



Plenary meeting of the Atlantic Arc Commission

18 October 2018 - Funchal (Madeira - Portugal)

MINUTES

(Approved during the Plenary meeting held in Palermo on 17 October 2019)

INTRODUCTION

Sébastien Pilard, member of Pays de la Loire Regional Council, representing the presidency of the Atlantic Arc Commission, welcomed the participants and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

Pauline Caumont, Executive Secretary of the Atlantic Arc Commission, asked the assembly to approve the minutes of the General Assembly and Political Bureau meetings held in Comillas (June 2018). The minutes were unanimously approved.

CPMR 2018 DRAFT FINAL DECLARATION

Ms Caumont explained the procedure under which the Final Declaration would be approved, and read out the amendments that had been received and that would be debated by the Regions. These amendments could either be approved by the Atlantic Arc Commission or, if there was a lack of consensus, be put forward by an individual Atlantic Region.

Ms Caumont drew attention to a number of amendments that referred to the outermost regions in particular rather than to the peripheral regions in general. She also highlighted point 17, a new point put forward by certain member regions of the Islands Commission referring to the political situation in Venezuela. This point was debated because it drew attention to a particular country. Mr Pilard considered that deleting the reference to Venezuela would nevertheless dilute the sense of the amendment. A re-worded text was agreed. Mr Pilard also presented Pays de la Loire's amendment on this same point, which highlighted the role of the Asylum and Migration Fund.

Amendment 27, submitted by Blekinge on the 150-km criterion for Interreg programmes, was rejected since it was contrary to CPMR's policy positions. Point 29 proposed by Rogaland limits the reference to Brexit. It was proposed that this amendment be rejected. On point 33, Cantabria proposed to add a reference to transnational Interreg programmes which may not correspond to the geographical area of a macro-regional strategy but are nonetheless important for the regions concerned. This amendment was supported. It was proposed to reject Skåne Region's amendment 40 since it was contrary to the Atlantic Arc's Declaration on the Landing Obligation. Two amendments had been submitted to point 41. They were consistent with amendment 49 proposed by Asturias. It was decided to retain all three. In the event of a debate in General Assembly the Atlantic Arc Commission would give priority to supporting amendment 49. On point 46, the Atlantic Arc Commission wanted to keep the mention of 'storms' in the text because these weather events are particularly alarming in the Atlantic area. It was decided to refer some other points back to the resolutions overview group; these related to regional cases that were too specific. On point 59, Cantabria proposed an amendment highlighting the importance, in the context of Brexit, of connecting Ireland to the Atlantic corridor. The Atlantic Arc Commission approved Point 60b introduced by País Vasco on decentralised cooperation.

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On points 61 to 66, Mr Pilard clarified Pays de la Loire's point of view concerning the CPMR's position on migration. He did not wish CPMR to include a statement in its Final Declaration on this highly sensitive topic. He said that these points were not in line with the policy position of Pays de la Loire and also argued that since the French Regions do not have competency for migration it is not legitimate that they should express a position on this issue. He was of the opinion that CPMR should limit the expressions of its views to those areas in which all its member Regions have competency. The Atlantic Arc Commission does not have a working group on this topic and has not agreed a position. He proposed that Regions wishing to pursue this further draft an ad hoc declaration on migration, separate from the Final Declaration.

Ms Caumont pointed out that País Vasco had also put forward an amendment to point 64. She asked the Regions what they thought of the suggestion of presenting a parallel position. She pointed out that if they failed to reach a consensus, Pays de la Loire could put forward this option as an individual Region.

Mikel Anton, speaking on behalf of País Vasco, said he understood that Pays de la Loire felt uncomfortable with this, but pointed out that other Regions did have competency in this policy area. He thought the Atlantic Arc Commission and CPMR should debate these issues because they were highly topical.

Francisco Martín, speaking on behalf of the government of Cantabria, said that while he respected Pays de la Loire's position he hoped that the Atlantic Arc Commission could adopt a joint position on migration.

Mr Pilar said he had no objection to Regions that had competency in this area taking a position on it, but that this was not the case for Pays de la Loire. Cantabria pointed out that the Atlantic Arc Commission had adopted joint positions in the area of transport, even though the Regions did not all have the same competencies.

Forough Salami, speaking on behalf of Brittany, reminded members that for the CPMR's founding Regions, of which Brittany was one, solidarity was an important component. Brittany therefore wished to keep the reference to migration in the Final Declaration, since it was a topical issue for all the regions. She said that the existence of differing points of view among the member Regions had never divided the CPMR as an organisation.

Vasco Cordeiro, President of CPMR and President of the Government of the Azores, proposed a possible solution. He pointed out that the issues relating to migration had been on the agenda for a number of years already. He also pointed out that the Government of the Azores had never benefited from the Neighbourhood Policy, yet this did not prevent it from supporting the policy. His view was that it is legitimate for CPMR to express a position on migration issues, even though the different Regions have different competences in this area and do not all have to face problems on a day-to-day basis. There was no obligation to arrive at a unanimous decision, he added, neither was any individual Region obliged to support a policy position with which it was not in agreement. A Region could express its disagreement by disassociating itself from specific points in the Final Declaration. **Mr Pilard** took note of the different positions and the notion of solidarity highlighted by Brittany. He would put forward the amendments from the Pays de la Loire as an individual Region. He stressed that he was committed to ensuring the CPMR's future reputation.

Nia Lewis, on behalf of the Welsh Government, referred to a document published by the Welsh Government entitled "Fair Movement" in which it appears that the management of migration is not a direct competence of the Welsh Government. However, this issue does have an indirect impact on its policies, education policy for example, and on its citizens. **Mr Pilard** agreed with this point but thought that a position could be taken outside the framework of the CPMR.

Access the [CPMR Final Declaration - Madeira 2018](#)

EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION AND UPDATE ON THE ATLANTIC STRATEGY

Given the limited time available, it was not possible to debate this topic. **Pauline Caumont** proposed that the Regions meet again the following day to discuss it.

ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mikel Anton, on behalf of País Vasco, asked the Assembly whether in the event of a disagreement on certain amendments the rule was that decisions should be taken on the basis of a unanimous vote or a majority vote, since this was not stipulated in the Atlantic Arc Commission's statutes. He proposed that a majority vote should be the rule applied. Concerning the Final Declaration, and in particular the points regarding migration, **Pauline Caumont** suggested that in the absence of a consensus, each Region should speak for itself. This was a rule followed by the other Geographical Commissions. She proposed that certain of the Atlantic Arc Commission Regions could form alliances.

Ms Caumont gave a brief presentation of the financial documents which would be debated at the CPMR General Assembly. She mentioned the different programmes in which the Atlantic Arc Commission was involved: SAFER, [CleanAtlantic](#) and [BBMBC](#), and said she would be happy to provide any further details.

She ended by recalling the forthcoming events in the 2018-2019 calendar of the Atlantic Arc Commission:

- 23/24 October 2018: Atlantic Strategy annual conference, in Vigo (Galicia);
- 21 November 2018: French workshop on the Atlantic Strategy, in parallel with the Final Conference of the BBMBC project, on 22 November 2018, in Bordeaux (Nouvelle-Aquitaine);
- 12 & 13 December 2018: technical "Hub meetings" of the Atlantic Arc Commission, in Brussels;
- During the first semester of 2019 (date and venue to be confirmed): General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission.

Ms Caumont closed the meeting and thanked the participants for attending.