



AAC's Atlantic Strategy Working Group and Brexit Task Force

18 May 2018 - Office of Galicia in Brussels

Minutes

I – SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

- Atlantic Strategy Working Group

The institutional body of the Atlantic Strategy, the ASG, has been chaired by Spain since January 2018. It gathers representatives from the 5 Atlantic Member States, the European Commission, Committee of the Region, CESE and networks such as the AAC. It meets regularly, and notably this year on 19 March and 4 May, to discuss mainly the organisation of the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform (October, Vigo, Spain). It also put in place an [Atlantic Project Atlas](#).

AAC member regions acknowledged that the ASG is not a strategic group, Brexit has never been mentioned in the discussion, important issues like the functioning of the INTERREG Atlantic Area, the assistance mechanism have not been covered sufficiently throughout the years. The involvement of Member States is quite weak.

However, the AAC has succeeded in raising these questions among the ASG, through its participation in the [EC's Staff Working Document](#) (February 2018) on the Mid Term Review of the Atlantic Action Plan.

Besides, the AAC managed to convince the 5 Member States early this year to have a roadshow to promote the Atlantic Strategy and collect recommendations for its improvements. Spain will have its workshop in Canarias on (12 September). Information on other workshops should follow shortly.

Mikel Anton for the Basque Country suggested that the AAC Secretariat should give a template to regions on how they should lobby their national government to revive the Atlantic Strategy. The Atlantic Arc General Assembly in Comillas (14-15 June) is the occasion to meet with the Spanish State. He also raised the issue of converting the sea basin strategy into a Macroregion and get the support of DG REGIO.

Debates also tackled the question of EP's support to the Atlantic Strategy. The election of 2019 prevent any actions towards the EP as of now.

- Further alignment between INTERREG and the Atlantic Strategy

Further alignment between INTERREG Atlantic Area and the Atlantic Strategy will be discussed during the AAC General Assembly in Comillas and specific political messages should be included in the Comillas Political Declaration.

From the meeting the AAC had with Jean-Pierre Halkin (11 April), we know that EC's proposal on INTERREG for the post 2020 period (which will be published on 29 May) will include a budget reduction, 5 thematic priorities instead of 11 and a change of geographical coverage. A new approach will be introduced and will be focus on maritime sea basin. Maritime-cross border programmes could be integrated in transnational programmes.

On this basis, the AAC regions discussed specific messages on ETC budget, architecture and management/governance to include in the [AAC Comillas Declaration \(2018\)](#).

- **Brexit Task Force**

Ana Ramos for Galicia, chair of the Task Force recalled the past activities of the group and questioned participants on the future activities to launch after the AAC General Assembly.

As background information, Galicia presented on the state of play of Brexit negotiations and the AAC Secretariat recalled the various activities led on Brexit at the Channel and CPMR levels. ([see powerpoint presentation](#))

Participants agreed to organise a meeting with Stefaan de Rynck in September, jointly with the North Sea Commission and the Channel Task Force. Impact analyses should be further shared among the group prior to this meeting.

II – DECISIONS AND AGENDA

- **Atlantic Strategy :**

- Have a template for all regions to lobby their national governments on the Atlantic Strategy
- Finalise the Political Declaration of Comillas
- Further lobby Member States and the EC on a further alignment of the Strategy with INTERREG Atlantic Area on the occasion of the AAC General Assembly Round Table
- Participate in the Atlantic Stakeholder Conference, 23-24 October, in Vigo, which will focus on maritime training. The AAC Secretariat will be there as well as the leader of the BBMBC project, the University of La Rochelle, which will have a slot in the plenary session.

- **Brexit:** organise a meeting with Stefaan de Rynck in September, jointly with the North Sea Commission to update him on our actions on Brexit and be informed of the negotiation stage.