



Atlantic Arc Commission

## Minutes/record of conclusions of the Atlantic Strategy Working Group

Tuesday 9 February 2016 – Brussels

Cantabria Delegation to the EU

### **Participants:**

**Member Regions:** Galicia, Cantabria, Basque Country, Andalucía, Aquitaine – Limousin – Poitou-Charentes, Brittany, Normandy, Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA).

**Excused:** Asturias, Pays de la Loire, Navarra.

**CPMR Region:** Canarias regional office in Brussels (member of the CPMR Islands Commission).

**Partners:** Atlantic Transnational Network (RTA-ATN).

**Invitees:** Assistance Mechanism for the Atlantic Action Plan (Kantor Qwentas).

### **I. Welcome address and introduction, Inma Valencia, Presidency of the Atlantic Arc Commission**

**Inma Valencia**, Director General for Economy and European Affairs, Government of Cantabria representing the Presidency of the Atlantic Arc Commission welcomed all the participants. She welcomed the representatives of the Atlantic Assistance Mechanism, from Kantor Qwentas who came to exchange with the members of the AAC.

**Pauline Caumont**, Executive Secretary of the Atlantic Arc Commission, briefly summed up the [last meeting of the Atlantic Arc Commission's \(AAC\) "Atlantic Strategy" working group](#) (last 14 January 2016). The minutes of this meeting are available [here](#). She recalled that **Marcella Smyth**, Maritime Attaché of the Irish permanent representation in Brussels was invited to present the work programme of the Atlantic Strategy Group (ASG) for 2016. **Joanna Kyrillo** from DG REGIO, was also invited to talk about the Atlantic Area transnational programme (2014-2020).

### **II. Presentation of the missions of the new Assistance Mechanism (2016-2018), Kantor Qwentas**

**Konstantinos Zaprís**, Project Manager of the Assistance Mechanism from Kantor Qwentas, first presented the main outcomes of the Assistance Mechanism over the period 2014-2015, launched in July 2014. Its role was to provide guidance to the Atlantic States in order to implement the Atlantic Strategy Action Plan, ensure a proactive project development and extend the outreach of the Strategy. Over this period, 10 national events gathering 884 participants were organised. In total, 3851 stakeholders were contacted in all the States. A website, twitter and LinkedIn accounts were created.

**For the new period (2016-2017)**, the Assistance Mechanism continues with its main missions (guidance, events, etc.). In addition, they will organise "roadshows" (i.e. meetings with stakeholders, managing authorities, regional authorities, universities, researchers, SMEs, etc.), which aim to give more visibility to the

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Strategy in the Regions. They will have to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan (collect information and results in close cooperation with the ASG members). They are in contact with the European Investment Bank (EIB) which will provide information via a dedicated website. The “Focal points” became “National Units” for this period. They remain the same people as in the previous period.

An “**Atlantic label**” will be created to identify projects that are relevant to the Action Plan. Projects with this label will be able to submit an application (via a dedicated mini-site) to compete for **the Atlantic Awards**. There will be a price in 4 or 5 categories. The award ceremony will take place in the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform (Dublin, 23 September 2016) in presence of Commissioner Vella. The Jury should be composed of representatives from the Commission, Regions, the ASG, Kantor and universities. This competition is also open for ended projects.

More information is available on Konstantinos Zapris’s [PowerPoint presentation](#)

### III. Discussion with participants

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**Inma Valencia (Cantabria)** asked where the national units are located.

- In Galway (IE), Faro (PT), Bilbao (ES), Brest (FR) and Portsmouth (UK) cf. <http://www.atlanticstrategy.eu/en/contact/the-support-team>.

**Aude Korfer (Brittany)** asked how the data were to be collected for the monitoring.

- The Assistance Mechanism will contact the different Managing Authorities. When necessary, they will be introduced by the national representative of the ASG.

**Pauline Caumont (AAC)**: the Secretariat will circulate the names and contact details of the National contact point in the ASG if Regions want to contact them directly.

**Ainhoa Azarloza (Euskadi)** raised a question on Atlantic award: is it a specific call? She also asked for more information about the roadshows.

- Regarding the awards, there will be a submission process via a dedicated website. Projects will be chosen by a panel composed of DG Mare, DG Regio, the CoR, the ASG, Kantor, universities, etc. It will be a transparent process to highlight projects doing well. Projects can be ongoing (mature enough) or already finished.
- Regarding the roadshows, the Assistance mechanism already has a mapping of stakeholders (researchers, universities, SMEs, regional authorities, etc.). The idea will be to visit them and to explain them the interest of the Atlantic Strategy. There will be two roadshows: this year before summer and next year before summer too.

**Arantza Lopez (ATN)** asked if the label will be linked to the awards.

- Yes. Labelled projects will all be eligible for the awards (different categories aligned with the objectives of the Strategy), but they will have to apply for it. Projects will need the label to get the awards but they are not obliged to compete once they have the label.

**Pauline Caumont** reminded that there are two purposes in the label: one for monitoring and one for publicity purpose. The Award ceremony will aim at giving publicity to successful Atlantic projects.

**Aude Korfer** asked whether the label will be delivered by the managing authority.

- No, it will be delivered by the Assistance mechanism on behalf of DG MARE and the ASG.

**In conclusion**, the timeline is very short as the ceremony will take place in September this year. There will be another ceremony in 2017 during next Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Forum. Kantor Qwentés is very keen to

cooperate with the CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission, which has a good knowledge of the Regions and managing authorities. Thematic seminars in the Regions could be jointly organised.

#### IV. Feedback from the Atlantic Area Programme Monitoring Committee in Porto, Pauline Caumont

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Last 20 January 2016, the Atlantic Area Programme organised the last “[Programme Monitoring Committee](#)” (PMC) of the 2007-2013 period and right after the first PMC of the 2014-2020 period. Atlantic networks (AAC, CAAC, and ATN) have always been associated to this PMC. The aim was to ensure their participation in the new PMC (2014-2020).

*a. Composition of the National delegations:*

**Pauline Caumont** gave more information on the composition of the National delegations in the PMC. In 2016, Ireland is chairing this PMC. Gerry Finn, from Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) is the current chair. In France, Brittany is part of the delegation but there is still a seat available for another Region (contact person: [david.rousseau@pays-de-la-loire.pref.gouv.fr](mailto:david.rousseau@pays-de-la-loire.pref.gouv.fr)). In Spain, Galicia has a permanent seat and there is a rotating one (Cantabria for the first semester of 2016). In the UK, Wales is part of the Delegation and in Portugal, Norte and Lisboa-Vale-do-Tejo participate. All these Regions are AAC member Regions.

The national delegations agreed on the participation of the Atlantic networks in the next PMC. It should be made official in the Minutes of the Porto meeting.

**More info:** The Executive Secretary made a [presentation in Porto](#) to briefly explain the added value of the AAC.

*b. Previous and new programme*

For the 2007-2013 period, 98% of the ERDF was used (2% ERDF released is a good rate) and 71 projects were financed. However, 25 projects are still to close and the Joint Technical Secretariat wants to close this projects before launching the 1<sup>st</sup> calls of the new programme (2014-2020). In the current agenda, the Managing authority still expects to organise the launch of the calls by the end of April/beginning of May. It might be optimistic considering the limited human resources they have in the secretariat (only 2 project officers).

The AAC will liaise with all the Atlantic Regions to give them a frequent feedback and up-to-date information on these monitoring committee meetings.

#### V. Feedback on the ASG meeting of 25 January 2016 in Brussels, Pauline Caumont

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DG Regio and the ASG want to organise a meeting with ESIF managing authorities in Brussels. Other European Commission DGs could also take part to present other available funding (DG RTD for instance). Managing authorities will be contacted by Marcella Smyth as Chair of the ASG.

The meeting should take place on **18 April** (to be confirmed) in the Committee of the Regions.

The ASG also discussed about the “Atlantic label”. Some Member States are afraid that a label would entail a long and bureaucratic process (terms of reference, jury, surveillance authority, etc.). The name might change (“tag”, etc.), but the idea is to give visibility to projects and be able to gather them under the umbrella of the Atlantic Strategy.

**Sigi Gruber** (DG RTD), in charge of Galway Statement, presented the [Atlantic Research Alliance](#) between the EU, the USA, Canada, Brazil, South Africa. Through this alliance, partners have managed to align research priorities regarding the Atlantic Ocean. A budget has been dedicated in the last H2020 calls. Projects such as [AtlantOS](#) (62 partners, 18 countries, €20 million) were financed.

Next ASG meeting will take place on 26 February – Pauline will get back to all the Regions and circulate information.

## VI. Discussion with members

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- **Email from DG REGIO to create a group of Atlantic regional representations in Brussels.**

Joanna Kirylo, from DG Regio sent out an email to a list of Regions (not updated) to create a group gathering the Atlantic regional representations in Brussels. Such group was created for the Baltic and worked very well. The objectives are to meet on a regular basis and exchange on proposals and/or ideas regarding ESIF programmes in the Atlantic.

Participants agreed to keep a coordination via the Atlantic Arc Commission “Atlantic Strategy Working Group”, which already represents most of the Atlantic Regions and has been active since 2012. A mandate was given to Pauline Caumont, executive Secretary to keep in contact with DG Regio.

Many Regions did not understand what the objectives of DG Regio were. Participants suggested that Inma Valencia, representing the Presidency, and Pauline Caumont meet with Joanna do clarify the objectives and governance of such group. (NB: this meeting took place on **11 February in DG Regio**: it was agreed that the AAC would be the coordinator for all the CPMR member regions. An additional UK coordinator will be in contact with Joanna to deal with the UK local and regional authorities, which are not members of the CPMR).

- **Budget for the Atlantic in the EMFF**

The ASG suggested that a budget of the EMFF should be dedicated to the implementation of the Atlantic Action plan in next DG Mare 2017 Work Programme. This Working group can make suggestions on the Thematic we would like to see included as well as on the budget. By way of comparison, a call for proposals for “[IMP-related actions in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean](#)” was included in the 2015 Work Programme with a budget of €569 000.

**In terms of timeline**: from January to April: DG MARE will discuss priorities and headlines. Once there is a consensus: the proposal will go to the finance unit (around June). Director General reviews it and gives his green light before the end of September. Then it goes to interservice consultation and in the EMFF Management committee (with Member States). The 2017 Work Plan should be released by the end of 2016.

**Themes under discussion are**: Skills and competence development (relevant with the CPMR [Vasco da Gama](#) initiative), safety at sea, rescue at sea, littoral observatory, etc. Pauline asked the members to come back to her **before 26/02/16** with more specific proposals.

- **Political messages to include in Final Declaration**

The aim of the final declaration is to take stock of actions since the last General Assembly and to propose a programme answering to the challenges ahead. (cf. slide 9 of the [PPT Presentation](#)).

Proposals are the following:

- Progress made (feedback) – Atlantic Strategy
- Role of the Regions in the Atlantic Strategy
- Smart specialisation towards the Sea in the Atlantic Regions
- Vision for the future (what would be an ideal Atlantic Strategy?)

During the discussion, participants insisted on the necessity to include a strong message regarding the delay of the Atlantic Area programme. An action could be undertaken sooner. Budget line and governance should also be mentioned. The executive Secretariat will prepare a draft Declaration which will be discussed at the end of April / beginning of May with the Coordination Committee (technical representatives of the members of the AAC Political Bureau).

## VII. Any other business

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Inma Valencia recalled that in Brest (last 29 October 2015), the AAC met with Mr Farah, the Québec General Secretary of the Sea to discuss about the **Québec Maritime Strategy**. (cf. minutes of the meeting enclosed). Mr. Farah called Inma and asked her to identify **concrete items to strengthen cooperation with the EU Atlantic Regions**. Mr. Farah will send us the Québec priorities in the short term. In Québec, there is a very strong political commitment (coming from the Prime Minister) with a significant budget available. French Regions mentioned that bilateral relations already exist with Québec due to the historical relations between France and Québec. However, such relations do not exist neither in Spain nor in Ireland or in the UK. It could be extremely interesting to strengthen the relations and go deeper into concrete exchanges in the maritime field.

Pauline Caumont mentioned that the AAC invited Mathieu Parenteau, from the Québec Representation in Brussels, last year to take part in a [Transport Working Group](#) where he made a [presentation](#). It could be interesting to invite him again to the next meeting of the Atlantic Strategy Group. This was agreed upon.

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### *Upcoming events and meetings:*

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- **May 2016:** Launch of the Atlantic Area programme – currently recruiting a Director for the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)
- **18 April 2016** – tbc- meeting with ESIF managing authorities in Brussels
- **18-19 May 2016:** EU maritime days in Turku – a high level speaker from IE (Chair of the Atlantic Strategy)
- **June 2016:** SEARICA intergroup on the Atlantic in the European Parliament
- **23 September 2016** – Atlantic Stakeholder Platform in Dublin (+ Award ceremony) – Vella has confirmed / AAC should be represented (new President?)
- **2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2016:** DG MARE wants to organise an event in San Sebastian (Esukadi, ES) – EU capital of culture