



CPMR  
ATLANTIC ARC  
COMMISSION

# Plenary meeting of the Atlantic Arc Commission

19 October 2017 - Helsinki (Helsinki-Uusimaa-FI)

## MINUTES

*(Approved by the Atlantic Arc Commission's General Assembly in 2018)*

### INTRODUCTION

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**Isabelle Boudineau**, Vice-President of Nouvelle-Aquitaine, representing the presidency of the Atlantic Arc Commission, welcomed the participants and presented the agenda for the meeting. She apologised for the absence of the political representative from Pays de la Loire. Following Bruno Retailleau's decision to continue in his term of office as a French senator, Pays de la Loire Regional Council had to designate a new President. The elections were taking place now.

**Isabelle Boudineau** put the minutes of the General Assembly and Political Bureau meeting held in Les Sables d'Olonne 2017 to the vote. They were unanimously approved.

### ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION DECLARATION ON BREXIT

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**Eleni Marianou** presented this document, which had been drafted in the context of the discussions taking place within CPMR on the issue of Brexit. Two amendments had been submitted, by Andalusia and the Basque Government. They were unanimously adopted.

**Alfonso Garrido** spoke on the amendment submitted by Andalusia and explained their situation, which was unique because of the border with Gibraltar, and in particular their concern about cross-border workers.

The declaration, with the two amendments, was put to the vote and unanimously approved.

### ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION DECLARATION ON A MORE FLEXIBLE AND SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LANDING OBLIGATION

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No amendments to this document had been received from any of the Regions. The declaration was presented and unanimously adopted.

### CPMR DRAFT FINAL DECLARATION 2017

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**Élise Wattrelot**, Atlantic Arc Commission Policy Officer, detailed the "Atlantic" amendments received by the Secretariat. Referring to the amendment submitted by Asturias on indicators, she underlined that this was a somewhat sensitive issue for the CPMR Regions.

**Isabelle Boudineau** did not wish the issue of indicators to be addressed at this point in the debate on the Cohesion Policy. There was nothing to stop each Region asking for a specific indicator, she said; however, this would make it impossible to achieve a common CPMR position.

CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission

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**Montse García Ortiz**, Cantabria, supported Asturias's request, saying that particular attention should be paid to the issue of demographic changes which were specific to Regions such as Asturias or Cantabria for example. She hoped it would be possible to find some wording, however general, on this issue.

**Ana Ramos**, Galicia, also supported Cantabria's point of view. This was an important issue, which should be taken into account in the discussions on the future of the Cohesion Policy. Although GDP was an important criterion, she stressed that a new, demographic, criterion would be highly relevant for the allocation of funding.

**Isabelle Boudineau** pointed out the risk of the Cohesion Policy budget being drastically reduced. In this context, it would be risky to limit the Policy to the least developed Regions. The question of criteria was a fundamental one, which should be considered in the context of the Cohesion Policy as a whole.

**Ana Ramos** insisted nonetheless that the demographic criterion should be taken into account for the allocation of funding.

**Claire Letertre**, Brittany, said that in the first instance we needed to defend and safeguard the Cohesion Policy as a whole. She therefore suggested that a debate on the indicators, in particular a population criterion, should take place during a future General Assembly.

**Montse García Ortiz** agreed with Brittany's point of view. She proposed a new point arguing that particular attention should be paid to Regions experiencing demographic problems. This would avoid explicitly mentioning the criteria question.

**Nicolas Brookes**, CPMR Director in charge of Cohesion Policy, recalled the opinion of the Core Group which was looking into this question. Specifying one indicator in particular was rather complicated. His view was that we should first of all defend the Cohesion Policy itself, before focusing on the issue of indicators. He referred to the debate with the European Commission on this point and suggested a new compromise wording which would involve examining new criteria, once the debate on the future of regional policy had moved forward.

**Eleni Marianou** also considered that talking too much about criteria at this stage in the discussions was not a good idea. She suggested that a debate could take place during the session devoted to this topic during the General Assembly.

**Ana Ramos** agreed with Nicolas Brookes's suggestion, and asked that proposals be drafted asking the European institutions to take an interest in the issue of criteria at a future stage.

In conclusion, **Eleni Marianou** proposed mentioning that work on defining new criteria, going beyond GDP, would be started.

The second amendment submitted by **Andalusia**, on the challenge to economic growth represented by unemployment, was unanimously approved.

**Élise Wattrelot** presented the final "Atlantic" amendment, submitted by Asturias, alongside an amendment submitted by the Ionian Islands. This was also unanimously approved.

**Élise Wattrelot** concluded by raising a final point which could pose problems for the Atlantic Regions: the question of own resources. In principle, the Atlantic Arc Commission would not keep the amendment. Brittany and the Basque Government stated clearly that they did not wish this amendment to be kept. This point was endorsed by all the Regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission.

Another potential conflict could arise from the amendments submitted by the Baltic Sea Commission and the Intermediterranean Commission. These Commissions wished to include a specific mention of their respective sea basin strategies. The position of the Atlantic Arc Commission had always been

to support a CPMR Declaration which was sufficiently broad to cover all the member Regions and its Geographical Commissions, to avoid promoting individual cases.

**Eleni Marianou** confirmed that the CPMR Final Declaration cannot and indeed should not refer to unique geographical situations. She proposed keeping global references such as “macro-regional strategies, sea basin strategies and other emerging strategies”.

**Isabelle Boudineau** would therefore submit a proposal along these lines during the CPMR General Assembly, to defend the position of the Atlantic Arc Commission on this point.

**Davide Strangis**, Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission, wished to clarify that the mention of the West Med Strategy was intended to serve as an example. **Isabelle Boudineau** said that she would make this clarification.

Lastly, concerning the Intermediterranean Commission’s climate amendment, the Atlantic Arc Commission noted that the mention of a “hotspot in the Mediterranean” was also too specific. **Claire Letertre** pointed out that global warming was not only a Mediterranean issue. The idea was a positive one, but it was important not to focus on one particular area rather than another.

**Isabelle Boudineau** said that climate was indeed also an important issue for the Atlantic, in particular with regard to the serious problem of coastal erosion. She proposed a more general wording, so that the Intermediterranean Commission’s amendment would also cover problems faced in the Atlantic.

**Ana Ramos** asked what the procedure was for dealing with the other amendments. **Eleni Marianou** explained that these would have to be justified and submitted to the Final Declaration Overview Group for approval before being submitted to the CPMR Political Bureau. See the [CPMR Final Declaration - Helsinki 2017](#) here.

## ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION INTERNAL ISSUES

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**Eleni Marianou**, Secretary General of CPMR, gave a report on the financial situation of the Atlantic Arc Commission and in particular the budget for 2018. The Commission’s finances were healthy, with a surplus budget forecast for the next few years, thanks in particular to the exceptional contribution from Pays de la Loire and income from EU cooperation projects.

**Eleni Marianou** brought up the question of the British Regions in relation not only to the Atlantic Arc Commission but to CPMR as a whole, and both from a financial and a political point of view. She launched an appeal for bilateral actions with these Regions.

**Élise Wattrelot** concluded by highlighting the following dates in the 2017/2018 calendar of the Atlantic Arc Commission:

- Before the end of 2017: meeting with Michel Barnier to present the [Declaration on Brexit](#)
- 15 November: DG MARE seminar on the landing obligation (see the Atlantic Arc Commission’s [Declaration](#))
- 16 November: Cardiff Conference on Brexit
- 29 November: [visit of an offshore wind farm in the North Sea](#), for elected representatives of the Atlantic Arc Commission and the North Sea Commission in the framework of [Wind Europe](#)
- 13 and 14 December: Atlantic Arc Commission Hubs meetings.

Lastly, **Montse García Ortiz**, Cantabria, confirmed her Region’s invitation to host the 2018 General Assembly, the most likely dates being 14/15 June (to be confirmed).

In conclusion, **Isabelle Boudineau** thanked all the participants for attending this plenary meeting and said she looked forward to seeing all the members again in June 2018 in Cantabria for the next General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission.