



Atlantic Arc Commission

Innovation Working Group meeting

Tuesday 6 October 2015 - Bordeaux (Aquitaine-France)

Conclusions

The Atlantic Arc Commission's Innovation Working Group meeting was held in Bordeaux on 6 October 2015. The Aquitaine Region has been leading this Working Group since the General Assembly that took place in Bilbao on 17 and 18 March 2015.

Through this Working Group, the Aquitaine Region is willing to mobilise the Atlantic Regions on the issue of innovation in the blue economy. There are endless possibilities for exploiting the Atlantic Ocean (marine renewable energies, marine research and innovation, nautical and naval industries, tourism, boating, maritime transport, biological resources and blue biotechnologies, ports, etc.) that must be supported by the Regions. In order to help create growth and jobs in the Atlantic territories, the Regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission must work together and share information, results and good practices.

This working group addresses a strong challenge identified by the European Union in the fields of blue growth and innovation. It appears in several strategic documents, including:

- The Communication from the European Commission of 13 September 2012: [“Blue Growth: opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth”](#);
- The Limassol Declaration of 8 October 2012: [“A Marine and Maritime Agenda for Growth and Jobs”](#);
- The Communication from the European Commission of 13 May 2013: [“Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic area: Delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”](#);
- The Communication from the European Commission of 13 May 2014: [“Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth”](#);
- European Parliament resolution of 8 September 2015: [“Untapping the potential of research and innovation in the blue economy to create jobs and growth”](#).

On the basis of the working document « Innovation Working Group - Draft roadmap for 2015-2016 »¹, the Regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission agreed on a specific hierarchisation of the proposed thematic priorities according to their own regional priorities. Furthermore, specific working guidelines were adopted for each of the four priorities (see below):

1- Biological Resources and Biotechnologies

- **In brief:** Marine bio-resources refer to the products, co-products and by-products of multitrophic fishing and fish-farming, marine organisms, fungi and halophytes.

The exploitation of these resources can stimulate the economy of all the Atlantic Regions and become a key economic sector, especially in the fields of human and animal nutrition, health, cosmetics, chemistry, etc. The exploitation of these resources will stimulate many innovations and collaborations and the emergence of new opportunities.

¹ See the Atlantic Arc Commission's website: www.arcatlantique.org

- **Actions proposals:** considering the major interest expressed by the Regions in this topic, it was proposed that it would become the main purpose of this working group. The objective of this group will be to identify the actors and their priorities that would lead to the implementation of a European project focused on biological resources and biotechnologies. Here is the methodology suggested:
 - Mapping of the regional actors;
 - Identification of the main areas of activity (health, cosmetics, energy, nutrition) – priority might be given to the health area;
 - Information feedback concerning the needs of the actors on the ground;
 - Preparation of a joint project and support to the organisations willing to be involved in the project.
- **Deliverable:** European project in which every Atlantic Region (and/or their main partners in this field) will be allowed to participate. The project could be submitted within the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Atlantic Area 2014-2020”.

2- Ships of the Future

- **In brief:** This key sector for all the Atlantic Regions includes several research and innovation activities such as engineering, design and construction of clean and innovative ships, propulsion systems, innovative materials, on-board equipment, maintenance, etc.
- **Actions proposals:** In view of the next call of the European research programme « Horizon 2020 » (two calls announced in the 2016 and 2017 working programmes), the Regions proposed to create a directory of the main regional actors in this field that will be compiled at the Atlantic Arc level. This transnational directory will then be sent to all the stakeholders that will be invited to work together in order to develop a “ship of the future” Atlantic project. This project might be eligible for the H2020 programme’s calls for proposals. The Atlantic Arc Commission’s “Innovation” working group will contact the CPMR “Shipbuilding and Maritime Industries” working group’s coordinator to know how the innovation component is taken into account in their activities. In return, the Innovation Group of the Atlantic Arc Commission could also feed into the CPMR group with regard to the Atlantic dimension.
- **Deliverable:** Atlantic directory of the stakeholders in the fields relating to the ships of the future, in line with the agenda of the Horizon 2020 programme’s calls for proposals.

3- Development, surveillance and security of the coast

- **In brief:** the Atlantic coast is particularly vulnerable to the risks of erosion and flooding. Innovation is now the key to improve coastal monitoring, prevent environmental risks and provide services suited to the needs of the different users.
- **Actions proposals:** The working group’s members consider that the problem concerning this field lies in the identification, management and use of data. In this respect, an « *EU Open Data Initiative* » was launched together with the Communication from the European Commission of “*Innovation in the Blue Economy*”. This initiative aims at making data easily available, interoperable and usable without restriction. In order to better use these data, the « *Smart Cities* »² European model could, for instance, be imitated to create « *Smart Coastal Areas* ». The objective of the group will be to develop proposals/guidelines to be transmitted to the European Commission on the area “Ocean and Big Data”.
- **Deliverable:** Lobbying – Submit guidelines on how to improve the access of Atlantic actors to marine and coastal data and how to share them effectively to the European Commission.

² Further information about this concept is available here: <http://ec.europa.eu/eip/smartcities/>

4- Marine mineral resources

- **In brief:** This offshore industrial sector is seeking to have access to new marine mineral resources located in marine depths exceeding 1 000 m. The exploitation of these resources is pretty erratic since the cost is still extremely high and the offshore deposits of the Atlantic coastal Regions have not been identified yet.
- **Actions proposals:** This topic was identified as an area with high potential for the future in all the Atlantic Arc Regions. However, given that this sector has not been defined as a priority in the regional strategies, the working group decided to keep track of its evolution. The Regions are invited to circulate information on the development of technologies linked to the exploration and sustainable exploitation of these resources in order to estimate the importance of this topic within the Atlantic Arc. An update will be provided to the Regions every year within the working group.
- **Deliverable:** Active monitoring and regular information sharing between the Regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission.

5- Other business

The « Innovation » group expressed a strong interest in the Renewable Energy sector, especially in aspects relating to “technologies/products/innovative services”. This group will therefore work closely with the “Marine Renewable Energy” working group of the Atlantic Arc Commission, which is led by the Brittany Region.

These draft conclusions of the Atlantic Arc Commission “Innovation” working group will be circulated among all the member Regions and will be put to vote during the plenary session of the Atlantic Arc Commission on 5 November 2015, in the margins of the CPMR General Assembly. Once approved, these conclusions will serve as working programme for this group.