

**POLITICAL BURO OF THE ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION****PAMPLONA, JUNE 2nd, 2016****AGENDA: "ANY OTHER BUSINESS" (AOB)****CREATION OF A "TASK FORCE OF TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION"
(2016-2017) IN THE ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION****CONSIDERING**

The Atlantic Ocean is the western border of the EU: a door of natural entrance and exit to the outside.

Through the centuries, the European Atlantic regions have always maintained relations with the outside world, both through their institutions and through their economic and social agents. These relations of cooperation, trade, culture, etc., are becoming wider and more and more frequent.

Therefore, the Atlantic regions have their own policies and strategies for foreign affairs.

Today, the membership to the EU and the increasing globalization mean that the external action takes part directly in the daily life of the inhabitants of our regions.

At European level, the regions of the Atlantic facade are immersed in cooperation in different fields that are part of the Atlantic Strategy.

Additionally, on the other side of the Atlantic, on the American side, there are also regions and networks of regions that want to strengthen ties with the regions of the European Union (e.g. the National Conference of Governors of Mexico). Many of them share concerns and face similar challenges to those we are dealing with in the European Atlantic facade; so it seems reasonable to establish a channel of contact and relationship between both sides of the Atlantic that makes possible the identification of areas for collaboration and synergies.

And, especially taking into account the multitude of economic and commercial agreements signed by the European Union with the countries located on the Atlantic facade of the American continent.

PROPOSAL

Therefore we consider interesting and necessary that the Atlantic Arc Commission creates a temporary structure (Task Force) which serves as a forum for meeting and discussion between the regions located on both sides of the Atlantic. The Task Force should serve to, at first, identify regions or associations of regions and federal states of the Atlantic facade of the American continent interested in establishing a relationship with their European counterparts and in creating a stable dialogue to subsequently identify possible areas of collaboration and joint action in relation to the work areas of the Atlantic Strategy.



Candidature of the Basque Country for the coordination of the “Task Force of Transatlantic Cooperation” of the Atlantic Arc Commission (2016-2017)

Pamplona, June 2nd and 3rd, 2016

External Action of the Basque Government

Euskadi has maintained a historical tradition of external relations at the highest level by its institutions.

With the signature of the Statute of Gernika in 1979, the Basque Executive saw itself facing the challenge of institutionalizing the self-government, articulating the Basque civil service and developing public policies that include its external dimension. In this way, the General Secretary for Foreign Affairs, attached to the Presidency-Lehendakaritza, was created in 1991.

Today, in order to develop its external action, the Basque Government counts on four Delegations in America: the Delegation of Euskadi in the United States, based in New York; the Delegation of Euskadi in Mexico, based in Mexico City; the Delegation of Euskadi in Argentina - Mercosur, based in Buenos Aires and the Delegation of Euskadi in Chile, Colombia and Peru, with headquarters in Santiago de Chile and Bogotá Office. Besides, there is the Delegation to the European Union in Brussels at the European level and an office in Madrid.

Euskadi has distinguished itself by participating actively and continuously in networks, associations and international institutions. The Basque Government has participated and still does in several European and international networks defending the role of the regional governments and subnational entities, as well as its differential socio-political and economic reality. Among them, we can find the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions.

Regional and cross-border cooperation has been and still is, also, an area of priority concern. In this regard, Euskadi maintains fluid relations with regions that share interests and similar problems, such as Flanders, Querétaro, Quebec, Bavaria and Jiangsu.

Apart from that, the collaboration with Navarre and Nouvelle-Aquitaine is the most relevant example as far as cross-border cooperation is concerned, with the consolidation of the “Euroregion”.

Objectives of the coordination of Task Force for the period 2016-2017

- To strengthen relations between the Atlantic Arc Commission and the transatlantic regions and federal states, particularly in the work areas that the Atlantic Strategy deals with.
- To exchange knowledge, study visits on our maritime strategies and economy related to the Atlantic, to both sides of the ocean at the regional level
- To strengthen the "bottom-up" approach in the economic relations with the American countries of the Atlantic facade.
- To analyze the impact of the economic and trade agreements between the European Union and the countries of the Atlantic facade of the American continent.
- To analyze the possibility of joint actions in the field of external action between the regions of both sides of the Atlantic.

Proposal of Methodology

- Contacts with regions and federal states of the Atlantic facade of the American continent or with associations of them will be established in order to identify the ones that could be interested in starting a dialogue and cooperation with their counterparts in the European Atlantic facade.
- An inventory of the relations that the regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission interested in the Task Force maintain with their counterparts on the Atlantic facade of the American continent, in the areas of the Atlantic Strategy, will be elaborated.
- There will be at least two meetings/seminars, which will take place in Brussels or in the Basque Country, before the next General Assembly of 2017.
- In addition, a networking system between the regions interested in participating in the Task Force will be established.
- In the General Assembly of 2017, the work done by the Task Force will be evaluated and it will be decided, if appropriate, the convenience of modifying the Task Force into a Working Group ad hoc in the Atlantic Arc Commission.

Responsible for the coordination of the Task Force

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