



CRPM CPMR

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MINUTES OF THE 37TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CPMR 1/2 OCTOBER 2009 – GOTHENBURG (VÄSTRA GÖTALAND, SWEDEN)

Thursday 1 October 2009

OPENING SESSION

Opening of the proceedings of the 37th General Assembly of the CPMR

Mr Roland Andersson (Västra Götaland) opened the General Assembly, saying that numerous European meetings and discussions had taken place in Gothenburg, particularly during the Swedish EU Presidency. He also mentioned the Gothenburg Agenda, which it was necessary to pursue, and the United Nations' COP 15 climate change conference in Copenhagen in December, at which a positive outcome was absolutely vital. He spoke in favour of the macro-regional approach, such as the one being developed for the Baltic Sea Region, and paid tribute to CPMR, which he said had always identified the key issues for the maritime regions and had managed to introduce these into the political debates. He paid tribute to the work of **Mr Gizard**, and wished his successor **Ms Marianou** every success in her new post.

After extending his thanks to the region of Västra Götaland and its President, **Mr Martini** briefly outlined the key issues to be discussed over the two days. He paid tribute to the efficiency of the CPMR's work to date, and said he hoped that the organisation would not shy away from tackling the new challenges awaiting it in the lead-up to the political and financial negotiations on the post-2013 period, which would take place against the backdrop of the global economic crisis. The responses developed to date at national and European level to this major crisis were insufficient, he said, and local and regional authorities should also be involved. This was the argument behind the European Territorial Pact proposed by CPMR. In conclusion, he said that at the General Assembly in 2010 CPMR would have a new Secretary General and a new President. It would be the beginning of a new era for the organisation, which should continue to take its strength from its Geographical Commissions.

The minutes of the General Assembly in Bayonne and the Agenda for the present Assembly were approved.

SESSION 1: PROPOSAL TO RATIFY THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Mr Xavier Gizard (CPMR) described the recruitment procedure for the new Secretary General of the CPMR and asked the Assembly to ratify the decision of the Odessa Political Bureau to appoint **Ms Eleni Marianou** to this post.

The proposal was unanimously ratified and **Ms Marianou** was invited to address the Assembly.

Ms Marianou thanked the members for their show of confidence and said she was aware of the responsibilities that awaited her. The CPMR was essential for the regions in Europe, and she wanted to see the organisation's strength and visibility further reinforced. She described the current context in Europe as unique, with the crisis that was affecting all levels of governance and the still unresolved situation with regard to the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty. She underlined the importance of the forthcoming debates on regional policy after 2013, which should not, she said, be used as an adjustment variable in the face of reduced national budgets.

She mentioned a number of the principles of this policy, which would in the future still concern all European regions. The questions she was asking herself concerned the current level of satisfaction with regard to

regional policy; how it could be modified and made more effective; what indicators should be developed, etc. The debate needed to be carefully prepared and it was essential that the European interlocutors involved local and regional authorities in this preparatory phase. **Ms Marianou** considered the European Territorial Pact proposed by CPMR to be in harmony with the positions of President Barroso and those expressed by the Committee of the Regions on multi-level governance. The G20 summit meeting in London had signalled a profound change in global governance, which in the future would have to include the regional authorities. Sustainable development was not possible without the regions. They had in particular the capacity to promote a green economy. The regions had a systematic role to play in European growth. The organisation's first task would be to form strategic alliances with the Commission presidency in order to ensure that it took due account of the regional level.

SESSION 2: PRESENTATION OF THE ACTIVITY REPORT AND WORK PROSPECTS FOR 2009-2010

Mr Xavier Gizard spoke of the objectives of this 2009 Assembly, which would have to agree the broad principles of the positions to be defended by the Conference with regard to European programming post-2013. This had to be done in a rather difficult context, with the institutional changes within the European Union not fully completed and against a backdrop of economic crisis and concern about the current and future impacts of climate change. He emphasised that the Conference's activities would be carried forward into the first half of 2010 in close liaison with the Spanish EU Presidency.

He then turned to the main areas of CPMR's activity since the General Assembly in Bayonne, including the survey on the crisis, the discussions on the future regional policy – in spite of the “vagueness” of the EU – and the work done on the EU's internal and external territorial cooperation, transport, agriculture, and energy policies. With regard to maritime affairs, **Mr Gizard** mentioned the meeting with Commissioner Borg in the Azores and the work done on fisheries. He gave a rapid overview of the work carried out on climate change in conjunction with nrg4SD and the Climate Group in preparation for the Copenhagen conference, and added that a CPMR position on the Commission's White Paper on climate change had been prepared. He referred to the reflections on the question of development aid, organised in partnership with the Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development, of which CPMR was a member. He also mentioned the Dakar summer on food security, and the links established between CPMR and the FAO.

Mr Gizard then spoke of the CPMR's achievements over the course of the last two European programming periods (safeguarding of regional policy, creation of a maritime policy, greater recognition of the regions' role in the Union, dialogue with the various DGs, creation of two new Geographical Commissions: Baltic Sea and Balkans / Black Sea, etc.). He thought it would be a good idea to publish a book at the beginning of 2010 setting out the Conference's proposals (as had been done in 2000 and 2007).

He ended with some recommendations for the future: the members must remain united. It was this unity that had been the Conference's strength. Be bold, he said, trust the Political Bureau and the General Secretariat, keep the pioneering spirit of CPMR alive, including at global level, and strengthen the partnership with the Committee of the Regions in a modified institutional context.

Mr Alfonso Vicente Barra (Aragón) then addressed the Assembly. He assured CPMR of his region's support. Taking part in the organisation's work was a way of contributing to the debate, which was why Aragón had volunteered to chair the working group on transport and transport infrastructure. It was a question of remaining close to the European decision-making centres. For this, improvements were needed, especially to rail transport (passengers and freight) and maritime transport. The motorways of the sea were a priority project here and should be developed through public-private partnerships. He also stressed the importance of logistics platforms and hub ports, the links to be developed with neighbourhood countries, and the key issue of finding solutions that were compatible with sustainable development.

Mr Vicente Barra said that the working group was open to all regions which felt themselves to be concerned by these issues. The next CPMR event would take place in Aragón in the spring of 2010. Good, well-connected transport systems were important, he underlined, to enable Europe to maintain its central position in world trade. Lastly, he gave a presentation of the situation in Aragón and described a number of the region's key projects.

Debate

The representation of Norrbotten said he was satisfied with the CPMR's work, especially on the transport networks. There was still much work to be done, and although the member regions of the Conference were peripheral, they were nonetheless fundamental for the development of Europe, especially in terms of

infrastructure. He added that a meeting of the Committee of the Regions would take place in Sweden on 14 December on the theme of territorial cohesion, and invited any interested member regions to take part.

Mr Jérôme Polverini (Corsica) pointed out that the islands appeared to have been “forgotten” in the Trans-European Transport Networks. The debates and reflections were, he said, organised on a sector basis, by type of transport, whereas it would really be more appropriate to reason in terms of multimodal linking.

Mr Claudio Martini (Tuscany-CPMR) concluded the session, paying tribute to the way CPMR had over the years managed to find a balance in its activities between actions and forward studies; in terms of the issues addressed: between regional policy, cooperation, the maritime dimension, sectoral policies; between political positions and technical analysis; and lastly between the global challenges and the work of the Geographical Commissions. The organisation should continue to work along these unique and specific lines.

The activity report was unanimously approved.

SESSION 3: THE CHALLENGES POSED BY THE GLOBAL CRISIS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL PROJECT

Ms Julie Gourden (CPMR) gave a presentation of the study on the consequences of the global crisis for the regions in Europe. After commenting briefly on the rather worrying situation of the global and European economy, she described the wide variety of situations faced by the regions. In tackling the crisis, the regions had introduced various kinds of budgetary or regulatory measures and new, more inclusive, rules of governance. Concerning the use of the Structural Funds, **Ms Gourden** emphasised that the majority of regions wanted the existing measures to be simplified in order to improve their efficiency. It would be worth pursuing this analysis in the coming months, she said, by monitoring and evaluating the impact of regional recovery plans. A seminar was being organised in Marseille on 27 November to look at the regions’ responses to the crisis, and it was crucial that the results of this seminar be taken into account in the new cohesion policy. Lastly, **Ms Gourden** reminded members that it was not too late to sign the regions’ manifesto “Emerging stronger from the crisis”: a European Territorial Pact”.

Mr Rudolf Niessler (European Commission-DG REGIO) paid tribute to the CPMR’s work, emphasising that it was very useful for the Commission, which did not as yet have a very clear vision of the impacts of the crisis and the measures taken in response at local level. The Commission was preparing reports on the national recovery plans. **Mr Niessler** acknowledged that local and regional initiatives were decisive in responding to the crisis, and said that regional proposals should be included in these reports. He was pleased that the regions welcomed the European recovery plan, especially the strand on State Aids, which offered an opportunity that a number of regions had already seized.

With regard to the future cohesion policy after 2013, a European consultation would be opened in October 2009. This would give the regions an opportunity to express their views on the necessity of including their proposals in the new cohesion policy. Among the key political challenges identified for the post-2013 period were the need for a policy that encouraged a balanced development in order to reduce economic and social disparities between the regions; the maintaining of an instrument devoted specifically to the most vulnerable regions; and the maintaining of instruments to promote competitiveness and cooperation between territories. It was not a matter of revolutionising cohesion policy, said **Mr Niessler**, but rather of simplifying its implementation in order to make it more efficient. He ended by expressing his sincere thanks to Mr Gizard for all his work over the years.

Mr Günther Krug (Council of Europe) paid tribute to the work of CPMR and expressed his sincere thanks to **Ms Marianou** and **Mr Gizard**. Decentralisation and the subsidiarity principle were of crucial importance for a balanced economic development in Europe, he said. He thanked the regions for their positive reaction to the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which sees itself as a binding legal tool for regional democracy. The CPMR was invited to take part in a round table discussion on territorial cooperation in Europe during the next session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on 15 October 2009.

Debate

A representative of Ostrobothnia said that CPMR’s work on the crisis was an important value added, and hoped that the seminar in Marseille would also look at the question of the efficient use of the Structural Funds.

The representative of Midtjylland pointed out that his region was facing numerous challenges in this crisis period, and proposed that CPMR focus on two priorities to aid recovery: employment, to enable the unemployed to adapt to new demands, and innovation, which constitutes a major potential in urban, rural and maritime areas.

Mr Desmond Clifford (Wales) described how his region was “using” the recession to emerge stronger from the crisis, by for example granting loans to SMEs at very competitive rates. The Structural Funds should refocus as a priority on employment and investment, he said, with the emphasis on measures that were effective over the long term.

The representative of Asturias said that a cross-cutting vision of all the European Funds was necessary for an effective economic and social recovery.

Concluding the debate, **Claudio Martini** underlined the importance of the regions’ commitment in tackling the economic and social crisis and the difficulty of taking into account the specific characteristics of each territory. The regions faced an uphill task, given that the forecast for recovery was not good.

SESSION 4: GETTING THE EUROPEAN REGIONS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN A GLOBALISATION PROCESS THAT FOSTERS DEVELOPMENT: A TERRITORIAL PACT

President **Claudio Martini** underlined the urgent need for the regions to join together in tackling the crisis. This apparent paradox could be overcome, he believed, by putting in place the conditions for a more effective dialogue. This was the argument behind the idea of the Territorial Pact proposed by the CPMR. This Pact should be a political agreement, signed by the regions and the Commission, under which the regions would be more tangibly involved in the decisions made concerning the responses to the crisis. He called on all the regions to sign the Pact presented by the CPMR.

Ms Julie Gourden gave a presentation of the technical note entitled “Emerging stronger from the crisis: A European Territorial Pact”. She explained that this document was the outcome of a process of analysis begun at the seminar held in Seville in January 2008 on the future of regional policy after 2013. The current crisis merely confirmed and reinforced the CPMR’s position on regional policy, i.e. that it should aim to maximise the regions’ potential, and that it should concern all the EU regions. These two options were in line with the Barca report.

On the basis of the conclusions of the Seville meeting, it had been proposed to focus on the following two themes: the most appropriate scale for action, and governance.

The thematic priorities should be implemented on a territorialised basis and should give priority to innovative practices especially in the area of employment and training. A thorough examination of the working of the ESF would be necessary.

She ended by emphasising the necessary coordination between levels of governance – sub-regional on the one hand; transnational and interregional on the other hand – and suggested that the Pact could be implemented on a contractual basis.

Mr Jöran Hagglund, Swedish State Secretary of the Ministry of Enterprise and representative of the Swedish EU Presidency, started by underlining that it was very useful for national governments, and in their interests, to have a dialogue with organisations such as CPMR. He went on to say that we were not only facing the economic and financial crisis, but also the climate change crisis, to which a globally coordinated response had to be found.

The current crisis should be seen as an opportunity to revitalise our economies by moving them in an “eco-efficient” direction, he said, adding that the EU was addressing the climate change crisis globally by seeking maximum ecological efficiency.

Several conditions had to be united if we were to successfully overcome the crisis. First of all, we had to all work in the same direction, exploiting interactions and synergies, and in order to do this procedures and contacts needed to be simplified. It was important at the same time to preserve the fundamental operating principles of the Structural Funds, and to develop partnership working between the national and regional levels. Lastly, he underlined the importance of territorial cooperation and the need to rely on the potential of each region’s territories.

Debate

Ms Rinske Kruisinga (Noord-Holland) underlined the value of using the potential of the territory, as in the example of the strategy for the Baltic Sea, a region in which the sea had always been the main factor of cohesion. She thought the macro-regional approach would be decisive in ensuring cohesion in the future.

Mr Wulfran Despicht (Nord-Pas de Calais) believed that the development of territorial cohesion would increase our chances of recovery from the crisis provided that the available tools were reviewed and corrected. New tools for territorial cohesion needed to be defined as soon as possible in order to develop the territorial cooperation objective. He raised the key question of training for those involved, citing the example of the European Institute for Territorial Cooperation set up by Nord-Pas de Calais region.

Mr Michael Cook (South of Scotland Alliance) emphasised the links between sessions 3 and 4. He also asked the new Secretary General to look into the question of communication and the transmission of documents between the General Secretariat and the member regions.

Ms Paula Cunha (Lisboa e Vale do Tejo) stressed the importance of two points: improving cooperation by simplifying the administrative rules, and highlighting the social dimension in a synthesis of the documents on innovation.

Mr Tony Fitzpatrick (South of Scotland Alliance) called for further cooperation on the future carbon emissions trading scheme.

Mr Claudio Martini closed the session and again thanked **Mr Jöran Hagglund**.

POLICIES TO AID RECOVERY FROM THE CRISIS: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Ms Annika Annerby Jansson (Skåne) introduced the session, emphasising that although the form and degree of the impact of the crisis varied from one region to another, they were all affected. It was important that the responses to the crisis should take account of the specific contexts of each zone, and she stressed the key role of innovation.

She believed that all the territories should receive support; that there was a strong connection between the fundamental structure in a society and its innovativeness; and that there were dramatic differences within Europe with regard to innovation. She emphasised that creativeness thrived in systems with more egalitarian education systems, but that other factors such as tax systems and mobility were also decisive.

Illustrating her speech with some reflections from her own region of Skåne, which was in a good position in Europe in terms of innovation, thanks to support from business and privately funded research, she underlined the need for an ambitious and proactive policy for innovation and technology, based on the participation of all stakeholders in a joint structure. The CPMR should look at these aspects in relation to the future regional policy, she stressed.

Mr Damien Périssé (CPMR) underlined the links between CPMR's activities in the fields of regional policy, maritime policy, energy policy, and the European Research Area.

He announced the creation of a new working group on research, chaired by Midi-Pyrénées, and invited all the regions to take part.

Mr Alain Bénétou (Midi-Pyrénées) said that research had long been an important issue for CPMR. He described the structure of research and innovation activities in Midi-Pyrénées and emphasised the links between innovation and spatial planning. The regional innovation strategy was conceived as an instrument to unite forces in the territory. The regional recovery plan of June 2009 reflected this guiding principle, and he said that he would do his utmost to ensure that his region signed the Territorial Pact proposed by CPMR. He thought that innovation should be a key element in the recovery, and that a broader approach should be adopted, including for example social, societal, and behavioural innovation. He would like to see innovation and these guiding principles placed at the core of the future European project.

Serious thought should be given to the role of the regions in the European Research Area, and CPMR should contribute to this through its Scientific Council, which should look at questions such as the political future of the European Research Area; the results of European funding for research in terms of the territories and the complementarity between excellence and cohesion; the involvement of regional authorities in the "Regions of knowledge" programme; and the synergies between the regions and structuring initiatives such as networks of excellence, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures, and European Technology Platforms. To this end, he invited the regions to join the existing working group.

Debate

Mr Gabriel Amer (Balears) raised the problem of the islands, where research and innovation are increasingly important particularly in the fields of tourism, the environment, and social welfare. He thought the regions should devote 5% of their GDP to research and innovation. Concerning tourism, he underlined the need to adapt to the new globalised context and to develop new models based on clusters in many fields. All of this could only be envisaged with European funding.

The representative of Västerbotten thought that the links between the regions and universities were not strong enough and should be further developed.

Mr Jerker Johnson (Ostrobothnia) raised the question of how to avoid the phenomenon of concentration. Citing the example of Finland, where universities are highly decentralised, he underlined that regions with university centres were recovering well.

Mr Tony Fitzpatrick (South of Scotland Alliance) agreed that innovation should be developed in rural areas and in the discussions on the CAP. He was afraid of a definition focused too closely on funding, and called for synergy between projects so that all the existing funds could be put to contribution.

POLICIES TO AID RECOVERY FROM THE CRISIS: HUMAN RESOURCES, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Ms Anne Marie Cocula (Aquitaine) started by defining a number of terms and underlining the need for tailored responses. The regions today were, she said, territories that had many dimensions and were capable of responding to the crisis in partnership with national governments.

Among the major assets possessed by the regions she cited human resources and knowledge of the local situation.

The crisis should also be viewed in perspective. It was not a completely new phenomenon; some of the problems, notably social problems, had existed prior to the current crisis and these pre-crisis situations dictated the solutions that had to be used as basis for recovery. This was an issue that the working group on social inclusion should examine.

The aim was to soften the blows, to anticipate the difficulties, and to imagine what the professions of the future would be. The main priorities should be the search for creativity; methods and practices relating to university establishments; and improved teaching methods. Support for vulnerable people, promotion of exchanges and pooling of professional experience should also be considered key objectives.

Ms Elizabeth Morin-Chartier (European Parliament) said that the European Parliament placed people at the heart of its concerns. It was important not to lose sight of the context in which the current crisis was taking place, in particular the demographic aspects, the increasing rate of economic and technological changes, and the rise of the BRIC countries (Brazil-Russia-India-China). In such a context, Europe needed to consolidate its position, and crises were a necessary catalyst in helping Europe to adapt. Europe had already responded by adopting regulatory policies aiming to bring about greater equilibrium.

Ms Morin-Chartier then emphasised the importance of the Lisbon Treaty, which would help us to face these challenges. In particular, the Treaty set the course towards a knowledge society, and this would be developed to a large extent at the regional level since that was where efficiency lay.

Concerning training, it was a matter of ensuring that the largest possible number of people succeeded, so tailored and adapted responses should be proposed. She saw three key objectives: workers' adaptability, mobility, and the "active" inclusion of the most vulnerable sections of the population.

In order to tackle the crisis effectively, the existing tools, notably the ESF, should be exploited and simplified, and the payment of funding advances accelerated. Particular stress should be laid on vocational training and recognition of prior and experiential learning. This should all take place within a strengthened social dialogue.

She ended by pointing out that the European Parliament had already reacted by directing resources from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to a fund for the retraining of workers in the sectors hardest hit by the crisis, and emphasising employability.

Ms Annika Annerby Jansson (Skåne) underlined the importance of the working group on social inclusion and said that existing measures for migrants were inadequate. She invited the regions present to join the working group.

Mr Guy Clause (EIB) spoke of the Bank's action in favour of the regions, particularly the least developed regions, the transport networks, and enhancing human resources. He mentioned the three major instruments, which were joint funding, business support, and financial engineering, and underlined the capacity of these instruments to help solve the current problems.

MEETING OF THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU

The minutes of the Political Bureau in Odessa were adopted.

1- Financial decisions: Adoption of the draft budget for 2010 and financial situation of the current year

Mr Yves Morvan, President of the CPMR Administrative Council, presented the 2008 accounts, gave a progress report on the implementation of the 2009 budget, and submitted a draft budget for 2010.

Concerning 2009, **Mr Morvan** pointed out that there had been no increase in membership dues (apart from inflation) and that the envisaged deficits were relatively small in comparison with the available reserves and the overall budget total. Income from membership dues had been higher than forecast as a result of the admission of several new regions, but financial income had been lower than forecast. Every effort had been made to adjust expenditure, and the forecast deficit was now €22,000 rather than the initially forecast €26,000.

The draft budget for 2010 had been drawn up on the basis of a 1.2% increase in membership dues (annual EU27 rate of inflation). Total income amounted to €3,267,763 and total expenditure to €3,318,312. After recovery of dedicated funds, the forecast result was a deficit of €58,055.

Mr Morvan explained that there were in fact four budgets: the general budget, the cooperation programmes budget, the networks budget and the Geographical Commissions budget. The results for the Atlantic Arc, Intermediterranean, Balkans & Black Sea, and North Sea Commissions were balanced or showed a surplus. The Islands Commissions and the Baltic Sea Commission showed a deficit, which would be covered by the general budget. He said that the final deficit for 2010 might well be lower, or that the final budget might even be balanced, "if everything went well".

Debate

Ms Christel Liljeström (Itä-Uusimaa/BSC) pointed out that one way of absorbing the deficit was to ensure that member regions paid their dues. Regions that claimed the status of member must be in order with the statutes. Otherwise it would be too easy for a region to claim they were a member without ever contributing financially to the organisation.

She then drew attention to the case of certain Baltic regions which might not be able to pay their dues because they were very severely affected by the crisis. She would like the principle of solidarity to apply in these cases. Would it be possible to exempt these regions from the 1.2% increase?

Concerning FOGAR, she did not think the budget was clear enough or that it indicated whether any working time was to be devoted to this network. It had been envisaged that FOGAR would be financially independent from 2010. What was the situation? She also wanted to know when the decision had been taken by CPMR to join FOGAR.

Mr Leslie Angus (Shetland) went along with what **Ms Liljeström** had said, and thought the budget was not clear with regard to FOGAR. He also pointed out that the reserve fund (€800,000 to date) was not at the level of at least 60% of the total budget as stipulated in the CPMR's Organisational Charter.

Mr Rainer Kosmider (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) shared the same concerns as **Ms Liljeström** with regard to FOGAR. It had been said at the Political Bureau meeting in Odessa that CPMR's contribution to the FOGAR budget would end at the end of 2009; this was not the case in the draft budget being proposed. He did not consider that there had been a decision on CPMR joining FOGAR which could justify this expenditure. He said the budget was not clear on this point.

Concerning the CPMR membership fees, **Mr Kosmider** proposed taking account of the global economic situation and the fact that many regional budgets had been frozen. He proposed that the 1.2% increase should not be applied in 2010. If this were not possible, he asked the Bureau to think about a way to respond to this new economic situation in 2011.

He also proposed that the €10,000 contribution to FOGAR be taken out of the 2010 budget.

Mr Piero Di Maggio (Sicily) drew attention to the situation of the CPMR "Tourism" working group which had received support from the Conference since 2007. He hoped that the CPMR would be able to release the funding to develop the work of a group of experts (approx. €25,000).

Mr Henning Gjellerod (Midtjylland) shared the frustration of certain representatives with regard to the lack of clarity of certain parts of the budget. He thought a serious debate was necessary before presenting a budget, and that a balanced result should be the objective. A deficit was always possible but the aim must always be to reach a balanced budget and this is what should be presented.

Mr Alex Macdonald (Western Isles/CDI) asked for further clarification on the conditions for excluding a region. After how many years of failing to pay its dues could a region be struck off the list of membership of CPMR? He mentioned the case of one region (still listed as a member) which had not paid its dues since 2004.

Mr Claudio Martini said that it was always possible to present draft budgets that were balanced, but that a realistic and step-by-step vision resulted in a budget that was as close as possible to its actual final implementation. He hoped that a collaborative effort could be made to seek solutions that would be satisfactory to all. He invited **Mr Gizard and Mr Morvan** to respond to the questions raised by members.

Mr Yves Morvan (CPMR Administrative Council) said that it would have been possible to present a draft budget that was balanced, but that it had been considered more honest to present a realistic budget. He repeated that the forecast deficit was small in relation to the overall budget. The remarks that had been made would of course be taken into account for the future, and balanced budgets would be presented. However **Mr Morvan** repeated that it was here a matter of presenting a budget that was sincere and realistic. He said it was correct that the reserve fund was no longer equivalent to at least 60% of the budget, but that it remained at a comfortable level.

Mr Jacques Boulau (CPMR Administrative Council) reminded members that progress reports on the current budgets were systematically given to every Bureau meeting and Assembly. He proposed that this practice be continued and further developed under the new Secretary General, who would keep the Bureau regularly informed so that it could monitor the implementation of the budget and ensure there was no overspending. **Mr Morvan** confirmed that this practice (report on the accounts at every Bureau meeting) was already in place, and said that it could no doubt be improved further. Concerning the 1.2% increase in membership dues for 2010 he said if this were not applied, this would not only be a break with regard to the organisation's current practice but would also significantly modify the budget. However this was a political decision, one to be made by the Assembly.

Mr Xavier Gizard confirmed that a progress report on the budget was indeed given to every Political Bureau meeting, and that information on this item was sent to members at least two weeks before the meetings. With regard to exclusions, the General Secretariat assessed on a case-by-case basis the likelihood of dues actually being received from a region that was overdue with its payment. It was sometimes appropriate to support regions in temporarily difficult situations. Up until now this had been possible thanks to the cash flow situation. If the situation became difficult, it would be necessary to be much stricter. He pointed out that in 1995, half the membership dues payable for a given year were actually received the following year. Now there were two or three difficult situations to be dealt with each year, even though the number of member regions had doubled.

Concerning the necessary solidarity with those regions hardest hit by the crisis, he mentioned the case of Klaipeda which exceptionally would pay 50% of the amount of its fees in 2010. He mentioned the case of two Estonian regions (Ida-Virumaa and Pärnumaa) which would pay a single, joint, membership fee in 2010.

With regard to the question from Sicily on funding for the expert group, it was true that the organisation's working groups lacked financial support for expert intervention and this issue should be discussed.

With regard to the 1.2% increase, he said this was the organisation's usual practice.

Concerning the reserve fund, **Mr Gizard** acknowledged that this was not currently at the level stated in the Organisational Charter, but that if this level were respected then the fund would be unreasonably large and members would have to be asked to contribute an additional €600,000. He suggested that a modification of the Charter be examined in 2010.

Concerning FOGAR, he said that the question of participation in FOGAR had been discussed and agreed at Political Bureau meetings in February and June 2007. He pointed out that for 2009, the CPMR's contribution to FOGAR was €9,587 (decided by the 2008 Assembly in Bayonne) and that the remainder of FOGAR's

income (a total of €113,000) came from additional contributions from CPMR regions and from European and national grants. It was CPMR that benefitted from FOGAR and not the other way round.

He said that as from 2011, FOGAR would be based in Geneva. It would be desirable for the CPMR to make a contribution in the form of staff working time during 2010 for FOGAR; this would reduce the CPMR deficit.

Mr Rainer Kosmider (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) underlined that the information about FOGAR was not transparent and said he did not understand why CPMR staff should work for FOGAR. He maintained his proposal that the €10,000 contribution to FOGAR in 2010 should not be paid.

Ms Christel Liljeström (Itä-Uusimaa/BSC) said she had not received all the information concerning the budget, and considered that the situation was clearer following the responses received, in particular with regard to the total budget for FOGAR. She was not in favour of excluding member regions, but hoped that a way could be found of identifying more clearly the situations where there was a risk of non-payment so as not to give the impression that this was standard practice.

Ms Marjatta Vehkaoja (Ostrobothnia) said she was still confused about FOGAR. She also called for a balanced budget to be presented, by reducing all envisaged expenditure by 2.6% (the forecast deficit).

Mr Poul Müller (Midtjylland) said that if we stopped working on FOGAR, expenditure would be reduced and a balance achieved.

Mr Xavier Gizard replied that CPMR had been supporting global networks since 2003, and that this was a political choice. The reason why CPMR had a seat on the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC) but not on the International Maritime Organization was because the IMO only accepted global networks, not continental ones. This new reality had to be taken into account. CPMR had supported nrg4SD for many years. Its support for FOGAR was more recent, and the network was rapidly gaining in credibility with European and, more importantly, international partners.

Mr Philippe Cichowlaz (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) pointed out that, as Mr Morvan had said, we were in fact talking about four different budgets. If the joint budget could not be approved as it stood, he proposed that the budgets be examined separately (general budget, projects, networks, Geographical Commissions) and approved one by one. The general CPMR budget showed a surplus, and it would just be a matter of those Geographical Commissions that were in deficit finding a way to balance their budgets.

Mr Claudio Martini summed up the debates as follows. The regions (including Tuscany) were asking for a commitment that the budgets presented from 2011 on should be balanced. Member regions and the General Secretariat would look into the best ways of achieving this. The 2010 budget would be recorded as presented, but the CPMR would undertake to reach a balance at the end of the year. Concerning the requests from the UK regions (document distributed at the meeting entitled "Proposal for an Administrative Decision"), these practices were already in place. CPMR should have a clear standard procedure for regions facing difficulties in paying membership dues, which should be applied with a certain amount of flexibility; however it was important to avoid the risk of abuse. Regarding membership dues, he thought we could not on the one hand demand a balanced budget and on the other hand reduce dues. The rule about aligning the increase with the European rate of inflation had worked well until now and Claudio Martini proposed that it should continue to be followed.

Concerning FOGAR, he repeated that clear political decisions had been made on CPMR joining FOGAR and it was now time to move on from this question. **Mr Martini** said he had attended the General Assemblies of the Baltic Sea Commission and the North Sea Commission in 2008 to explain and debate these points. He pointed out that for 2010, the other regional networks that were members of FOGAR had committed to funding FOGAR and it would be difficult to convince our partners to make a financial contribution if we ourselves refused to do so. He added that he would find it regrettable if, after the considerable involvement and efforts made to build a voice for the regions at global level, we were to withdraw from the very organisation that had this voice. CPMR could review all these points in 2011, but as far as 2010 was concerned, we had now to move forward and accept these proposals.

Mr Rainer Kosmider (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) thanked **Mr Martini** and said he would like to know how much longer CPMR would continue to support FOGAR; in which year exactly would the transition period end? He also asked for more details to be given to the next Bureau meeting concerning the contribution of CPMR staff working time to FOGAR.

Mr Poul Müller (Midtjylland) thanked **Mr Martini** and said that of course he considered international cooperation to be useful, but he was not sure that FOGAR was the best way to achieve it. He proposed that the debate be adjourned and that a decision be taken at the next Political Bureau meeting early in 2010.

Mr Claudio Martini said he really hoped to reach a synthesis and agreement among everyone. He took account of **Mr Müller's** proposal but said that this discussion about FOGAR really must be brought to a close and a budget for 2010 proposed to the Gothenburg Assembly, as stipulated in the Conference's statutes. The Assembly was always asked to approve the budget for the following year.

Mr Müller (Midtjylland) considered that it was a matter of principle. It had been decided to totally separate CPMR and FOGAR in 2010. It was therefore legitimate to raise this issue again.

Mr Xavier Gizard pointed out that the working time spent by staff on FOGAR activities represented 4% of salaries in 2009. He also said that nrg4SD had for a long time operated with a deficit, and that the link between CPMR and nrg4SD would only come to an end in 2010. Given the urgency with which climate issues needed to be addressed and the need to make the voice of the regions heard, this support had been necessary. To bring the launch phase of the FOGAR network to a conclusion, it was necessary to continue to support the network during 2010 so that it could be fully independent in 2011. It was already financially independent.

Mr Claudio Martini proposed to bring the debate to a close. In reply to **Mr Kosmider (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern)** he said that 2010 would be the last year of the transition period. He supported the proposal to review cooperation with global networks at the next Bureau meeting. He therefore proposed, in a spirit of cooperation, that the point be debated again, but that the debate should be well prepared and that there should be clear proposals. If we were talking about the two networks being independent, from 2011, what did that mean exactly? That we would not make any contribution or pay a membership fee at all after that date? Or that we would continue to pay a membership fee but not make any contribution in the form of staff working time? We should make the most of the coming months to discuss where there was a need for clarification. **Mr Martini** said he too wished for clarity and serenity within the Conference. He gave an undertaking that a debate would take place on a balanced budget and on FOGAR.

Decisions

The 2008 accounts were approved.

The draft budget for 2010 was approved with 5 (five) abstentions.

2- Adoption of the draft Final Declaration and annexed resolutions

Since the debates on the previous item had run over time, **Mr Jean-Didier Hache (CPMR/CDI)** briefly outlined the amendments submitted to the resolutions group. It would be left to the General Assembly to decide between the options concerning two amendments.

3- Applications for membership and striking-off from the list of members

The application of Zuid-Holland region (Netherlands) was unanimously approved.

It was unanimously agreed that Chaouia-Ouardiga region (Morocco), which had never settled its dues, should be struck off the list of members.

4- Agreements between CPMR, nrg4SD, the CAAC and FOGAR

Mr Xavier Gizard proposed to adopt the principle of drawing up agreements between CPMR and the CAAC (Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities), FOGAR (Forum of Global Associations of Regions) and nrg4SD (Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development).

Mr Rainer Kosmider (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) considered there was no point in proposing this since no agreement was being submitted for approval.

Mr Xavier Gizard asked that the principle be agreed; no opposition was raised.

5- Proposed amendments to the Organisational Charter

Mr Xavier Gizard described the new provision that had been proposed concerning the General Secretary of CPMR. The person occupying the post would from now on be subject every five years to a vote of confidence by the Conference's Political Bureau and General Assembly. The Organisational Charter would have to be modified to include this provision.

The modification was unanimously approved.

6- Next meetings of the Political Bureau

15 February (afternoon) / 16 February (morning) in Oviedo (Asturias, Spain)

11 June in Troms (Norway).

Friday 2 October 2009

SESSION 5: DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

The Copenhagen talks

Mr François Desrentes (CPMR) opened the debate, referring to the two strands of the climate change question: mitigation and adaptation, the latter being a matter of urgency. It was in the interest of all CPMR regions to take part in the debate, he added, since they were among the most vulnerable and at risk regions. Their mobilisation had to be organised on two levels.

At the European level, the debate should take place through the channel of CPMR. At the global level, the nrg4SD network should be the channel and the voice of the regions at the COP15 meeting in Copenhagen. Practically speaking, what was required was the insertion of a number of references to the regions in the negotiating papers, so as to enable the regions in the future to have access to information and to funding.

The EU White Paper on adapting to climate change

Mr Peter Gammeltoft (European Commission-DG Environment) described the four pillars of action set out in the European Commission's Green Paper on adaptation to climate change: developing the knowledge base, adopting an integrated approach, looking at how to most effectively use European policy instruments and funding, and international cooperation.

Debate

Mr Roland Andersson (Västra Götaland) thought it was important for the regions to have a role in the COP 15 agreement, because both national and regional efforts could have an impact. Adaptation measures would be costly, but the cost of failing to adapt would be even higher. Investment expenditure should be viewed positively as a factor in the creation of jobs.

Mr Angel Cortadelles (Catalunya) informed the Assembly of the summit meeting of regional leaders for climate change taking place in Los Angeles at the same time as the CPMR General Assembly. He also mentioned the nrg4SD's presidents' meeting with the Algerian Environment Minister, who was also the spokesman for the "Africa" group preparing COP 15. He had assured them of this group's support for the introduction of a reference to local and regional authorities in the Final Declaration agreed at Copenhagen. Mr Cortadelles therefore called on CPMR member regions to lobby their national governments to support the Algerian representative in the lead-up to the Copenhagen summit.

Ms Rinske Kruisinga (Noord-Holland) pointed out that 40% of the population of the Netherlands lived on the coast and was threatened by rising sea levels. The limitations of traditional engineering were being reached, and possibilities of creating extensive sandy beaches and new national conservation areas were therefore now being studied.

Mr Jérôme Polverini (Corsica) made a number of points:

- The involvement of local and regional authorities in Copenhagen was justified because of the wide variety of challenges and solutions to be found in the different geographic areas and regions;
- When it came to an overall review of public policies, the theory of "least inconvenience" should be chosen;
- Exemptions from the general rule should be accepted, in particular for the islands.

Mr Jonathan Glen (Hampshire) agreed that action at a global level was necessary and this implied new working methods within CPMR. He also suggested that two elected members be given specific responsibility for climate change issues: one to deal with carbon emissions, the other to deal with adaptation.

Mr Erik Bergkvist (Västerbotten) said that adapting to climate change should be seen as an opportunity to find solutions to other problems, not directly linked to climate change, as well. This could be done by developing an integrated approach. He thought the White Paper was excellent from this point of view and that it was important that the regions should be able to play a role. Lastly he pointed out that although the impact of climate change was indeed severe in the coastal areas, it was also significant in other regions, such as the north of Sweden for example.

Mr François Maïtia (Aquitaine) raised the question of forests. Speaking of the gale that had devastated the *Forêt des Landes* in January 2009 he said this was not a local disaster but one which affected the whole continent since it had resulted in the destruction of a large carbon sink. The reforestation of the area was now being called into question. He appealed for the setting up of a carbon compensation fund to aid reforestation.

A representative regretted that the White Paper made no mention of the cultural heritage of coastal and river areas.

Mr Peter Grant (Fife) said he thought that Europe and the developed countries generally had a moral responsibility to invest in new technologies to help developing countries to tackle climate change.

Mr Christian Bruns (Bremen) said that the responses to climate change should not be seen as incompatible with the solutions for recovery from the crisis, and said he was pleased to note that the regions also perceived climate change as an opportunity.

Mr Peter Gammeltoft (European Commission-DG Environment) concluded the debate, saying that in any event the economy could not replace the political decision-making process, and that combating climate change also implied a change in mentalities, as shown by the example of the use of water in the Mediterranean.

Mr Claudio Martini had discussed Hampshire's proposed amendment to the draft "Policy Position" on climate change with the region's representatives. The amendment concerned the designation of two Political Bureau representatives: one to deal with mitigation and one to deal with adaptation. The CPMR Presidency accepted this amendment.

The Policy Position was adopted.

SESSION 6: THE SEA AND MARITIME POLICY IN A NEW STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

Mr Patrice Carollo, representing Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian (Brittany) began by saying that the Aquamarina working group, set up in 2007, was now taking stock of its first period of activity. Several major issues had been addressed, including the European strategy for marine and maritime research, maritime transport, maritime spatial planning, and the CFP. Other issues needed to be explored, including the social and human aspects of maritime policy, and training. Aquamarina would continue its work, notably on clusters, training, and maritime safety, this last question being addressed in collaboration with the European Maritime Safety Agency. Mr Carollo proposed that a working group be set up within CPMR tasked with drawing up proposals for a package of measures to deal with the new maritime risks. The plenary session, early in 2010, would also have to look at a new form of organisation for the Aquamarina group.

The crisis was having a severe impact on the maritime sector, he went on, with falling levels of freight transport and port traffic, consumption of fisheries products, and shipyard orders. As Professor Juan Luis Suarez de Vivero had said at the June 2009 session of Aquamarina, a new paradigm was needed for maritime policy, to integrate the new challenges such as the crisis and climate change. The future maritime policy should strengthen links with the regions, the regional dimension, and territorial cohesion. Political action was needed at all levels. The European institutions and the Committee of the Regions had so far gone along with this.

Mr Paul Nemitz (European Commission-DG MARE) said that the maritime sector had been badly hit by the crisis, because of the fall in shipyard orders, the cost of energy, reduced activity in the tourism sector, and difficulties in the fisheries sector. The President of the European Commission had indicated to the European Parliament that maritime policy would be a priority. Progress made would be presented in an interim report to be published on 15 October 2009 and which should be tabled at the November 2009 Council meeting. Until now, Europe had developed its maritime policy through governance rather than by means of regulation. Similar processes were under way in the Member States and in the regions, such as Asturias,

Schleswig Holstein, and Västra Götaland. These approaches were also providing inspiration for the United States.

The Spanish EU Presidency had made innovation its main priority. The new European Commission should support economic innovation in the coastal areas, in particular via improved governance.

Progress had also been made in maritime policy at the level of the macro-regions such as the Baltic Sea. A strategy for the Arctic was also being drawn up, as well as a document on governance in the Mediterranean, due to be published in November 2009.

Maritime policy should encourage innovation in certain areas such as transport. It should also be the maritime arm of European innovation policies, for example on clusters. The European Commission would work in collaboration with CPMR on all these topics.

Mr Vincente Álvarez Areces (Asturias) referred to the forthcoming European Maritime Days in Gijón in May 2010. This would be an important event, in which the Spanish Presidency of the European Union would take part. The European Commission had been endeavouring for a number of years to integrate various different sectoral policies into maritime policy. Asturias was a pioneer in this type of approach, he said, citing the example of the region's Marea plan, which had numerous axes. The regional level was very much involved, alongside the European institutions and the national level, in implementing the maritime strategy. Regional policy and the Framework Programme for research and technological development were among the main sources of funding.

Mr Álvarez Areces also called on the European Commission to develop a European strategy for the Atlantic Arc. Such a strategy was necessary for the Atlantic Arc, and should encompass key issues such as cohesion, maritime policy, and research.

Debate

Mr Jérôme Polverini (Corsica) considered that the efforts made to protect biodiversity in the Mediterranean, notably the Erika package and Natura 2000, remained insufficient. There should be further development of marine conservation areas, and initiatives such as the extension by France of its Exclusive Economic Zone in the Mediterranean were necessary.

Mr Bo Löfgren (Blekinge) said that his region, which was facing pirating problems, was working on the question of security in the Baltic and Arctic. Blekinge would be hosting a conference on maritime security the following week. Important changes were being introduced in maritime legislation and regulation, for example with the convention for the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments and maritime traffic initiatives. CPMR had been instrumental in bringing about certain changes, and that was interesting for the future. The Conference should have permanent representation on the IMO.

Mr Philippe Bonneau (Basse-Normandie) pointed out that for the first time a CPMR Geographical Commission was asking the General Assembly for support for the development of an integrated strategy, in this case for the Atlantic Arc. The Atlantic Arc represented a population of 60 million, 12% of the population of the European Union, and a coastline of 2,500 kilometres. A resolution submitted by the Atlantic Arc Commission to its meeting in Gothenburg, called for the development of a European strategy for the Atlantic Arc. It was unanimously adopted.

Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen (Telemark/NSC) said that the CPMR's North Sea Commission was launching the development of an integrated strategy. A conference would take place early in 2010, and the European Commission was cordially invited.

Mr Michel Delebarre (Committee of the Regions) said that the major steps in maritime policy had demanded the full support of the European Commission. The initiatives taken by Asturias were exemplary. The European Commission should now support the creation of a European Parliament intergroup on maritime affairs. **Mr Delebarre** paid tribute to Commissioner Joe Borg and hoped that maritime policy would not be split up among several different Commissioners.

Mr Emilio Martin Bauza (European Maritime Safety Agency) congratulated the CPMR on its action in the area of maritime safety.

Mr Paul Nemitz (European Commission-DG MARE) hoped that the CPMR would pursue its efforts in favour of the creation of a maritime affairs intergroup in the European Parliament.

Mr Patrick Anvroun (CPMR) said that the first meeting for MEPs interested in the maritime affairs intergroup would take place on 8 October 2009. The CPMR would be co-chair of the intergroup if it were to be set up. He thanked **Mr Xavier Gizard** for the work he done over the years.

THE GREEN PAPER ON SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Mr Jean-Claude Cuffe (European Commission) thanked CPMR for its contribution to the debate on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. The 2002 reform had not produced the expected results; in the meantime new challenges, such as climate change, the energy crisis and the financial crisis, had appeared. Moreover, we were still facing problems relating to over-fishing, the aquaculture crisis, and the fact that fleets were insufficiently profitable.

The new policy should enable the recovery of marine ecosystems, ensure the seafood markets in Europe were kept supplied, guarantee a more sustainable development, simplify the regulations, and maintain an external dimension. There was a need for greater accountability, which could lead to a strengthening of the regional level of the European policy. A first step could be to give the Regional Advisory Councils a greater role, and develop sea basin committees made up of representatives of Member States as well as other stakeholders. It would also be necessary to delegate the implementation of decisions to the Commission and to the regional level; take steps to avoid the trading of fishing rights – which produces positive results – resulting in job losses in inshore fishing; and ensure that environmental aspects were taken into greater account, in particular with regard to the protection of certain species. The regional dimension remained important, especially through the role of the EU's regional policy for employment. Lastly, he said, the CFP should continue to allow the development of links with non-EU countries. These topics would be addressed in a consultation to be launched by the Commission.

Mr Ramón Luis Valcarcel Siso (Murcia) said that the Committee of the Regions' report, for which he was the *rapporteur*, would be adopted in December 2009. The cities and regions would have a great deal to say in the consultation organised by the European Commission. The fisheries Green Paper highlighted the need to reduce capacity, protect the environment, and reduce discards. It also envisaged a separate regime for inshore fishing fleets, an idea which Murcia supported. The CFP interacted with numerous national and regional policies. A number of related initiatives had been launched by CPMR. Progress needed to be made on key issues such as climate change, by seeking support for political objectives and developing a culture of cooperation. Additional resources would be necessary to improve the sector's economic performance, but other aspects, such as those related to health, must not be forgotten. Lastly, Mr Valcarcel Siso thanked Xavier Gizard for his action over the last years.

Mr Leslie Angus (Shetland) thought that the CFP review should take inspiration from the principles developed in the document produced by the CPMR General Secretariat. He regretted, as did the Green Paper, the absence of long-term political objectives, the lack of links with industry, and the absence of a political determination on the part of Member States to ensure compliance with national rules. The governance of the CFP should involve stakeholders to a greater degree. Social and economic questions should also be addressed, as well as the problems of coastal zones and the role of science. The CPMR text was therefore a basis for future action.

Debate

Mr François Maïtia (Aquitaine) pointed out that the CFP represented only 0.9% of the European budget. The fisheries sector needed public funding. The French regions agreed with the CPMR's position affirming that fish stocks are a public good and should be managed by the public sector. The regions were awaiting proposals from the European Commission on fishing rights. For the French regions, public sector management would make it possible to avoid the commoditization of fishing rights. One solution could be management by the producers' organisations, which would manage individual rights. The regions should also play a more important role in the Regional Advisory Councils, which should continue to receive financial support from the European Union.

Other factors, such as pollution and other maritime activities, had an impact on stocks and should therefore also be taken into account. Alongside this, species management should be addressed taking a long-term view, and not giving priority to the scrapping of vessels. Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund should be reinforced.

Mr Roland Andersson (Västra Götaland) emphasised the need to put an end to discards, to crack down on illegal fishing, to give greater importance to sustainable development, to support inshore fishing, and to develop "eco-products".

Mr Leslie Angus (Shetland) said it was disgraceful that so many dead fish were discarded. He hoped that the European Council would take decisions on this matter and that CPMR would have some influence. He thought the technical papers from the CPMR General Secretariat on the CFP were a good basis for future action.

A representative of Norrbotten thought the General Assembly should express its support for an immediate halt to the practice of discards and said that the Green Paper was important for generating citizens' participation in the debate.

Mr Jérôme Polverini welcomed the regionalisation of the CFP and the recognition of the problems of small-scale inshore fishing. He was pleased to note the reference made to the MAREMED project in the CPMR document. This project referred to management by sea basins and to conservation areas aiming to protect fish populations. He drew attention to the need to regulate the catches from recreational fishing, or fishing as a tourist activity.

Mr Fernando Antonio Fernández Domonte (Galicia) referred to the wish expressed by certain regions that the Fisheries Intergroup should do further work on the CPMR document "*The CPMR's options on the reform of the CFP*". He thought that the working group had reached a consensus and that any action had to take realistic and practical account of the deadlines involved.

Mr Kent Gudmundsen (Troms) said that the regions had a long-term responsibility in the management of fish stocks. Thanks to more efficient methods (catch certificates, long-term plans for coastal cod stocks, a ban on discards) fish stocks in Norway were healthier than in the EU.

Mr John Lamb (East of England Regional Assembly) pointed out that there were several different sizes of fishing fleets, and that they should be treated separately. Sub-standard vessels should be scrapped. He would like to see a sustainable fishing industry, but did not think this could be achieved in the present situation.

The CPMR General Secretariat's Policy Position on "CPMR's options for the reform of the CFP" was adopted. It remains open however, and will need to be modified to take account of the observations made during the debates. The Fisheries Intergroup will be responsible for doing this.

Speech of Mr Michel Delebarre (1st Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions)

Mr Michel Delebarre (Committee of the Regions) said that CPMR had always been visionary with regard to European policies. Today, the question of the relation between the European Union and the regions was marked by the question of the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, of multi-level governance, and the future of cohesion policy.

For the Committee of the Regions, the Lisbon Treaty marked a new step forward because it introduced a cross-cutting social clause, reinforced citizens' initiatives, recognised the principles of regional self-government, strengthened subsidiarity and gave the Committee of the Regions the right to bring a case before the European Court of Justice if it deemed there was failure to comply with the subsidiarity principle. Lastly, it introduced territorial cohesion as a criterion in the reform of all policies at all levels.

Progress was needed in multi-level governance, and the Spanish regions should lobby the future Spanish EU Presidency on this topic. The Committee of the Regions had recently proposed the adoption of a multi-level charter, along the lines of the Territorial Pact proposed by CPMR.

Lastly he said it was necessary to avoid focusing solely on the economic dimension of regional policy, on the technical difficulties linked to the crisis, and on the rate of implementation. It was necessary on the contrary to concentrate on objectives before discussing amounts. From this point of view, the Barca report was interesting because it looked at results in relation to objectives and emphasised the need to adapt policies to the territories. All policies related to cohesion policy needed to be looked at as a whole, and cohesion policy must not be used as an adjustment variable. He concluded by saying that public services were an important element in territorial cohesion and were taken into account in the European Commission's latest Communication on indicators.

SESSION 7: CPMR'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SIX-MONTH SPANISH PRESIDENCY'S AGENDA

Mr Alejandro Abellán, General Director, State Directorate for the EU, Spanish Ministry for foreign affairs and cooperation, said the Spanish Presidency of the EU would take place against a backdrop of the EU's institutional reform, a new term of office of the European Parliament and European Commission, the process of recovery from the crisis, and the "aftermath" of Copenhagen.

He described in detail the seven priorities adopted by the future Presidency:

- economic and financial action to aid recovery from the crisis;
- preparation of the EU strategy to succeed the Lisbon strategy;
- transition to a European model of growth based on reducing CO2 emissions;
- justice and home affairs: updating of the Hague programme;
- reflection on the role of the EU as a global player;
- implementation of institutional reform with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty;
- providing an impetus for an integrated European maritime policy.

Debate

Mr Claudio Martini underlined the importance of the Spanish EU Presidency, which had traditionally been attentive to the regions and maritime affairs.

Mr Xavier Gizard outlined the CPMR events planned in collaboration with the Spanish EU Presidency.

SESSION 8: PRESENTATION OF NEW CPMR MEMBER REGIONS

The *Land* of Bremen and the regions of Trabzon and Zuid-Holland each made a presentation of their region to the General Assembly.

SESSION 9: EXAMINATION AND VOTE ON THE FINAL DECLARATION AND RESOLUTIONS

Mr Jean-Didier Hache (CPMR/CDI) presented the proposed amendments to the Final Declaration. It was proposed that only the amendments to points 8 and 16, which involved choosing between a number of options, should be debated. This proposal was accepted, with two observations:

- On the proposal of **Västerbotten**, it was decided that point 13 should include an explicit reference to the regions' responsibility in organising analyses of vulnerability to climate change.
- **Halland** was not prepared to support the Manifesto "Emerging stronger from the crisis: a European Territorial Pact" as proposed in point 7. This article was therefore adopted with one abstention.

The modified Final Declaration was unanimously approved.

Concerning the resolution on the effects of the cod recovery plan, proposed by the North Sea Commission's "Marine Resources" group, **Mr John Lamb (East of England Regional Assembly)** proposed deleting the reference to Berwickshire and adding a reference to the need to review the discard policy, which was currently counterproductive. These proposals were accepted. The modified resolution was unanimously adopted.

The resolution proposed by the Atlantic Arc Commission on the launch of an integrated Atlantic strategy was unanimously approved.

SESSION 10: BUDGET DECISIONS

Mr Yves Morvan and Mr Jacques Boulau (CPMR Administrative Council) presented the Auditors' (Audit Grand Ouest) report on the CPMR's accounts for the annual period ended 31 December 2008.

The accounts were closed showing a total income €3,264,455 and total expenditure €3,295,874. After recovery of dedicated funds, integration of exceptional income and expenditure, and recovery of provisions for unpaid dues, the book result for the period was a deficit of €28,637, which would be covered from the reserve fund.

The result, a deficit of €28,637, was close to that anticipated in the draft budget, i.e. €26,964.

Mr Peter Grant (Fife) observed that the reserve fund was no longer at the level stipulated in the Organisational Charter, and asked what solutions could be found.

Mr John Lamb (East of England Regional Assembly) did not think the figures relating to contributions to bodies outside CPMR corresponded to the pages in the budget, and said that there was a lack of transparency here. He asked that a list be drawn up of these contributions and their beneficiaries.

Mr Claudio Martini said that in future more time would be allowed during the General Assemblies for discussions on the budget. He also said that the new Secretary General would make suggestions concerning modifications to the Charter.

Mr Yves Morvan thought the Charter should be modified. He wished to make it clear that contributions from the CPMR general budget to outside bodies, to the Geographical Commissions, and to cooperation programmes were detailed and validated at the meetings of the Political Bureau.

Mr Claudio Martini asked that the report be put to the vote. The General Assembly approved the report on the 2008 accounts with 7 abstentions.

Mr Jacques Boulau said that the 2009 budget was being implemented as anticipated. Two new regions had joined in 2009 (Bremen and Trabzon), and a provision for unpaid dues had been recovered.

Financial income from investments would be lower than in previous years because of the impact of the crisis on interest rates. Revenue relating to cooperation programmes would be lower than anticipated (approx. €80,000 rather than the €120,000 indicated in the draft 2009 budget adopted in Bayonne in 2008). Consequently, measures had been taken to reduce certain expenditure headings, in particular travel expenses, operating expenses, and translations. The anticipated deficit was €22,500, which was lower than that adopted at the General Assembly in Bayonne.

Mr Claudio Martini clarified that the General Assembly did not vote on the budget of the current year, (i.e. this year, the 2009 budget).

Mr John Lamb (East of England Regional Assembly) asked why the figure relating to contributions to outside bodies was €2,603 on page 49 but €24,650 on page 65 of the budget presented.

Mr Peter Grant (Fife) thought the budget figures should be detailed so that a comparison was possible between what had been budgeted and what had been implemented.

Mr Xavier Gizard said that contributions to FOGAR and nrg4SD were included in the amount of €24,650 in 2010, whereas in 2009 they were isolated at the bottom of page 49.

Mr Yves Morvan explained that the budget for 2010 was made up of four different budgets: a general budget, the budgets of the Geographical Commissions, the cooperation programmes budget, and the budget relating to activities carried out in relation to the networks.

The draft budget as presented showed total income (CPMR, Geographical Commissions, cooperation programmes, and networks) of €3,267,763 and total expenditure of €3,318,312. After recovery of dedicated funds, the result was a deficit of €58,055. Mr Morvan pointed out the membership dues were the principal source of income for the general budget. CPMR membership dues amounted to €2,129,578; this included a proposed increase of 1.2% calculated on the basis of the EU27 annual rate of inflation (Eurostat).

The following scale of dues was proposed for 2010:

- €0.010476 per inhabitant

- Minimum due for regions with a population of less than 621,760 = €6,512.

An undertaking had been given by the Political Bureau to present the next budget as a balanced budget.

Mr Claudio Martini explained that the Political Bureau had given an undertaking that a balanced budget would be presented next year. He also said that the Charter would be modified with regard to the amount of the reserve fund. Lastly, he indicated that CPMR's relations with outside bodies would be discussed at the first Political Bureau meeting of 2010.

Mr Rainer Kosmider (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) indicated that a resolution, which could be annexed to the draft 2010 budget, had been prepared and had been signed by 37 regions. He emphasised the need for clarity with regard to the CPMR's activities in relation to outside bodies, in particular FOGAR, and their value added. It was not so much the financial amounts that were at issue here, but a lack of transparency and comprehension. He stressed that the resolution expressed a desire for dialogue on CPMR's international

position. He thanked Mr Claudio Martini for his assurance that this point would be addressed at the next meeting of the Political Bureau. He asked that the resolution submitted be annexed to the budget.

Mr Martini thanked **Mr Kosmider** for the constructive nature of the resolution submitted, and said he approved the idea of annexing the resolution to the budget. He remarked that the debate was more about how contributions should be made to outside bodies rather than the principle of such contributions. The CPMR Political Bureau meeting in February 2010 in Asturias would settle all these questions.

Mr Tom-Christer Nilsen (Hordaland) asked that the term "for approval" by the 2010 General Assembly be added to the text of the above-mentioned resolution. (See Appendix 1).

Mr Claudio Martini considered this proposal was acceptable.

Mr Peter Grant (Fife) asked that a declaration concerning the implementation of the budget be annexed to the budgets in the future. He considered that the next declaration should include an article stating that the Charter was to be modified with regard to the reserve fund. He also asked for clarification as to the fact that two British regions could withdraw their membership but that certain UK counties could join on an individual basis.

Mr Xavier Gizard explained that, following administrative restructuring, discussions had taken place with the UK counties concerning the arrangements for their future participation in CPMR.

Mr Claudio Martini put the draft budget to the vote.

The General Assembly unanimously adopted the draft budget for 2010.

SESSION 11: PROPOSALS AND VOTE ON AMENDMENTS TO THE ORGANISATIONAL CHARTER

Mr Xavier Gizard said that the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission had withdrawn its amendment to the Charter concerning full membership of CPMR for regions that were members of the Union for the Mediterranean. There was therefore only one amendment to be examined, relating to the renewal of the mandate of the Secretary General every five years.

Mr Claudio Martini put this to the vote. The Assembly unanimously adopted the amendment making provision for the renewal of the Secretary General's mandate every five years.

SESSION 12: FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings of the Political Bureau:

- 15 February (afternoon) / 16 February (morning) 2010 in Oviedo (Asturias, Spain)
- 11 June 2010 in Troms (Norway).

General Assembly:

- 29/30 September-1 October 2010 (Aberdeen City, United Kingdom).

CLOSING SESSION

After an address by President Roland Andersson, President Martini closed the proceedings of the General Assembly and thanked the delegates and the region of Västra Götaland for its very warm welcome. He also thanked Aberdeen City for its invitation to host the next General Assembly in 2010.

Appendix 1

SESSION 10: Budget Decisions

Addendum to the Budget 2010

Proposal:

With reference to former decisions taken it is stated that as of 2010 FOGAR should be an entity separate from CPMR. The Member regions give the Political Bureau the mandate to take a policy decision on the future scope of activities at global level at its next session in Asturias in February 2010 and submit it to the General Assembly 2010 for approval. To this aim the General Secretariat shall provide a comprehensive and systematic evaluation of the activities of CPMR at global level that were pursued since the General Assembly in Florence in 2007. This evaluation report should comprise complete information on the following aspects:

- The input of both human and financial resources to global networks as stated in the budget with a reference to the decisions of the General Assembly and the Political Bureau to authorize these activities and
- The outcome and the added value for the members that entail from these activities.

The allocation of funds in favour of the cooperation at global level as laid down in the CPMR Budget for 2010 is not to be considered to be a preliminary decision on future activities and financial contributions of CPMR as to global networks.
