



## Atlantic Arc Commission

# Atlantic Strategy Working Group Meeting

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 - Brussels

### Participants:

**Member Regions:** Northern & Western Regional Assembly, Wales, Normandie, Pays de la Loire, Nouvelle Aquitaine, Euskadi, Navarra, Cantabria, Galicia

**Atlantic Arc Commission:** Pauline Caumont, Executive Secretary, Emmanuel Maniscalco, Policy Analyst

**Atlantic networks:** CVAA-CAAC, RTA-ATN

### I. Welcome address

Pauline Caumont, Executive Secretary of the Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC) thanks all the participants for coming to the last “Atlantic Strategy” Working group meeting before the summer break. She presented the different points on the agenda suggested that a “Brexit” point could be added to the agenda.

### II. Feedback on the Brexit

**Nia Lewis**, from the Welsh Government’s EU office, expressed the disappointment of the Welsh Government regarding the results of the UK referendum on the EU. She stated that Wales will push to remain in the single market in order to keep the confidence of the investors and will fight to keep same level of investment as it is currently getting from structural funds. The EU funds will have to be replaced by domestic funding eventually, which implies a deep reviewing the UK’s funding system. Wales is in favour of triggering article 50 as soon as possible, as the adaptation of the legislation will be a lengthy and heavy process. A specific department has been set up by the British Government to deal with the Brexit: it will mainly consist of people from the immigration department, meaning that free movement will be key in the negotiations with the EU. She added that new general elections might be triggered, opening the way for a second referendum.

**Pauline Caumont**, Executive Secretary of the Atlantic Arc Commission, asked whether there would be implications on structural funds in the short-term. There is no answer yet. Nothing will change until article 50 has been invoked.

**Tamara Guirao-Espiñeira**, Secretary General of the Conference of the Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC), recalled that Donald Tusk’s (President of the European Council) first declaration was that the legislation won’t change until the actual exit of the UK. Tamara also gave some feedback on a meeting she attended at the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels:

- It is considered that the main causes of the Brexit were the internal crisis the conservative party has been suffering, and the bad campaign of Jeremy Corbyn;
- The UK will probably be postponing the exit until new general elections are organised;
- It is likely that new elections are triggered as the British parliament was not mandated for the Brexit: this could lead to a second referendum if the majority changes;

- Scotland will probably call for a second referendum: Nicola Sturgeon, Prime Minister of Scotland, is waiting for the outputs of the negotiations with the EU.

**Pauline Caumont** stated that the Atlantic Arc Commission's "Atlantic Strategy" working group will monitor the evolution of the Brexit, especially the implications for the Interreg Atlantic Area programme and for the activities of the Atlantic Arc Commission.

**Nia Lewis** added that the European Commission's staff should get guidance by the beginning of July.

### **III. Feedback on the General Assembly – Pamplona 2016**

**Pauline Caumont** announced that the next Atlantic Arc Commission's General Assembly will take place in the Pays de la Loire Region in the first semester of 2017. In order to keep improving the format, she asked for feedbacks from the people who attended the General Assembly.

**Inmaculada Valencia Bayón**, Head of Cantabria's office in Brussels, stressed that the enthusiasm of the new Presidency was received very positively. The debate during the Political Bureau and the first part of the General Assembly (day one) was very fruitful. However, she pointed out that the thematic sessions on day 2 lacked interactivity with the participants. She suggested to organise less technical sessions so that the politicians can get better involved in the discussions.

**Agnès Trarieux**, Head of the Pays de la Loire delegation in Brussels, stated that the President of the Region and new President of the Atlantic Arc Commission, Bruno Retailleau, was very delighted. She recalled that the new presidency has identified 4 priority sectors: transport/mobility; cohesion; marine energies and fisheries. The new presidency is also willing to focus on training and developing European projects.

**Arantza López de Munain**, Representative of the ATN, was delighted to see the strong political commitment of the new presidency and stated that the General Assembly was globally very well organised. However, she stressed that associate networks were not visible enough.

**Tamara Guirao-Espiñeira** suggested to have the Atlantic Arc Commission's associate networks (CAAC, ATN, AC3A, etc.) as moderators of the different thematic sessions to have more interactive sessions and to give more visibility to the networks.

**Pauline Caumont** also mentioned that compared to the previous year, the Secretariat tried to reduce the number of speakers per session. In view of continuing these efforts, the Secretariat will try to help Member Regions prepare some questions to trigger more debate. The suggestion coming from partners networks is interesting and will be considered when the next agenda will be prepared.

### **IV. Feedback on the meetings organised in June in Brussels**

The Atlantic Arc Commission participated in three meetings organised in June in Brussels about the Atlantic Strategy:

#### ***1. Meeting of the Managing Authorities of the Atlantic Strategy – 8 June 2016 – Committee of the Regions***

This meeting was organised by the Irish Presidency of the Atlantic Strategy Group (institutional group), the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions. The Commission had some difficulties in attracting people from the managing authorities in the regions. Most of the participants were people from the Brussels' regional offices. **Pauline Caumont** stated that, as Andrea Mairate (DG REGIO) claimed during the General Assembly in Pamplona, it is possible to give a bonus (slightly higher cofinancing rate) to projects in line with the Atlantic Strategy. It is up to managing authorities to decide whether they want to implement it or not.

## **2. Atlantic Strategy Group meeting – 9 June 2016**

Pauline Caumont gave some feedback on the issues discussed during this ASG Meeting:

- About the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference in Dublin - 27 September 2016

The ASG meeting held on 9 June mainly focused on the [Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference](#) that will take place on 27 September in Dublin. This event will be focused on priority 1 of the Atlantic Action Plan (“Promote entrepreneurship and innovation”) as well as on the international dimension of the Atlantic Strategy. It is expected that 300 to 400 people will participate. **Pauline Caumont** announced that the President of the Atlantic Arc Commission won’t be able to attend. However, the Atlantic Arc Commission has submitted an application to organise a workshop on training moderated by Pauline Caumont, in which Sébastien Pilard – Representative of the Pays de la Loire Region in charge of blue growth – will participate, together with representatives from the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) and the Wave Energy Center (WavEC) in Portugal.

During this event, there will also be two award ceremonies:

- The [Call for projects awards](#) (open until 15 July)
- The [Contest “Atlantic City of the Year”](#) (open until 15 September) – contact person is **Tamara Guirao-Espiñeira** from the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities

*NB: Do not forget to book you accommodation in advance as there will be three major events at the same dates in Dublin*

**Tamara Guirao-Espiñeira** suggested to ask for a stand of Atlantic networks (Atlantic Arc Commission, ATN, CAAC) during the event.

- About the EMFF specific budget line for the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan

**Pauline Caumont** recalled that a letter signed by President Bruno Retailleau was sent to Commissioner Vella on behalf of the Atlantic Arc Commission to express the concern of the Atlantic Arc Commission’s member regions regarding the decision not to earmark a specific amount of money within the EMFF 2017-2018 programme for the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan. Marcella Smyth (Irish Presidency of the ASG) mentioned that the 5 Atlantic Member States wanted to draft a letter to the Commissioner as well.

The Atlantic Arc Commission also regrets that there is no continuity within DG MARE’s Unit C1 (Maritime policy Atlantic, outermost regions and Arctic) as well as a lack of political willingness to support the Atlantic Strategy.

**Zoé Buyle-Bodin**, Representative of the Normandie Region, asked whether there was any update on the possibility of setting-up a seed money facility for the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme as mentioned earlier by Joanna Kyrillo (DG REGIO).

The Secretariat will discuss this with Joanna and come back to the members.

## **3. SEARICA Intergroup meeting “Activating the Atlantic Action Plan” – 14 June 2016 – European Parliament**

During this meeting, **Pauline Caumont** was invited to speak about the involvement of the Atlantic Arc Commission in the development and implementation of the Atlantic Strategy. She presented the main messages of the Final Declaration “Pamplona 2016”. She noted that many MEPs attended the meeting.

**Tamara Guirao-Espiñeira** regretted that there was no time for debate.

On this occasion **Pauline Caumont** met the representative of [Mercator Océan](#) – association entrusted by the European Commission to implement and operate the Copernicus Marine Service. The association is very interested in meeting with Regions and raising awareness about the use of satellite data for the maritime sector.

Presentations and minutes of the SEARICA Intergroup meeting on the Atlantic Strategy (14 June 2016) are available here: [“Seas in Motion – Activating the Atlantic Action Plan](#)

## **V. Future revision of the Atlantic Action Plan**

The question raised here was to know whether it was relevant to get involved in this process as the Action Plan is not binding. The group should decide whether it should draft a joint declaration in view of the 2017 mid-term review.

**Arantza López de Munain** expressed that the Transnational Atlantic Network will prepare a contribution to this mid-term review.

## **VI. Update on EMFF funding: news and post-2020 architecture**

Although there is no CPMR official position so far, **Pauline Caumont** stressed that it is most probable that the CPMR will push to keep the 10% share of the EMFF directly managed by the European Commission (budget currently internally questioned in the European Commission). It is indeed included in the Final Declaration “Pamplona 2016” that the Atlantic Arc Commission fully supports the initiatives undertaken by the Commission thanks to this budget (e.g. Blue Careers, Blue Labs and Blue Technology calls.).

## **VII. Any other business**

**Tamara Guirao-Espiñeira** will send information on the “Atlantic city of the year” contest and invites the participants to disseminate it as broadly as possible.

**Arantza López de Munain** stated that the ATN is assessing the Atlantic Action Plan in view of the 2017 mid-term review. The assumption of the ATN is that the Strategy is not producing the expected effects.

**Pauline Caumont** recalled that the Atlantic Arc Commission participated in the COTER Committee of the Committee of the Regions on “missing transport links in border regions” on Tuesday 28 June. On this occasion, DG MOVE announced that a €100 million (indicative amount) call dedicated to small cross-border projects should be launched in September 2016. A joint meeting of the COTER (Committee of the Regions) and TRAN (European Parliament) committees will be organised on **29 September**. The Atlantic Arc Commission Executive Secretariat will send more information about this meeting as soon as it is available.