



Plenary session of the Atlantic Arc Commission

Tuesday 5 November 2015 – Firenze (Tuscany - Italy)

Relevé de conclusions

I. Welcoming speech

Pauline Caumont, Executive Secretary of the Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC), thanked all the speakers and participants in this meeting. She put to vote the minutes of the [Political Bureau](#) and [General Assembly](#) meetings, held in Bilbao (17 and 18 March 2015). The minutes were approved unanimously.

II. Presentation of the work of the “Innovation” working group

François Maïtia, Vice-President of the Aquitaine Region presented the results of the Atlantic Arc Commission’s “Innovation” working group meeting that was held in Bordeaux on 6 October 2015. During the last Atlantic Arc Commission General Assembly in Bilbao, Aquitaine was appointed chair of this group. The Region currently coordinates it in close collaboration with the Poitou-Charentes Region. Given that some Regions could not be represented at this meeting, **François Maïtia** announced that **Sheila Zecovic**, in charge of interregional and European cooperation at the Aquitaine Region, would circulate a document during the plenary session so the Regions that were not represented in Bordeaux could express their interest and appoint contact persons. Then, he presented the main sectors that were identified (biological resources and biotechnologies; ships of the future; Development, surveillance and security of the coast; marine mineral resources) as well as the actions planned within this working group. Since this group is also linked to the development of marine renewable energies, he announced that its activities will be developed in close collaboration with the Atlantic Arc Commission’s “Marine Renewable Energy” working group. He suggested that the group should meet twice a year in Brussels and formal and informal electronic exchanges should be organised. He finally invited the Regions to get involved in the activities of this working group and to make it more dynamic by appointing a representative for each member Region.

⇒ [Link to François Maïtia's presentation](#)

Inma Valencia, Director-General for the Economy and European Affairs of Cantabria and representative of the Atlantic Arc Commission’s Presidency, thanked **François Maïtia** for his presentation and recalled the importance of the innovation sector for the Regions that have identified priorities in their smart specialisation strategies (S3). She also thanked the Aquitaine Region for the work carried out in order to give a dynamic impulse to this working group.

III. CPMR Final Declaration

Inma Valencia reminded the representatives of the Atlantic Arc Commission’s member Regions that the proposals for amendment to the CPMR draft Final Declaration had to be presented to the CPMR Secretariat by 13:30 the same day.

Pauline Caumont highlighted the fact that each Geographical Commission was allowed to propose amendments to the Declaration. She stressed that this year’s document is much shorter (6 pages) than last year’s and consists of 24 messages. Then, she mentioned the main sections of the Final Declaration and insisted on some important points and on the parts added or amended by the Atlantic Arc Commission’s executive secretariat (link between European politics and maritime basin strategies, activation of the EU Solidarity Fund by Regions, etc.).

Inma Valencia spoke on behalf of Cantabria and mentioned migration. She also mentioned the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF), which can only be activated at national scale provided the required threshold is reached. She recalled that one of the messages of the Atlantic Arc Commission Final Declaration that was adopted in Bilbao in March 2015 claimed that this fund should be activated at macrorregional scale. She welcomed the fact that this message was echoed by the CPMR.

Pauline Caumont asked whether the members had other remarks regarding the document. No amendment was presented.

IV. Internal issues by Pauline Caumont, Executive Secretary of the Atlantic Arc Commission

- Presentation of and discussion on the 2016 budget

Pauline Caumont presented the Atlantic Arc Commission's financial documents that were sent to the members before this meeting. She first recalled that during the Atlantic Arc Commission Political Bureau on 17 March 2015, it was decided that the loss resulting from the merging of the Aquitaine and Poitou-Charentes Regions would be compensated and shared among all the members. The fees will thus go from 5 003€ to 5 297,30 € per Region and per year (an increase of 5.88%).

Regarding the 2015 budget, **Pauline Caumont** presented the income that amounted to 90 054€. She announced that Navarra rejoined the Atlantic Arc Commission and that South of Scotland Alliance left it for budgetary purposes. Then, she mentioned the participation of the Atlantic Arc Commission in the ARCOPOLplatform project, that helped the Atlantic Arc Commission increase its income by 38 422€. In 2015, staff costs amounted to 105 430€. The deficit of the Atlantic Arc Commission in 2015 comes to 31 674€. This deficit will be incorporated into the CPMR general budget that will remain balanced in 2015.

Pauline Caumont then presented the prospects of the 2016 budget. Thanks to the distribution of the lost fees due to the merging of the French Regions among all the Regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission, the income will remain balanced. The 2016 income should amount to 90 042€. The staff costs should also remain stable and come to 105 636€. The operational costs slightly increased due to the relocation of the CPMR office in Brussels. However, this increase is offset by a decrease of the distribution of the CPMR operational costs (6.5% for Geographical Commission instead of 8% beforehand). To date, the deficit planned for 2016 amounts 55 838€. It should be reduced thanks to the participation of the Atlantic Arc Commission in several European projects within the Atlantic Area Interreg programme that will publish its first calls at the beginning of 2016.

Pauline Caumont finally recalled that the Atlantic Arc Commission participated in the submission of a call for tenders for the Atlantic Strategy assistance mechanism together with ECORYS (lead partner). If the application is successful, the Atlantic Arc Commission will be in charge of communication and will make use of its network of stakeholders along the Atlantic coast. In order to do so, the Atlantic Arc Commission would benefit from a budget of 190 000€ over two years. The results will be communicated to the members as soon as they are known (November-December 2015).

- Agenda 2015/2016

Pauline Caumont pointed out that the annual activity report will be presented during the next Atlantic Arc Commission General Assembly. Regarding the second semester of 2015, she stressed that an application for the Atlantic Strategy assistance mechanism was submitted on 11 September 2015. The Atlantic Arc Commission was also in charge of organising the ARCOPOLplatform project's final conference on 14 and 15 September 2015 in the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. Three working groups then met: the "Atlantic tourism and culture" group on 24 September in Brussels, the "Innovation" group on 6 October in Bordeaux and the "Atlantic Strategy" group on 28 October in Brest.

She announced that at the beginning of 2016, the Atlantic Arc Commission will focus on preparing projects in the marine renewable energy (APC2), tourism and blue biotechnologies fields, in relation with the different Atlantic Arc Commission's working groups. She added that the "Transport" working group will meet after the Cantabria's Transport Director is appointed. In this respect, she added that the Cantabria Regional Councillor for Innovation and Transport participated on behalf of the Atlantic Arc Commission in the Atlantic Corridor Forum organised in Bordeaux on 28 October.

- 2016 General Assembly

Pauline Caumont recalled that the next General Assembly must be held during the first semester of 2016. The member Regions are invited to express their interest in hosting it.

Navarra expressed its interest in hosting this event. This proposal must be approved and confirmed.

V. End of the meeting

François Maïtia announced that he was retiring from politics together with Adeline L'Honen, Regional Councillor of the Pays de la Loire Region and Brigitte Tondusson, Regional Councillor of the Poitou-Charentes Region. They will not run in the next regional election in December.

Inma Valencia spoke on behalf of the Atlantic Arc Commission and thanked the three French representatives for their commitment to cooperation in the Atlantic and their unconditional support to the Atlantic Arc Commission throughout the years.