



CRPM CPMR

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MINUTES OF THE 36TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CPMR 2/3 OCTOBER 2008 – BAYONNE (AQUITAINE, FRANCE)

THURSDAY 2 OCTOBER 2008

OPENING SESSION

Mr Alain Rousset (Aquitaine) welcomed the representatives of the CPMR member regions. He spoke of the contribution that EU policies make to regions' economic development, stressing the progress that has been made on maritime policy and two major issues for the future: cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

He informed the Assembly about the questions that are being asked about the future of the regions in France under the announced reform of local and regional authorities. He also stressed the importance of the imminent debate on the future of the CPMR.

Mr Jean Grenet (Mayor of Bayonne) also welcomed the participants and thanked the CPMR and Mr Rousset for having chosen Bayonne. He felt this was important and demonstrated a genuine desire for decentralisation.

Mr Claudio Martini (CPMR) in turn welcomed the participants and thanked Aquitaine for its hospitality. He underlined the CPMR's increasingly recognised role as a representative body of regional authorities in Europe, which makes it a vital partner in debates on European integration. He then explained how the two days of work would be organised and asked the Assembly to approve the minutes of the 2007 Florence General Assembly and the agenda of this year's one. The two documents were unanimously approved.

Opening of the 36th General Assembly of the CPMR

SESSION 1: THE CPMR AND THE CHALLENGES OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, REPORT AND OUTLOOK

Mr Xavier Gizard (CPMR) presented the report on the CPMR's activities since the last General Assembly and the 2008-2009 work programme. He stressed how unclear the future of European integration is at the current time and gave an overview of sectoral work, notably on climate change, the CAP, tourism and European maritime policy.

The report can be accessed at http://www.crpm.org/pub/agenda/714_en-cpmr_activity_report_2007-2008-compressed.pdf;

He reported on the extent to which commitments made at the Florence General Assembly had been met and introduced two new Executive Secretaries: **Ms Josefina Moreno** (CPMR Intermediterranean Commission) and **Mr Fabien Mesclier** (CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission).

Mr Claudio Martini opened the debate on the activity report and areas of work proposed.

Ms Annika Annerby Jansson (Skåne) welcomed the creation of the working group on social inclusion and invited all CPMR members to participate.

Mr Marcelino Iglesias Ricou (Aragón) applauded the CPMR's vitality. He stressed the need for European integration and the vital role of the regions.

He stressed the importance of transport—an area in which Aragón has invested a great deal—and mentioned the example of the Plaza logistics platform. The improvement of links across Europe, especially over the Pyrenees, is still a major issue in economic terms, and in terms of exchanges between regions, spatial management and efforts to reduce pollution and improve safety. Trans-European Network No. 16 is a very positive factor in this regard and the development of a priority corridor for goods transport is essential. He also emphasised the importance of the motorways of the sea and the need for complementarity between different modes of transport.

European funding available for the 2007-2013 period is insufficient and extra sources could be found, notably through public/private partnerships.

Aragón wants to assemble a scientific committee in order to contribute to the CPMR and EU debate. Lastly, Aragón would like to lead the CPMR transport group.

Mr Francesc Antich I Oliver (Balears) stressed the fact that Europe's future depends on the regions more than ever. There is still utmost interest in the Majorca declaration on sustainable development several months after it was adopted and despite the crisis.

The new impetus the Balearic Islands are seeking to achieve through sustainable tourism requires ambitious efforts in terms of quality, renewal and innovation. He mentioned several relevant schemes, for example aimed at improving landscapes, cleaning up beaches, demolishing buildings, developing public transport and funding research and training. He also mentioned the importance of a new technological centre in the Balearic Islands. He stressed the fact that the involvement of trade unions and businesses is necessary for the development of these initiatives.

He felt that the Palma project is a current example of a successful pilot scheme in terms of innovation in the provision of tourism services. It makes it possible for the beach to be used all through the year.

He spoke of the importance of innovation in tourism, the development of transferable know-how, the role of technological clusters and the regeneration of centres of activity. He concluded by stressing the need to fully respect the environment and cultural heritage.

Mr Francesco Attaguile (Sicilia) emphasised the interest of the Balearic Islands' experience for the CPMR tourism group. He spoke about this group's activities. It has met several times and generated several sets of discussions, notably with the European Commission. He pointed out how economically dynamic the tourism sector is, which makes it necessary for the CPMR to develop a strategic and territorial approach in this field.

He felt that the CPMR approach must be integrated and holistic, so that it covers concerns linked to environmental developments and climate change for example. The development of a broad-based approach must help link the problems of the home and host territories involved in tourism flows. Lastly, tourism must be perceived as an activity that forges links between peoples, and also both enhances and respects territories' characteristics, especially their social ones.

The links with the geographical commissions and other regions will be very important for prolonging the work accomplished to date.

Debate

Mr Humphrey Temperley (Devon): The increase in the price of oil has made it necessary to develop rail transport for both leisure and work purposes. These issues also arise in the maritime transport field. He also wondered about the consequences of the current crisis for both tourism and urban transport.

A Greek representative: Human activities often have a negative impact on the environment. It is necessary to enhance the range of territories' assets and highlight the importance of innovation and efforts to improve quality. Lastly, oil price increases augment the need to collaborate in order to improve transport, notably in the interest of tourism.

Mr Rafael Hueso (País Vasco) also spoke about traffic problems and congestion in transport. He asked for the CPMR to continue working in this area.

Mr Claudio Martini stressed that transport and energy issues have a big territorial dimension and are therefore directly related to the CPMR's founding principles.

The activity report was adopted.

SESSION 2: THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY – ACTIVITY REPORT AND PROSPECTS OF THE FIRST ACTION PLAN

Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian (Bretagne) introduced the session and thanked Commissioner Joe Borg for attending. He said this reflected the excellent working relationship between the European Commission and the CPMR. He stressed that the maritime dimension constitutes the CPMR's fundamental identity and that the sea is what brings us together. It increasingly offers a development opportunity for our regions, as long as we are able to exploit the synergies between different policies. He mentioned the creation of the Aquamarina Working Group in Florence, which brings together 40 regions and aims to assess progress made on the Maritime Policy Blue Paper action plan, in order to propose improvements and further measures.

He regretted that the Erika III Package had not been adopted and said how audacious the European Parliament had been in requesting the adoption of the whole raft of measures. He said this is a key issue for maritime regions and proposed that those most concerned should approach the French Presidency about it before the end of the year. He welcomed the adoption of the Commission Communication on marine research and indicated the regions' availability to get involved in the matter.

President Le Drian said that two points of concern remain. The first is the Common Fisheries Policy. The paper of 17/09/08 launching the debate on CFP reform does not fully satisfy the regions, notably regarding the purpose of "scrapping" fishing boats to protect stocks. He also stressed the importance and the role of the human and social dimension and asked that efforts be made on safety, energy and the use of new technologies in fishing vessels. He noted that there are still concerns regarding the motorways of the sea concept.

Commissioner Borg thanked the Assembly for its welcome and immediately said how pertinent President Le Drian's observations were, especially regarding maritime governance and the fishing industry. He wanted the CPMR to have a key role in the forthcoming debate on CFP reform. He confirmed that the CPMR is a vital partner for the successful delivery of maritime policy and said that the points raised by the CPMR on transport, governance and surveillance are being dealt with.

Commissioner Borg's speech can be accessed at http://www.crpm.org/pub/agenda/751_en-speech_by_commissioner_borg_to_the_cpmr_oct_2008.pdf

Concerning:

- Governance: work has started on the member states' best practice, which is to be the subject of a Commission Communication. This will point out that maritime governance must also be developed at regional level. The regions have a beneficial role to play in this domain, as they do in the field of cooperation;
- Transport: the work done focuses on ports and the creation of a border-free maritime area. This firstly requires a reduction in bureaucracy. On maritime research, the Commissioner mentioned the recent adoption of a Communication focusing on innovation;
- Maritime spatial planning: the Commissioner invited CPMR regions to join the working groups set up to examine good practice. With regard to surveillance, the aim is firstly to strengthen cooperation between the member states and to bring about better integration of existing systems.

In the longer term, the following issues will be dealt with: firstly, climate change, which will have a particularly big impact in coastal zones and regarding which it is vital to exchange good practice; energy, so that sea-based energies are taken into account in order to diversify power sources and means of transport. In this field, the Commission stressed the particular importance of offshore wind power. With regard to maritime clusters, which are essential features of maritime regions' economies, he stressed the need for synergies and public private partnerships. These are emerging and deserve to be developed.

On the Baltic and Black Sea strategy, he said that strategies aiming to develop an integrated maritime policy are being drawn up. The same must be said for the Mediterranean as a whole, where any maritime policy

must be coherent, and where the CPMR must be involved in the consultation process. For the outermost regions, he stressed the need for research, biodiversity, the diversification of power sources and the geopolitical role, all things that will be at the heart of the Communication drawn up by the Commission.

The Commissioner ended his speech by speaking of the major role played by the regions in the development of an integrated maritime policy and encouraged CPMR members to get fully involved in the European Maritime Day initiative, which was created this year (see Joe Borg's speech on the CPMR's website).

Debate

Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian thanked Commissioner Borg. He welcomed Schleswig-Holstein's entry into the CPMR. He said that the CPMR will be represented in Biomarine by Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen. He also thanked Commissioner Borg for having spoken about integrated European maritime policy in the Mediterranean. He emphasised the presence of representatives from Tunisian and Moroccan regions at the General Assembly and the requirement to integrate these partners into the maritime policy being developed.

Mr Humphrey Temperley asked Commissioner Borg whether it would be useful for the European Commission if the CPMR were to adopt a declaration supporting the Erika III Package.

Mr Jérôme Polverini (Corse) welcomed the plans for the Union for the Mediterranean, which is reviving the Barcelona Process. Referring to the debates of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission's General Assembly in Naples on 18 September 2008, he felt that the Union for the Mediterranean could make major progress in the maritime field. Regarding the protection of fisheries stocks, transport, security and motorways of the sea, for example, he stressed the need for North-South cooperation in the Mediterranean. He wanted the European Union to enter into dialogue with central governments within the International Maritime Organisation, for example regarding the creation of particularly vulnerable maritime areas, which he wanted to see created in the Mediterranean.

Mr Bo Löfgren (Blekinge) said that several accidents and oil slicks had recently occurred in the Baltic Sea in recent months. He queried the effectiveness of the action taken at European level to prevent them and stressed the need to improve controls, for example through the installation of black boxes in vessels. He also felt it would be useful to finance more research in the maritime field and develop Baltic Sea cooperation between coastguards and a system for exchanging information on good accident prevention practices.

The Swedish CPMR members support the European Commission but want Russia to be more involved in the initiatives developed. They want an action plan to be updated every year and stressed the importance of the local and regional levels of action. A paper on these issues is available on the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission's website. Lastly, Blekinge Region is available to coordinate Aquamarina Group initiatives.

The representative of a Swedish region stressed how important motorways of sea are for the Nordic Oslo-Copenhagen-Helsinki triangle, in order to guarantee accessibility between regions from the North of Europe and the rest of the Union and broadly to consolidate the maritime transport system. She also stressed the need to combine maritime and rail transport between Stockholm and Gothenburg, and the fundamental need for links between Northern regions and other European regions in order to ensure trade and commerce and promote peace and prosperity in the Union.

She invited the CPMR to take these aspects into account during negotiations with the European Commission and other partners.

Commissioner Borg said that the Commission has adopted the Erika III proposals, which it hopes the Council will adopt even though certain issues are very sensitive for various member states. He wanted it to be possible to enhance the potential of maritime transport while respecting the principles of sustainable development.

As a global industry, decisions on maritime transport must be taken at global level, but the European Union must have a pre-eminent role. He wanted maritime transport to be developed in a sustainable manner so that Europe can maintain leadership in this field.

Maritime policy and the Union for the Mediterranean process can be mutually beneficial for one another and integrated. He believed that the Communication, which will soon be published by the European Commission, will also contribute to the Union for the Mediterranean.

Controls in the Mediterranean will be subject to particular attention through a cross-border surveillance project, a proposal for an agreement on surveillance at sea, and a call for projects for a study of the sectoral potential.

The European Commission is working on the issue of vulnerable marine ecosystems and wants to develop the matter further in the Mediterranean region.

As far as the Baltic Sea is concerned, he concluded by saying that the European Council of December 2007 invited the Commission to present a new Baltic Sea strategy in 2009 at the latest, so that it can be adopted as appropriate under the Swedish Presidency in December 2009. He said that the actions proposed will for example concern employment, maritime safety, motorways of the sea and the marine environment. He said the majority of the points raised will thus be dealt with.

Lastly, concerning the Nordic dimension and motorways of sea, he said that following the green transport initiative, the European Commission wishes to promote sustainable and ecological maritime transport.

Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark) said that the regions in the CPMR North Sea Commission take note of and recognize the initiatives already developed. She wanted the European Commission to propose even more effective mechanisms and invited all the parties concerned to get involved. She told Commissioner Borg about a project that aims to define a specific status for maritime transport. The sectoral approach is still important and the project would precisely aim to identify thematic areas on which to work and define a form of governance that would also permit overall coherence.

She hoped that the projects mentioned by the European Commission will rapidly give results. She stressed the importance of forging links between regions and the development of a coordinated governance approach.

She added that a good knowledge of the North Sea's profile is necessary and that a regional approach is generally essential in order to meet future challenges. Lastly, she stressed the importance of having an optimistic and ambitious approach, for example by using research and new technologies to achieve these ambitious objectives.

Mr Yasar Yakis (MP, Turkey) raised the issue of congested traffic in the Mediterranean. In the Black Sea, Turkey only has the warm seas route for reaching international waters. The Bosphorus is severely congested and ships cannot be permitted to cross it when they wish. This situation creates several problems for the people living and working in this region. Several projects will make it possible to avoid passing through the Straits, notably a non-maritime pipeline linking Anatolia and other regions.

Mr Sahbi Karoui (Sousse) thanked Commissioner Borg for having taken into account the southern shore of the Mediterranean in his observations. It is an ideal area for the development of EU initiatives and is much in demand in Asia. A deep water port is being built in Tunisia. It will help to improve links with the Suez Canal and the rest of Africa, along with the opportunities it offers.

Maritime transport is an issue both as far as goods and people are concerned (ie, cruise ship tourism). Several areas of reflection are shared by both shores of the Mediterranean, such as fisheries and pollution.

Mr Louis Le Pensec (Bretagne) said that scrapping boats is a brutal method because of the social and economic consequences. He asked whether the European Commission considers this is now a structural measure and an almost exclusive means of adapting fishing capacity to stocks.

Commissioner Borg said he agreed with the need for maritime policy to evolve. This will only be possible through a strong commitment among all the regions concerned by a common and integrated maritime policy. If this policy is to be visible, people need to be aware about its impact and integrated nature. An agreement has been reached between the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament for the organisation of a day of events focused on maritime policy, probably around the 20 May. He invited the regions to get involved in this initiative.

He said he understood the traffic problems in the Bosphorus Straits. Maritime policy must be able to exploit synergies in the Black Sea and the European Commission wants to work with actors from this part of Europe. He mentioned the creation of a forum which will enable the stakeholders to discuss the range of problems of the Black Sea.

He emphasised the need to focus attention on maritime policy issues in the south of Europe, and to link environmental aspects in the Mediterranean Basin with other dimensions and to forge new governance instruments. This will require a stronger commitment in the Mediterranean Basin.

With regard to the particular problem of scrapping vessels, he said that the European Council adopted some measures before the summer to help the fishing industry restructure and cope with issues such as increased fuel prices. Restructuring does not just mean scrapping vessels, but also entails several other things such as tonnage capacity and vessel safety.

The European Commission has launched discussions on how to ensure that fishing and its impact is sustainable, notably in environmental and social terms. Fishermen themselves suffer from the ecological consequences of fishing and excess fishing capacity must be reduced in order to be manageable in the long-term.

We need to know how to organise restructuring, notably by developing other coastal activities. He cited the example of the prospects offered by initiatives to exploit the sea's energy potential and tourism.

Mr Leslie Angus (Shetland) spoke of the massive support the member states have given to the financial sector and asked whether any initiatives are planned to adapt state aid regulations on the fisheries sector. He also asked if there were any prospects of investment to guarantee the future of fishing in the outermost regions.

Mr Gérard Bodinier (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) spoke on behalf of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission's Maritime Policy Group. European maritime policy must acknowledge the Mediterranean's specific circumstances, which are rooted in the concept of the regional maritime basin. He added that the development of maritime governance at basin level will strengthen European maritime policy. The Barcelona and Union for the Mediterranean process must be an opportunity to give a new dimension to European maritime policy in the Mediterranean.

The regions in the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission consider that the development of a Mediterranean maritime policy notably requires the extension of neighbouring states' zones of authority at sea beyond territorial waters, for example for the creation of ecological protection zones. These regions invite the neighbouring states to reflect upon the creation of a specific legal status of Mediterranean and the attribution of powers and resources. They feel that the current rules are insufficient and unsuitable both at Euro-Mediterranean level and at the level of the Mediterranean Action Plan. They consider that a new governance system for the Mediterranean area involving new and close cooperation between the international, regional and local levels is the only thing that can help develop suitable responses.

He asked for maritime policy to be coordinated with Union for the Mediterranean projects and wanted Mediterranean regions to be able to get involved. He asked if any arrangements were planned regarding negotiations on the implementation of Mediterranean maritime policy with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean or with international organisations. Lastly, he asked how the European Commission was planning to tackle the issue of the management of activities in international waters in the Mediterranean.

Mr Ulrich Bohner (Congress of Local and regional Authorities of the Council of Europe) said that the Council of Europe has admitted the regions of the Black Sea's five neighbouring states. It is very important for the European Union to make even more efforts for this difficult area of Europe. He hoped that the Euroregion chaired by Mr Constantinesco would help develop wide-ranging cooperation with the forum mentioned by Commissioner Borg. He emphasised the excellent cooperation with the CPMR's Balkans and Black Sea Commission.

A representative of Martinique said that regions such as Martinique and Guadeloupe have no vessels to scrap. The Caribbean is a high-risk area for cyclones and volcanoes and has very large fish stocks. It has not been possible to modernise the fishing fleet and small-scale fishing has little impact on stocks. Although there is a development policy along the coastal strip, production is much higher than local consumption. He regretted that the EU is not allowing modernisation efforts, just as it is preparing to provide more support for third countries. He wanted it to be possible to take distance and specific circumstances into account.

Commissioner Borg returned to the issue of state aid in the fishing industry and emphasised that the crisis in the financial sector is of an exceptional nature and not a permanent problem. The financial and fisheries

sectors are not comparable. Competition rules have not been suspended in the financial sector, despite efforts to give maximum flexibility.

State aid regulations do take account of distance, although it will be necessary to reassess the situation in order to evaluate the importance of changes and special treatment for distant regions.

The Commission is giving specific attention to issues, and governance issues in particular, that are specific to the Baltic Sea, Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It is also sometimes necessary to distinguish between problems of the east and the west of the Mediterranean. With regard to governance, some sectors such as tuna have their own instruments and if necessary their own system of governance. It will be necessary to develop new tools and invite non-public actors to get involved.

On fishing, an advisory committee on fishing in the Mediterranean has been set up and guidelines on governance were adopted last July. He hoped there would be some feedback on these guidelines and their adaptation to different maritime regions.

He welcomed the creation of a Euroregion in the Black Sea and the fact that the EU is directly represented in it. He mentioned that Turkey's accession process is strengthening interest in the Black Sea.

He said he understood the situation in Martinique, and that a dispensation had been granted to outermost regions on modernisation. Modernisation and the construction of new vessels are not necessarily synonymous with one another. After 2010 it will no longer be possible to grant aid for the construction of new vessels, but it will still be possible to modernise them and update construction techniques. Lastly, the fact that stocks are not in danger is a vital point and efforts should be made to ensure that the construction of too many vessels does not harm them.

He added that strong demand for fish helps guarantee better prices.

Lastly, certain types of European Fisheries Fund aid will be granted for modernisation, but not for the construction of new boats, although all entrepreneurs can use their own funds to do so. It will still be possible to invest in new technologies.

Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian thanked **Commissioner Borg** and stressed the diversity and interest of contributions.

SESSION 3: IMPACT OF THE FUTURE OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY ON OUR REGIONAL ECONOMIES

Mr Claudio Martini said that the CAP is a fundamental issue, given its importance in the regions' economy and European budget. The necessary debate on this point is to prepare the Nantes seminar planned for 23 October 2008, which will bring together the regions, the European institutions and the French Presidency.

Mr Alain Rousset thanked the Agriculture Working Group and its President Ms Béatrice Gendreau. In recent years, the CAP has come under considerable pressure owing to variations in farm prices on the global food market, standards, environmental issues, the development of agrofuels and the EU's internal budget negotiations.

He emphasised the importance of addressing the following questions:

- do we want a Common Agricultural Policy or a Common Food Policy?
- do we want to maintain a powerful agricultural policy in the context of globalisation or should we reduce EU support and unleash market forces?

He stressed that European agriculture must diversify in order to meet the challenges of globalisation and sustainable development. He added that in Europe there is thus room for two types of agriculture, that are both different and complementary:

- a globalised and competitive agriculture that requires a high level of technical expertise and innovation. This sort of agriculture will be able to resist, although it will need help in order to adapt to health and environmental requirements;
- a multi-purpose, territorialised agriculture that relies more on its quality and originality than on production capacity, and that can be part of territorial management, generate other parallel activities such as tourism and offset the residential economy.

The European agricultural model needs to diversify and ensure the parallel development of these two types of agriculture in order to promote innovation and added value. This firstly means that European funding under the First Pillar will have to be called into question—it must be modulated to permit the development of territorial agriculture—and secondly between the Second Pillar and the First Pillar.

The regions will have a major role to play both in the negotiations on CAP priorities and in the development of a farm sector that acts as a driver of economic, social and territorial cohesion. The regions have a major role to play in the agricultural field and the regional model is likely to become dominant in Europe. The CAP must keep its purpose to provide food and promote sustainable agriculture and organic crops.

The regions call for the creation of a real partnership with central governments and representatives of farming. They must be at the centre of a partnership for the governance of First Pillar support—to promote greater effectiveness and democracy—and must be responsible for managing the whole Second Pillar.

Debate

A Swedish representative thanked the Agriculture Working Group. The CAP must take account of the various problems threatening farming today. CAP reform is difficult bearing in mind the major differences at territorial level between the regions and the big environmental challenges. The final declaration on the future of the CAP sets out principles that should inspire the CAP. The CAP must permit more sustainable use of resources and its reform should be combined with a forward-looking vision rather than unproductive memories of the past.

A British representative said that there are major differences between the British and French agricultural situations, but they nevertheless have points in common, such as the existence of small farms for example. The CAP's efforts should be focused on disadvantaged regions.

A Finnish representative said that the member states have different situations and perspectives on agricultural policies. For example, in the peripheries it is clear that the CAP should recognize natural disadvantages, and that the level of production and price variation should vary in different regions. Farmers from peripheral Nordic areas cannot be competitive in comparison to farmers from better-off regions.

Mr Claudio Martini felt that it is necessary for the CPMR regions to agree on a common position rather than just repeat national differences. The CAP must be more effective and should neither be abolished nor reduced to a price or market issue. Farming has multiple purposes and several different dimensions, for example related to the environment, water, landscape conservation or tourism. Tuscany would like the First Pillar to be resized, and investment in Second Pillar.

The political synthesis of the range of these issues must be subject to a political decision and not produced by the markets. He stated his respect for all positions on this matter. However, the message sent to Europe must be clear and balanced and must express the desire to reform the CAP without abandoning it.

Mr Massimo Francesco Rocchitta (Sardegna) felt that the CAP should support an increase in European production. He also said that efforts should be made to ensure European production does not lose its links with the territory and wanted support to be focused on areas which need it most.

Mr John Dyke (Somerset) felt that it is not necessary to continue supporting the best-off farmers. It would be more appropriate to take specific circumstances into account, for example through Article 69, which refers to the best-off regions.

A Swedish representative wanted the issue of renewable energy to be included in the debate, which should focus more on the definition of common rules for agriculture than on the principle of a common policy.

A representative of Västra Götaland felt that the purpose of farming is not just to produce food and the CAP must notably be revised for this reason.

Ms Béatrice Gendreau (Aquitaine) felt that CAP reform is a fundamental issue for the regions' future. Despite their diversity, farmers are linked by common issues such as the environment and market regulation.

She said that achieving regionalisation will help increase production reserves and do more to help the most disadvantaged areas such as mountain regions.

Mr Alain Rousset said that Aquitaine will cease to coordinate the Agriculture Working Group and invited other regions to take over. The debate on agriculture should not be confined to production and market regulation issues.

Furthermore, the continuance of activities in rural areas cannot be limited to granting pensions to farmers. Rural areas must be vibrant and strike a balance between the production and residential economies. The distribution of farm products will suffer from the effects of the energy crisis and the increase in fuel costs, and farmers' incomes are still a fundamental subject for discussion.

Lastly, he spoke of the importance of regionalising support under the First Pillar of the CAP.

Mr Humphrey Temperley wanted efforts to focus on other regions too.

Mr Jorma Pitkälä emphasised that regulation instruments have sometimes been harmful in recent years.

SESSION 4: THE PLACE OF THE REGIONS IN THE EU ENERGY CLIMATE PACKAGE

Mr Kevan LIM (East of England Regional Assembly) praised the CPMR's ability to react. European strategy must permit the development of new energy sources because the EU can no longer be dependent on fossil fuel growth. Bearing this in mind, it is necessary to support R&D in new technologies. European policies must also make it possible to invest in companies to promote the use of information and communication technologies, as well as technologies that facilitate energy savings. Finally, there are certain contradictions in the draft directives, for example concerning the development of the biomass and fuels.

Mr Jean-Didier Hache (CPMR Islands Commission) said the European Union aims:

- to limit the average global increase in temperature to less than 2°C;
- to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% between now and 2020;
- to increase the share of renewable energy by 20% between now and 2020;
- to reduce energy consumption by 20%.

He said that four directives, focusing on the following themes, are helping to achieve these objectives:

- the promotion of renewable energy;
- the geological storage of CO₂;
- the improvement and extension of the EU's system for trading CO₂ emission rights;
- the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

He said these texts will have a large impact on peripheral and maritime regions, and the working group had had to react within an extremely short timeframe.

A legal framework on the geological storage of CO₂ is currently being defined. This is receiving much attention from the European Parliament. The CPMR has made several requests about this legal framework, for example regarding analysis of the consequences of climate change for maritime areas and the participation of regional authorities in the processes developed.

There has been intensive political debate on renewable energies, with several hundred amendments having been submitted to the European Parliament. He thanked Mr Alyn Smith, MEP and member of the Greens/European Free Alliance, for his efforts. There is general agreement on the need to increase the production of biofuels, particularly by emerging economies. He said that the European Parliament has nevertheless reduced the share of biofuels, that a major proportion of renewable energy must come from other sources and that there should be no competition between production of biofuels and food production in the use of land. Some MEPs have also stressed the importance of reforestation and forestry.

The biofuel guarantee of origin certificate system runs the risk that some countries acquire these certificates instead of promoting the production of biofuels on their land. With the support of the CPMR, an amendment obliges member states to produce biofuels and support the subsequent stages of their use, notably marketing. Another success has been the strengthening of the European Commission's powers: it can enforce

application of obligations regarding the lack of discrimination of peripheral regions in terms of price and access to renewable energy distribution networks.

Another proposal, presented by the Greens/European Free Alliance, has introduced the possibility for greater flexibility in complying with obligations to protect bird habitats when they enter into conflict with the infrastructure development for the production of renewable energy. The role of regional authorities has also been strengthened.

He drew attention to the provisions that encourage maritime regions to produce renewable energy, for example wind power, and regarding an integrated approach, for example for marine energy in certain areas such as the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.

He was pleased that all of the CPMR's proposals had been approved at this stage.

He also mentioned one directive on the reduction of greenhouse gases and another on the improvement of the certificate system. In 2005, it was important to know which companies this system could apply to, and it was extended to several sectors, notably the maritime transport and air transport industry. At present, CO₂ emission quotas will be allocated to the member states and then companies. Some of these will highlight the danger of relocation and there are huge financial amounts at stake. The CPMR has asked for part of the money in question, of which 55% would be paid to developing countries and 45% to the EU, to specifically help peripheral regions and those affected by demographic deficits. The debate will still be long and difficult, and it will involve several powerful stakeholders: any extra support in making contacts with the European Parliament is useful. As the deadline set for this work is very tight, it is important for all CPMR regions to participate in the Energy Working Group and that all geographical commissions be represented. The regions are also invited to participate in the Aberdeen seminar (13/14 November 2008).

A questionnaire to be sent out by the end of the year will ask the member regions which themes the CPMR should mainly focus on within the energy and climate package and the conclusions will be presented to the Political Bureau.

Mr François Desrentes (CPMR) said the European Commission will publish a White Paper on adaptation to climate change before the end of the year. It will link in with the energy and climate package. The CPMR must get ready to respond, and develop cooperation projects to help identify good practice at territorial level. It must also be able to set out proposals on all of the regulatory documents drawn up in the framework of different fields such as cohesion, energy, research, maritime policy etc.

He said the CPMR believes it will be necessary to set up a formal working group on adaptation and that all other working groups and geographical commissions will be called upon to give their opinion on this issue.

This issue has also had a global dimension since 2004, and the CPMR is a member of the nrg4SD network. In this framework the CPMR must make specific proposals on the post-Kyoto process. Brittany region and the nrg4SD network, with support from the CPMR, are organising two days of discussions on climate change in Saint-Malo (France) on 29 and 30 September 2008.

Debate

Alex MacDonald (Western Isles) expressed his satisfaction with the lobbying efforts made. He asked who would have to cover the costs of acquiring certificates and what would be the repercussions on companies' competitiveness, transport costs and peripheral regions.

A representative from Turkey asked if the planned actions to tackle climate change take account of differences between industrialised and developing countries. Turkey is unfortunately in the list of industrialised countries, but this is not so much due to its production of CO₂ as to other reasons.

He asked how far it would be possible to transfer energy production to renewable sources in such a way as to give an advantage to countries that are advanced in this area. He also stressed the problem of companies relocating to countries that produce less CO₂. He asked these considerations to be taken into account in the Political Bureau opinion.

Mr Kevan Lim: The 20% objective will be weighted differently depending on the states concerned, and the United Kingdom's target will for example be lower than that of Scandinavian countries. Pollution is

currently a result of the most developed European countries' policy, and although China presents a problem for future sustainable development, it is not responsible what has happened in the past.

Mr François Desrentes: Ongoing discussions are focusing on the definition of post-Kyoto positions. The EU has drawn up proposals on developing countries' sustainable development, and in actual fact the countries that have contributed the least to climate change are those on which the current obligations paradoxically have the greatest impact. The EU has proposed changes concerning its own policies.

Mr Erik Bergkvist (Västerbotten): In the Political Bureau Opinion there is a contradiction between the desire to encourage the growth of biofuels and the concern expressed about the vast agricultural areas that would no longer be used for the food production. There is also a danger of not defending regions with a permanent handicap.

Mr Michel Lebrun (Committee of the Regions): The reduction in fossil fuels will have a huge impact on the production system and in the future there will be a phenomenon comparable to that which is affecting the financial system today. It would be appropriate to increase demand among citizens in order to change their behaviour, but he feared that they are not yet ready. There are exceptions such as Switzerland, which has declared that it wants to be fossil fuel-free by 2020. The regions should raise awareness among the population.

Mr Poul Müller (Midtjylland): Climate change has a huge impact in the Baltic Sea, notably as far as energy supply is concerned. However, this phenomenon also generates opportunities. For example, Midtjylland has set itself the objective of achieving 50% renewable energy by 2025, with the national level being 30%. This objective will mainly be achieved through support for innovative products. A foundation for innovative companies has been created with this in mind. Denmark is among the avant-garde when it comes to using renewable energy.

Mr Kevan Lim: The use of first-generation biofuels can notably be explained by Europeans' wish to be autonomous with regard to the United States. European populations must change their energy consumption habits.

Mr Jean-Didier Hache: The text presented stressed the importance of changing European citizens' habits and cited the example of SAMSO Island.

Mr François Desrentes, responding to Mr Lebrun, said that schemes to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in Switzerland are widely implemented in the regions (in Ile de la Réunion, for example). The European Commission's DG Regional Policy has become aware of the large number of regional initiatives; they are however inadequately co-ordinated and supported.

Mr Len Scoullar (Argyll & Bute): The islands are very interested in Article 5.2 on the closure of big electricity power stations. Small islands are also very interested in the development of alternative energy sources, but they would like to develop concrete activities with other, larger regions.

Mr Jean-Didier Hache: The situation of specific territories such as islands is very difficult. The member states are insufficiently interconnected by European energy networks and it is not possible to obtain the resources to develop them quickly. It is therefore necessary to develop rural and peripheral areas and new funding should be proposed.

Mr Kevan Lim: The working group has done excellent work and it must now ensure that its conclusions are taken into account in the final versions of the European directives. The commitment of citizens is necessary in order to accelerate the production of renewable energy and this requires changes in behaviour. The regions are invited to join the Energy Working Group, and links with MEPs working on this subject should be strengthened.

Mr Claudio Martini: The Energy Working Group's discussions highlight the CPMR's commitment to providing peripheral and maritime areas with an opportunity for high-quality development. A diversified development approach is necessary through new activities such as renewable energy, research, etc.

ELECTION OF THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU

At the request of the Secretary General, each national delegation and geographical commission proposed their full and alternate members for the Political Bureau. These candidacies were unanimously accepted by the General Assembly.

See attached list

MEETING OF THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU

Mr Xavier Gizard said that the approval of the minutes of the Rhodes Political Bureau meeting that took place in June would be postponed until the Political Bureau meeting of January 2009.

1. Election of the CPMR President and Bureau

Mr Xavier Gizard informed the Political Bureau that only one candidacy had been received. He therefore asked the members to vote on **Claudio Martini's** candidacy. He was unanimously elected.

Mr Claudio Martini thanked the members of the Political Bureau for renewing their confidence in him. He stressed the importance of working as a team, notably with the vice-presidents, and emphasised that the coming period will see several major upheavals in the life of the organisation: everything will change in 2010 as there will be a new President and new Secretary General. He thus urged the member region presidents to get involved personally during this period. He ended by stressing the importance of dialogue and working together.

Election of Vice-Presidents: The following names were proposed to the Political Bureau:
First Vice-President: **Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark, NO);**
Vice-Presidents: **Mr Charalambos Kokkinos (Notio Aigaiio, GR);**
Mr Ramón Luis Valcarcel Siso (Murcia, ES);
Ms Giovanna Debono (Gozo, MT);
Mr Kevan Lim (East of England Regional Assembly, UK).

This proposal was unanimously accepted.

2. Financial decisions: Adoption of the 2009 draft budget and the financial situation for the current year

Mr Yves Morvan (Chairman of the Administrative Council) presented the accounts:

- the state of execution of the 2008 budget for information;
- the draft 2009 budget for approval prior to submission to the General Assembly.

Mr Morvan said that the 2009 budget is a continuity budget representing a total €2,146,000, with a 3.7% increase in dues corresponding to the rate of inflation in the EU27 as calculated by Eurostat.

No major change in expenditure is to be noted in comparison to preceding budget years; there is a slight increase in staff and travel costs, and running costs are stable.

Mr Morvan said that the CPMR's general budget provides support for the related budgets of the geographical commissions and certain networks. He said that FOGAR and nrg4SD budgets have been made separate and are paid for by voluntary dues from certain regions or networks of regions.

In total, the draft 2009 budget presents a slight deficit of €26,000.

Debate

Mr Kevan Lim thanked **Mr Morvan** for having separated the FOGAR budget from the general budget. He was pleased that combined FOGAR and nrg4SD expenditure had been reduced but stressed that this will only be acceptable if there is a proportional reduction in the activity devoted to them.

Mr Xavier Gizard said that efforts had been made to seek external finance in order to fund these related budgets.

Mr Yves Morvan said that the rule of conduct applied is to match approved budgets as closely as possible with budgets spent.

President Claudio Martini put the 2009 budget to the vote. The Bureau unanimously agreed to submit it to a vote of the General Assembly.

3. Adoption of the draft Final Declaration and draft resolutions

Mr Philippe Cichowlaz (CPMR Intermediterranean Commission), Coordinator of the Resolutions Group, presented the amendments to the draft Final Declaration and the draft resolutions.

Ms Christel Liljeström (Itä-Uusimaa) said she wanted to maintain Point 26 of the draft Final Declaration on the CAP as it stands and that she therefore had difficulties in accepting the amendment proposed on this point. She stressed that the CAP offers a comprehensive approach and it is important to give great attention to regions' whole economies.

Mr Claudio Martini said that opinions on this point differ since the Rhodes Political Bureau meeting. He personally shared Christel Liljeström's view because the amendment proposed focuses more on principles than on concrete aspects. He proposed that the Political Bureau vote on this and take note of what was decided in Rhodes, which in his mind represented the best possible synthesis.

He said he was open to discussion on other points of view but it was now important to know what the CPMR's position on this issue would be. And it appears that the most consensual position is that contained in the current Point 26.

He asked the Political Bureau to give its view so that the organisation would have a clear position to support at the Nantes seminar on 23 October 2008.

Results of the vote:

In favour of including the amendment to Point 26 = 3

Against the amendment = 11

Abstention = 6

The amendment proposed for Point 26 of the Final Declaration was rejected.

President Martini then submitted the draft Final Declaration to the vote. It was unanimously accepted.

The amendments to the draft sectoral resolutions were presented and unanimously adopted.

4. Examination of membership applications

The Political Bureau approved the membership application from Västerbotten Region (recently reorganised).

5. Proposal and appointment of a new President of the CPMR Scientific Council

At the Secretary General's proposal, the Political Bureau approved the appointment of **Jean-Charles Leygues, Honorary Director General of the European Commission** as the new President of the CPMR's Scientific Council to replace Mr Luis Valente de Oliveira.

6. Letter of intent for the partnership with the UNDP on climate change

Mr Xavier Gizard presented the draft letter to be signed by the CPMR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the Saint-Malo Summit on climate change. He stipulated that the text would not make any financial commitments and asked the Political Bureau to authorise President Martini to sign it.

The Political Bureau accepted unanimously.

7. Partnership status request for the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

Mr Xavier Gizard presented the CPMR's request for sectoral dialogue partnership status on the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC) for the Political Bureau's agreement. In the framework of this partnership, Balkans and Black Sea Commission will represent the CPMR in the BSEC.

The Political Bureau accepted unanimously, with one (1) abstention.

8. Forthcoming Political Bureau meetings

The next meeting of the Political Bureau will take place in Aarhus (DK) on 23 January 2009.

Regarding the Political Bureau meeting of June 2009 that should be held in Odessa (Ukraine), the Secretary General pointed out that this destination is far from the centre of Europe and, bearing in mind the extreme importance of the decisions to be taken, notably the election of a new Secretary General, it would be wiser to organise it in a more accessible place and keep Odessa for a later Political Bureau meeting.

Mr Peter Khlytsov (Odessa) said he wanted to maintain his request to organise the June 2009 Political Bureau meeting.

President Martini asked for Odessa to be maintained for the June Political Bureau meeting.

At President Martini's request, **Xavier Gizard** provided details about the procedure for electing the new Secretary General. A recruitment procedure will be drawn up by the General Secretariat, under the responsibility of Jean-Didier Hache. This will be submitted for approval at the Political Bureau meeting of 23 January 2009 in Aarhus (DK). The procedure will deal with all aspects of recruitment, including the advertisements that will have to be published.

As all the items on the agenda had been dealt with, **President Martini** brought the Political Bureau meeting to a close.

FRIDAY 3 OCTOBER 2008

SESSION 5: TERRITORIAL COHESION, THE LISBON AGENDA AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

President **Claudio Martini** welcomed **Ms Katarina Mathernova**, Deputy Director-General of DG Regio, **Mr Pierre Heilbronn**, representative of the French Prime Minister, and **Claude Grasland**, Representative of ESPON.

He stressed the following three points in his introduction:

- What do we mean when we speak of "territorial cohesion"?
- Why is territorial cohesion essential for CPMR member regions?
- What are our expectations and fears on this issue?

On the first point, he said that, for CPMR member regions, territorial cohesion primarily means solidarity between territories, and in no circumstances should it be confused with "charity". While some may believe this is an issue to be dealt with at member state level, this is not our position and the CPMR intends to take its full place in the debate.

On the second point, President Martini said that the CPMR fought for the introduction of this concept in the Convention. Without cohesion, regions located on Europe's margins would be in great difficulty and Europe without solidarity would mean that certain citizens could not access the same services or have the same rights, which is unacceptable. So the CPMR deems territorial cohesion to be a concrete theme that lies at the interface between all policies.

On the third and last point, he said we hope the Green Paper will go further than just regional policy to ensure the coordination of all policies in a long-term perspective. We also hope it will not be kept isolated from the institutional context, bearing in mind that the current Treaty refers to it.

Mr Claude Grasland presented the ESPON Europe in the World Report, focusing on three approaches:

- mental maps;
- the European neighbourhood;
- proposals.

Mr Grasland's presentation can be accessed at http://www.crpm.org/pub/agenda/759_crpm-europe_in_the_world_-_oct_2008.ppt.

He concluded his presentation with two questions:

- should the CPMR not enlarge its perspective by moving from an EU/local relationship to a EU/global view?
- should we not turn the term peripheral into interface and replace the P by an I?

Ms Katarina Mathernova kicked off by saying that territorial cohesion comes within the framework of the request to revise the 2009-2010 budget, in which 35% of the EU expenditure (cohesion policy) will be very closely scrutinised. She confirmed that the Green Paper on territorial cohesion will be published on Monday 6 October and the CPMR will be a major partner in the forthcoming debate.

Four questions arise. How and to what extent has current EU policy already taken account of the territorial dimension? Why and in what way is territorial cohesion a concept? How is it considered at the European Commission? What measures are planned by the Green Paper and what are the implications?

On the first point, Ms Mathernova said that several current eligibility criteria are based on factors linked to territories' characteristics, such as population density, restructuring areas, urban/rural characteristics or remoteness criteria. Nevertheless, the European Commission is aware that several sectoral policies have very different impacts and a sectoral approach is necessary.

Why take such a concept into account? The debate started in the mid-1990s led to initiatives, as from 1997, with the Interreg programmes, the transnational approach and then the creation of ESPON. This was complemented and strengthened by the development of networks and a debate on the coordination of spatial planning policies between the member states.

The European Commission felt it was time to consolidate this body of existing doctrine by producing a Green Paper.

What do we mean by this? The common denominator lies in the concentration of activities in order to achieve economies of scale. There may be areas of less concentration, but disadvantaged regions should not exist and access to services for all is essential. So, how can these differences be turned into assets without totally seeking equality. This means it is necessary to bank more on development potential than on aid.

Ms Mathernova suggested three solutions: to strengthen links (including for intangible services), to develop cooperation, notably via Interreg in order to resolve shared problems and work on major issues such as immigration, and to take account of interaction between policies.

She also said the Green Paper will focus on certain major problems such as climate change, which pays no attention to borders and for which the territorial level is particularly well adapted.

She then described some of the challenges we will be faced with, in order to give some meaning to this concept of territorial cohesion: what tools do we need in order to link policies to territories? How can we start a new phase of cooperation? How can we invent new types of partnership?

In her conclusion, Ms Mathernova emphasised what the Green Paper is not: it is not a pre-established discussion framework, but an open document that invites debate; it does not refer to the Lisbon Treaty, because this is not legally binding. She concluded by describing the principal stages of the forthcoming debate and invited the CPMR to participate extensively.

Debate

Mr Erik Söderlund (Norrbotten) stressed the local and regional nature of territorial governments and argued for polycentric governance. He spoke about current changes in Sweden concerning the creation of a new administrative entity bringing together the three existing regions in the north of the country.

Ms Christel Liljeström recognized the added value of cooperation as a major factor and said that the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission she chairs will participate fully in the debate on the Green Paper. She stressed that the results will be even more important if all policy instruments can be combined with one another and asked for greater flexibility in practices. She lastly said that one of the major concerns should be to meet the challenge of the ageing population.

Mr Pierre Heilbronn (French EU Presidency) said first that the French Presidency is keen to hear the views of local and regional authorities and especially the regions. He outlined the French Presidency's priorities (climate change, the Health Check and future of the CAP, immigration—three major areas of work with territorial implications, including in the maritime field for the latter—as well as European defence).

On territorial cohesion, he said the objective is to launch a debate under the 2009-2010 budget revision clause. How can territorial cohesion contribute to the solidarity and elimination of inequalities? He said the debate will offer people an opportunity to give their views on the territories' adaptation to the major issues of climate change, demographic change and the economy.

He mentioned the key dates of the French Presidency and said the debate should focus on the very concept of territorial cohesion in order to build a foundation of shared values based on an approach that combines solidarity, equality and competitiveness.

On maritime policy, and maritime safety in particular, he stressed the importance of safety issues and repeated the French Presidency's desire to reach an agreement on the whole Erika III Package. Concerning integrated maritime policy, he stressed the governance, surveillance and knowledge aspects. On fisheries, he spoke about the member states' commitment to the fundamental principles of the Common Fisheries Policy and emphasised the progress that needs to be made to achieve simplification, transparency and multi-annual programming in the management of this policy.

He concluded by saying that all these actions are part of a trend towards the involvement of local authorities in the development of common policies.

THE ROLE OF THE REGIONS IN EUROPEAN INNOVATION POLICIES

Ms Inger Linge (Stockholm) began her speech by saying that solidarity, as President Martini had said, must be at the heart of Europe's and the regions' action and it should not be pitted against competitiveness. They are two sides of the same coin. Innovation has a fundamental role to play in this context. She said that to be innovative, regions need be able to count on innovative people, who must be supported by their local or regional authorities.

She then spoke about the TN-RIS project, the regions that have taken part in this initiative, the support given by local experts and the organisation of a CPMR Scientific Council meeting on the topic. The objective was to provide elements and proposals on how to take innovation into account within cohesion policy and the Lisbon Agenda. She said the aim is to help the CPMR prepare its positions on these subjects and much needs to be done in order to improve the European Union's contribution to innovation. This theme has not been optimally taken into account within current cohesion policy, and more should be done to take account of the role of the regions as a driving force for innovation. She emphasised the fact that all regions can promote innovation in proportion to their own possibilities. She stressed the importance of the link between entrepreneurship and creativity. For example, in Stockholm, the emphasis is placed on creativity rather than innovation per se. Innovation does not exist without individuals, without a state of mind and a far-reaching understanding of what that this entails. Links must be forged between the public sector, universities, research centres and also civil society, cultural actors etc. Innovation is a matter of Technology, and also Talent and Tolerance.

Mr Damien Périssé (CRPM) said that innovation is a key element in determining territories' competitiveness. It lies at the heart of European policies, and as such has an impact on other policies. He said the CPMR wishes to further develop its reflection on innovation through a territorial approach.

He gave an example of the British definition of innovation: "a change that has an impact on the market", which thus responds to a socio-economic need. According to the European Commission, innovation has a management dimension and concerns working conditions, clearly going beyond just the technology dimension. This wide approach corresponds to the view held by the CPMR, which deems it necessary to avoid the concentration of innovation dynamics in just a few European regions.

The CPMR would like to highlight the following points:

- the need to combine efforts to promote innovation and the territorial dimension while avoiding the risks of concentration;
- the need to determine innovation approaches that take into account differences between territories and their respective assets. Making 2009 the Year of Creativity seems to be a good thing. European indicators should also be changed as they are still too purely technological and do not sufficiently exploit the regional approach. More attention should be given to innovation in rural areas;
- the need to involve the regions more closely in the Lisbon Agenda and in the development of good governance that takes territories into account;

- the need to strengthen the regions' ability to conduct strategic and economic analysis;
- the need to reflect certain tendencies in innovation policies (to reflect in terms of demand, to take more account of education issues) in accordance with territories' characteristics. Innovation policies may be very diverse and give territories ample room for manoeuvre.

Concerning cooperation between stakeholders, which is a very important theme, the CPMR says that priority should not just be given to European clusters policy, as a support policy for a few world-class European technology clusters. Some clusters seem less "important" but are however vital to the territories concerned. Clusters policy must be complimentary to cohesion policy.

As far as the next steps are concerned, **Mr Damien Périssé** announced the forthcoming organisation of seminar on the theme of innovation under the Swedish Presidency. This could take place in Stockholm.

Mr Martin Rattray (Highland Council) - Innovation in rural regions, the case of the Highlands - began his speech by saying that the concept of innovation changes and it is currently based on the knowledge economy, which needs to be taken into account. EU and member state innovation efforts have long focused on work done with major cities and central regions. Innovation developed by the European peripheries should now also be taken into account as they promote a different sort of innovation.

Scotland has used the ERDF and ESF to promote innovation in partnership with the private sector, universities and civil society. This innovation takes into account territories' specific circumstances in order to turn them into assets. He also said that, in certain peripheries, innovation cannot only come from SMEs, coupled with strong local leadership and the support of local universities. It is vital to work in networks. Some innovations are only possible within rural territories where they can be based on natural local resources (wind, tides, etc.). Innovation is clearly at the centre of regional development, even for regions that are far from Europe's geographical centre.

Mr Rattray then presented the example of on-shore wind energy in Denmark, which is the world leader in this area and is based on a range of small companies.

He concluded by calling for a simplification of European instruments for supporting innovation.

Debate

Ms Giovanna Debono (Gozo) said that it is not possible for all member states to promote innovation in the same way and they cannot all be on a par with the most advanced countries in this field.

Mr Fernando Alonso (Stockholm) added one more T to those mentioned by this Ms Linge (Technology, Talent, Tolerance): Trust, and stressed the fundamental importance of trust between actors in innovation systems. He furthermore regretted that no budget is planned to support the Year of Creativity in 2009.

The representative of the Aquitaine Innovation Agency regretted that innovation support for SMEs is still too mono-regional. Responses should be developed by different regions together.

In conclusion, **Ms Inger Linge** stressed the fact that this is not just a matter of money or administrative machinery, but clearly concerns culture, and notably promotion within educative systems. For his part, **Mr Damien Périssé** returned to the fact that innovation is not solely the result of research and it is not necessarily technological. He said the technical paper specifically stressed this point and the need for a wide vision that fully respects the territories' diversity.

Mr Michel Lebrun (this speech can be accessed at http://www.crpm.org/pub/agenda/750_08-10-03_lebrun_general_assembly_bayonne_fr.pdf) recognised that the concept of territorial cohesion should be specified from three different angles, bearing in mind the inclusion of this objective in the Treaty. It:

- 1) reflects the continuation of integrated cohesion policy at EU level in the long term;
- 2) it meets the need for a polycentric, balanced, sustainable and inclusive spatial planning policy for the European territory;
- 3) represents a governance tool.

Bearing in mind also that territorial cohesion is a cross-sectoral priority, he said it is also necessary to bear in mind the problem of complementarity and coherence between cohesion policy and other EU policies such as rural development policy, energy policy, agricultural policy, transport policy, research, etc.

For the post-2013 period, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) wants a strong regional policy that is based on the principle of solidarity. To achieve this, it has created a specific working group on the future of cohesion policy in the certainty that it will not be possible to achieve the goal of territorial cohesion without a strong cohesion policy targeted at all European regions. Mr Lebrun of course recognised that less prosperous regions must be the main beneficiaries of European support. However, he also said that regions that are neither lagging behind nor most in difficulty, but have pockets of unemployment, poverty or social exclusion, must not be forgotten. All regions must therefore benefit from a cohesion policy that is not just a regular redistribution policy, but is a public policy that helps all regions in their quest for innovation and economic and social progress.

The CoR also wishes to strengthen the role of local and regional authorities in the definition, management and implementation of cohesion policy, bearing in mind that there is a link between the correct use of funds and project quality on the one hand and the driving force of decentralisation on the other hand. The European model must therefore be preserved – and more systematically improved – in order to reconcile cohesion, solidarity and prosperity. To achieve this, it will be necessary to bring together the member states and local and regional institutions, and show vision and courage in order to maintain a budget that will be meet the European goals of prosperity, solidarity and cohesion.

Ms Ludmila Sfirloaga (Chamber of the Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe) said that the CLRAE is the organisation of local and regional authorities at pan-European level, because the Council of Europe has 47 member countries. She said the Council of Europe' key theme is the defence and promotion of democracy, and that this is notably dependent on local and regional authorities. She then said that the regional dimension of the European Union is vital, particularly for regions with legislative powers and that the Congress is striving to take them properly into account.

For the CLRAE, regional identity, culture and languages are priorities for many regions in Europe. It is in this context that the European Charter on Regional Democracy was finally adopted last May. It is the first legal instrument that offers a degree of flexibility in preserving and promoting the regions' autonomy. She said the CLRAE is also working hard on cross-border and interregional cooperation. She cited several concrete examples such as the Black Sea Euroregion, which must help bring about more synergies between citizens and has just been launched in September 2008. She also mentioned the CLRAE's recommendations and resolutions on the services of general economic interest in rural territories and the importance of the issue of polycentrism, which still needs to be developed further in Europe.

Continuation of the debate

Ms Christel Liljeström, on the half of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, thanked the working group for the efforts undertaken and hoped the work would continue.

Mr Xavier Gizard said that in the spring of 2009, a summit of the regions and cities will take place in Prague under the Czech Presidency. The CPMR has already been invited. **Claudio Martini** suggested to the CoR that the organisation of this event should be more collaborative and that the major European associations of local and regional authorities be involved in the organisation and preparation of the final declaration of this major event, as was the case in Leipzig in 2004. This will help to demonstrate the collective determination and mobilisation of European local and regional authorities in the debate on the new post-2013 European budgets and programmes.

Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark) concluded the session by also thanking the members of the working group for the work done to date, and for the putting the issues of cohesion, notably territorial cohesion, and the link with innovation and regional policy into perspective all through the morning. The exchanges and information must make it possible to contemplate new perspectives and new approaches. This will enable the regional representatives to develop their thoughts.

SESSION 6: PRESENTATION OF NEW CPMR MEMBER REGIONS

Five new regions have joined the CPMR: Angus (United Kingdom), Ida-Virumaa (Estonia), Larnaca (Cyprus), Picardie (France) and Samsun (Turkey).

The representatives of these five regions presented the main characteristics (demographic, natural, economic, etc.) of their region.

SESSION 7: THE FUTURE OF THE CPMR

Mr Claudio Martini opened the session, saying that an in-depth survey had been conducted among members, with a very satisfactory and significant response rate (over 90).

Mr Jean-Didier Hache presented the results of the survey conducted by the executive secretaries of the geographical commissions and the General Secretariat. He said a mandate had been given at the Seville Political Bureau meeting in early 2008, a study had then been launched on the CPMR's membership characteristics, a whole series of debates had been organised with the geographical commissions and member regions' national groups, and interviews conducted with qualified external "personalities".

An initial presentation was made in June 2008 at the Rhodes Political Bureau meeting. A statistical analysis on the nature and characteristics of the membership had then been undertaken with help from the Geography Department of Rennes University.

Succinctly, the conclusions were:

- the maritime dimension is clearly the factor that brings together CPMR member regions (90% of responses), then accessibility (80%), demographic and natural disadvantages, the need to cooperate with neighbouring regions and, lastly, external cooperation;
- what distinguishes us: size in terms of surface area and population, and institutional organisation.

On the basis of this work and interviews conducted among some 20 personalities, and of course the results of debates held within the geographical commissions, a questionnaire was drawn up and then circulated individually to each of the member regions. The consultation took place over a one-month period, between mid-August and mid-September.

Firstly, the representative nature of responses should be emphasised (57% of members, and two-thirds of the CPMR's "population"). The response rate was 79% for members of the Baltic Sea Commission, 70% of the North Sea Commission, 67 for the Islands Commission, 46% of the Intermediterranean Commission, 44% for the Atlantic Arc Commission and 40% for the Balkans and Black Sea Commission). The lessons learnt from the responses collected are:

- the organisation is very stable. Its historical goals (the maritime and peripheral dimensions) have been widely approved. Furthermore, the great majority of members state that CPMR will be a relevant organisation for the future;
- priority activities are, in order of importance: lobbying, information/monitoring of EU policies, interregional cooperation.
- the regions that support the development of cooperation with regions from other continents are in a small minority;
- among the General Secretariat's tasks, the most important is stability; it should not get directly involved in interregional cooperation aspects, which is principally a task for the geographical commissions. The geographical commissions are asked to be more active and develop relations with third countries in their maritime basin;
- regarding the overall performance of the organisation, responses show a good rate of satisfaction and a balanced performance;
- on possible relations with other European networks of regions, there was massive opposition to any merger; CPMR members clearly want the organisation to remain independent, preferring to strengthen working links with other networks;
- on the issue of whether it is necessary to restrict or widen the criteria that need to be met in order to become a member, the low response rate to this question clearly shows that CPMR members have no position on this point. However, there a large majority favours keeping the CPMR name.

In conclusion, Mr Hache noted the organisation's very great stability, a very clear focus on the priority themes (cohesion, energy, climate change, transport) and considerable reticence about tackling these issues at global level except for when EU policies themselves have a clear global dimension, for example climate change. The members want to strengthen the role of the geographical commissions and maintain the organisation's independence.

He also noted the absence of any major conflicts of interest between the members, notably between large and small regions, and ended by outlining the future stages of this work:

- drafting of recommendations on the basis of responses to the questionnaire;
- presentation of these recommendations to the Political Bureau in January 2009;
- ratification of the position adopted at the 2009 General Assembly.

Debate

Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian was pleased with this work: he noted that maritime identity is acknowledged as being the cornerstone of the organisation, which means that it should be given even more attention. On peripherality, he noted that this concept originally had a protest connotation, and this has considerably changed today. He wondered whether it is not now appropriate to develop the following two ideas; The first would be to contemplate the possibility of having centres of development around a “central polygon” as presented by **Mr Claude Grasland** (scenario 4 of his presentation), which would be based on the knowledge society and innovation. A second possibility is that our position on the EU periphery gives us new duties vis-à-vis new members and new neighbours, two categories that require more attention.

Mr Piero Di Maggio (Sicilia) was pleased to note the stability undermining the CPMR since its creation. He declared himself to be thoroughly opposed to opening up to the outside or any merger. He felt that the roles of the geographical commissions and the General Secretariat are complimentary, despite being different.

Mr Henning Gjellerod (Midtjylland) said he was very satisfied with the process started. He believed this work gives the CPMR a major tool with which it can prepare the future. He said he agreed that priority should be given to the maritime dimension because this is where our identity lies and he argued for more attention to be given to the EU’s neighbouring regions.

Mr Roy Perry (Hampshire) was grateful for the work done and asked if the responses reveal any national differences, while of course saying that it was a good thing not to have used this angle of the debate. He said that the options emerging still need to be refined, notably in terms of cooperation. He emphasised that we are a above all European organisation that needs to take into account what is happening elsewhere and it is important to focus on priorities.

Ms Josefina Moreno (Murcia) stressed the importance of the notion of peripherality, which leads us to give particular attention to certain policies such as transport. She also underlined the need to widen lobbying to the process for developing norms.

Mr Henrik Ringbæk Madsen (Nordjylland) said we will need our full strength in order to contemplate the future. However, we know already that the EU budget be lower, so it is important not enlarge activities. He mentioned the example of FOGAR, which must become independent from the CPMR. We must take this independence into account from now on.

Ms Rinske Kruisinga from Noord-Holland, which represents 2.6 million people, stressed the importance of regional approach in the implementation of policies and the federating nature of this approach.

Mr Jérôme Polverini (Corse) noted that the results of the questionnaire underscored some points that are already clear. He stressed the need to not necessarily request identical treatment for all regions and argued to introduce the concept of aid differentiation and proportionality in our demands.

Concerning the “widely shared” interests illustrated by the questionnaire responses, he asked for attention to be given to ensure that solidarity among all is expressed, including regarding some regions’ specific characteristics. He cited the example of fisheries, which does not concern all regions to the same degree but deserves to be supported by all. He argued that we should work in a spirit of solidarity in order to defend things that illustrate our diversity and specific circumstances. He said uniformity should be rejected and a hierarchical lobbying process should be invented.

Mr Richard Westlake (Devon) was not surprised by the results of questionnaire. The responses are clear and mean that “if we go too far we will lose out”. Chinese and Japanese regions are beginning to work on the global stage, and we have to recognize diversity. He asked for the CPMR to focus on what it does best, such as transport, energy and climate. He wanted the geographical commissions to intensify lobbying efforts

in their areas, even if this is just to justify membership and demonstrate that this type of organisation defends its members' interests. He also stressed the importance of cooperating with other organisations.

Mr Rafael Hueso said he was pleased but unsurprised by the results, which confirm that the union (of the regions) is what gives them their strength. He regretted that the Atlantic Arc Commission is not more active and asked whether the debate on the future of the CPMR extends to the future of the geographical commissions.

Mr Claudio Martini made four remarks to be assembly.

- The members want to maintain the CPMR's founding identity (maritime/peripheral); in his mind this is a positive commitment which underpins action taken to date. On CPMR membership, he noted that if the members are satisfied, the line followed to date should be used, giving those that accept the founding (maritime and peripheral) principles an opportunity to join;
- On the priority subjects such as they have emerged from the questionnaire responses, he felt that as many as possible should be taken into account as these are subjects that require the adoption of technical and not a general position. He suggested continuing along this path;
- On the respective roles of the General Secretariat and geographical commissions, it is important to not to pit them against one another because they are both necessary and complementary to one another; it thus seems very important to keep the organisation as it works today;
- On FOGAR, he said he thought the matter had been settled; it is an additional dimension which does not affect the budget and the regions are invited to give their views on the basis of a synthesis between a yes and a no to FOGAR. He ended by saying that his candidacy letter clearly indicated this position because certain situations require a global vision. He asked the Assembly to support the idea of having a synthesis setting out a point of view shared by all.

Mr Xavier Gizard gave details about the follow-up to the debate on CPMR's future and the timetable. The Political Bureau of January 2009 will draw up the initial positions which will be discussed during the spring in each geographical commission. A synthesis will be proposed by the Political Bureau in 2009 and submitted for adoption at the 2009 General Assembly in Gothenburg.

On the matter of changing the location of the General Secretariat's offices, he said this would lead to an increase in the dues of about 50%.

Mr Ole B. Sørensen (Nordjylland) said he was astounded by President Martini's reaction on FOGAR. He felt that it is not right to put forward a declaration of intent in a candidacy letter, and that when one does not agree with an opinion expressed by the members of an organisation, it is up to the President to see whether he wants to stay on in his position.

Mr Claudio Martini replied by stressing that this is not new and it is a very important point. He felt that, with the results of the survey, we now have information of a "technical" nature which must be turned into political positions. It will then be time, depending on the results, everybody to draw the consequences.

Mr Jean-Didier Hache spoke on matters regarding the form of a debate, to specify the following points:

- On the methodology selected, each region reacts to the questions, notably in accordance with their own geographical and historical situations. He cited the example of Navarre, which is highly involved in the energy work, but for whom fisheries are not an issue. This just reflects the reality and is in no circumstances due to lack of interest;
- On the relations between General Secretariat and the geographical commissions, he did not see any conflict but rather a demand to strengthen the two bodies;
- lastly, with regard to the question "should we explore and go further into the debate on the geographical commissions", the answer is yes. The Intermediterranean Commission has already done this and it could prove very useful to refine the data for each maritime basin.

President Martini said that we have a clear roadmap until the following General Assembly and brought the debate to a close.

SESSION 8: EXAMINATION AND VOTE ON THE FINAL DECLARATION AND RESOLUTIONS

Mr Claudio Martini introduced the session gave the floor to Marie-Ange Orihuela, the CPMR Director in charge of the Resolution Group during this General Assembly.

Ms Marie-Ange Orihuela presented the results of the Resolutions Group and firstly spoke of the draft amendments to Final Declaration.

Having read the amendments submitted by the regions and the geographical commissions and adopted by the Political Bureau, the President submitted this amended Final Declaration to the vote of the Assembly.

The final declaration was unanimously adopted.

Mr Claudio Martini then proposed to move on to the draft resolutions.

Ms Marie-Ange Orihuela said that, as the draft resolutions had not been subject to amendments, they had not been circulated again. They were in the file of working papers. This includes the following resolutions:

II-1: Towards a Sustainable European Regional Cohesion Policy - Challenges and opportunities in geographically delineated areas;

II-2: Energy as a Priority in European Sustainable Procurement;

II-3: Discard: Incompatible with Sustainable Fisheries;

II-4: Letter of Support for the Activities of the TN-RIS Working Group (detail: this resolution was only submitted by the Baltic Sea Commission because the North Sea Commission did not have the time to give an official reaction on the issue);

II-6: Sustainable tourism.

As their had been no amendments, **Claudio Martini** proposed to submit these draft resolutions to the overall vote of the Assembly.

Resolutions II-1, II-2, II-3, II-4, II-6 were unanimously adopted.

Concerning Resolution II-5 "Support for Maritime Freight Transport", a separate vote on the two points was requested:

1st point: adopted by a majority (with 6 votes against and 2 abstentions);

2nd point: adopt unanimously (with 2 abstentions).

President Martini thanked the Assembly.

SESSION 9: BUDGET DECISIONS

Mr Yves Morvan and **Jacques Boulau** presented the CPMR's accounts:

2007

The 2007 accounts were evaluated in a report by the Auditor and presented to the General Assembly, after having been approved by the Administrative Council and the Rhodes Political Bureau meeting in June 2008.

Income totalled €3,416,534 and expenditure came to €3,500,401. After re-integrating income and exceptional expenses, the constitution of provisions and recovery of dedicated funds, there is a positive final balance (€118,634).

A comparison between the draft budget for 2007 and the completed budget reveals small differences of 1-3% under the expenditure headings, which shows that the completed budget was in line with the budget voted by the General Assembly.

2008

The 2008 accounting year is underway. To take account of the requests of the Florence Assembly of October 2007 concerning the management of external networks, the allocative key for expenditure was changed in the draft 2008 budget:

- Application of an allocative key accounting for 4% of the CPMR's running costs for FOGAR, and 2% for the nrg4SD network (allocative key determined further to an analysis) and application of a real

share of the time spent by the Secretariat on this work and adjustment of the allocation of dedicated funds, the budget line dedicated to FOGAR having been removed, with it having to finance itself mainly from regions' additional contributions.

On the other hand, the Islands Commission' staff costs have decreased to take account of the Executive Secretary's contribution to CPMR work (50% share for the Islands Commission and 50% for the CPMR).

There was no change for the other commissions.

It should be noted that the French regions of Limousin and Centre and the Scottish Executive have withdrawn and Ida-Virumaa, Angus, Larnaca and Samsun have joined.

Draft 2009 budget

The draft 2009 budget was presented, for the CPMR's general budget, with total income of €2,146,141, which mainly comes from the regions' dues.

This budget includes a 3.7% increase in dues calculated in line with the Eurostat EU27 inflation rate for May 2007 to May 2008.

The new scale of dues proposed is as follows:

€0.010352 per inhabitant

Minimum dues: €6,436 for regions with less than 621,760 inhabitants.

Total expenditure comes to €2,118,463. There is a slight increase in staff costs owing to the recruitment of a Director for research and innovation, and a small 2% increase has been applied to all staff costs. Travel costs have also been slightly reassessed. Running costs are under control and relatively stable.

The CPMR's general budget surplus is €27,000. It is reduced by contributions to the budgets of certain geographical commissions (secondment of staff and running costs) and the budgets of the networks of regions: €9,587 for FOGAR and €21,830 for nrg4SD.

The FOGAR accounts have been separated from the CPMR account and the CPMR's contribution to FOGAR is decreasing, with FOGAR aiming to finance itself.

After integration of the contributions of the CPMR general budget to the related budgets of the geographical commissions and the networks of regions, there is a final deficit of €26,168.

At the request of **Mr Kevan Lim**, it was stipulated that no additional funds will be allocated to external networks, aside from the subscriptions paid directly by these networks' member regions.

The Atlantic Arc regions thanked Basse-Normandie Region for its €60,000 contribution (over 2 years) to complement the funding of a full-time Executive Secretary position.

The General Assembly unanimously adopted the 2007 accounts and draft 2009 budget.

SESSION 10: FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND CONCLUSION

2009: Invitation from Mr Roland Andersson, *President of Regional Executive Board* (Västra Götaland – Sweden) to hold the next CPMR General Assembly in **Gothenburg** on 30 September, 1 and 2 October 2009.

2010: Invitation from Ms Katharine Dean, *Council Leader* (Aberdeen City - UK) to hold the CPMR General Assembly in **Aberdeen** on 29/30 September and 1 October 2010.

President Claudio Martini thanked them for these invitations and asked the participants to reserve the dates in their diaries. He thanked all the delegates and gave the floor to **Mr François Maïtia**, Vice-President of Aquitaine Regional Council, so that he could make the closing speech of this 36th General Assembly on behalf of President Rousset.