



Atlantic Arc Commission

Minutes of the Atlantic Strategy group Brexit Task Force meeting

29 March 2017 - Brussels (BE)

I. WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE GALICIAN REGION, CHAIR OF THE ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION'S TASK FORCE ON BREXIT

Ana Ramos, Director of the Galicia Brussels Office and chair of the Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC) Brexit Task Force, welcomes every participant in the Galicia Brussels Office for this first combined meeting of the Atlantic Strategy group and the new Brexit Task Force, in this very peculiar day (29 March 2017) of triggering the Art. 50.

II. CONTEXT AND FEEDBACKS FROM THE ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 2/3 MARCH 2017

Sophie Cochard, Director of the Pays de la Loire Brussels Office and representative of the Atlantic Arc Commission Presidency made a summary welcomed all participants on behalf of Bruno Retailleau, President of the Atlantic Arc Commission. She recalled that the last Atlantic Arc Commission General Assembly was held in Les Sables d'Olonne on 2/3 March 2017 and asked regions to give their comments on the general organization and debates. **Ana Ramos** comments that the debates held on the last day were very interested but a two-days meeting can be too long for regions' representatives.

Pauline Caumont, Executive Secretary of the Atlantic Arc Commission reminded that a survey has been transmitted to all participants in this respect. She strongly encouraged all Regions to take part in this [satisfaction survey on the 2017 General Assembly Meeting - Les Sables d'Olonne](#)

III. INFORMATION ON THE LAST ATLANTIC STRATEGY GROUP (ASG) MEETING BY THE ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

Cf. [PPT Presentation](#)

- **Feedback from last ASG Meeting**

Pauline Caumont recalled that the Atlantic Arc Commission working group is a mirror group of the institutional Atlantic Strategy Group (ASG) composed of representatives from Atlantic Member States and chaired by the UK in 2017. The last meeting occurred on February 14, 2017 and was the opportunity to present activities led by the [Assistance Mechanism](#) which monitors the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan.

DG MARE shared information on the the high-level international meeting "[Our Ocean Conference](#)" to be held in Malta next 5/6 October, at the invitation of Commissioner Vella. The Chair (UK representative James How) invited the steering group to consider whether a joint contribution from the 5 Atlantic Member States could be made on this occasion.

DG RESEARCH represented by Sigi Gruber, head of Marine Resources Unit, gave an update on an agreement to be signed by Commissioner Moedas with Brazil and South Africa, probably next 13/14 July in Lisbon. DG RESEARCH will seek a mandate from the Council to sign such agreement. This is not an extension of the "[Galway process](#)", but an additional international agreement to foster transatlantic cooperation in the South Atlantic.

- **On EMFF Funding for 2017**

During the ASG meeting, Member States restated their support for an EMMF funding dedicated to the strategy. DG MARE confirmed that a delegated act was to be presented to the EMFF Committee to ensure further alignment of funds with the Strategy.

DG MARE represented by Christos Economou underlined that some of the EMFF call for proposals are already aligned with the Atlantic Strategy. DG Mare will keep the ASG updated.

In this respect, **Pauline Caumont** highlights that a few “Atlantic” calls for proposals are expected in the second 2017 quarter (cf. Presentation PPT) and will tackle “Environmental monitoring of tidal arrays” (1.2.1.1) and “demonstration projects for blue economy sectors” (1.2.1.2). A call for tender (service contract) on “Areas of Particular Environmental Interest for the Atlantic”(1.3.1.1) will be launched in the 4th Quarter of 2017.

- **Atlantic Action Plan Mid-term Review**

The Atlantic Action Plan **mid-term review** should be launched during the European Maritime Day next 18/19 May 2017. The process will include a consultation running from March to August and a review to be released by the end of 2017. This paper might take the shape of a staff working document or a Communication from the European Commission. The work on the post 2020 Atlantic Strategy should begin in 2018.

- **Next meetings/Calendar**



Upcoming Meetings & Conferences

- 6 April PM in Brussels, next ASG Meeting
- 17 May in London, before the EMD in Poole
- Atlantic Stakeholder Forum: Glasgow end Septembre/ beginning October
- 13-14 July 2017: Ministerial Meeting in Lisbon with C. Moedas with South Africa and Brazil
- 5-6 October 2017: Our Ocean Conference (with F. Mogherini and K. Vella)

Mar Martin, for Cantabria, asks if lobbying actions could be undertaken towards DG RTD to fund the Atlantic Strategy. Pauline Caumont agrees and adds that DG ENER could also be involved in the implementation of the Atlantic Strategy like it does with the North Sea grid.

IV. INFORMATION ON THE NEW BREXIT TASK FORCE BY GALICIA, THE ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT AND CPMR GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Ana Ramos officially launched the work of the new Atlantic Arc Commission Brexit Task Force following on from the proposal of Jesús Gamallo, representative of the Galician Government during the last Atlantic Arc Commission General Assembly. To avoid multiplications of meetings, it was suggested to integrate the Brexit Task Force within the Atlantic Strategy Working Group. It is meant to inform regions on the Brexit developments, to publish Regions’ statements on Brexit and its impacts as well as to promote the Atlantic political presence in the Brexit negotiations. In this respect [a blog](#) has been created by CPMR. It can be found on its website and on every geographical commissions’ webpage under the heading “**Future of Europe**”.



Ander Albisu (ander.albisu@crpm.org) will be responsible for managing the content uploaded to the new CPMR blog on the Future of Europe. He will liaise with its counterpart **Ruben Rivas** who works on the Brexit issues for Galicia.

Ana Ramos and **Gregg Jones** who leads the Future of Europe reflection within CPMR, agree that the Atlantic declaration on Brexit should come before June 2017, which means before CPMR's Political Bureau.

Ana Ramos and **Tania Gesto Casas for Galicia** made a [PPT Presentation](#) on the Brexit state of play. Galicia took part in the Committee of the Regions meeting with Barnier on 22 March 2017 where he gave different strong messages: citizen first, transparency and public debate, removal uncertainties on EU budget and borders as well as a broader reflection on the future of Europe were his four commitments. On Monday 27 March, Verhofstadt, chief Brexit representative for the European Parliament, announced the EU Parliament will publish a **resolution** on Brexit negotiations. These negotiations should take two years. A three-year transition period then should follow, ending with an agreement, as leaked by The Guardian newspaper. **Gregg Jones** adds that Theresa May's letter to Donald Tusk to trigger Article 50 has just been disclosed.

Mar Martin for Cantabria asked if the Brexit Task Force could work on informing regional stakeholders on consequences of Brexit on projects running and including British partners. This point is shared by **Sarah Holder** representing the NWRA (Ireland). **Gregg Jones** answers that two guarantees have been given last August and October by the British government which affirmed that until 2019, UK will co-finance European projects.

Ainhoa Azarloza, from the Basque Country, added that this group should gather information on concrete impacts of Brexit on regional territories which could be pooled in an executive summary. **Mar Martin** drew attention on misinformation on Brexit. **Sarah Holden** stated that Ireland is doing this work of processing information through its website, which she can share.

Pauline Caumont recalled the proposal of the Atlantic Arc Commission President, Bruno Retailleau: to meet with Michel Barnier in Autumn 2017. Then, **Elise Wattrelot, policy analyst (Atlantic Arc Commission)** presented the [note on the consequences of Brexit](#) debated during the last Atlantic Arc Commission General Assembly ([PPT Presentation](#)).

Gregg Jones presented the CPMR Future of Europe initiative. As stated in the [CPMR press release](#), the association gathering around 160 regions is a legitimate body to take part in the reflection on the EU project, Brexit and its territorial consequences. He underlines that its work is even more important given that the scenario 4 "Doing less more efficiently" from the EC White Paper, which threatens the cohesion policy. The idea is to gather factual data to nurture our reflection on the Future of Europe and build a CPMR manifesto.

The reflection will be divided into three pillars: 1) Investment, competitiveness and territorial cohesion 2) Democratic participation 3) EU and its neighbours, among which the UK will fall in. He recalls solidarity, cooperation and a balanced territorial development are the three principles which will drive CPMR's work.

The webforum is a first way to gather information from regions, academics and other on-field stakeholders. Discussions time have been scheduled in CPMR's premises notably with Ann Mettler from the European Political Strategy Centre (date tbc). A session on Brexit will be planned. Synergies will be found with the CPMR North Sea Commission, which has launched a similar Brexit Task force as well as with the new Channel Task Force.

Nia Lewis, for the Welsh Government, insisted on the consequences of Brexit for Wales, which will suffer the most from Brexit among the British regions. In this respect, she asked for the regions' support. She also shared that the Government is not happy about Theresa May letter and will send a resolution to the Welsh Parliament to state that the UK Government should respect devolution, compensate every penny from the EU programs which has been received by Wales up until now, clarify the Welsh maritime borders and remain part of H2020, Europe Creative, Erasmus+ and INTERREG.

V. FOLLOWING STEPS:

Next meeting of the Atlantic Arc Commission Atlantic Strategy Working Group/Brexit Task Force should take place by the end of May, after the European Maritime Days (18/19). The North Sea Commission representatives as well as members of Barnier's cabinet will be invited.

Other key dates:

- **Next ASG meeting:** 6 April, 17 may
- **22 June:** CPMR Political bureau in Stavanger
- **End of September/Beginning of October:** Atlantic Stakeholder Forum in Glasgow
- **5/6 October:** Our Ocean Conference
- **September 2017:** Juncker speech on Future of Europe and Brexit
- **October 2017:** CPMR General Assembly in Helsinki
- **October 2017:** meeting President Retailleau/ Michel Barnier
- **December 2017:** first conclusions of the European Commission on the Future of Europe
- **Autumn 2018:** CPMR manifesto on the Future of Europe
- **2019:** EP elections and end of the Brexit negotiations

For any questions or further clarifications, please send an email to the Atlantic Arc Commission Secretariat: catherine.petiau@crpm.org and pauline.caumont@crpm.org

All presentations are available on the event webpage: <http://cpmr-atlantic.org>