



# Minutes of the Atlantic Arc Commission's Atlantic Strategy Group

17 July 2018 - Brussels (13h30 – 17h30)

## AAC's ATLANTIC STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

**Sophie Cochard, Director of Pays de la Loire representation in Brussels**, welcomed the participants and thanked **Svetoslav Stoyanov, Policy Officer at DG MARE, European Commission (EC)**, for presenting the European Commission's work on the [Mid Term review of the Atlantic Strategy Action Plan](#).

### 1. Presentation of the National workshops by DG MARE

**Svetoslav Stoyanov, Policy Officer at DG MARE**, Unit A3 – Sea-basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, outlined that one of the conclusions of the Midterm review highlighted the Action Plan's priorities were too broad.

As suggested by the AAC, the national workshops will be held in each Atlantic Member State from September to November. They will enable Member States to consult key experts and stakeholders to help narrow down the Atlantic Action Plan. Each Member state will choose a thematic area of interest and will moderate debates on how to include it in the Action Plan.

Together with Ernst and Young (EY), DG MARE produced a concept note to help Member States organise these workshops (see in attachment). Seven thematic areas have been identified as important for the Atlantic: Bioeconomy, Ports as blue economy hubs, Connectivity, Blue skills and ocean literacy, Marine litter, Marine Renewable Energy, Recreational boating. The last two themes were suggested by the AAC and added by Portugal. The European Commission will invite up to 10 experts from Member States other than the host country to foster transnational debates.

Portugal will take over the EU presidency in 2019 and is willing to reinforce the governance of the strategy to implement the new priorities, liaise with specific ministries in each country, measure the implementation and draw lessons from this.

**Pauline Caumont** highlighted the overlap between "Connectivity" and "Ports as Blue Economy Hubs". She mentioned the AAC can help to invite the relevant experts for each national workshop.

### 2. Debates on future Governance of the Atlantic Strategy

**Pauline Caumont** developed the position of the AAC on the Governance issue. The AAC is currently analysing how to foster strategic discussions within the ASG. Several issues are being considered:

- the benefits and drawbacks of a rotating presidency;
- coordination between the ASG, the high-level group, and the sectoral ministries;
- the benefit of having a region/managing authority co-chairing the ASG;
- the benefit of having a joint meeting once a year between the ASG and the AAC's Atlantic Strategy Group;

- liaison with other DGs and specific ministries;
- the role of the assistance mechanism to help strategic decisions to be taken within the ASG, accompany small project leader to scale-up their projects and monitor results.

**The Basque Country** represented by **Mikel Anton**, Director in charge of EU Affairs and **Marta Marin**, Head of the Brussels office and asked the AAC regions to look at the benefit of applying to a Macro-region. Other neighbouring Macro-regions are currently being develop, diminishing the governments' attention to the Atlantic Strategy.

**Pauline Caumont** took note of this suggestion and provided some background information. Calling for a Macro-region is a three-year process. The European Parliament elections will give uncertainty to this process.

**Lucille Erhart**, policy officer for the **CPMR Baltic Sea Commission**, suggested that participants should evaluate the benefits of having a macroregional strategy based on the Macro-region Study, released by the European Commission in December 2017.

**Svetoslav Stoyanov** recalled that DG MARE is currently quite open to improving the governance. He explained that for a Macro-region, DG REGIO would be the leading DG in the governance body. If Atlantic regions think it can better match funding with the priorities of the strategy, they can go for it, but he recalled that DG REGIO is seeking to optimize its work.

- ➔ A questionnaire will be drafted by the AAC Secretariat on the governance of the Atlantic Strategy and will be sent to regions in September.
- ➔ See [Pauline Caumont's Powerpoint Presentation](#)

### ***2.1. Debate on the further alignment between the Atlantic Strategy and INTERREG programmes***

**Inma Valencia**, head of the Brussels office of Cantabria, mentioned the consultation, to be launched on 3 September, on European Territorial Cooperation.

**Pauline Caumont** shared the conclusions of her recent discussions with DG REGIO. It is still not guaranteed that the Atlantic Area is safeguarded, even though it supports an Sea Basin strategy, as France and Ireland are not clear on their will to spend money for this programme.

**Caitlin Conneely**, Assistant Director of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA), asked about the follow-up on the first Managing Authority network, held during the last Atlantic Stakeholder Platform in Glasgow in 2017. She said that these meetings are important for the further alignment of future ETC programmes with the Atlantic strategy.

**Svetoslav Stoyanov** advised there will be a meeting at the Vigo Conference, even though registration for the event has not been launched. He said the new Assistance Mechanism will be able to organise more meetings of managing authorities. He agreed that liaising with Managing Authorities is important for the identification of common Smart Specialisation Strategies between regions in the Atlantic and to build the new Atlantic Action Plan as a "big Atlantic Smart Specialisation Strategy".

Participants welcomed the UK presidency's initiative to hold the annual INTERREG Atlantic Area event as a back-to-back meeting with the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform in Vigo.

**Pauline Caumont** outlined the CPMR's activities regarding the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programmes. Based on a questionnaire sent to regions, the CPMR's Secretariat has developed 10 messages on the future of ETC. One of the key elements is the defense of maritime cross-border programmes.

→ [See CPMR's Technical Note](#)

→ [See AAC's Comillas Political Declaration 2018](#)

On 18 July, they will be presented to the assistant of Mr Arimont, MEP rapporteur on this dossier, who is currently drafting the report. They will be further developed during a meeting with political representatives from each of the CPMR's Geographical Commissions and Mr Arimont in September. On 4 December, the CPMR, as secretariat of the Parliamentary Intergroup SEARICA, will organise a meeting on Maritime INTERREG programmes.

**Séverine Ernest, for Pays de la Loire Region**, stressed the importance of having programmes with a maritime dimension, as some other programmes, such as the North-West Europe programme, do not always welcome maritime projects.

### **3. Update on CPMR's internal business**

The CPMR has sent a questionnaire to a core group of member regions to evaluate the services provided by the CPMR General Secretariat to its Members. As a consequence, CPMR's secretariat is rethinking the organisation of its work around three pillars: - I. Territorial Cohesion - II. Sustainable and Maritime Communities - III. Global Agendas. A thorough analysis will then identify the different types of activities and classify them into three categories: Core Areas - Regional Specific Priorities - Watching Briefs.

The Atlantic Arc regions will be kept informed about this process and will be able to contribute to the ongoing internal debate, particularly during the CPMR General Assembly (17-19 October). In March 2019, a first draft of the CPMR Strategic Plan should be released for discussion.

### **4. Update on AAC workplan for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester**

- **27 August:** Atlantic Games, Saint Nazaire
- **4 September:** CPMR Transport Working Group
- **13 September:** Brexit Task Force Meeting with Stefaan de Rynck (Task Force 50)
- **19,20,21 September:** Floating Wind Power (FWP) Brest and Nantes
- **25 September:** First Regional Cruise Dialogue for the Atlantic, North Sea and the Arctic, Nantes, France
- **Beginning of October** (to be scheduled): AAC Projects Task Force – Hubs meetings
- **18 October:** AAC Plenary Meeting, Madeira, Portugal
- **23-24 October:** Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Forum, Vigo, Spain. In parallel: Atlantic Area Programme Annual Event
- **19-26 November** (to be scheduled): Final Conference BBMBC
- **4 December :** SEARICA Intergroup on maritime INTERREG programmes
- **March or April 2019:** Atlantic Arc Commission General Assembly: location to be found
- **May 2019:** European Elections
- **End 2019:** New Commission

## UPDATE ON THE ATLANTIC STRATEGY GROUP (ASG) – 18 July

The Atlantic Strategy Group is the governance body of the Atlantic Strategy. It is composed of representatives from the five Atlantic Member States (Ireland, the UK, France, Spain and Portugal) as well as the European Commission (DG MARE and REGIO), the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the CPMR's Atlantic Arc Commission. It is currently chaired by Spain which organises regular meetings in the Spanish Permanent Representation in Brussels.

### 1. Updated information on the Conference of Stakeholders in Vigo (Agenda, workshops, awards, registration, etc.).

Registrations to the [Atlantic Stakeholders Platform Conference](#) (23-24 October, Vigo, Spain) are now opened: [Registration to the Conference](#).

The Draft Programme can be found online: [Draft Programme 2018 Atlantic Stakeholder Platform, Vigo](#).

Deadlines for registration to specific sessions are as follows:

- **7<sup>th</sup> September: Session B) “#BlueInvest goes local event” (23 October)**. Following the successful [BlueInvest 2018](#), the European Commission is now bringing Blue Invest to the different sea-basins. This session will be a match-making event that brings together **innovators** and **investors** to boost the economic potential of the ocean. Six companies will be selected to pitch in front of a panel of investors.
  - o [Registration here](#)
- **15 October: Matchmaking event (23 October)**. It is being organised by European Enterprise Network. A networking platform is available online.
  - o [Information and Registration here](#)

➔ *Please note that participants must register for the conference and the matchmaking event separately.*

### 2. Update on the revision of the Atlantic Action Plan: organisation of the national workshops and concept note for the thematic consultation

Following advice provided by the AAC, Member States agreed to organise workshops to consult stakeholders and update the Atlantic Action Plan (end of 2018- beginning 2019).

Country	City	Region	Theme(s)	Date
Spain	Las Palmas	Canary Islands	Marine Renewables /Blue Skills	12 September
Portugal	Viana do Castelo	Norte	Port as Blue Economy Hubs /recreational boating /MRE	tbc
Ireland	Cork (tbc)	Cork County	Connectivity	8 or 15 October (tbc)
The United Kingdom	Liverpool	Merseyside County, England	Ports as blue economy hubs / Blue skills	7 November
France	La Rochelle/ Bordeaux	Nouvelle Aquitaine	Ports as blue economy hubs /Blue Skills  ➔ In parallele with the AAC's BBMBC project Final Conference	19-23 November (tbc)

→ Among the seven themes, marine litter and bioeconomy have not been picked up by Member States yet. Spain and Portugal wanted to choose more than two themes.

### 3. Presentation of the new Assistance Mechanism team

Following on from the Mid-term review of the Atlantic Action Plan and at the requirement of Spain, a new call for applications was launched to renew the Assistance Mechanism. A new mechanism was designated by Member states and presented to the ASG on 18 July.

The team is composed of:

- a central team led by AETS and Kantor, which will be directly in contact with the ASG and will provide services to Atlantic Stakeholders (Atlantic Website, Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conferences, etc.)
- five national contact points, now called 'national hubs', which will aim to engage with stakeholders and develop networks, and support conferences held in regions on the Atlantic Strategy and between Managing Authorities.



Team member	Email address	Position
Ana Vilar	<a href="mailto:ana.vilar@aets-consultants.com">ana.vilar@aets-consultants.com</a>	Central team
Elina Zempili	<a href="mailto:egz@kantor-group.eu">egz@kantor-group.eu</a>	Central team
Emmanuelle Hiere	<a href="mailto:emmanuelle.hiere@aets-consultants.com">emmanuelle.hiere@aets-consultants.com</a>	Communication Expert
Pascale Van Doren	<a href="mailto:pvd@kantorqwertes.eu">pvd@kantorqwertes.eu</a>	Event Organisation Expert
Daniel Irwin Brown	<a href="mailto:daniel.irwinbrown@aets-consultants.com">daniel.irwinbrown@aets-consultants.com</a>	National Unit Coordinator
National Hub France	<a href="mailto:nationalhubfrance@atlanticstrategy.eu">nationalhubfrance@atlanticstrategy.eu</a>	Coordinator: Michael Schlaifer
National Hub Ireland	<a href="mailto:nationalhubireland@atlanticstrategy.eu">nationalhubireland@atlanticstrategy.eu</a>	Coordinator: Dr. Anne Marie O'Hagan
National Hub Spain	<a href="mailto:nationalhubspain@atlanticstrategy.eu">nationalhubspain@atlanticstrategy.eu</a>	Coordinator: Antonio Villanueva
National Hub Portugal	<a href="mailto:nationalhubportugal@atlanticstrategy.eu">nationalhubportugal@atlanticstrategy.eu</a>	Coordinator: Dr. Maria de Fátima L. Alves
National Hub UK	<a href="mailto:nationalhubuk@atlanticstrategy.eu">nationalhubuk@atlanticstrategy.eu</a>	Coordinator: Dr. Ben Drakeford
AAM email	<a href="mailto:helpdesk@atlanticstrategy.eu">helpdesk@atlanticstrategy.eu</a>	AAM infoline

#### **4. Debate on an approach to a new governance system for the Atlantic Strategy.**

The Governance issue and the opportunity to apply to a Macro-region was raised by the AAC during the debates, when they mentioned the process of consultation launched within the Atlantic Arc Commission. The point will be further developed in another ASG meeting.

#### **5. AOB**

France highlighted a call for proposal launched by DG MARE on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) which is of interest for the Atlantic Strategy as it aims to (1) support concrete actions in Member States helping to build capacity for the implementation of the MSP Directive and; 2) provide support for the establishment of lasting mechanisms for cross-border cooperation on MSP.

- ➔ The geographical areas covered by this call include the Atlantic.
- ➔ [More information available here](#)