetings with some of the Member States that signed the 1% letter (Germany, France, the Netherlands and Sweden), and is continuing to lobby the rapporteurs at the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions. This channelling of expertise and opinions based on convictions to the European Parliament is fundamental, because, along with the Council and the Commission, it must reach an interinstitutional agreement.

The CPMR's book "Objective 2009: A Giant Leap for Europe, One Small Step for the Regions", did provide European decision makers with a well-founded argument in favour of having an ambitious regional policy. The CPMR's expertise and political positions have been widely advocated, and its President, Claudio Martini, has been promoting them in various high level meetings (19-20 May Wroclaw Summit of Towns and Regions organised by the Committee of the Regions, 3 March, Brussels conference organised by the European Commission on "Cohesion and the Lisbon Agenda: the role of the Regions", 24 February, territorial Dialogue with the President of the EC M. Barroso).

But the negotiations are far from being won. The Luxembourg Presidency of the Union has just proposed a compromise on the financial perspectives for 2007-2013, it advocates a budget that is much closer to the position of the so-called "gang of six" (Germany, France, UK, Netherlands, Sweden, Austria that did not wish to exceed 1%, of the Gross National Income (GNI)) than the European Commission's proposal of 1.24%. Claudio Martini, President of the CPMR denounces these "derisive budget agreements" in a declaration addressed to the representatives of the European institutions and Member States.

The chances to reach an agreement in June are thin. The climate for negotiations which was already complicated by the new political situation in Germany is now closely linked to the results of the referendum on the constitutional Treaty.

There is still time and room for campaigning. The draft deliberation which the CPMR has suggested that regions might adopt and forward to the Presidents of the European institutions and the States from which they come is still at your disposal.