Dear Members,

In the light of the upcoming hub meetings of November 2021, the AAC Secretariat seized this timely moment to reflect on the developments of the Atlantic Arc Commission in the last few months. October 2021 marked the first year of the Basque Country Presidency, which is an important landmark in the timeline of our activities. On the occasion of the Atlantic Arc Commission Plenary in October 2021, we had the opportunity to assess our advancements on the AAC Action Plan with highlights on active developments on the Atlantic Macro-Region.

We also got the occasion to reunite with the other CPMR Geographical Commission Members during the CPMR General Assembly, during which some of you voiced valuable AAC insights on various topics of our interest, from aquaculture and fisheries, connectivity, to recovery challenges. We are pleased to share further details on our activities in this FlashInfo. Thank you very much for your active engagement in our network. Together, let’s continue to boost the Atlantic cooperation for a resilient and fair future!

With all our best wishes, and looking forward to meeting you for the AAC hub meetings,

The CPMR Atlantic Arc Secretariat,
Elise Wattrelot, AAC Executive Secretary
Delphine Kaczorowski, Project and Policy Officer
Catherine Petiau, Policy Assistant

and the CPMR project team (AAC projects),
Barbara Favaro, Project Officer
Justine Brossard, Project Officer
In the light of the fruitful discussions that occurred during the high-level meeting of the AAC General Assembly of June 2021, actions on the Atlantic Macro-Region Strategy have accelerated in the last few months. Following this meeting, Spanish Secretary of State Juan González Barba expressed the Spanish Government’s willingness to contribute to the creation of an Atlantic Macro-Region at the General Affairs Council of June 2021 in front of all EU Member States representatives, marking an important step for the AAC proposition at the EU Council level, which will be decisive to call for a mandate to the European Commission.

On 14 September 2021, the report of MEP Younous Omarjee, Chair of the REGI Committee “A new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy”, has been adopted by the European Parliament with an overwhelming majority. From the draft to the adoption of the report, the AAC actively defended the inclusion of the creation of the Atlantic macro-region. Through joint actions of the AAC Secretariat and Member Regions, the AAC also ensured that our core messages on the macro-region circulated to shadow rapporteurs Caroline ROOSE, Isabel CARVALHAIS and Laurence FARRENG and rapporteurs Pierre Karleskind (PECH) and Izaskun Bilbao (TRAN). This report marks a crucial step for the Atlantic Macro-Regional Strategy: since September 2021, the initiative is officially supported by the European Parliament, drawing important attention on the Atlantic Macro-Regional Strategy at the EU level.

In this encouraging atmosphere, the AAC gathered for its Plenary meeting in October 2021, which enabled regions to update each other on their respective actions on their national governments. MEP Younous Omarjee, present on that day called the regions to seize the vote of the European Parliament as an argument to further strengthen the legitimacy of the request for a mandate for the creation of the Atlantic Macro-Regional Strategy.

On 5 November, the Secretaries of State for European Affairs of Spain, France and Portugal met in Lisbon to discuss our shared priorities with the aim of strengthening our close cooperation and preparing together for the next European deadlines. On this occasion, we adopted the following joint declaration proposing to assess the benefits of the creation of an Atlantic Macro-Region. Latest developments are promising, and the AAC looks forward to continuing its work on this dossier!
The Atlantic Arc Commission participating to key political events

In collaboration with other CPMR Geographical Commissions and beyond, the Atlantic Arc Commission shares its vision and perspectives for the future of the Atlantic

Atlantic Arc Commission at the CPMR General Assembly

On October 14, Member Regions gathered for the 49th CPMR General Assembly. On that occasion, AAC representatives voiced the Atlantic perspectives. Rosa Quintana, Regional Minister of the Sea of Galicia, presented her view on the revision of the CFP, highlighting place-based solutions from Galicia. She proposed the organisation of a CPMR event on the CFP review in Galicia in 2022. Paula Fernandez, Regional Minister of Cantabria, tackled the recovery plans, calling for the involvement of regions in the management of the funds, and presented the stakes of TEN-T revision in Cantabria. Mathieu Bergé, Councilor of Nouvelle Aquitaine Region, also presented regional challenges in terms of connectivity. Many thanks to all speakers and regions attending for this great day of discussions!

On October 13, back-to-back with the General Assembly, the CPMR organised a webinar on Sustainable Blue Economy in the framework of the Interreg Med Project Blue Growth Community. Mathieu Bergé, presented the ambitions of his region on circular economy notably with the pilot project “I Clean My Sea”. Alentejo Region was represented as well to share the outcomes of AQUACOMBINE and MISTRAL projects. Many thanks for your participation highly contributing to strengthen cooperation with other sea-basins!

Atlantic Arc Commission at the European Week of Regions and Cities

On October 12, the AAC organised, with the impulse of the Region of Lisboa e Vale do Tejo, the workshop “Blue Economy and RIS3, fostering Innovation in the Atlantic Area” at the European Week of the Regions and Cities 2021. The workshop, moderated by MEP Manuel Pizarro, facilitated fruitful exchanges to exploit synergies in the RIS3 of Atlantic regions and identify further cooperation opportunities for innovative projects and new businesses related to the Blue Economy. Teresa Almeida, President of CCDR Lisboa e Vale do Tejo, recalled the need to identify cooperation opportunities thanks to RIS3 to scale up innovative solutions for the Blue Economy. Claire Hugues, Vice President of Pays de la Loire Region presented the regional maritime strategy with a specific focus on innovation. Tiago Pitta e Cunha, CEO of the Oceano Azul Foundation, shared his vision on sustainable development of the Atlantic Area with the support of RIS3. Olatz Ajuria, Basque Energy Agency, explained the EuropeWave cooperation project as a good cooperation example on innovation and RIS3. Karl Bonner from Donegal County Council gave an overview of the potential of cooperation between regional ports. This workshop echoes the Smart Specialisation Blue Economy workshop of DG MARE/JRC in which Lisboa Region participated in July 2021. Many thanks for your contribution! Watch the recording here
On October 1, Antonio M. Cunha, President of CCDR do Norte, participated at the OSPAR Inter-Ministerial Meeting, backed by the CPMR observer status at the convention. On that occasion, he presented the AAC Pollution Working Group and made a powerful statement voicing the importance of including regions and local communities in the fight against ocean pollution. In the final Ministerial Declaration adopted during the meeting, regions were thus recognized as key interlocutors for a strong and transparent cooperation on marine pollution. Many thanks and congratulations to Mr Cunha!

During the AAC plenary 2021, Mr Cunha proposed a workplan for the Ocean Pollution Working group, which has been validated by the AAC Regions. The Ocean Pollution Working Group will officially kick off during next Atlantic Arc Commission Hub Meetings on 24-25 November. Encouraging prospects ahead!

On October 1, the CPMR co-organised with the SEArica Intergroup the seminar “Towards an EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism” to build forward smarter and greener in the EU coastal and insular regions. The seminar gathered key MEPs involved in discussions around the future EU Strategy on Tourism such as Tonino Picula, Josianne Cutajar, Vangelis Meimarakis, François Alfonsi, and Claudia Monteiro de Aguiar. On that occasion, Marta Barca, Director General in charge of Tourism in Cantabria Region, Chair of the AAC Tourism Working Group, was invited to present Cantabria initiatives and recalled that an EU tourism recovery agenda should plan strong support to SMEs and regional campaigns. On the Atlantic, she stressed common priorities and highlighted sustainable tourism not only as a way to preserve the environment and resources, but also to differentiate the specificities of the regions and thus diversify their offer, notably with the use of innovation. Thank you for your contribution!

The CPMR is monitoring closely sustainable tourism activities at the EU level. The CPMR coordinated an answer to the DG GROW stakeholder consultation on the transition pathway for Tourism with the help of Geographical Commissions. Stay tuned!
The Atlantic Arc Commission advancing on its priorities

Atlantic Cooperation Hub
The Atlantic Arc Commission boosting collaborations opportunities across the Atlantic

A new Interreg Atlantic Area programme aligned with our positions

On October 20, the Interreg Atlantic Area Annual Event was organised from Porto, opened by Antonio M. Cunha, President of Norte Region. This event was the occasion to learn more about the future programme orientations. Aligned with several major EU policies, the programme will focus on Blue Economy, Resilience, Innovation & Digitalisation, Tourism, Biodiversity and the Ocean and Energy and Resource efficiency. Cooperation with other Interreg programmes, identification of investment opportunities, direct youth participation, synergies with the Atlantic Maritime Strategy will be especially encouraged. We can be satisfied of these promising conclusions which are very much aligned with the messages that we passed to the programme (see AAC answer to the INTERREG AA public consultation). We will continue to closely monitor the publication of the new programme and looks forward to exciting opportunities to cooperate together!

An active participation of the Atlantic Arc Commission in the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan 2.0

In September and November 2021, the AAC participated in the Atlantic Strategic Committee meetings, contributing to voice the Atlantic regions’ positions and advance together smoothly on the implementation of the AAP 2.0 objectives. This meeting was the occasion to prepare the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference, held on 21 October in Dublin, in which the AAC Secretariat participated. Internally, the AAC Secretariat also held a series of bilateral meetings with Atlantic regional representatives of the AAP 2.0 pillars task force in order to strengthen collaboration and joint actions. The Pillar Coordinators updated ASC members on their reports of implementation, soon to be released. In addition, the Assistance Mechanism is planning to compile projects aligned with the priorities of the Atlantic Strategy. Finally, DG MARE presented possible synergies between the next Horizon Europe calls under the Ocean Mission and the Atlantic strategy.
Contribution of the Atlantic Arc Commission to a CoR Report on the role of regional and local authorities in the EU/UK relationships

Earlier this summer, the CPMR and AAC Secretariat was asked to contribute to the report “Restoring “lost connections” between the EU and the UK as a consequence of Brexit through local and regional authorities” of the Committee of the Regions, aiming at identifying policy areas that will be most negatively affected by Brexit and exploring possible avenues for future cooperation between local and regional authorities in the UK and the EU, with a focus on cross-border and interregional cooperation, movement of people, research, and student exchange. The report was published this September. Have a read!

The Atlantic Arc Commission committed to promote its vision on the Atlantic Macro-Region at the Parliament of Navarre

On September 24, the AAC was invited by the Euroregion Nouvelle-Aquitaine Euskadi Navarra to an event called “Border areas: territories of opportunity and European cohabitation” to discuss cross-border and transnational cooperation. In this meeting chaired by Unai Hualde, President of the Parliament of Navarre, gathered also Ana Urkiza, President of Eusko Ikaskuntza, Marian Elorza, Secretary General of Foreign Affairs of the Basque Government, Mathieu Bergé, Councilor of Nouvelle Aquitaine and Ana Ollo, Councilor for Citizen Relations of the Government of Navarre. Elise Wattrelot presented the AAC proposal of an Atlantic-Macro Region and its benefits to achieve a greater territorial cohesion by evolving from a sea-basin strategy towards a macro-regional strategy. Thank you for the invitation and the insightful discussion!

The AAC Political Declaration of December 2020 gathers key messages for the development of an Atlantic Macro-Region. You can still read the document by clicking here!
Maritime Hub
The Atlantic Arc Commission expanding its visibility and actions on Marine Renewable Energies, Blue Skills and Ocean Pollution

Advancing on boosting Atlantic cooperation on Marine Renewable Energy

On October 07, the AAC participated in the sub-group internal meeting and in the workshop of the Pillar III of the Atlantic Strategy on the place of Renewable Energy in the Maritime Spatial Planning in the Atlantic Area. Hosted by Olatz Ajuria, Project Manager at the Basque Energy Agency and Coordinator of Pillar III, the meeting focused on an update on the French and Spanish MSP Plans and presentation of innovative MRE initiatives in the Atlantic. For more information on that matter, we encourage you to have a look at the MSP Platform, an interactive gateway with a team of key experts, providing information per countries and sea-basins. The AAC keeps on participating regularly to the sub-group meetings of Pillar III. The hub meetings of November 2021 will enable to discuss its advancements and the regional perspectives on the Ocean SET plan. The AAC will keep you updated!

The Offshore Renewable Energy Pact for Skills: the work goes on with the MATES Strategy

On September 29, the AAC was invited as a panelist of the MATES project workshop on their Maritime Technologies Skills Strategy, which aimed to show how skill requirements in the blue economy will likely change in the future as a result of emerging trends such as digitalisation, the rising demand for more sustainable practices and the adoption of new technologies. Elise Wattrelot highlighted the crucial socio-economic role of traditional maritime sectors in the Atlantic and the AAC reflection on the use of RIS3 to accompany the transition. She recalled the AAC activities on Skills. Earlier in September, the AAC also participated in a meeting of the ORE Pact for Skills Working Group to discuss and contribute to the MATES Skills Strategy. Stay tuned!

What’s a Pact for Skills?

Officially launched in November 2020 by the European Commission, the Pact for Skills is a shared engagement model for skills development gathering private and public actors to work together on upskilling and reskilling industrial ecosystems identified by the new EU industrial strategy. Regions are specifically targeted to roll-out the skills Strategies, hence the involvement of the AAC in one of them. For more information, click here
Paving the way for an Atlantic Arc Commission involvement on future legislative development on Education for Environmental Sustainability

In September 2021, the AAC answered to a consultation of the European Commission, aiming to improve knowledge, skills and attitude in the light of the transition proposed by the European Green Deal. The AAC seized this opportunity to stress the importance of involving regions for coordinated educational systems, of the need to adapt to local market and seek synergies with RIS3, and recalled the Atlantic Arc Commission Political Statement calling for an All Atlantic Skills Alliance (2019, Porto). This response also aims at further nurturing the AAC work on a VET project on Atlantic Aquaculture Skills.

Update on the EU agenda on fisheries

On September 23, the European Commission published a first report on the Implementation of the Technical Measures Regulation, which analyzed the impact previous technical measures, the current situation, and actions planned for the near future to implement the CFP Regulation. Besides, a targeted consultation on the upcoming Action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystem opened until 20 December 2021. The CPMR had contributed to the Roadmap with a dedicated answer (link here). This Action Plan comes before the assessment on the functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) which is planned for 2022. In preparation of a potential revision of the CFP, the EU Parliament Committee on Fisheries will prepare a report to share their views on this matter. The report of MEP Manuel Pizarro on fishers for the future largely adopted by the European Parliament in September 2021 also provides important elements of reflection on the social dimension of the CFP. The Atlantic Arc Fisheries Working Group will contribute to the CPMR reflection on the review of the Common Fisheries Policy via a questionnaire addressed to members which will be discussed during next hub meetings.
Accessibility and Attractivity Hub
The AAC working on transport and tourism challenges for a better connected and more attractive Atlantic Arc

The collaboration with RTA-ATN on the TEN-T revision goes on!

On September 28, the AAC was invited to participate in the RTA-ATN orientation committee to debate on the revision of the TEN-T, organised in Extremadura. This discussion enabled to share different Atlantic views for a better connectivity of Atlantic regions to the central network. Elise Wattrelot recalled the key messages of the AAC TEN-T declaration, calling for a green and blue arc of transports at the service of the sustainable development of Atlantic regions. Mikel Anton, from Basque Country, intervened on connectivity in the context of the AAC proposal of an Atlantic Macro-Region. The AAC and RTA-ATN have been partnering since the signature of a memorandum in 2014. The AAC looks forward to continuing joint actions!

Regions Move! A CPMR Questionnaire on Sustainable transport

On October 14, the CPMR General Assembly invited the President of the European Parliament Transport Committee, MEP Karima Delli and Pablo Fabregas, Member of cabinet of Commissioner Valean. These exchanges with Member Regions led the CPMR to launch an initiative aiming to identify Regions' best practices contributing to decarbonising the transport sector and identify the main obstacles they face in this endeavor. The questionnaire is available in French and English. Please note that you can answer in Greek, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. The deadline to answer the questionnaire is 17 December 2021. Contribute here!

The CPMR working together with DG GROW on a transition pathway for Tourism

In September 2021, the CPMR coordinated an answer to DG GROW consultation on the transition pathway for Tourism, which aimed at involving tourism stakeholders through a co-creation process in the planning and design of the sector's future pathways toward a more resilient, sustainable and innovative tourism ecosystem. In this answer, the CPMR called for a new tourism model that should put host communities - local/regional authorities - at the heart of tourism planning & decision-making to improve their ability to cope with new challenges, and stressed the needs and capacities of regions to participate in this process.

Thanks to this action, the CPMR was invited to the two rounds of participatory workshops with DG GROW, which were divided into two thematic areas, namely "Greener Tourism" and "Digital Tourism". This opportunity enabled the CPMR to share key messages on tourism and to voice the regional challenges and perspectives for the future works of the European Commission on sustainable tourism.
Atlantic Arc Commission Projects

As SAFER and CleanAtlantic respectively came to an end in September 2021, the AAC has been delighted to be a part of these two consortiums and participate in the capitalisation of crucial topics for the Atlantic, respectively innovation in the seafood sector and marine litter pollution. Following the announcement of the Interreg Extension Call, both of the projects are currently assessing this opportunity to continue their activities in that framework. Stay tuned!

SAFER Final Conference: Atlantic Regions at the forefront of innovation for a sustainable future of seafood sector!

On the occasion of the CPMR Working Group on Fisheries on September 20, the Atlantic Arc Commission organised the final conference of the SAFER project. Not only was this time an opportunity to discover the important outcomes of the project, but it also enabled to gather key players to discuss opportunities and challenges experienced by regions to pave the way for a sustainable and innovative future of the seafood sector. During this meeting, the final results of the SAFER project were presented, discussions with key EU experts on future scenarios for the seafood sector were engaged, and innovative regional best practices from various CPMR sea-basins were exchanged. Read the full article here

The Atlantic Arc Commission is a partner of two winning projects of the Atlantic Awards 2021!

In the context of the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference 2021 that was held on October 20 in Dublin, the Atlantic Strategy announced the winners of the Atlantic Projects Awards. Among them, the Interreg Atlantic Area project CleanAtlantic won under the category “Healthy and Resilient Coasts” and the EMFF-funded project AspBAN won under the category “Ports as gateways and hubs of the Blue Economy”. Congratulations, the AAC is honoured to be a part of these two consortia and is looking forward to future developments!
The AspBAN project: What is new?

**An open call for Acceleration Services**

From August to mid-October, the AspBAN opened application of an open call for start-ups of the Blue Economy, willing to boost their innovation and sustainable services in the Atlantic. This programme aims to offer **tailor-made support for blue businesses**, in addition to bi-monthly pitches in front of selected investors until July 2022. The project is now entering its selection process. Stay tuned! [More information here](#)

**ASPC 2021 Workshop “Perspectives of Green Ports for the Future”**

In the light of AspBAN project, the AAC co-organised the workshop “Perspectives on Green Ports of the Future” on October 21 at the [Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference](#), together with the Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO). The event gathered experts coming from the ports sector, private companies operating in ports, regional and national governments for them to present their **different perspectives on Green ports of the future**. Mathieu Bergé, Councilor of Nouvelle Aquitaine Region, represented the AAC and updated participants on the Regional strategy for Ports and the commitment of regional ports such as Bayonne to develop circular economy for the production of steel. Sr Ramón Muñoz-Calero, Director of Avilés Port (Asturias), presented the port’s priorities to reduce carbon emissions and facilitate the installation of wind power companies. Thank you for your contribution!

**The AspBAN Ports Community Database**

As the “N” stands for Network in AspBAN, facilitating a **vibrant and active community of stakeholders** is key to connect all relevant stakeholders. The AspBAN created the [Ports Community Database](#) as a practical tool. Please [register your profile here](#), and then [add your entity there](#)!

**What’s next for the AAC Members?**

In addition to presentations to external and other CPMR Geographical Commission events, the AAC will organise **workshops with CPMR Geographical Commissions**, starting with:

- CPMR Islands Commission, December 9, 2021. Agenda and Registrations are [here](#)
- CPMR North Sea Commission, January 2022

*Stay tuned!*
**EU Calls’ Corner**

**Extension Call 3**

On October 04, the Interreg Atlantic Area programme announced opening a restricted call for proposals for approved projects of 2014-2020 period, including those already closed. Projects are invited to propose additional activities as well as capitalisation actions, and the possibility to include new partners is open. The activities enabled by the Extension Call 3 will have the possibility to run until June 2023. The call is open until November 30, 2021. For more information, click here.

**EMFAF Flagship Call**

On September 28, the EMFAF call “Flagship projects promoting a sustainable blue economy through regional maritime cooperation in the Atlantic, the Black Sea and the Western Mediterranean” (EMFAF-2021-PIA-FLAGSHIP) has been opened. In the case of the Atlantic, it will especially focus on innovative multi-use projects combining offshore renewable energy with other activities and/or with nature protection, in order to support the Atlantic Maritime Strategy priority to develop marine renewable energy. The applicants shall include at least 2 Atlantic Strategy Member States. The call is open until 12 January 2022. For more information, click here.

**Connecting Europe Facility Call**

On 16 September, the first CEF 2.0 Call for Proposals was published and will be open until 19 January 2022. In this framework, the CPMR Secretariat prepared a recap on CPMR work to influence the design of the Programme. More information on our impact on CEF 2021-2027 available here.

**EMFAF Maritime Spatial Planning Call**

On September 28, the European also published a call for projects that develop innovative responses to the challenges of implementing, monitoring and/or revising maritime spatial plans. €3.75 million in grants are available and proposals must be submitted by 12 January 2022. Full details are available on the Funding & Tenders portal, where you can also submit your project proposals. The European MSP Platform has prepared information on the call here.

**Euroclusters Call**

On September 30, the European Commission launched the call “Joint Cluster Initiatives (EUROCLUSTERS) for Europe’s recovery” (SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER). The call will aim to foster a network for resilience of the EU industrial ecosystems by the development of value-chains interlinkages, to innovative for strategic economy and build capacity, encourage the adoption of process and technologies for greener and more digital economy, re-skilling, and internationalisation. The call is opened until November 30, 2021. For more information, click here.

**Horizon Europe Calls**

A series of Horizon Calls are currently opened on a variety of topics of interest for Atlantic Regions such as the demonstration of wave energy devices in real sea conditions, innovation on floating wind energy deployment optimized for deep waters and different sea basins, Socio-economic risks of climate change in Europe, Europe’s cultural heritage and arts. More information here.
## AAC/CPMR events

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<td>Cohesion Core Group</td>
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<td>Atlantic Strategy Committee</td>
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<td>19 NOVEMBER 2021</td>
<td>CPMR President in Lisbon</td>
<td>Meeting with Portuguese Regions</td>
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<td>AAC Hub Meetings</td>
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<td>9 DECEMBER 2021</td>
<td>AspBAN AAC/Islands Commission Workshop</td>
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<td>JANUARY 2022</td>
<td>ASPBAN AAC/North Sea Commission Workshop</td>
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## External events

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<td>Business2Sea 2021</td>
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<td>19 NOVEMBER 2021</td>
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