Aquamarina

Minutes of the third meeting

12 November 2008

Committee of the Regions / Brussels

Speech by Janick Moriceau, Vice-President in charge of Maritime Affairs, Brittany Regional Council

Ms Moriceau welcomed the participants and speakers. She recalled the importance of the sea for the CPMR regions and consequently their interest in seeing the realization of an integrated European maritime policy. The Aquamarina group had been set up and was functioning as a tool for the regions to monitor the implementation of this policy. The regions’ commitment, illustrated by their investment in the group’s work, was today unanimously recognised and was reflected in the latest documents adopted by the European institutions, which all gave a place to the regional dimension.

Speech by Xavier Gizard, Secretary General of the CPMR

Mr Gizard indicated that the next Political Bureau meeting would take place on 23 January 2009 in Denmark (Aarhus). The draft policy position on the strategy for marine research, tabled for discussion today, would be submitted to that meeting.

Mr Gizard regretted that the Commission’s work programme for 2009 failed to take the integrated maritime policy seriously into account.

One of the major challenges ahead, he said, was the EU budget debate and the accompanying negotiations, which would be difficult. The CPMR must prepare itself for this, especially with regard to maritime policy.

He announced two forthcoming events:
- A seminar for the regions, in Stockholm, on innovation policy;
- A seminar for the regions, in Spain, on the place of the regions in European research policies.
Session on the European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research

André Lespagnol, Vice-President in charge of Research, Brittany Regional Council, opened the session. The current climate was, he said, propitious for marine and maritime research. Maritime research and innovation were crucial for the CPMR regions. This was a strategic issue for them, especially in view of the current crisis. The regions were therefore entitled to have their say concerning the strategy proposed by the Commission – on research priorities, means and funding, as well as on the governance of marine and maritime research.

Thomas Engelke (see presentation) stressed that marine and maritime research, in the framework of an integrated maritime policy, was essential for all sectors and sectoral policies. After briefly outlining the origins and objectives of the sub-group on marine research and clusters, he presented the group’s initial conclusions, illustrated by a number of best practice examples of regional initiatives in integrated marine and maritime research. He invited the regions to communicate information about any other similar initiatives. All the examples would be annexed to the CPMR’s policy position on the strategy for marine and maritime research.

Frederic Sgarbi (see presentation) described the background to the Commission’s proposal for a strategy for marine and maritime research. He then outlined the key points of this strategy, the two main goals of which were to address system complexity (through capacity-building, integration and development of synergies) and to bring about new forms of governance. It was important that all stakeholders should take part in defining the guidelines of research policy. For example, researchers wanted a direct link with policy-makers. The Commission was therefore proposing to set up a Forum, whose role would be to identify topics for research, foster cooperation, develop a foresight function, etc. The key partners in this forum would be the research community, regional authorities, etc. The Commission’s role would be limited to that of facilitator. The next steps were:
- 2.12.2008: adoption of the strategy by the Council;
- 2009: introduction of a new model of governance;

Wojciech Wawrzynski (see presentation) first of all gave a brief presentation of ICES, and then described the Aberdeen Plus Partnership, which had emerged from the Aberdeen Conference, and its role. Under the umbrella of ICES, this partnership was preparing a response to the Commission’s call for proposals for the setting-up of a new model of governance for research (Forum). According to ICES, the proposed Forum would bring together the marine and maritime research and industrial sectors, on the basis of existing networks. At the present time, there was no consensus within the Partnership on the place to be given to representatives of regional authorities, via the CPMR, in the structure to be proposed in the response.

Aurélien Carbonnière (see presentation) gave a presentation of the Marine Board (European Science Foundation) and its activities as a platform for marine research in Europe. One of the Marine Board’s main activities was the organisation of working groups which published conclusions addressed at public policy decision-makers to inform them and raise their awareness about research issues and the potential contribution of research. He described the Board’s current projects, in particular the eco-regional approach currently in preparation under the new Era-Net scheme. Four major regions had been identified (Arctic, Baltic, Atlantic and Mediterranean) each of which had different priorities. A report on national research priorities was also being finalised and would be available in December 2008. With a view to strengthening links between the CPMR regions and the Marine Board, Mr Carbonnière proposed the setting-up of ad hoc working groups between Aquamarina regions and the Marine Board to develop topics of mutual interest.
Questions / Debate with the floor

- **Patrick Anvroin** (CPMR): What cooperation has been put in place with Russia on research questions?

  *Mr Carbonnière*: none, except via the Baltic Sea BONUS ERA NET project.

- **A. Williams** (South East of England): can DG Research give more information about the joint calls that are to be launched?

  *Mr Sgarbi*: they will be cross-thematic and will be issued jointly by four of the Commission’s Directorates General: Transport, Research, Agriculture and Environment.

- **François Desrentes** (CPMR): At the end of the day, don’t all these different initiatives generate additional complexity, in particular with regard to data and indicators? What coordination mechanisms are being introduced?

  *Mr Sgarbi*: the question of data is one of the key issues in the Communication. The EMODNET network – which will itself be integrated in the GEOSS global system – will be responsible for ensuring coordination on this question.

- **Ms Moriceau**: what place is given to the social sciences in the proposed new strategy?

  *Mr Sgarbi*: behavioural aspects are included in the strategy, i.e. the impact of human activities on the environment. The human factor is essential.

  *Mr Carbonnière*: this is a recurrent theme in the discussions taking place within the Marine Board, particularly in the latest working group which will publish a document on this question in about a year’s time.

  *Dr K. Potthoff* (Schiff GmBh): beyond talking about it, taking social sciences into account is not easy. It requires a great deal of effort.

- **Mr Lespagnol**: on the question of the social sciences, the teams will need strong support from Europe. We would like to know more about the Commission’s proposals concerning the Forum. All stakeholders must have their place.

  *Mr Sgarbi*: it has to be recognised that as well as being the most innovative aspect of the strategy, this is also the most difficult to implement. The structure must be open, sustainable, and based on existing networks. At the same time, it will have to take decisions, so it must be efficient. We need to be creative.

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**Dr Klaus Potthoff (see presentation)** described the Interreg III-C project ‘InterMareC’, through which enterprises, research institutes, and public bodies from Brittany, Schleswig-Holstein and Pomerania had been able to exchange ideas on maritime innovation questions and develop joint projects. Lessons learned from the project could be applied to initiatives aiming to foster the bringing together of regional clusters at the European level.

**Questions**

- **Ms Martin** (Basse-Normandie Regional Council) asked Dr Potthoff if he could give an example of an actual project launched on the basis of InterMareC.

  *Dr Potthoff* cited the BEAD project on aquaculture in the Baltic Sea.

- **Ms Bourbigot** (Pôle Mer Bretagne – the Brittany Maritime Cluster) raised the question of what role could be played by clusters in the context of the strategy for marine and maritime research.

  *Dr Potthoff* evoked the origin of clusters, and the support provided by a programme such as InterMareC in anticipating maritime clusters.

  *Mr Lespagnol*: the emergence of maritime clusters is one of the most significant facts since 2000. Clusters are a method of organisation at the territorial level, on a regional basis, involving
research bodies and enterprises and including the participation of the public authorities. We are in a growth phase, in line with the Lisbon strategy. How can clusters contribute to the governance of marine research? Forming networks of clusters is certainly one way.

Mr Carbonnière: the issue of clusters is still not sufficiently recognised by researchers.

Reacting to Dr Potthoff’s presentation, Reinhard Boest (state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) raised the question of the sustainability of projects once Interreg funding is no longer available.

Mr Lespagnol gave a general presentation of the policy position on the European strategy for marine and maritime research (see document distributed to participants). This draft would be submitted to the next CPMR Political Bureau meeting. The main points of the policy position were then discussed in detail. It was stressed that the regions, represented by CPMR, must be players in the future Forum.

The following amendments and comments were made:

By Mr Lespagnol:
- Capacity-building also includes human capacities. This point should be underlined.
- The term ‘Forum’, used by the Commission, should be re-introduced. The question of the representation of clusters should be raised in connection with this point.
- We could also underline the strategic importance of marine research in broader issues such as climate change or the development of new sources of energy.

By Mr Vasselin (Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur Regional Council):
- It should be stressed that sciences that are not exclusively marine sciences (space observation for example) are also important for the sea.
- Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur’s research priorities are the coastal eco-systems approach and operational oceanography.
- The list of renewable marine energies provided by the Commission is incomplete. The existence of other technologies should be underlined.
- In the context of governance, a place should be give to clusters.

By Mr Vasselin (Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur Regional Council):
- We are not always very clear when we talk about coordination. At what level does this take place? This should be made clear.

By Mr Drouet (Basse-Normandie Regional Council):
- It is necessary to be very open and to advocate pluridisciplinarity.
- The collaboration between clusters in different regions should be underlined.
- Frequent reference is made in the text to Era-Net and other mechanisms that involve large amounts of funding. It should be added that very concrete, very operational projects, can be catalysts for actions with a wider scope. Moreover, specific funding is available for SMEs for this type of project.

By Ms Moriceau (Brittany Regional Council):
- Stress could be laid on public research with a global interest, i.e. with no direct commercial spin-off, as well as on the difficulties faced by large scale projects in finding funding for this type of research.

Mr Anvroin asked that all these modifications be sent in writing to the CPMR, by 1st December at the latest.

Introducing the afternoon session, Ms Moriceau emphasised that it was necessary to remain vigilant with regard to the regions’ involvement in the implementation of the maritime policy. While the regions’ role had been clearly acknowledged in recent developments in maritime policy, questions remained as to the meaning given to the term
region’, and the process by which regional authorities were involved. A close watch should be kept to ensure that it was indeed the regions as public authorities that were involved in defining and implementing maritime policy.

**Approach by maritime sea basin**

**Bo Löfgren**, of the Baltic Sea Commission, described this Commission’s activities in relation to the integrated maritime policy (see presentation). A strategic action plan for the Baltic Sea was being drawn up. Maritime policy should be a major component of this plan, and the aim was to make the Baltic Sea a model area from the point of view of integrated maritime policy. **Mr Löfgren also proposed setting up a sub-group on maritime surveillance (security and safety) and invited interested regions to take part.**

**E. Martin-Bauza (European Maritime Safety Agency)** suggested to Mr Löfgren that EMSA be a member of this sub-group.

**Update on the implementation of the action plan**

Christophe Marques reported on the progress of the action plan of the Blue Book and new developments since mid-July, looking at:
- new actions: clusters, maritime surveillance, maritime spatial planning;
- ongoing work: maritime transport, fisheries regulations;
- neglected actions: fisheries (concept of ‘Guardians of the Sea’ and working conditions) and social aspects.

**Presentation of the sub-groups**

- **Mr Vasselin** (Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur Regional Council) explained the reasons for setting-up the sub-group on data and indicators: the need for regional data, the increasing amount of data and indicators produced at European level, the lack of coordination and interaction. **Mr Desrentes (CPMR)** then outlined the objectives of this sub-group: to foster interaction and coordination in the production and use of data and indicators, improve cooperation programmes and, in the medium term, influence the objectives of the next programming period. The first meeting of the group could be held as a fringe meeting during the next plenary session.

- **Mr Engelke** (Schleswig-Holstein): the group was continuing its activities, in particular organising a meeting on regional maritime clusters. The next meeting of the sub-group would take place on 11 December.

**Initiatives and decisions of the Aquamarina group, by Ms Moriceau**

- A call for candidates had been launched to appoint a representative for the stakeholders’ group on port policy.
- Contact would be made with Commissioner Tajani’s cabinet in order to clarify the role of the regions in maritime safety and in support of their demand for recognition within the European Maritime Safety Agency.
- On the maritime safety initiative, a draft declaration would shortly be sent to those regions having indicated their support for the operation.
- Exchange programme for young people in maritime training: the idea was to work with the Commission on setting up an exchange programme for young people involved in maritime training, irrespective of the level.

  Mr Boest (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) noted that this was a very good idea and was in line with one of the wishes of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. He cited examples of structures that would be interested (especially concerning apprentices).

  A small working group had been set up to develop this project. Regions wishing to become involved were invited to contact Brittany Regional Council or CPMR.

Miscellaneous

- Mr Desrentes asked whether Aquamarina could not address the issue of territorial cohesion in the coastal regions. He also underlined that the group should already be starting to think about the question of the next EU budget.

- Mr Anvroin gave a presentation of the CPMR's 'Transport' working group, led by Aragon, and its activities. Maritime transport would be one of the questions addressed by the group, but it would not be a central issue. A CPMR Scientific Council on the TEN-T would be organised in 2010. Mr Anvroin proposed that a session on transport be organised during one of the next plenary sessions, in order to take stock of progress on the various fronts.

- Mr Carbonnière (Marine Board) pointed out that a seminar on research infrastructure was due to take place in February in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (France).

- Ms Martin (Basse-Normandie Regional Council) asked whether it would be possible for Aquamarina to look at leisure-related activities, yachting, marinas etc. Ms Moriceau pointed out that this topic was not addressed as such in the Blue Paper. Mr Vasselin considered that leisure-related activities as a broader issue could be addressed under the discussions on maritime spatial planning.

Conclusions by Ms Moriceau

  The next plenary session would take place early in 2009. It could address the question of maritime spatial planning, linked with governance. These were key issues for the regions on which they needed to remain vigilant in order to ensure their full involvement in the forthcoming discussions and consultation phase.

  One year on from the adoption of the Blue Book, it had to be said that the vast majority of the measures had been launched and that things were moving ahead quickly. However, certain important actions, such as fisheries, had been neglected. We had therefore to remain particularly vigilant on questions related to fisheries policy, in particular safety and working conditions.

  Concerning maritime safety in a wider sense, developments were expected before long with the negotiations on the third Erika package. We would need to closely monitor the conclusions and decisions adopted, and examine the pertinence of proposing a new series of measures that better integrate the human factor.

  Aquamarina’s strength lay in its capacity for rapid reaction and mobilisation in response to the actions initiated by the Commission. This was no easy task, since these actions were numerous and varied. It was essential nonetheless to endeavour to continue our action, which has been widely praised and acknowledged. This success was due to the efforts of all those concerned, and all the regions involved in the group were to be thanked for their commitment.