Introduction

May-July 2023 were very dynamic months for the AAC with the celebration of its Cardiff General Assembly, the continuous efforts to implement the Atlantic Strategy and explore the Atlantic Macro-Region, as well as the finalisation of four Atlantic cooperation projects. In this Flash Info, you will find a summary of the latest activities performed by the Atlantic Arc Commission.

Taking stock of the results of the General Assembly, the AAC Secretariat will maintain efforts and coordination activities to contribute efficiently to the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU during the second semester 2023 and move forward with the Work Plans of the Atlantic Arc Commission working groups.

We would like to thank you for the smooth cooperation and your contributions to set the AAC priorities into motion. We wish you a pleasant reading and a restful summer break!

The Atlantic Arc Secretariat,
Elise Wattrelot, AAC Executive Secretary
Mathilde Maure, Projects & Policy Officer
Catherine Petiau, Policy Assistant
Member regions voted a new Political Declaration restating their vision on the future of the Atlantic. Not only does it express the AAC positions with regards the Green Industrial Plan, the Fisheries Package and maritime policies, the Fit for 55 and TEN-T policy, it also represents a call on the Spanish Presidency of the Council to make sure that the Atlantic Macro-Regional Strategy is developed and includes the political priorities of the Atlantic regions. The Declaration has been sent to EU institutions. It is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish on our website.

On 24 May 2023, Member Regions of the AAC met in Cardiff for the General Assembly of the Commission. Three political debates were organised to rethink cooperation between EU and non-EU regions in the Atlantic, to boost the Atlantic Offshore Renewable Energies sector, and further adapt skills of young people and professionals to the green transition in the Atlantic. Regional experts and high-level representatives were able to draw avenues of work to improve multilateral cooperation in those three domains. Check out the details here.

The Government of Québec was officially welcomed to be an associate member of the Atlantic Arc Commission. “We profoundly believe in the value of exchanges of experiences and good practices among our territories [...] in priority sectors such as inter port cooperation, ecological transition in the maritime sectors and coastal tourism” said Geneviève Brisson, Delegate General of the Québec Government Office in Brussels.

The next AAC General Assembly will be held in March 2024 in Evora, Alentejo.
The Spanish presidency of the Council, starting in July 2023, published its programme which included the Atlantic macro-region. It states that Spain "will promote the debate on the development of strategies for maritime regions with common geographical specificities, such as the Atlantic macro-region".

A new Atlantic Network of Chambers of Commerce

17 Chambers of Commerce met in Bilbao, Spain, on 21 June. Coming from 8 Atlantic regions of France, Spain and Portugal they met to agree on the creation of a Atlantic network of Chambers of Commerce and voted a Declaration in favour of the creation of an Atlantic Macro-Region to support the sustainable development of the Atlantic Arc. Should you think other Chambers of Commerce are interested in joining, please contact the AAC Secretariat. Learn more.

Meeting of the Atlantic Strategy Committee

On 15 June, the Atlantic Strategy Committee held its second meeting in Lisbon, to discuss the objectives of the Portuguese Presidency for 2023. In view of the writing of an Atlantic Ministerial Declaration, the AAC Secretariat presented its Cardiff Declaration and its ideas for the Transatlantic Cooperation pilot project of the European Parliament. See the Atlantic Strategy website.

AAC participates in Atlantic Maritime Strategy Pillar 1 workshop in Vigo

On 1 July, the coordinator of Pillar I "Ports as Gateways and Hubs of the Blue Economy", Carlos Botana, President of the Port of Vigo, hosted a first discussion on how to boost the decarbonisation of ports and the fishing sector. The AAC Secretariat, given its work carried out within the AspBAN project and its policy declarations on the valorisation of ports in the green transition, got involved in the discussions on Ports. A report of the meeting will be sent to the European Commission to possibly shape future calls.

The next Atlantic Strategy Committee will be held online in September. The Atlantic Stakeholders Conference will be in Porto on 18-19 October.
The AAC in SEArica to present its Recommendations on Ports as hubs of the Sustainable Blue Economy

On 27 June, the AAC presented to the SEArica intergroup of the European Parliament the AspBAN Policy Recommendations on Ports as hubs of the Blue Economy, endorsed by the AAC in Plenary in October 2022. These Recommendations compile the experiences of AspBAN partners in their endeavour to support ports to become hubs of the sustainable blue economy. Among the messages, the development of a own initiative report on the matter was proposed. Read more.

The AAC works to build a Strong Atlantic Network of Blue Innovations

On 16 June, the Atlantic Arc Commission organised a workshop to discuss ways to develop a Strong Atlantic Network of Blue Innovations, harnessing the experience developed in the FANBEST project (INTERREG Atlantic Area). This discussion, hosted by President Almeida, First Vice-President of the AAC, gathered a variety of Atlantic stakeholders including start-ups, researchers, maritime clusters and investors to reflect on bottlenecks and ways to boost the capacity of Atlantic start-ups to grow and enhance Atlantic Regions' development. Recommendations emanating from the discussions and consultations with regions will be consolidated and published soon. Watch this space!

CleanAtlantic Regional Policy Toolkit: inspiration for Regions to fight marine litter

As the partner of CleanAtlantic (Interreg Atlantic Area) in charge of capitalisation activities, the AAC elaborated a Regional Policy Toolkit for the reduction of marine litter. Based on the partners' technical solutions related to marine litter databases, monitoring systems, educational tools and studies, this toolkit provides guidance and facilitates access to information on possible initiatives to be put in place by regional authorities willing to do more to reduce marine litter. The toolkit is available in all Atlantic area countries' languages (EN, FR, ES, PT), we invite you to read it here.
Towards a definition of Atlantic territorial accessibility

Nouvelle Aquitaine Region hosted the Transport Working Group of the CPMR on 22 June. The meeting was an opportunity for the General Secretariat to present its work on territorial accessibility. On this occasion, Guillaume Moreno, Policy Analyst at the CPMR General Secretariat showed the first results with a series of maps focusing on the accessibility of the TransEuropean Network for Transport (TEN-T) in the Atlantic area. His presentation triggered an animated discussion involving the AAC members which led the General Secretariat to commit to extending its work to illustrate the impact of Brexit on the accessibility of the North West of Ireland as well as exploring other factors in the accessibility of the network such as the cost of the infrastructures. The General Secretariat also presented a series of maps showing the impact of climate change on TEN-T sections and a brief update on the TEN-T negotiations.

EU Fisheries Package: Atlantic Regions participate in CPMR discussions

On 11 July, the first meeting of experts of the CPMR Working Group on Fisheries (FIG) was held, aiming to enhance the exchange of views between civil servants and experts from CPMR member regions. This new configuration of the FIG allowed participants to examine in detail the European Commission’s non-legislative package of 21st February. Discussions focused on the conclusions of the Swedish Presidency on this package, the contribution of the Committee of the Regions, led by Mr Gamallo, Director-General at Xunta de Galicia, as well as actions that could be carried out by the CPMR on the decarbonisation of the EU fishing fleet, the revision of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), and the Landing Obligation.

For more information, you can contact giuseppe.sciacca@crpm.org or clare.booth@crpm.org. The next meeting will take place on 21 September (hybrid format).
Territories Matter Initiative - 3rd Seminar
On 6 July, the CPMR and the Basque Country joined forces to promote an exchange of views on the advantages and disadvantages of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and to reflect on the role of Cohesion Policy in an evolving Europe.

Pedro Azpiazu, Basque Minister for Finance, delivered an opening speech stressing the added value of Cohesion Policy in the region and the need to preserve it. In one of the thematic sessions, Iñaki Barredo, Basque Vice-Minister for Economy and European Funds, addressed the lessons learned from the RRF, highlighting that structural reforms could be carried over to the future Cohesion Policy. Read the post-seminar brief here (available soon).

First CPMR Energy Working Group: definition of activities
On 31 May 2023, the first meeting of the CPMR Energy Working Group, coordinated by the Basque Country, was held in Brussels. Thanks to roundtable discussions between the participants, the WG set its working priorities and methodology with a focus on fostering cooperation and promotion of the CPMR Member Regions’ work. Moreover, the Fit for 55 package implications and potential impacts as well as the latest developments concerning Energy Policy at EU level were discussed in a panel debate with different stakeholders. Read the full article about the meeting here.

CPMR Technical Paper on the Fit For 55
The CPMR Energy team conducted an analysis of the interinstitutional agreements and final texts of a number of dossiers of the Fit for 55 package. The analysis gives an overview of the main provisions of the texts, whilst having a CPMR perspective. The dossiers analysed in the Technical Paper are the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), the Energy Efficiency Directive, ETS Aviation, ETS Maritime, FuelEU Maritime, ReFuelEU Aviation, the Renewable Energy Directive and the Social Climate Fund. See the CPMR members area.
Stop marine litter: final event of the Clean Atlantic project. After 6 years of working together, project partners met on 21 June in Vigo, Spain, to present the results of the project to the participants: databases and monitoring systems, studies on the impact of marine litter, clean-up actions and cooperation with fishermen, school trainings. The AAC particularly contributed to the creation of a policy toolkit that aims at inspiring regional stakeholders to take action! Read more.

Conclusion of the SAFER project. Started in 2017, the project delivered pilots of innovation transfers in seafood companies of the Atlantic area. Among innovation, companies were able to test and adopt tools for marine water treatment, remote water monitoring, manufacturing control systems, digital apps for oyster harvest inspections. Check the results here!

The AAC contributed to the project by releasing a Policy Toolkit to provide guidance to Regions wishing to learn more about the innovations tested in SAFER to get inspiration to support the development of their regional seafood sector.

A new AAC project on the decarbonisation of maritime transport. The SMARTDEC project, in which the CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission is a full partner, recently got approved by the INTERREG Atlantic Area Monitoring Committee. This project led by Pole Mer Bretagne Atlantique will aim at identifying Start-ups and SMEs providing solutions to shipbuilders to decarbonise the fleet. The AAC will lead the capitalisation activities.

The AAC will be an associated partner of FreeLitterAt. FreeLitterAt will constitute the prolongation of the CleanAtlantic project. The AAC will be an associated partner to keep the AAC Ocean Working Group informed of the results of this new collaboration on marine litter. The AAC Secretariat enabled the University Bretagne Occidentale and CIIMAR to integrate this new consortium as full partners.

Full list of AAC projects available here
El Lehendakari destaca que la UE reconoce la inversión vasca en innovación y excelencia y llama a sus instituciones a sumarse al proyecto de Macrorregión Atlántica
11/07/23, Euskadi

El Lehendakari celebra el nacimiento de la asociación Cámaras del Arco Atlántico y aboga por involucrar a todos los "actores" en la defensa de los intereses comunes de la fachada atlántica europea
21/06/23, Euskadi

Las cámaras de comercio del Atlántico advierten de la pérdida de competitividad
21/06/2023, El correo

Urkullu avisa a Sánchez que no puede perder tiempo y se debe crear la Macrorregión Atlántica en la presidencia española
21/06/2023, Europress

Urkullu avisa a Sánchez que no puede perder tiempo y se debe crear la Macrorregión Atlántica en la presidencia española
21/06/2023, La Vanguardia

Un total de 17 ciudades del Arco Atlántico firman un compromiso por la protección de los océanos
07/06/23, Europa Press

Anglesey tidal energy project represents region on international stage
01/06/23, North Wales Chronicle

Regional leaders commit in Cardiff to more and better cooperation between EU and non-EU Atlantic regions
26/05/2023, EUReporter

A Xunta defende na asemblea de rexions do Arco Atlántico o corredor ferroviario e a creación dunha macrorrexión atlántica
23/05/23, Xunta de Galicia

Autarcas foram até Bruxelas mostrar preocupación com preservación da agua
28/04/2023, Osetu

Bruselas presiona a Francia porque la conexión con la 'Y vasca' es de «extrema importancia
24/04/2023, El Correo

Paula Fernández: Ahora todos se suben al tren
22/04/2023, El Diario Montañés

CIMAL em Bruxelas para debater questões fulcrais para o Alentejo Litoral
21/04/2023, Rádio M24

Revilla y Barbón junto a Galicia y País Vasco quieren crear un loby para la conexión del corredor atlántico con Francia
17/04/2023 Cantabria Liberal

Pedro Sánchez admite que se prestó más atención al corredor ferroviario mediterráneo que al atlántico
16/04/2023, La Voz de Galicia

Revilla y Barbón abogan por "obligar" a Francia a conectar el AVE con España por el corredor atlántico en 2030
16/04/2023, EuropaPress

El Parlamento Europeo incluye el tren Santander-Bilbao en el proyecto del Corredor Atlántico
13/04/2023, El Diario Cantabria – Público

Urkullu encarrila una reunión con el Gobierno francés y el respaldo de Portugal a la macrorregión
12/04/2023, Noticias de Gipuzkoa

Urkullu redobla su presión por el Corredor Atlántico y se cita con el embajador francés
11/04/2023, El Correo

Urkullu reclama en el Aberri Eguna actualizar y renovar el marco del autogobierno del País Vasco
09/04/2023, La Voz de Asturias

«El Arco Atlántico es clave porque ofrece seguridad energética al resto de Europa»
03/04/2023, El Correo

Navarra se adhiere a la Declaración de Cardiff que promueve la creación de una macrorregión atlántica
24/03/23, Navarra

Rueda pide al embajador de Francia en España que el país galo se sume a la red de infraestructuras para conectar el Corredor Atlántico con Europa
23/03/23, Xunta de Galicia
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CPMR/ AAC EVENTS

September 19, 21, 25, 28, online. CPMR trainings on EU project management

September 19, Brussels, Belgium. AAC Brexit Task Force jointly with the North Sea Commission

September 21, online. CPMR Fisheries Working Group

October 3, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, online. CPMR trainings on EU project management

October 11, Brussels, Belgium. DG MARE Workshop "Coastal Cities and Regions, at the forefront of an innovative energy transition of the blue economy". Participation of the AAC Vice-President Teresa Almeida

November 15-17, Saint-Malo, France. CPMR General Assembly & AAC Plenary

March 2024, Evora, Portugal. AAC General Assembly

EXTERNAL EVENTS

September 3-6, Bilbao, Spain. European Wave and Tidal Energy Conference

September 4-5-6, Santander, Spain. Summer School "Macro-regional strategies: a new strategix framework for European territorial cooperation"

October 5-6, Riga, Latvia. EUSBSR Annual Forum

October 9-12, Brussels, Belgium. EU Regions Week

October 9, Vigo, Spain. High-Level Panel on Plastic Governance

October 10-11, Vigo, Spain. EurOCEAN 2023 Conference

October 17, Bilbao, Spain. Green Marine Europe

October 18, Porto, Portugal. INTERREG Atlantic Area annual event

October 18-19, Porto, Portugal. 10th Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference