



Atlantic Arc Commission

Conclusions of the Atlantic Tourism and Culture Working Group Meeting

Thursday 2 June 2016 - Pamplona

Participants:

Member Regions: Euskadi (Basquetour), Navarra, Asturias

Guests: Nasuvinsa (enterprise, Pamplona)

Atlantic Arc Commission: Emmanuel Maniscalco, Policy Analyst

CPMR: Giuseppe Sciacca, Senior Policy Officer in charge of Fisheries and Tourism

I. Welcome address and introduction, **María del Mar Martínez Salmerón**, Asturias Region

Mar Martínez Salmerón, Responsible for the Tourism Department (Government of Asturias), welcomed the participants and thanked the Government of Navarra for hosting this meeting. She stressed that Regions, which role is to provide an enabling framework for the private sector, are key actors in the development of tourism. The Atlantic Arc Commission's "Atlantic Tourism and Culture" working group is a valuable forum in which Regions can exchange and develop common strategies to promote the Atlantic identity and culture in a sustainable way. She finally mentioned the last meeting of this working group, which took place on 24 September 2015, during which Regions identified common areas of interest.

II. Update on past activities of the working group, **Emmanuel Maniscalco**, Policy Analyst (Atlantic Arc Commission)

Emmanuel Maniscalco recalled the history of the "Atlantic Tourism and Culture" working group, which was created in 2012 at the initiative of Cantabria. The group was first chaired by the Norte and Alentejo Regions from 2013 to 2015. Asturias, which had hosted a workshop on tourism in Gijon in April 2014, during which the members of the working group adopted a political note, took over the presidency of the group in 2015. He also mentioned the main conclusions of the first meeting of the group under the presidency of Asturias (24 September 2015), during which seven areas of work were then identified (see [Emmanuel Maniscalco's presentation](#)).

Then, he pointed out the main outputs of the event "Attracting Investment in Tourism" organised by the European Commission on 5 April 2015: on this occasion, the Commission stressed that Europe is the first tourism destination in the world and that it had invested €10 billion over the period 2007-2013 in this sector. The aim of this meeting was also to launch a reflection on how to address the main challenges the sectors is currently facing, namely: digitalization; climate change; competitiveness; ageing of the population; seasonality.

He finally insisted on the importance of developing/taking part in projects to gain expertise and share knowledge on specific topics. In this sense, the CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission is partner of two projects on tourism that were submitted under the Interreg Atlantic Area programme, together with the ODYSSEA European portal (more information about these two projects is available in [Giuseppe Sciacca's presentation](#)). The results of these projects, if selected, will be disseminated in the frame of the "Atlantic Tourism and Culture" working group.

III. Presentation of the AtlanticOnBike project, **Ana Lizarraga Dallo**, Navarra Region

Ana Lizarraga Dallo recalled that Navarra was the 1st Spanish Region to have a smart specialisation strategy. Then she presented the main features of the AtlanticOnBike project, submitted under the Interreg Atlantic Area 2014-2020 first call for proposals, which is linked to the [EuroVelo initiative](#). This project aims at promoting cycle tourism in the Atlantic. Navarra puts a big emphasis on the development of ecofriendly models and tools. For instance, 83.7% of Navarra's final consumption of electricity comes from renewable sources. More information about the AtlanticOnBike project is available on [Ana Lizarraga Dallo's presentation](#).

IV. Presentation of the EDERBIDEA project, **Patxi Sáenz Lazkano**, Navarra Region

Patxi Sáenz Lazkano presented the EDERBIDEA ("beautiful way" in Basque) project, submitted under the Interreg POCTEFA programme, which aims at creating a 123km bicycle route from Bayonne to Pamplona. The projects also aims at developing tools to enhance the visual identity of the route (common signs, tourist database, website, and information booklets). More information about the project can be found on [Patxi Sáenz Lazkano's presentation](#).

V. CPMR roadmap on tourism, **Giuseppe Sciacca**, Senior Policy Officer (CPMR)

Giuseppe Sciacca first stated that tourism in Europe has a high potential in terms of creation of growth and jobs. Despite the financial crisis, this sector has been growing constantly over the past years (the number of tourists per year in the EU has tripled between 1980 and 2013). Peripheral and maritime regions are the top tourism destinations in Europe.

Then, he focused on the CPMR activities on tourism, which were relaunched in 2014. The CPMR General Secretariat was asked by its members to develop a roadmap in order to explore opportunities in this sector. Inputs from the Geographical Commissions on tourism are more than welcome to help the General Secretariat develop a political position and do lobbying. Four thematic objectives in line with the EU strategy have been identified, namely: stimulate performance and competitiveness; improving knowledge; strengthening sustainability and mainstreaming of tourism.

He finally pointed out some of the initiatives undertaken by the CPMR:

- Monitoring initiatives at EU level (EU skills agenda, flagship projects)
- Memorandum of Understanding with NECSTOUR
- Ongoing analysis on S3 (better understanding the role played by coastal & maritime tourism in ESIF Ops).

For more details: see [Giuseppe Sciacca's presentation](#).

VI. Roundtable: development of tourism in the Atlantic Regions/future activities of the working group

Discussions between the members mainly focused on training and education. Training and education are considered as key tools for the development of tourism, which is a constantly evolving sector. Education and training are essential to meet the needs of customers. In this sense, the members agreed that the EU should focus on the development of certificates recognised at EU level. Lifelong learning should also be encouraged to help workers get new skills in order to address seasonality.

It was finally suggested that all the members of the working group should discuss to identify concrete actions on specific topics (indicators, regional tourism development strategies, exchanges of good practices, etc.).