



# Kick-off Meeting of the Atlantic Arc Commission Task Force on the exploration of an Atlantic Macro-Region

Thursday 12 December 2019 - Brussels

## CONCLUSIONS

Participating Regions in the meeting : Andalucía, Bretagne, Galicia, Navarra, Northern & Western Regional Assembly, País Vasco, Pays de la Loire, Wales

### OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

---

- To ascertain how many interested Regions may take part in the Task Force.
- To adopt the Terms of Reference on the basis of the document prepared by the Basque Country for which regions were asked to provide written amendments prior to the meeting.
- To decide on the methodology and calendar of the Task Force.

### The Basque Country's proposal:

---

- The Task Force should operate over a period of 6 or 7 months.
- The first step should be to identify regions willing to proactively contribute to the work of the Task Force, ideally one region per Member State at least. Participation of the Task Force should be widened to the Atlantic islands - Canary Islands, Azores, and Madeira.
- The second step should be to identify thematic priorities to tackle within a new Atlantic Macro-Region and the most appropriate governance structure to achieve these priorities.
- The third step should be to meet the Member State representatives and other EU institutions to spur the Council to give a mandate to the European Commission to create an Atlantic Macro-Region. This, ideally with the support the Atlantic Arc Commission membership, but not limited by it.

### Debates with participants:

---

#### Points raised by participants included:

##### 1) Geography of the possible Macro-Region

- What should be the geography of an Atlantic Macro-Region.
- This question may be somewhat determined by the thematic priorities identified for the Macro-Region.
- It was felt that the geography of the Macro-Region should be based on the assumption that we start with the existing geography of the Atlantic Sea Basin Strategy, and then potentially widen participation at a later date.
- Only three Member States are required to give a mandate to the European Commission for a Macro-Region.
- The islands of the Atlantic (the Canary Islands, the Azores, and Madeira) should be invited to participate in the Task Force.
- Regions from RESOE (Galicia, Castilla y León, Asturias, Norte and Centro) also have a stake in this work. RESOE will come in Brussels early 2020.

CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission

6, rue Saint-Martin - 35700 Rennes (FR)

Tel. +33 (0)2 99 35 40 60 - Email: [catherine.petiau@crpm.org](mailto:catherine.petiau@crpm.org) - Twitter: [Atlantic\\_Arc](https://twitter.com/Atlantic_Arc)  
<http://cpmr-atlantic.org>

## 2) Priorities of the possible Atlantic Macro-Region

- **Data collection**

- In order to define the priorities of the Macro-Region, it would be necessary to have appropriate data to identify common challenges and to support the initiative.
- Data collection can take time. Organisations such as Eurostat, ESPON, the JRC, or the OECD could be able to provide some of the necessary data based on what exists already.
- Once the European Commission receives the mandate from the Council, it could proceed to undertake a thorough data collection and analysis.

- **Potential Priorities**

- Climate change.
- Marine Renewable Energy, where there is a need for coordination between Member States to improve the planning of MRE development in the Atlantic area. A Macro region could support MRE value-chains where manufacturing takes place in an inland territory, but the device is deployed in the maritime region.
- **Transport and ports connection to their hinterlands**

## 3) Governance of the possible Atlantic Macro-Region

- **Context: Improvement of the Atlantic Sea Basin Strategy governance**

- An evaluation on the Atlantic Strategy was carried out in 2017. The Commission produced a [Staff Working Document](#) based on this evaluation in 2018.
- This evaluation led to the revision of the priorities and the governance of the Atlantic Strategy.
- Largely thanks to the influence of the Atlantic Arc Commission, based on the position approved at the Atlantic Arc Commission Extraordinary Political Meeting in Brussels on 5 June 2019, the role of regions in the governance of the Atlantic Strategy has been strengthened. There has also been a greater recognition of the importance of territorial cohesion in the Atlantic Area.
- In addition to being represented by the Atlantic Arc Commission Secretariat at the meetings of the Atlantic Strategy Group, regions may now also participate in meetings as part of their national delegations, and may become Pillar Coordinators of the four priority pillars of the Action Plan (Ports as Blue Hubs; Marine Renewable Energy; Skills and Ocean Literacy; Resilient and Healthy Atlantic coasts).
- As a Pillar Coordinator, a region would have an increased potential to influence the Atlantic Strategy and Member States on behalf of Atlantic Regions.
- It would require a certain level of resource commitment from the designated region. The region would receive administrative and policy support from the Assistance Mechanism and the Atlantic Arc Commission Secretariat, as well as some financial support for travel from the Assistance Mechanism.
- Regions should express their interest to become a Pillar Coordinator to Katie as soon as possible in order for Katie to liaise with the European Commission to ensure regions are taken into account in the drafting of the terms of reference of the Pillar Coordinators.
- The Atlantic Arc Commission may be interested to apply to become the new Assistance Mechanism. This should be discussed with members at a later date when more information becomes available.

- **Good practices from other Macro-Regions**

- The Alpine Strategy where both a region and a Member State chair the Macro-Region Strategy could be a model to replicate.

## Conclusions

---

- The Atlantic Arc Commission Secretariat will contact the CPMR Island Commission to formally involve the Atlantic Islands in the work of the Task Force.
- The Atlantic Arc Commission Secretariat and the Basque Country will propose a date for the next meeting of the Task Force, during the week commencing the 17 February 2020, and will propose an agenda aimed at advancing on the identification of priority areas. Guest speakers at this meeting may include, the JRC, and other bodies which could help the Atlantic Arc Commission gathering data on priority areas, such as Eurostat, ESPON, IFREMER, Campus CEIMAR, NWRA economist, etc. A draft list of priorities should be identified on this occasion.
- Regions are asked to provide the names of one contact from the region and one contact from the Brussels Office who will be the representatives to the Task Force.
- The Basque Country will seek to establish a core group of three or four individuals from the Task Force to drive forward the interaction with MEPs and other representatives from the EU Institutions, and to support the reflection work ahead of each meeting.
- The meeting in February will be organised within the framework of the overarching Working Group on Cooperation in the Atlantic, with a meeting on each of the Working Group's three pillars. The coordinator of the Task Force for each Pillar, with the support of the Atlantic Arc Commission Secretariat, should prepare the agenda for their Task Force meeting. These meetings should be followed by a plenary session, summarising the outcome of each Task Force meeting and including a point on the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme.
- A further meeting of the Task Force on the Exploration of an Atlantic Macro-Region should take place in April 2020 to discuss the governance of the Macro-Regional Strategy. Invited speakers may include representatives from the Alpine Strategy and the Baltic Sea Strategy. The Alpine Strategy could report on the outcome of their meeting with the Managing Authorities (planned in February 2020).