



Aquamarina

Minutes of the first meeting

26 March 2008 - Committee of the Regions, Brussels

Speech by Jean-Yves Le Drian, President of the Region of Brittany

After thanking those present for attending the meeting, Mr Le Drian emphasised the importance of an EU maritime policy, in particular for an association like the CPMR. A close reading of the Blue Book and Action Plan, he then said, raised a number of questions concerning the governance of the future maritime policy, including the place of the Regions.

The Regions had played a major role throughout the consultation phase. It was important that they continue to be involved in the drafting and implementation of the policy. The dialogue with the Commission must be kept up. The Aquamarina group could be a useful tool for mobilising the maritime regions to take up the issues affecting them, such as the establishment of a European Maritime Space, marine research, maritime spatial planning, and employment and training.

Speech by Xavier Gizard, CPMR Secretary General

Mr Gizard spoke of the expectations of the CPMR Political Bureau with regard to the future of the European Union for 2010-2017. Maritime affairs were a major issue for the Regions, he said. We had to look ahead now to 2010-2017 in order to answer a key question: how would we be able, at that date, to make maritime policy take a further step forward?

Speech by Nicolas Mariel, Maritime Affairs Task Force, European Commission

See presentation on the CPMR web site

Open discussion

The following points were discussed during this first debate:

- Where does the English Channel fit in to DG MARE's new organisational approach which is based on large maritime regions; how are the specific features of this maritime area taken into account?
- How will the cross-sector approach to European maritime policy be guaranteed under the new structure of DG MARE?

Functioning of the Aquamarina group / priority issues

In line with the agenda, following a presentation of the functioning of the Aquamarina group by Brittany Regional Council's "Mission Mer" (see working papers distributed at the meeting), participants were asked to identify the issues that were a priority for the Regions. The importance of returning the questionnaire on priority issues to the CPMR was again emphasised (this can be downloaded from the CPMR web site).

The following issues were indicated as priorities by the Regions:

- transport, maritime spatial planning, marine research, governance (including governance of the EU policy)
- maritime spatial planning, especially concerning relations between fisheries activities, marine-based energy resources, and mapping of the seabed
- an ecosystem approach to fisheries and the concept of fishermen as "guardians of the sea"
- the Baltic Sea (as a particularly sensitive maritime area)
- fisheries, especially the question of discards, and questions linked to maritime surveillance
- marine research - Schleswig Holstein proposed setting up a thematic commission on this question
- maritime safety, integration of surveillance systems, maritime transport
- maritime surveillance.

Haute Normandie emphasised that the group's work should be based on a sectoral as well a spatial approach.

The Regional Council of Guadeloupe asked how the work being done on the outermost regions would be coordinated with the work of the Aquamarina group.

In reply, the CPMR General Secretariat (F. Desrentes) proposed that the Conference of Presidents of Outermost Regions take up and discuss the issues addressed by the Aquamarina group and report back to the meetings.

The point was made that the work of the Aquamarina group should not duplicate that of the Geographical Commissions.

Following these exchanges, the President of Brittany Region said it was also important to bear in mind the Commission's timetable. There would be developments over the coming weeks on priority issues, in particular the European Maritime Space (transport, motorways of the sea, surveillance). It was proposed and agreed that the **next meeting of the Aquamarina group would take place on 8 July 2008 and that maritime transport would be discussed**. The Baltic Sea Commission would also present a report (similar to the one given today by the Intermediterranean Commission).

A number of topics to be discussed at future meetings, and some dates, were agreed. Marine research, in relation with clusters, could be addressed in the autumn of 2008, and at some stage a meeting should be organised on maritime spatial planning.

The Region of Brittany indicated that it would take the initiative of setting up a Technical Committee to back up the work of the Aquamarina group. (see attached document)

Information on the implementation of one of the actions in the Blue Book

The last speaker of the morning session was R. Kalaydjian (IFREMER) who presented the study being carried out in relation to the development of a European statistical tool (database) for maritime policy. See presentation on the CPMR web site.

Session on maritime safety

Ms Janick Moriceau (Vice-President in charge of Maritime Affairs - Brittany) spoke about the *Erika* accident and the main conclusions that could be drawn from the judgement: the liabilities of all operators in the transport chain were established, and, in France, the principle of environmental damage recognised. Two questions stood out among those arising from the judgement: the level of the fines imposed and, above all, the issue of ship inspections. She also said that particular attention should be paid to the social dimension, since good living and working conditions were essential if ship safety was to be guaranteed. Lastly, she underlined that the *Erika* and *Prestige* accidents should not mask the new threat that container ships represented for the European coasts.

Ms Cayetana Lado Castro-Rial (Spanish Legal Service, A Coruña) recalled the main elements in the *Prestige* accident and spoke in detail about the legal proceedings under way. Two cases were being brought before the courts: one in Spain, in which the pre-trial investigation was still going on. A trial would be held in Corcubion (Galicia), but not before 2009. The other legal action was being taken in New-York. She emphasised that the Spanish Regions had not been particularly active in the legal proceedings. This was because a system of advance payment of compensation had been put in place by the Spanish government, enabling victims to be paid quickly.

In terms of improvements that could be made to the present system, Ms Lado Castro-Rial cited the following:

- making flag States more responsible;
- increasing the liability of classification societies;
- improving treatment for victims of pollution.

Mr Gilles Bergot (Administrator, DG TREN, European Commission) gave a full account of progress in the adoption of measures following the third package of legislative measures on maritime safety. Three measures were awaiting final adoption (maritime accident investigations, port State control, and liability of classification societies); two were the subject of more difficult negotiations (traffic monitoring and compensation for passengers); and two were at a complete standstill (civil liability and liability of flag States). Gilles Bergot then described the social dimension of maritime safety policy, an important priority for DG TREN, pursued through an agreement reached between the social partners on implementing the Maritime Labour Convention, and also through application and revision of the STCW Convention. Lastly he mentioned the implementation of the LRIT system. He concluded by saying he thought that, today, relations between the IMO and the

Commission were good, although there was still a problem concerning the Union's status within the organisation.

Mr Humphrey Temperley (CPMR representative for the IOPC Funds) made a number of points. Firstly, concerning compensation for victims of oil pollution, he said that the IOPC Funds failed to take correct account of the environmental impacts. As far as liability was concerned, he noted little enthusiasm at global level for increasing the liability of flag States. He therefore considered that it was necessary to work with a key influential player, the ship's insurer. It was necessary to use market mechanisms in order to strengthen maritime safety. As far as chemical pollution was concerned, he believed that coastal regions would benefit from the entry into force of the HNS convention. It was necessary therefore to actively encourage the negotiations. Lastly, concerning container ships, he noted that the data available on what these ships were actually transporting was very limited. Action needed to be taken with regard to load manifests so that the content of the containers could be clearly identified.

Mr Emilio Martin Bauza (Head of Unit, European Maritime Safety Agency) outlined the role and activities of EMSA, in particular in training government representatives. *See presentation on the CPMR web site.*

Debate: initiatives to be taken and partnerships to be developed

Following these presentations, there was a debate on the initiatives that CPMR member Regions could take on maritime safety. President Le Drian emphasised that this was a crucial issue for our Regions, which were the Regions most at risk. What initiatives could be taken, in particular under the French Presidency of the European Union?

It was proposed and agreed that:

- > the Presidents of maritime regions should organise a high-level initiative to focus attention once again on the importance of this issue for the Regions, and call for the adoption of the necessary measures. Such an initiative could take the form of a jointly-signed letter or a meeting during the French Presidency. The Region of Brittany was asked to coordinate this action in conjunction with the CPMR General Secretariat.
- > Contact should be made with a view to organising a technical meeting between the IOPC Funds and the CPMR on the question of compensation for the Regions following a pollution incident. H. Temperley (Devon) was asked to coordinate this action.
- > Action should be taken to strengthen cooperation between the maritime Regions and the European Maritime Safety Agency. The CPMR General Secretariat was asked to coordinate this action.

Sea basins approach

Mr Benoît Vasselin, from Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, gave a presentation of the activities and working programme of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, which were based on a number of identified priorities (climate change, fisheries, data management, pollution etc.). *See presentation on the CPMR web site.*

Information on the TEN-T

P. Anvrouin gave information about the review of the TEN-T (*See technical note on the CPMR web site*) and invited the Regions, via the Geographical Commissions, to make their positions on this question known.

Conclusions by Janick Moriceau

In her conclusions, J. Moriceau emphasised that the Regions had to be both partners in implementing the EU maritime policy and a real source of proposals.

There were a large number of issues involved, and the Aquamarina group would clearly not be able to follow up all of them. It was therefore essential to identify the priority issues. The questionnaire that had been circulated should assist in doing this, and it would be discussed at the next meeting to be held on 8 July 2008.