



Political Declaration from the Atlantic Arc Commission on Brexit

Approved by the Plenary Meeting of the Atlantic Arc Commission
on 19 October 2017 in Helsinki

Context

The CPMR's Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC) brings together 17 Regions from 5 Atlantic Member States (PT, ES, FR, IE and UK). It covers 12% of the territory of the EU and represents approximately 60 million people. The Atlantic Arc Commission is currently chaired by Pays de la Loire Region (FR).

Following the secretariat's technical note providing an initial assessment of the "[Consequences of Brexit for the Atlantic Arc Regions](#)", a Brexit Task Force was set up at the General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission in March 2017.

For the duration of the negotiations between the United Kingdom and the 27 other members of the European Union, this Task Force, led by Galicia (ES), will monitor the work carried out in each member Region of the Atlantic Arc Commission. The aim is to share information and build a common message.

Together with the North Sea, the Atlantic is one of the two European maritime areas where Brexit will have a direct impact because it will modify the "natural" cooperation areas. This Declaration is therefore complementary to the Cardiff Declaration, drawn up by the CPMR, which aims to convey the position of all the CPMR member Regions with regard to Brexit.

Objectives

Through this Declaration, the member Regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission wish to convey a number of **political messages** to the negotiators, both from the United Kingdom and from the European Union.

Given that the Atlantic Arc Commission is made up of British as well as EU27 Regions, this Declaration takes into account the **shared interests of the Atlantic territories** with a view to ensuring that the fruitful cooperation that has been developed in the past will continue even after the United Kingdom has left the EU.

In the framework of the negotiations on the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, the member Regions of the CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission wish to convey the following messages:

1. Brexit: turmoil for people living in the Atlantic Arc – In this context, the Atlantic Arc Commission:

- **Draws the attention** of the negotiators to the situation of EU citizens established in the United Kingdom as well as to that of British people who have settled in the EU, in particular people who are working (especially posted workers and cross-border workers from bordering areas), students, families, retired people, etc. These people are the first and foremost to be impacted by the Brexit negotiations. The United Kingdom's vote on 23 June 2016 in favour of Brexit raised serious concerns for them, to which the Atlantic Regions need to be able to respond, protecting citizen's rights.
- **Emphasises** those issues which are specific to the Regions of the Atlantic Arc and where cooperation and exchange are currently very important. The Atlantic Regions wish for special attention to be given to these crucial issues, which are linked to the existence of a shared maritime area. They concern in particular sectors such as fisheries, marine renewable energies and offshore wind, as well as connectivity between the Atlantic ports, scientific research and maritime training.

2. Concerning governance and the involvement of the Atlantic Regions in the negotiations, the Atlantic Arc Commission:

- **Calls on** the negotiators to work in a spirit of compromise in order to reach an agreement which will limit the negative impact of Brexit on the Regions of the Atlantic Arc without renouncing any of the founding values of the European Union or opening the way to a fragmented Europe. Balanced territorial development and solidarity between its member states and with its neighbours must remain at the heart of the European project.
- **Calls on** the United Kingdom and the European Commission to maintain the greatest level of transparency in the negotiations in order to better anticipate and minimise the negative impact of Brexit in the Atlantic territories.
- **Wishes** to have a regular input so that it can forward and share the proposals and expertise of its Regions, in the framework of a structured dialogue, during the negotiations as well as in the context of the future cooperation agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union.
- **Proposes** that the Atlantic Maritime Strategy become a European macro-regional strategy in order to strengthen the governance of the European Atlantic Arc, as adopted by the Atlantic

Arc Commission's General Assembly in its [Final Declaration, Bilbao, 2015](#). The future Atlantic Macro-Region should give a central role to the Regions as public authorities in charge of territorial development, European investment policies (via the European Structural and Investment Funds in particular) as well as the management of coastal areas.

- An Atlantic Macro-Regional strategy would provide an integrated framework for implementing joint actions around strategic priorities at the level of the Atlantic sea basin;
- Both Member States and non-Member States would be included, and the Regions would be directly involved;
- It would enable greater mobilisation of European funding, including EIB funding, as well as national and regional funding.

3. Concerning the future of cooperation in the Atlantic, the Atlantic Arc Commission:

- **Recalls** its direct involvement in the creation of an Atlantic Area Interreg programme in the 1990s. The Atlantic Arc Commission was moreover the first managing authority of the "Atlantis" pilot programme and is still today a member of the programme's monitoring committee.
- **Asks** that the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) transnational programme covering the Atlantic area and including the United Kingdom, be maintained in the post-2020 period. The Atlantic Arc Commission asks that the future programme be allocated a significant budget so as to enable the excellent cooperation which has been developed over the years between stakeholders in the Atlantic territories to be pursued.
- **Underlines** that this Atlantic Area Interreg programme would enable the ambitions of the future action plan of the Atlantic macro-regional strategy, strongly advocated by the Atlantic Arc Commission, to be implemented. The United Kingdom could participate in this programme via a specific national contribution or via a Partnership Instrument (PI).
- **Is very concerned** by the fact that European Territorial Cooperation, in particular transnational cooperation, does not receive the support it deserves in the different post-Brexit scenarios presented by the Commission. **The Atlantic Arc Commission recalls** that, in this highly uncertain context, cooperation is a crucial element and more essential than ever.
- **Invites** all the British Nations and Regions to join the CPMR and its Atlantic Arc Commission in order to benefit from a cooperation framework which is appropriately positioned to monitor EU policies which have a direct impact on the Atlantic territories.

4. Concerning the financial aspects, the Atlantic Arc Commission:

- **Emphasises** the necessity that the United Kingdom honour its financial commitments to the European Union by guaranteeing its financial contribution to the EU budget for the current (2014-2020) Multiannual Financial Framework.
- **Underlines** the importance of the United Kingdom guaranteeing in full the European co-funding for all UK partners involved in EU projects that will run during and/or after the transition period following the UK exit from the EU. This guarantee is of paramount importance both for UK and EU partners in order to ensure a smooth delivery of these projects.
- **Suggests** that consideration be given to the setting-up of a specific EU-27 financial mechanism aiming to minimise the territorial impacts of Brexit at regional or sector level. This mechanism could take the form either of a new "Brexit Fund" or of a new instrument under existing programmes.

**In summary, the Atlantic Arc Commission
expects specific action in the following areas:**

1. The setting-up of a structured dialogue at European level so that the Atlantic Regions can forward and share their proposals and expertise;
2. The setting-up of a macro-regional strategy for the Atlantic sea basin;
3. The reaffirmation by the EU and the UK of their interest in European Territorial Cooperation;
4. The setting-up of a robust Atlantic Area Interreg programme for the post-2020 period, with the participation of the United Kingdom;
5. The setting-up of a financial mechanism to offset the territorial impacts of Brexit on the Atlantic Regions.

The Atlantic Arc Regions reaffirm their willingness to **make a constructive contribution** to the negotiations between the United Kingdom and the EU27.

The member Regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission are ready to work together with the negotiators on implementing these proposals.



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**The Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) brings together
160 Regions from 25 States of the European Union and beyond.**

Representing nearly 200 million citizens, the CPMR works to promote
a more balanced development of the European territory.

It operates both as a *think tank* and a lobby for the Regions.
Its main objective is focused on social, economic and territorial cohesion,
maritime policy, and accessibility.

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