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CPMR POLICY POSITION

(ON THE PROPOSAL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN GÖTEBORG, 1/2 OCTOBER 2009)

OPINION OF THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU

(As amended and approved by the CPMR Political Bureau – 15/16 February 2010, Gijón-Asturias, Spain)

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CPMR

A. General context: Responding to continental and global challenges

1. Over the past few years there has been raised awareness within the CPMR as to the fact that answers to the issues on which it focuses no longer lie solely at national or EU level, but in a much broader and more general dimension. This goes for many issues from climate change to energy issues not to mention migration, trade and financial exchanges, industrial relations, agriculture and food ...

On a continental level, the CPMR has incorporated taking a geostrategic area of 800 million inhabitants on board in its reflections and its actions, aware that economic and social development, the stability and security of the Regions located on both sides of the EU's external borders, to the east and to the south, are promoted by doing this on a wider European level. This work is undertaken by the General Secretariat in cooperation with the CPMR Geographical Commissions.

Gradually, particularly urged on by the CPMR, this place for the regional level at the EU's borders is also being built at institutional level. Thus, ARLEM¹ was created at the beginning of January 2010. Reflections are also currently underway in the east, in the scope of the Eastern Partnership and the CPMR has obtained observer status within the BSEC². This participation of regional bodies in strategic reflections at the borders of the European Union (Baltic, Northern Dimension, wider neighbourhood) must continue as they contribute to the European reflections of the network.

2. Moreover, from 2007 onwards, the CPMR's technical papers and policy proposals on EU priorities and budgets after 2013 take into account this state of affairs and the global dimension in order to propose European responses to be implemented together with the territories. Taking on board the global dimension does not mean watering down the CPMR's reflections or giving up a specific European approach. On the contrary, in order to be relevant and useful, this European vision must draw on a wider continental and global dimension on the one hand, and considerations based on the territories and their specific characteristics, assets and handicaps on the other.

3. As well as taking into account the global dimension in the debates and proposals within a European context, it is important for the Regions to be able to contribute towards solving problems on the levels on which they occur in the international arenas where at present they are not sufficiently acknowledged, namely the United Nations agencies and worldwide special-interest organisations dealing with issues related to trade, maritime affairs, pollution, etc. This is a very long-haul process, but gradually, through political choice and obligation, the Regions have found themselves involved in globalisation. They can no

¹ ARLEM: Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly

² BSEC: Black Sea Economic Cooperation

longer remain mere observers suffering the negative effects of an ever increasing globalisation process. They must become fully fledged stakeholders in a new global world.

4. The focus of the CPMR's reflections and activities remains Europe and the place of the Regions in European integration. However, the CPMR's strength has always been its capacity to anticipate discussions and propose innovative solutions to build on for the future. It should also be noted that well before the adhesion of their countries within European institutions the CPMR included amongst its members and further developed its reflections with Spanish and Portuguese Regions and Baltic Regions of the Black Sea ...Today, we can already pick out certain achievements where the CPMR has played a contributing role at international level:

- The Committee of the Regions takes up the CPMR vision on the Regions as actors in globalisation in its White Paper on multi-level governance, ratifying at institutional level the importance and necessity for this reflection;
- The Copenhagen Summit confirms at the highest level the vital need for the Regions to be part of the solutions to be implemented for climate change;
- The European Commission recognises the relevance of the territorial approach for strengthening support to territories in the south and east and therefore improving the effectiveness of aid.

B. Taking action at global level within the scope of thematic fields

5. Beyond neighbourhood and wider neighbourhood, it appears increasingly necessary, even essential, to address certain questions on a wider level than that of the States or European Union. Thus, since the early 2000's, the CPMR has obtained observer status with the IOPC Funds³ and has put forward a similar request to the IMO⁴. This request was not successful as the organisation only accepts organisations which represent the global level. As the theme is one of the major concerns of European maritime regions, it seems relevant to consider a presence within these bodies (at global level: IOPC Funds and IMO, at regional level: OSPAR⁵ and HELCOM⁶).

6. The most complete example at the moment, of the importance of working together and reflections to be carried out at global level on certain specific themes, concerns climate change. The CPMR has taken it into account since 2002 in Johannesburg during the World Summit on Sustainable Development. During this Summit the CPMR took part in setting up nrg4SD (Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development). The network has thrived on the international scene. It works with other international networks and regions within and outside of the European Union. nrg4SD has observer status with the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It has obtained NGO status with ECOSOC, the United Nations body in charge of economic and social issues and which transmits NGOs' and civil society's expectations and needs to the General Secretariat of the United Nations Organisation. This work carried out together on a global level culminated with the Copenhagen Summit in December 2009 during which over sixty regional leaders including several CPMR members could debate and adopt a joint declaration for submission to the COP 15 (Conference of the Parties). This declaration contained additional commitments from the Regions with regard to efforts to tackle climate change.

7. The Regions currently have a joint platform for dialogue at global level which helps them to coordinate their policies and their action, they defined the message they wish to convey together and they have a "roadmap" of specific actions to be carried out in the short and medium-term. All international actions which have enabled these developments for the CPMR have been carried out within the scope of nrg4SD.

C. Making the voice of the Regions heard at global level

8. Observations made in recent years establish the fact that the big European projects and international programmes (led by the UN and its agencies) do not obtain satisfactory results unless the territorial levels (Regions and cities) are involved. The Kock report published in 2005 clearly indicated that the

³ IOPC Funds: International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds;

⁴ IMO: International Maritime Organisation

⁵ OSPAR: Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

⁶ HELCOM : Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (*Helsinki Commission*)

implementation of the Lisbon Strategy had been a part failure since the local and regional levels were not involved in its design and delivery. One of the greatest battles that the CPMR must face on a European level for the post 2014 period, is precisely the presence and the taking into account by European Institutions and Member States of the sub-national level in the design and implementation of the new Lisbon Strategy.

9. The Regions acknowledge that they need to be present on the global field, but supranational policies must grant them a place and allow the Regions to cooperate both between themselves at international level and also with these supra-European bodies. The opposite is also true. It is important for the Regions to deal with global issues and to tackle the difficulties and contradictions arising from uncontrolled globalisation. They must propose a vision, solutions and concrete initiatives.

It is for this reason that, beyond specific thematic reflections, the CPMR considered back in 2007 that it had to be prepared to enter into discussions and lead concrete actions at global level. The situation, which is an unsatisfactory one, will not change unless the Regions commit themselves. It is in this context that the CPMR took the lead in creating FOGAR.

10. FOGAR currently has 17 member networks, including two European networks (CPMR and AEBR⁷). The other networks are either spread over the different continents or deal with thematic issues shared by the CPMR, but which have a wider vision, e.g. sustainable development and climate change and new technologies. FOGAR has defined its first priorities⁸. These are focused on the territorial approach and multi-level governance (particularly by helping to strengthen and gain recognition for national and international networks of regions in those countries and regional groupings e.g. EU, ECOWAS, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, etc., where the place of the Regions still needs to be established), climate change, food and the Regions and the contribution to the debate on the alliance of civilisations.

11. The CPMR has been successful in campaigning on the European scene for the need to involve the Regions in implementing EU policies with an impact on the territories. However the organisation has also first and foremost contributed towards gaining recognition of the Regions' political role in defining these policies and the need for a real partnership between the different levels of public authorities in order to strengthen the economic, social and also territorial cohesion of the Union. It is this firm belief, this experience in regional policy as well as within the different sectoral policies, that the CPMR intends to enhance within FOGAR. The aim is that by promoting and disseminating these experiences outside of the Union it will contribute towards a more sustainable and fairer globalisation process where the territories and their populations are duly taken into consideration.

D - Conclusions

12. The CPMR has therefore integrated an international dimension in its work and reflections which aims to support and further develop its European positions and to defend and promote at global level the progress achieved on the European stage. This promotion proves necessary in order, on the one hand, to avoid these achievements being undermined by an uncontrolled globalisation, and on the other hand, to contribute to a development that is as harmonious and sustainable as possible at global level, which will secure positive outcomes for the European Union and its citizens.

13. This global dimension was included in the CPMR medium-term strategic development plan in 2004 and guided the work presented in the document. It is important that at present, early in 2010, terms are set to ensure that the global dimension continues to be effectively taken into account, without at any time impinging upon or reducing the European reflection.

⁷ AEBR: Association of European Border Regions

⁸ http://www.crpm.org/pub/docs/197_doc-prsentation-fogar-en.pdf

PROPOSALS FOR THE POLITICAL BUREAU:

1. The CPMR pursues its reflections on European integration and neighbourhood policy. The CPMR shall be involved in the policy reflections led by the European institutions and the Committee of the Regions with partner countries and regions.
2. The CPMR continues its reflections and work and takes action in order for the network to participate in global bodies related to maritime issues.
3. The CPMR continues its contribution to international reflections on the issue of climate change through its participation (as a **member**) in the nrg4SD network. The CPMR is ceasing its function as treasurer of this network in April 2010, when nrg4SD will be permanently established in Brussels, in the offices of the region of Flanders.
4. The CPMR confirms its contributions to the reflections on the role of regions in a new international governance to be established through its participation, as a member, in the FOGAR network. In 2010, CPMR's assistance to FOGAR in establishing its working structures will come to an end. For the outstanding period, a convention will be signed laying down the conditions for the remunerated provision of human and technical resources of the CPMR to FOGAR.
5. The CPMR's participation in international networks will be reviewed on an individual and annual basis during each CPMR General Assembly. The networks which the CPMR is a member of must present an activity report and a financial report. Based on this information, the General Assembly will then decide whether or not to continue its membership and involvement in each network.
6. As with all the policy areas dealt with by the General Secretariat, the working time that the CPMR team spends on following the networks and promoting CPMR positions within them, will be subject to monitoring through a detailed timesheet presented annually to members.
7. The Secretary General defines the priorities and the workload of CPMR personnel and makes sure that under no circumstances do international activities encroach on the European policy areas.