



NEWSLETTER - JULY 2008 - HAVE A NICE HOLIDAY!

WWW.CRPM.ORG

## INTERVIEW

### MEP MONICA FRASSONI'S RECIPE AFTER IRELAND'S NO VOTE: MORE AMBITION AND LESS DIPLOMATIC DISPUTES

Monica Frassoni, has been an MEP since 1999 and is today co-president of the GREENS in the European Parliament together with Daniel Cohn Bendit.

Mrs. Frassoni strongly believes in a Federal Europe, has always believed in the "European Dream" and is now "deeply disappointed" after the Irish NO. The NO was more the result of a lack of clarity than a true aversion vis-à-vis Europe on part of Irish citizens, but it is a setback in the integration process of our Continent, which also has direct consequences on how the Union works and on enlargement.

*EM: Mrs. Frassoni, European Institutions in Brussels are starting to rebound after the Irish NO. What now?*

MF: The European Council decided to push ahead with the ratification process in the other countries and to wait until the autumn to see what Ireland has to propose. The Parliament welcomes this strategy which was decided by the Council, but on one condition: institutions must not take a passive attitude and everybody must take up their responsibilities. Citizens need to understand how important the European Union is, especially with a view to next year's elections. Personally I agree with the position which was taken by the Parliament and the Council, even though I would like the Parliament to take centre stage in this public debate. I also believe that Europe must go back to proceeding at different speeds: the Irish cannot be obliged to ratify Lisbon and therefore carry on with European integration, but other citizens must not be held back.

*EM: Many have pointed the finger at Ireland for voting NO after having received so much from the European Union, but do you not think the EU is also responsible? Has the Parliament thought about what might have gone wrong?*

Ever since the French and Dutch NO, I have accused the European Parliament of not doing enough and taking a passive stance. The Parliament has always aligned itself with National Governments and has let negotiations on the Lisbon Treaty be carried out within the framework of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), which is an obsolete, incomprehensible and secretive procedure. The result of all this must not come as a surprise: a text without any ambition which is basically a list of complicated and unclear articles. Unfortunately the European Parliament has helped turn an ambitious project into something grey and obscure!

*EM: Mrs. Frassoni will there be a Federal Europe someday?*

As Altiero Spinelli used to say, Europe will not fall from the sky and I fear that without the full involvement of European politicians and European citizens, the Europe we want to see will never see the light and will be forever lost in diplomatic disputes which citizens do not understand. What's more, since European procedures are unclear, citizens' fears get increasingly stronger and the whole project lends itself to NO campaigns based on blatant lies. For example, in this latest electoral campaign it was claimed that once the Treaty came (unless you are using some high register tense that I am not aware of) into force, Ireland would no longer be neutral and have the right to say NO to abortion!

I believe that in order to pursue a Federal Europe, we need to involve and inform people without telling lies.

**Enrico Mayrhofer (enrico.mayrhofer@crpm.org)**

## THE EUROPEAN GROUPING FOR TERRITORIAL COOPERATION, AN OPPORTUNITY NOT TO BE MISSED

The European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) responds to the need to have an innovative instrument with legal personality for efficiently managing territorial cooperation activities. Through these means the EGTC should help regional and local authorities overcome obstacles, legal and administrative constraints when engaging in cooperation projects. It was established two years ago by Regulation (EC) No. 1082/06 using Article 159 (3) of the EC Treaty as a legal basis.

Regrettably, up to now only the *Eurometropole* Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai EGTC, which gathers 14 partners from the French-Walloon-Flemish border areas, has been created. However, an increasing number of other EGTCs are currently under preparation and expected to be launched in the near future. Thus, the first cross-border hospital in the EU in the Region of Cerdanya between Catalonia and Languedoc-Roussillon should open its doors in 2010, and the recently established Euro-Region Alps-Mediterranean (Piedmont, Liguria, Valle d'Aosta, Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) is already working to become an EGTC.

A common erroneous belief has much to do with the scope of this new instrument, which was proposed by the Commission as part of the new legal package concerning the Structural Funds for the 2007-2013 period. Although the way it has been designed seems to make it particularly functional for the purpose of managing cross-border activities co-financed by the ERDF under Objective 3, the range of activities it may be aimed at is, as a matter of fact, much wider. Indeed, apart from territorial cooperation programmes and projects, an EGTC may be used to manage any kind of EU project, (e.g. projects under FP7, CIP) and even non-EU funded activities having a transnational scope. This legal instrument, in order to effectively perform its tasks can manage its own budget, hire staff, acquire property and can submit applications for EU funding.

Up to now only 11 countries have passed the necessary internal legislation (the last one being Denmark in June 2008) for which the deadline was set at 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007 in order to amplify specific provisions of the Regulation. Such provisions may cover, for example, the legal regime applicable to the EGTC (private or public), the kind of tasks that can be carried out, liability of members, participation of members from third countries, and rules on notification procedures.

*"Lack of added value", "insufficient instruments", "incompatible with constitutional provisions"* - these are the main, frequently used arguments put forward to justify long delays in adopting the necessary national rules.

From a legal point of view, the fact that 16 EU countries have, for the time being, failed to adopt national legislation should not be seen as a major impediment as an EGTC might reasonably be set up in a country where no specifying rules are in place. This legal instrument has its legal foundation on Regulations and not on a Directive, the former being (by its very nature) directly applicable. However, the absence of internal rules may give rise to concrete difficulties for Regions wishing to work jointly by exploiting this new opportunity for cooperating.

Within the EGTC platform, the Committee of the Regions has an important role to play. Indeed it has established a group of experts from regional and local authorities responsible for assessing progress and providing technical assistance in setting up EGTCs throughout the EU. It also keeps a register of EGTCs once established.

As highlighted by Commissioner Hübner at the Committee of the Regions on 19 June 2008, the introduction of the EGTC represents a drastic step forward in terms of implementation opportunities for territorial cooperation and promotion of genuine new modes of governance. The EGTC exists and the opportunities it offers are ready to be exploited. It now falls back to our Regions to make valuable and intelligent use of it, thereby determining its success.

Walter Atzori ([walter.atzori@crpm.org](mailto:walter.atzori@crpm.org))

## POST OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CPMR ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION

The CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission recruits its Executive Secretary - Please see <http://www.arcatlantique.org/index.php?act=1,6,1,,,,en>

## EVENTS

**7 August 2008**, 2nd Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop, Trondheim (NO)  
<http://gfetw.org/>

**1-4 September 2008**, European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg (FR)  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/plenary/agenda.do?language=en>

**18 September 2008**, General Assembly of CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, Naples (IT)  
<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,89>

**25-27 September 2008**, 7<sup>th</sup> European Information Society Conference (EISCO), Naples (IT)  
<http://www.eisco2008.eu/>

**1 October 2008**, Employment and Training CPMR Working Group, Bayonne (FR)  
<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,83>

**1-3 October 2008**, 36th CPMR General Assembly, Bayonne (FR)  
<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,65>

**6-9 October 2008**, OPEN DAYS, CoR Plenary Session, CoR Brussels (BE)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/od2008/index.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2008/index.cfm)

## LEGAL NOTICE

Director of Publication : Xavier Gizard  
Editor : Enrico Mayrhofer

To receive the TENOR, please send your e-mail to [the.newsletter@crpm.org](mailto:the.newsletter@crpm.org)

