Introduction

From the end of 2022 to the dawn of 2023, the Atlantic Arc Commission geared up for the upcoming year with the development of several strategic activities for the Atlantic.

These months will be a time of many challenges and opportunities for the AAC: key discussions on the future of the Atlantic Macro-Region, a General Assembly in Cardiff, Wales in May, and a joint preparation for the Spanish Presidency of the EU Council starting in July 2023. For the smooth cooperation and joint contributions to set the AAC priorities into motion, we wish to thank all of the AAC regions for their collaboration and fruitful exchanges.

In this Flash Info, you will find the latest activities performed by the Atlantic Arc Commission. We wish you a pleasant reading,
PHOTO BY MARTIN R. SMITH

The Portuguese government took over the Atlantic Maritime Strategy’s Presidency for 2023 and addressed a public message revealing preliminary hints on the future priorities for this year.

Calling for a debate on Blue Economy with the participation of all stakeholders including regional authorities, Portuguese government shared their ambition to organise a Ministerial meeting in the context of the Strategy, to further deepen the international dimension of the AAP 2.0, and underlined the importance of a transversal consideration of innovation across all pillars. Previously in 2022, the Portuguese representatives agreed on a meeting with the AAC in 2023. Read the full message here.

Next Atlantic Strategy Committee meeting will be held on March 30, Lisbon.

UPDATE ON THE ATLANTIC STRATEGY

Revision of the Atlantic Strategy Terms of References

On November 30, the AAC participated in the last Atlantic Strategy Committee under the Spanish Presidency of the Strategy in Cadiz, Spain. This meeting closed the revision process of the Atlantic Strategy’s Terms of References, set as a main priority of the Spanish government to provide more clarity to the governance. The overall text included many of the AAC amendments, with more references to Regions, possibility for the AAC to suggest observers, improved coordination processes, inclusion of a territorial approach for the National Hubs, development of flagship projects. However, systematic involvement of the regions in national delegations to the ASC was not retained. The AAC will continue calling for greater involvement of regional authorities.

Regions high on the agenda of the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference 2022

On December 1-2, 2022 in Cadiz, Spain, the Spanish Government closed its year of Presidency hosting the Atlantic Maritime Strategy annual event. Commissioner Sinkevicius opened the ceremony with a message underlining the vital role of the regions for effective resilience and sustainable Blue Economy in the Atlantic. The Atlantic Arc Commission echoed his words with the organisation of a joint workshop on RIS3s with DG MARE, a panel discussion on Atlantic Blue SMEs together with FANBEST, ASPBAN and SAFER project, and showcased the role and realisations of regions to contribute to the EU Mission Ocean. Learn more.

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**ACCESSIBILITY & ATTRACTIVITY**

**AAC Transport Working Group Meeting: TEN-T negotiations, potential of a Macro-Region**

On January 30, 2023, the Atlantic Arc Commission Transport Working group met for an update on the TEN-T negotiations for the Atlantic area. Lucas Bosser, CPMR Director for Transports, provided an overview of the current amendments and positions of the European Parliament and EU Council. [Have a look at the CPMR Maps here](#).

Ma Mercedes Vaquera & Germán Barrios, Representatives from RTA-ATN, presented a socio-economic study on the Atlantic Corridor. This meeting was also an opportunity to open the discussion on the potential of a macro-region to improve connectivity together with Tarmo Ots, Policy Area Coordinator on Transport of the Baltic Macro-Region. The AAC agreed on sending a letter to the European Parliament on TENT-T before TRAN Committee vote expected in March 2023, and will work on a transport priority for the future Atlantic Macro-Region. [Read more](#).

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**EU Tourism: European Commission’s call for members of an expert group**

In order to support the Transport pathway for tourism in its co-implementation phase to advance in the green and digital transition, and improve resilience of the tourism ecosystem, DG GROW opened a call to select members for the "Together for EU Tourism" expert group. Members of the group will be expected to support coordination on EU legislation, actions and programmes on tourism, exchange experience and good practice, and follow up in the European Agenda for Tourism 2030.

Deadline for submission: 03 March 2023

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Reminder! [The survey](#) on a Transports Workplan piloted by Basque Country government is still open for submissions.
CPMR Regions meet PECH Committee MEPs on the future of the CFP

On the initiative of the CPMR and hosted by Chair of the Fisheries Committee MEP Pierre Karleskind, regional representatives gathered for an exchange of views on the future of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) with members of the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament. Claire Hugues, Vice-President of Pays de la Loire Region and Chair of the CPMR Fisheries Working Group, pointed out the importance of reviewing the governance of the CFP as well as the involvement of regions considering their competences not only in fisheries but also in sectors such as research and innovation. Atlantic representation was also ensured by the participation of Daniel Cueff, Vice-President for Maritime and Coastal Affairs of Brittany, Rosa Quintana, Regional Minister of the Sea from Xunta de Galicia, John O’Fearraigh, Regional Councillor in Donegal County Council and José Manuel Martinez, Director General for Fisheries and Aquaculture for Andalucia. Read more

EU NATURE RESTORATION LAW: WHAT ARE THE STAKES FOR ATLANTIC REGIONS?

In the observation of important biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystems in the EU, the European Commission came out with the proposal of a regulation on nature restoration in July 2022, aiming at contributing to long-term and sustained recovery of biodiversity across the EU land and sea areas and to climate mitigation and climate adaptation objectives. The regulation will set binding targets and obligations which should cover at least 20% of the EU’s land sea areas by 2030, and ultimately all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

In order to reach the several targets on terrestrial, coastal and freshwaters, marine, agricultural, urban, forest ecosystems and pollinators, Member States will have to develop a series of measures in National Restoration Plans within two years after the regulation enters into force. The ERDF is targeted as one of the instruments to fund restoration. What are the stakes for Atlantic Regions? Read more in our policy analysis.
Partnership Agreements and reallocation of Cohesion policy funds

As all Partnership Agreements under Cohesion policy 2021-2027 have been adopted, CPMR Secretariat analysed how certain provisions established in the Cohesion Policy Regulations have been addressed by Member-States, focusing on the greater flexibility provided to national authorities to reallocate Cohesion Policy funds across types of regions and to other funds or instruments. The analysis shows that “there is a non-negligible appetite for transfers by national authorities (...) accounting for over 18 billion EUR or around 5% of total Cohesion Policy funds being transferred for the 2021-2027 period”.

Focusing on Atlantic States, France and Ireland are part of the group of Member States that use transfers among regions, derogating from the rule on the categories of regions (less developed, transition and more developed) while, Portugal and Spain do not transfer much but have considered transfer among funds. The broader analysis of States’ practices of reallocation has shown that the regional dimension could be losing its status as a core principle for the implementation of Cohesion Policy.

Read the full analysis here

CPMR Cohesion Core Group will be held on March 22, Linköping, Sweden.
UPDATE ON AAC PROJECTS

A new project on Skills in Offshore Renewable Energies. FLORES, standing for “Forward Looking at the Offshore Renewable Energies”, kicked-off in January 2023. The project will feed into the actions of the Pact for Skills on ORE, coordinating a large-scale partnership and improve up-skilling and re-skilling training offer adapted to the specificities of each sea-basin, with pilot actions to be developed at regional level. The AAC will contribute to the analysis of current skills and adaptation of training offer for the Atlantic. Read more.

Kick-Off of the Mission Ocean Lighthouse for the Atlantic/Arctic. Kicking-off with the EU Mission Ocean in Cork, Ireland, last November, BlueMissionAA will structure and mobilise a broad community of stakeholders across the Atlantic and Arctic Sea basins to build an effective governance structure for the achievement of the Mission’s objectives. The AAC will especially be involved in an analysis of Atlantic RIS3s on their contribution to the mission’s objectives to protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity and boost coastal resilience. Learn more.

AspBAN Bootcamp. From 23-25 January 2023, the AspBAN project gathered more than 35 startups, port authorities and investors to boost the implementation of innovative and sustainable economic activities in Atlantic ports. For this occasion, the AAC co-produced a database of Atlantic regional supports to guide startups in their development in the Atlantic. The AAC will also be in charge of the organisation of a SEARICA event, back-to-back with the final conference of the project. Dates to be circulated soon!

The AAC is the successful tenderer of the Transatlantic Pilot project! Submitted by MEP Younous Omarjee in 2021 at the European Parliament with the support of the AAC, this pilot project will aim at boosting transatlantic exchanges on Green Transition. DG REGIO and the AAC Secretariat are currently working together on its future development.

Submission of a project proposal on green shipping. Piloted by Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique, the AAC joined SMARTDEC project’s proposal under the Interreg Atlantic Area first call. If successful, the project will aim to support decarbonisation of waterbone transportation. The AAC would contribute to liaise with regional authorities and EU actors to capitalise on the projects’ outcomes.

Full list of AAC projects available here.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CPMR/ AAC EVENTS

March 01, Brussels. AAC Seminar on the Atlantic Macro-Region

March 09, Cartagena, Spain. CPMR Seminar on Transports "The role of maritime ports at the crossroad of energy transition"

March 10, Cartagena, Spain. CPMR Political Bureau

March 30, Lisbon, Portugal. Atlantic Strategy Committee

March 22, Linköping, Sweden. CPMR Cohesion Core Group Meeting

May 23-24, Cardiff, Wales. AAC General Assembly

June 8-9, Florence, Italy. CPMR Political Bureau

November 15-17, Saint-Malo, France. CPMR General Assembly & AAC Plenary

EXTERNAL EVENTS

March 02-03, Ferrol, Spain. Galician Offshore International Hub

March 21-23, Bilbao, Spain. World Maritime Week

May 24-25, Brest, France. European Maritime Days

May 23 - June 08, Saint-Nazaire, France. The Arch 2023

October 10-11, Vigo, Spain. EurOCEAN 2023 Conference