



Transatlantic Cooperation Task Force

Monday 18 July 2016



Minutes

Participants:

Member Regions: Euskadi, Navarra, Cantabria, Galicia, Wales, Nouvelle Aquitaine.

Atlantic Arc Commission: Pauline Caumont, Executive Secretary

Guest: Catherine Mainville, Attachée aux affaires européennes et multilatérales, Délégation générale du Québec à Bruxelles

I. Welcome by the Delegate of the Basque Country to the European Union, Mrs Marta Marín

Marta Marín welcomed all participants to this very first meeting of the “Transatlantic cooperation” task force. She recalled that this Task Force was created during the last Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC) General Assembly which took place in Pamplona last 2-3 June 2016.

II. Presentation of the Transatlantic Cooperation Task Force by Mr Mikel Anton, Director of European Affairs of the Basque Government

Mikel Anton gave precision on the reasons why Euskadi wanted to create such Task Force within the AAC. The proposal came from Maria **Angeles Elorza Zubiria**, General Secretary for External affairs of the Basque Government after a trip to Mexico. She suggested that all Atlantic Arc Regions should know more about their respective cooperation across the Atlantic. During the AAC General Assembly, the Portuguese Regions backed the idea, asking to enlarge scope of the Task Force to south America. Nouvelle Aquitaine Region (former Aquitaine, Limousin et Poitou-Charentes Regions) was reluctant to discuss issues such as the TTIP.

The proposal made during the General Assembly was then to establish a one-year task force aiming at:

1. Serving as a forum for meeting and discussion between the regions located on both side of the Atlantic
2. Identifying Regions or Associations of Regions and federal states of the American Atlantic façade interested in starting a dialogue with the AAC

3. Identifying possible areas of collaboration and joint action in relation with the common work areas of interest and in the framework of the Atlantic Strategy

This proposal was approved by the AAC Political Bureau and General Assembly.

III. Presentation of the Task Force Working Plan by the Delegation of the Basque Country to the European Union

Luis Elizondo, from the Basque Country delegation in Brussels, presented the Task Force Working Plan (cf. PowerPoint presentation enclosed).

The Task force will be coordinated internally in the Basque Country between the Direction of European Affairs, the Delegation of the Basque Country to the EU and the Basque delegations on America (New York, Mexico, Buenos Aires, Chile). Externally, all messages will be sent through the Atlantic Arc Commission Secretariat (meetings and exchange of information via e-mail). An intermediary evaluation will be presented in the Azores on the occasion of the CPMR General Assembly (2-4 November 2016). The final evaluation will take place during the next AAC General Assembly (Spring 2016 in Pays de la Loire).

To establish a first inventory of priorities, a form has already been circulated to all AAC members. Luis Elizondo presented this form asking all Regions to complete it before September 30. The task force should be able to help Regions develop **concrete activities**: joint projects, brokerage events, etc.

IV. Presentation of the Maritime Strategy of Quebec, by Mrs Catherine Mainville, EU Policy Officer of the Delegation of Quebec

In 2015, Quebec adopted its first Maritime Strategy focused mainly around the Port of Montreal and maritime Transport. It is a 15 years' strategy for Québec to take advantage of its maritime Assets. 9 priorities have been defined and public investments will represent more than \$ 1.5 billion.

Catherine Mainville also stated that \$ 2.2 million have been allocated to the Institut France Quebec to bring searchers together. A bilateral agreement Euskadi-Quebec is about to be signed.

More information on the Strategy: <https://strategiemaritime.gouv.qc.ca/en/strategie-maritime/vision2030/>

V. Next steps for the Transatlantic Cooperation Task Force and close of proceedings

In order to move forward rapidly, the Basque Country would like the other AAC member Regions to provide the following documents and information **before September 30**:

- Fill the form concerning each Region existing bilateral agreements/collaborations
- Send each Region External Action Strategies (when they exist), especially concerning Transatlantic relations, identifying priority topics and priority geographical areas.
- Send your American counterparts External Action Strategies (when they exist)