



CRPM CPMR

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PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 2 July 2010

Ref: CRPMCOM100024

EUROPE AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD: TOWARDS MACRO-REGIONS?

As 2010 is a crucial year for shaping the policies that will be guiding us throughout the 2014-2020 programming period, especially in the framework of EU regional policy, the **Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR)** and its **Inter-Mediterranean Commission (IMC)** organised a seminar on the **1 July 2010** at the European Parliament on *"Europe and its neighbourhood: towards macro-regions? Political and operational perspectives"*.

For the CPMR, which is the only organisation of Regions organised in geographical commissions, it is now vital for Europe to be able to work in functional areas with a greater territorial dimension and which have a propensity for integration.

Michel Vauzelle, President of Provence Côte d'Azur Region (FR) and of the CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission explained that the Inter-Mediterranean Commission defends the need to establish and implement a structural convergence policy in the Mediterranean and that it is necessary for it to use neighbourhood policy, in line with European regional policy. *"Today, it seems that a macro-region on the scale of the Mediterranean basin would be a tool adapted to the development of such a policy in the framework of the next programming period 2014-2020. Our outlook for 2020 takes the shape of a challenge which must be tackled by a Europe rocked by the crisis, divided, distanced by emerging countries, and which has ran out of steam. The challenge cannot be tackled without a reinforced economic, social and territorial cohesion policy. It is the regional dimension of this policy which will help to reconcile cohesion and diversity. This convergence policy must be extended to the borders of the Union. It is a geostrategic, political, economic and social necessity."*

The European Commission participated in the discussions with **Dirk Ahner**, Director General of DG REGIO, **John O'Rourke**, Director in charge of the coordination of neighbourhood, DG RELEX, and **Carla Montesi**, Director for the Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG MARE. **Dirk Ahner** was said to be very much in favour of macro-regional strategies and highlighted their constructive aspect: *"We want macro-regional strategies in order to foster European integration, not to divide Europe. Moreover, they reach consensus among member states, EU institutions and the regions."*

Lambert Van Nistelrooij, Member of the REGI Committee of the European Parliament reinforced the idea saying that the future of macro-regions could be based on a new Objective III and **Gianni Pittella**, Vice-President of the European Parliament and delegate of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly remarked that such a macro-region would be in line with the choice made at the time of the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

The Committee of the Regions was represented by its President, **Mercedes Bresso**, Regional Councillor, Piémont Region (IT) and **Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso**, President of Murcia Region (ES). The latter, also Vice-President of the CoR and of the CPMR declared, *"We could incorporate several policy areas in the macro-region agenda, especially the management of the maritime space, tackling climate change, research and innovation for more sustainable energy, transport which promotes accessibility as well as an immigration policy,"*

Amongst the other regions present, CPMR propositions for macro-regions and for neighbourhood were also mentioned. **Gunn Marit Helgesen**, Mayor of Telemark County (NO) expressed her opinion as First Vice-President of the CPMR, *“The mission given to regional policy in the Lisbon Treaty is to ensure a balanced development of the European territory, whereas EU2020 is a strategy for growth. Regional policy should therefore contribute towards European growth, but on the condition that the growth that is generated is evenly balanced throughout the territory. Therefore, it is necessary for regional policy to continue benefiting all Regions.”*

The CPMR has recently published two notes¹ on [macro-regions](#) and on [neighbourhood](#) which were distributed to the [participants](#).

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¹ “What opportunities do territorial cooperation and the macro-regional strategies represent for cohesion policy after 2013?”

http://www.crpm.org/pub/docs/282_ntp_crpm_politique_rgionale_bptroms_final_en.pdf

“For a more active participation of the territories in a new neighbourhood policy 2014-2020”

http://www.crpm.org/pub/docs/279_en-note_territories_and_new_neighbourhood_policy.pdf