



CRPM CPMR

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PRESS RELEASE

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A TERRITORIAL-BASED TREATMENT FOR THE CAP

200 [participants](#) from Regions across Europe and from the agricultural sector attended a meeting in Nantes on 23 October 2008, to put proposals to the European institutions for a "territorial-based treatment" for the CAP after 2013. The meeting was organised by the **Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)** and hosted by **Jacques Auxiette**, President of the Pays de la Loire Regional Council. **Mariann Fischer-Boel**, European Commissioner in charge of agriculture, and **Michel Barnier**, France's Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and current President of the EU Agriculture Council, took part.

The CAP Health Check provides an opportunity for the CPMR to act. In June, the CPMR presented its response to the Commission's proposals ([CPMR contribution on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\)](#)). Today, it is launching the next step: the preparation of proposals for the period after 2013.

Michel Barnier, France's Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, made a link between regional policy and agricultural policy: *"The opponents of regional policy are the same as those who oppose agricultural policy: they are those who want to reduce the EU budget, which is already not very high. Agricultural policy can go hand in hand with growth and competitiveness, just as cohesion policy does."* The former European Commissioner for regional policy also underlined that, *"in the current financial maelstrom, Europe is resisting thanks to its real economy, which includes agriculture."* Speaking on behalf of the EU Council, Mr Barnier assured the Regions that his 26 colleagues all agreed that the CAP should be maintained. Lastly, he invited the CPMR to take part in an informal working session, before 19 November, the date of the Agriculture Council's meeting on the Health Check, so that the Regions could have a better opportunity to express their views on this subject.

"The CAP Health Check gives States the possibility of taking a further step in the direction of regionalisation," underlined **Claudio Martini**, President of Tuscany Region and of the CPMR. *"Given that there is not one example in Europe where the handover of responsibilities to the Regions has resulted in failure as far as territorial policies are concerned, the States are invited to seize this opportunity."* Although the CAP is decided at EU level, it has a territorial impact, and it is the regional level that is best placed to avoid a mis-match between the major policy objectives and their application locally.

The participants adopted a [final declaration](#). This proposes, amongst other things, that on the occasion of the mid-term review of the rural development plans there should be a more widespread regionalisation of these plans throughout the Union. It also calls for a territorialisation of the programmes under the second pillar for 2010-2013, to pave the way for regionalised rural programmes after 2013. The CPMR believes that these principles for partnership with the Regions should be made binding through EU legislation, in line with the principle of territorial cohesion introduced in the Lisbon Treaty. (Increased regionalisation of the CAP will also help to coordinate first pillar funding with aid under the second pillar and thereby avoid contradiction between these two instruments, as is unfortunately all too often the case at present.)

The Commissioner's response was relatively cautious. *"As you know, regional identities are an important part of the make up of the EU. However, when policy proposals from the Commission come before the Council, the Council meets as a body made up by Member States. The extent to which those Member States choose to pass on responsibility to regions is up to them!"* However, **Mariann Fischer-Boel** did say that she was in favour of a regional system



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for direct aid, and assured the participants that she would fiercely defend the maintenance of the budget as it stands and as defined up to 2013.

Jacques Auxiette agreed with the Commissioner and also underlined the "common" dimension of the CAP. *"The common policy for agriculture and food must remain a 'common' and therefore a European policy. The CAP must be one of the European Union's priorities, and this priority must be reflected in the maintenance of the level of EU funding that is currently devoted to it,"* he said. *"Now more than ever, the CAP is above all a food policy,"* added the President of the Pays de la Loire Regional Council, *"and in Europe as elsewhere, agriculture is not just another economic activity, in the same way that a food product is not just another product, to be regulated by the market alone. Independence and food security remain vital issues. And they must be developed in combination with quality aspects and guarantees relating to food safety and public health."*

The CPMR decided to give a mandate to an internal working group, the members of which are to be representative of Europe's territorial diversity, to continue to reflect on these issues. It also decided to invite the other regional European networks active in the agricultural sector, such as AREPO (Association of European Regions for Products of Origin) and GMO-free Regions, to join it in taking up this challenge. The working group will be coordinated by Pays de la Loire and Andalusia. Lastly, it put forward to the EU institutions the idea of a permanent partnership between the Council, the Commission, Parliament, and the Regions, in the form of an annual meeting to review the progress of the CAP in the Regions. This idea was welcomed by Mr Barnier, who promised to submit it to the Council.

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