Atlantic Arc Commission

Political Statement calling for an All Atlantic Skills Alliance

General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission
14 November 2019, Porto
(Norte, Portugal)

Statement of intent from Atlantic Arc Commission Regions to local and regional stakeholders and other actors to foster an Atlantic blue skills ecosystem, and a call to EU decision-makers and national governments to put the right conditions in place to support this.

The Atlantic Arc Commission of the CPMR represents the voice of Europe’s Atlantic maritime Regions. Many Atlantic Regions are serious economic actors in their own Member States, with substantial populations, and significant political autonomy, yet economic peripherality continues to lead to underperforming economies in many cases and a low-skilled workforce.

Recognising this context and in light of the risks and challenges facing the Atlantic coastline from climate change and the importance of adapting local economies to mitigate these effects;

Accepting the challenges facing the Atlantic Sea Basin as outlined in the Atlantic Strategy and in particular Pillar II on blue skills and ocean literacy;

Cognisant of the economic impact of adverse weather events on sectors with a direct relationship to climate, such as tourism, agriculture, or fisheries, and the need to adapt these sectors to cope with technological, lifestyle and activity changes;

Realising the need to involve citizens in preparing for and adapting to the energy shift, and making citizens a part of the adaptation process;

Emphasising the need to strengthen the regional dimension to the Galway and Belem Statements, and complementing such pan-EU initiatives as the European Ocean Alliance, or the EU Network of Blue Schools;

Highlighting that a coordinated response is the only way to make the case for change, to provide the capacity and framework for action, and to embed and mainstream climate resilience;

Building on the experience of past and on-going projects on maritime skills in the Atlantic and stressing the need to capitalise on the potential of existing initiatives.

Valuing the existing relationships and cooperation programmes that exist between universities, vocational training centres, and educational institutions across the Atlantic;

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We intend to build a coordinated ecosystem of higher and further education institutions in the Atlantic to foster skills development, increase capacity within the maritime skills sector, and to speed up the process of adapting our local and regional economies and societies to climate change and the energy shift, and adaptation to the new skills requirements.

This alliance should foster competences in the sectors identified in Regional Smart Specialisation Strategies, or equivalent strategies at regional level, of Atlantic Regions.

Actions flowing from this Alliance may include joint degrees and training courses, coordinated responses to calls for projects, and greater facilitation of cross-border circulation of workers to meet skills demands in the different sectors within the maritime economy. This would boost the response to training needs in specific professions in order to provide solutions to the needs of businesses in traditional and emerging sectors within maritime economies.

With the aim to ensure a local suitably qualified workforce with the right skills and to encourage citizens to accept and support changes in technology, and to lead to an Atlantic skills ecosystem benefiting all Regions of the Atlantic that would exploit the growth potential and employment opportunities of our maritime economies.

To this end, it has been found that greater cohesion in the entire Atlantic area encouraged by greater alignment of existing funding streams through the Atlantic Strategy is required, in order to better accompany and support initiatives in this area.

We, the member regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission, call on the European Union Institutions and Member States, and the Government of the United Kingdom to join us in this endeavour through the provision of adequate funding programmes and policy provisions.