

TOWARDS EU STRATEGY FOR THE ATLANTIC MACRO-REGION



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Map of current EU macrorregional strategies:



Key moment for an Atlantic Macro-regional Strategy

- The **2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework**.
- **ETC Proposal Regulation:** 2A Alignment 100% Macro-regional strategies for Transnational cooperation / 2B Maritime transnational cooperation 70% Macro-Regional strategies and “sea basin strategies”.
- **International dimension: Trade and Brexit** will inevitably affect the concept of the Atlantic Strategy and the future cooperation between Atlantic partners.
- A macro-regional strategy should be endorsed by the European Parliament and European Council → **qualitative leap** as regards the **political momentum** given to the macro-regions in relation to maritime strategies.

The principles for developing a macroregional strategy are:

- *a **relevant partnership** and an **adequate collaboration mechanism***
- *good action coordination as regards **relevant policies** and their **funding sources***
- *a **high spirit of cooperation** within and across countries and sectors in the macroregion*

Example 1: Baltic macroregion

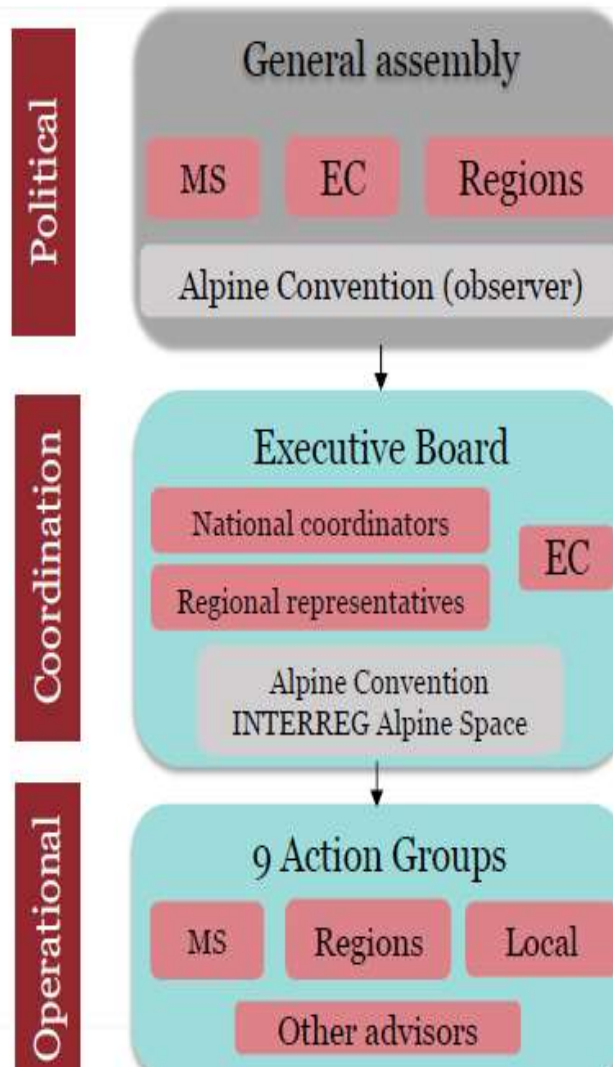
- First macroregional strategy, it started in 2009
- Eight EU Member states
- Objectives:
 - *Save the sea*
 - *Connect the Region*
 - *Increase Prosperity*



***** Regions are not fully involved in the governance**

Alpine macroregion

- Macroregion started by the regions, which are also part of the governance system in the Executive Board
- 7 EU countries and 2 non-EU Countries
- Long cooperation tradition among the Alpine regions
- Policy Areas:
 - *Economic growth and innovation*
 - *Mobility and connectivity*
 - *Environment and energy*
- Interreg Alpine Space is the main funding source
- It is too early to assess the MRS



Governance system for the EUSASR

MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

High level Group (Strategic Decision Making)
EU+MMSS+REGIONS

Strategic Implementation

National Coordinators+Regional Coordinators+ EC
Atlantic Arc (Observer)

Ministries of Finance
and ESIF management
authorities+ETC Atlantic
Space+Cross-Border
(AECT)

Priority Areas Coordinators
Sectoral national+ sectoral
regional authorities
Atlantic cities + Atlantic
Arc (Observers)

Social and Economic
stakeholders + civil society

National + Regional ESIF
authorities + Cross-Border
authorities (AECT)

Programming & mobilisation of funds



- Makes no new funding available & lack of resources in some countries
- Difficult to mobilise national or regional financing for cross-border issues
- Aligning of funding - window of opportunity for post 2020 INTERREG but more needs to be done for ERDF & other EU funding
- Better capitalization of project and programme results possible

Community & Capacity-building



- Provides opportunities for new stakeholders to reach EU funding
- Networks became stronger at MRS level (in time)
- Working with third countries may be facilitated
- Opportunities to engage unusual stakeholders & triple helix & new stakeholders to reach EU funding

Case Study: Ocean Energy in the Atlantic Area

Atlantic Area in line with EU-level

- European Ocean Energy Forum Roadmap -> challenges & action plan for EU are similar to interviewees' positions
- EU & Atlantic Area – global leadership, actions should be closely coordinated

Main needs mapped

- **Stronger public funding**
 - little EU funding earmarked for ocean energy
 - National & regional funding substantial in several Atlantic regions
- **Inter-regional collaboration**
 - More inclusive governance including regions & triple-helix actors
 - Facilitation of peer learning



National & regional investment in ocean energy in Atlantic Area



Source: TG based on DG MARE, 2018, market study on ocean energy

- Having a common objectives in terms of Ocean energies will allow the Atlantic Region to have **common strategies and funding** . In particular the political weight of a macrorregional strategy would allow stronger coordination in a multilayered governance setting (EU, National and regional)
- The **Planning** needs a strategic point of view at macrorregional level
- **Atlantic Coastal regions can bring national and european attention** to recognise the potential of ocean energies and needs for investment
- Multi-level governance is needed : Triple helix model
- Linking the MRS to Atlantic Action Plan
- More diversity in the types of stakeholders involved in the Atlantic Strategy is needed.
- Improving permitting practices for ocean energy projects in the atlantic
- Coordination of policy measures in the Atlantic to boost Ocean energies

Is a macroregional strategy relevant to Atlantic Area needs?

Atlantic Area needs

Less informal governance structure

More political engagement

Making voice of regions heard

Strategic framework linked to funding for priority areas (e.g. ocean energy)

Target more stakeholders in inter-regional cooperation

Cooperation with third countries (e.g. in case of Brexit)



MRS matching needs



MRS provides clear governance frameworks, albeit more lengthy processes



MRS engages political representatives in multi-level decision making



If regions integrated more in governance processes



If MRS linked to MFF & EU funds coordinated with priorities + efforts



If governance framework is inclusive



MRS allows setting transparent basis for collaboration – but also depending on the 3rd country's arrangements with EU

5. Conclusions

- The mid-term review of the Atlantic Strategy and the current climate of crucial changes for the Atlantic Strategy (Brexit and 2021-2027 MFF negotiations) → **opportune time** for an in-depth reflection on the nature and areas of concentration (Ocean energies, skills , port hubs and blue economy, etc), of the future cooperation for the European Atlantic Region.
- SOCIAL dimension, Transport and Connectivity, Job creation etc. are relevant in a Macro-Regional Strategy
- Not Enough to add “...and the sea basin strategies” . Existing experience demonstrates that macro-regional strategies have added value because they strengthen cross-sectorial regional cooperation both within and outside the EU and the vision and the strategic decisions are taken at the highest political level by consensus. **A well-structured multilevel governance is a must.**
GOA (Governance Assessment Scorecard)
- Cooperation in the Atlantic area **must keep the maritime dimension, a cohabitation between a Sea Basin Strategy** (Competitive Intelligence hubs) and a **Macro-region (strategic decision making process/ political governance)** could be possible (Baltic case) .
- Framing Atlantic cooperation in a macro-regional strategy of the EU means **raising the political commitment** of the **Member States and their Regions** to **Atlantic cooperation**, along with underscoring its Visibility/ Ownership in the EU as Gateway to the Western Europe . (E.g. Ocean Energies)
- Regulation No. 1303-2013 regulating ESIF **distinguishes between sea basins and macro-regional strategies** as regards financing possibilities. The proposal Regulation for European Territorial Cooperation) for 2021-2027 also envisages “Increasing the coherence between the financing and priorities of the macro-regional strategies”