



CPMR ACTIVITY REPORT 2014-2015

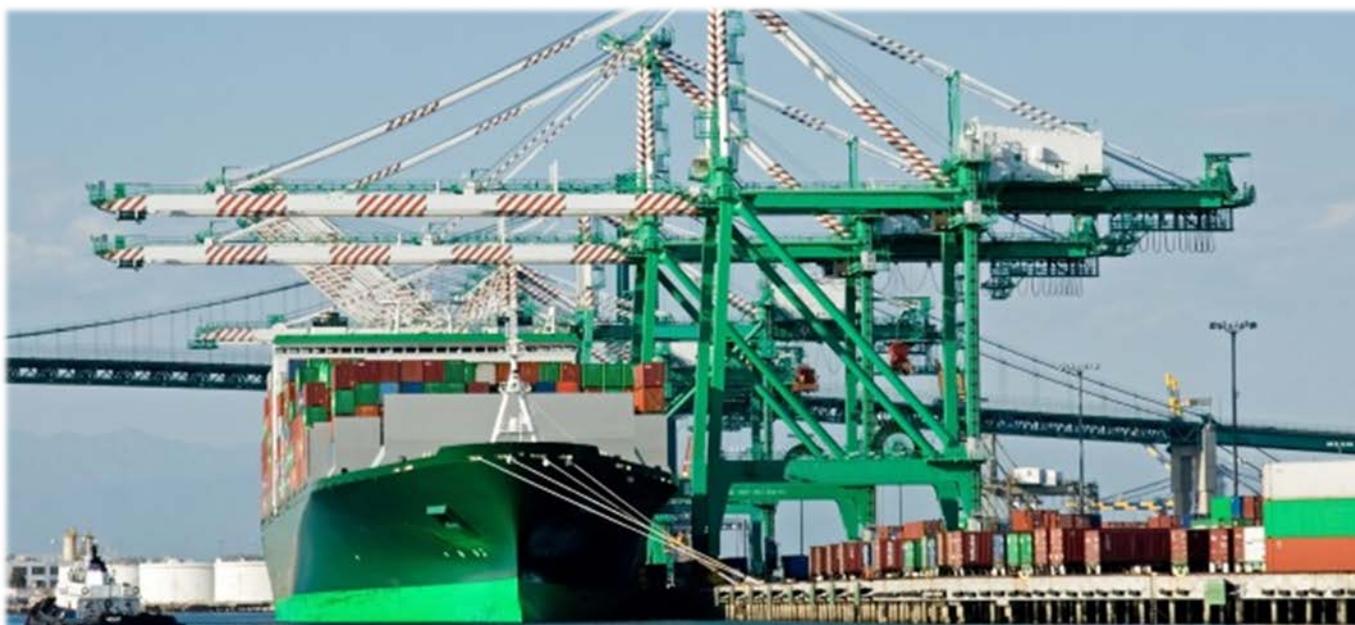


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Dear Readers,

Last year, during our General Assembly in Umeå (SE) we addressed a CPMR Statement to the renewed European Parliament and Commission.

In this document, our messages aimed at implementing the Europe 2020 strategy at the regional level. We underlined our priorities in the field of cohesion, maritime and accessibility with a particular emphasis on the territorial aspects.

One year after, the implementation phase of European policies for 2014–2020 is fully underway, with most of the Operational Programmes adopted and running.

Meanwhile, in terms of European **cohesion**, regional disparities are rising and the development gap between the centre and the periphery has increased. Therefore, after having analysed the preparation and negotiation of the current EU Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds Operational Programmes, we urge the European Commission to launch the process of the post-2020 Cohesion Policy reform and allow the CPMR Regions to feed into the discussion.

When it comes to **Maritime affairs**, we should be clear in stating that delivering blue growth will come from continuous dialogue between regions, EU institutions and maritime stakeholders. Investing in the sea while preserving the ecosystem is the only way to go. We have a full programming period ahead of us. Increasing the maritime component of any investment opportunity via Structural Funds or Horizon 2020 and beyond should be our answer to delivering blue growth and jobs in our regions for our citizens.

On **Accessibility**, we are convinced that the EU Transport policy must contribute to territorial cohesion. It is a fundamental principle of the Treaty alongside economic and social cohesion. We have therefore launched a campaign to accentuate the unquestionable relationship between accessibility and economic development of Europe's regions. Citizens should have equal treatment no matter where they are located. We would like to see centre and periphery usefully interacting. Linking territories and people brings prosperity and eases bottlenecks.

Hoping our recommendations and activities described in this activity report will inspire European leaders, we wish you an enjoyable read.

Vasco Cordeiro, President of the CPMR and President of the Government of the Autonomous Region of Azores (PT)

Eleni Marianou, CPMR Secretary General



INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2014, the Juncker Commission took office and presented its ten fold guidelines aiming at boosting the economy of our continent generating jobs, growth and investments.

Subsequently, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) better known as the “[Juncker plan](#)” was launched and approved by the European Parliament to encourage the financing of viable investments in Europe.

The CPMR Regions greatly welcomed the ambition of the European Commission’s €315-billion plan and its proactive approach to reversing the downward trend of investments, but at the same time they questioned a [number of points](#) regarding the Plan and how it will be implemented in the peripheral part of Europe.

The beginning of a new programming period has also been launched with operational programmes being drafted and negotiated among CPMR regions, Member States and the European Commission. The CPMR’ work on Cohesion policy has secured a comfortable financial package for regions to deliver growth and jobs.

This year was also marked by the Greek crisis and by the emergency of a great number of refugees coming into Europe, with thousands of people drowning in the Mediterranean Sea. These two matters have brought to light deep divisions in Europe with exacerbated selfishness of some Member States and a growing distance of the European project to its citizens. In different countries, a number of political parties have attempted to undermine the functioning of the common currency and constantly questioned the solidarity among EU people.

In this uncertain framework, managing the risks of climate change has also been a serious challenge especially for peripheral regions that are on the front line and with often insufficient means. The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) will be held in Paris (FR) from 30 November to 11 December 2015. Regions are expecting concrete outcomes from this crucial event and they ask to be involved in the implementation of any measures that will be taken.

COHESION

CONTEXT

After Member States reached a **deal on the European Union budget** for the 2014-2020 period, the renovated European Commission adopted the new Operational Programmes strengthening regional competitiveness, creating new opportunities for growth, and improving the quality of life of EU citizens and businesses. At the same time, the €315-billion **Juncker plan** was approved by the European Parliament and came into force last June.

The CPMR fully shares the European Commission's analysis on the need to boost investment in Europe to create the right conditions for sustainable economic recovery, but it is concerned about the consequences of the financial crisis on the territories, while disparities in development have widened between the centre of Europe and its periphery. In order to balance these differences, the CPMR has already initiated a series of activities to legitimise Cohesion Policy as an investment policy at the service of Europe's territories relying on regions at the heart of a multilevel governance framework.

CPMR ACTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION OF COHESION POLICY PROGRAMMES FOR 2014 - 2020

The **implementation** phase of Cohesion Policy for 2014–2020 is now fully underway, with most operational programmes adopted and running.

At its Core Group meeting in December 2014 and Political Bureau meeting in Nantes (FR) on 27 February 2015, the CPMR had the opportunity to discuss Regions' experiences of preparing and negotiating the European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds operational programmes. In Nantes, a [Policy Position](#) was adopted addressing the European Parliament and Commission with a series of messages on the preparation process for the 2014–2020 Structural Funds programmes.

In this document, the CPMR criticises a disconnection between the framework of the Cohesion Policy legislative proposals and the narrative in the Country Papers, which were published to guide Member States and Regions for the preparation of operational programmes. In some cases, the Country Papers were overly specific and provided little room for manoeuvre in terms of investment priorities, which contrasted with the final and adopted legislative texts governing Cohesion Policy funds. For instance, many Regions from the more developed and transition categories expressed some difficulty in justifying their need to finance infrastructure projects to the Commission.

The CPMR also noted that communication between Regions and the Commission on operational programmes preparation was of varying quality. Whereas some felt that the process was very constructive and enhanced by informal contacts, other regions were sometimes left very little time to respond to comments made on a regional operational programme or had relatively poor guidance. Although it is understandable that the cross-cutting nature of operational programmes requires a large scale interservice consultation within the Commission, the expertise and knowledge of DG Regional and Urban Policy could have provided a stronger and more strategic role within the Commission with regard to operational programmes preparation and management.

Therefore, the CPMR called on the European Commission to initiate the process of post-2020 Cohesion Policy reform shortly, in order to allow ample time for negotiation and for programmes to start on 1 January 2021 and to improve the alignment and coordination of key strategic documents such as the Country Papers or the Partnership Agreements.

On the European Social Fund specifically, the CPMR organised a High-Level Conference "[The Role of the Youth Guarantee in the Implementation of the Structural Fund Programmes 2014-2020](#)" as part of the series of conferences to provide an opportunity for its Member Regions to exchange best practices in terms of the implementation of the ESI funds programmes. This event on **youth unemployment** issues took place in Campobasso (IT) on 28 November 2014 at the invitation of the President of Molise Region, Paolo di Laura Frattura, and in partnership with the Italian Presidency.

During the proceedings, participants focused on ongoing trends and practical options for implementing the Youth Guarantee and investigating potential synergies with European Structural and Investment Funds. In this regard, particular attention was paid to the contribution of the CPMR Regions which have successfully implemented strategies to reduce youth unemployment rates and invest in soft-infrastructure, such as human capital development, which yields positive results in the longer term.

POST 2020 COHESION POLICY

Thinking more in terms of a **long-term reflection on the future of Cohesion Policy**, the CPMR is continuing to monitor developments with regard to regional economic development amongst peripheral maritime regions. A recent [analysis produced by the CPMR](#) confirms that regional disparities are rising and the development gap between the centre and the periphery of Europe has increased, and these statistics will have a bearing on Cohesion Policy reform discussions.

In terms of structuring post-2020 Cohesion Policy activities, the CPMR published a [Technical Paper](#) on the state of play with regard to EU Cohesion Policy suggesting a course of action for CPMR Regions for the long term during the Political Bureau meeting in Crete on 12 June 2015. The document proposed that the CPMR works on the governance of Cohesion Policy, builds arguments for a Cohesion Policy for all regions in the post-2020 period, studies the territorial dimension of financial instruments, boosts the islands dimension, and makes proposals on the simplification of Cohesion Policy.

On the governance of Cohesion Policy, the CPMR launched an **internal survey** to assess the level of involvement of CPMR Regions with Cohesion Policy programmes, paying particular attention to the relationship between the areas of intervention of Cohesion Policy and the legislative competences of Regional Authorities, as well as the islands dimension of Cohesion Policy. The survey follows on from one of the successes of the last round of negotiations on the Cohesion Policy package which was the introduction of reinforced provisions on multilevel governance and partnership. These provisions establish a clear framework for partnership and provide a role for all actors of Cohesion Policy, and in particular Local and Regional Authorities. The aim of the survey is to get a clear picture of the regional responsibilities, powers and levels of involvement, and compare these to the 2007 – 2013 programming period. The results of the survey will feed into a study establishing the state of play on the place of Regions within Cohesion Policy for the 2014 – 2020 period.

On the indicators of Cohesion Policy, the CPMR General Secretariat gathered a group of regions to create a Task Force to study the allocation methodology of structural funds for the post-2020 period.

Led by the Basse-Normandie Region, the group was constituted to examine the flaws of the methodology for allocating structural funds, understand the political ramifications of the allocation methodology, and examine alternative indicators. The group held a meeting in March involving experts from the OECD and the University of Strathclyde, and a follow-up meeting in September involving a representative from DG REGIO. Further work on Cohesion Policy indicators will be integrated within the CPMR Core Group.

On financial instruments, the CPMR already positioned itself on the €315 billion [European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#) which will be operational for the next three years. Last September, this plan entered into force after an Inter-Institutional agreement between the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB). Although the CPMR welcomed the initiative which should boost jobs and growth in Europe, it also expressed some concerns summed up in a technical paper entitled [“The investment plan: what’s in it for regions?”](#). This document was presented during the Political Bureau meeting in Nantes where CPMR delegates raised some [key questions](#) linked to the plan. Proposals for amendments were developed on the basis of the messages of the document which were successfully tabled by Members of the REGI Committee of the European Parliament.

In this document, the CPMR shows that the increased use of financial instruments as supported by the Juncker Plan should not undermine the key role of Cohesion Policy as the EU’s main investment instrument, which has been the asserted aim of the European Commission since 2007. The CPMR believes that effective coordination between the implementation of the Juncker Plan and Cohesion Policy delivery is important, since they are additional and can be combined but not substituted. The deployment of such a significant envelope through the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) must necessarily be based on a long-term policy vision to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and target sectors able to fulfil these.

Although some Regions already resort to market instruments to support public investments, with a high degree of success, many are not in a position to rely on private-sector involvement. Therefore, such a variety of experiences between Regions needs to be taken into account by the European institutions when it comes to implementing the Juncker Plan and considering how future EU intervention is conceived for the delivery of its public policies, particularly for the post-2020 period.

On the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy, the Islands Commission of the CPMR held a debate on the island dimension of Cohesion Policy at its last General Assembly in July 2015. The debate session was the occasion to present the preliminary results of the CPMR survey on the role of regions within Cohesion Policy and more specifically the connection between Article 174 of the EU Treaty and Cohesion Policy

On simplification issues, the CPMR also contributed to a stakeholder event organised on 20 October by the European Commission in the framework of its recently constituted High Level Group on Simplification.

On the future of Cohesion Policy more generally, the CPMR is a member of the DG REGIO expert group (‘Structured Dialogue’) set up in October 2014 to look at the application of the partnership principle within Cohesion Policy programmes. The CPMR is also a member of the Committee of the Regions working group on the Future of Cohesion Policy which was established in December 2014 to draw up proposals on the post-2020 Cohesion Policy. Last but not least, the CPMR also participates in the

National Territorial Cohesion Contact Point working group, which is an intergovernmental expert group looking at territorial cohesion issues.

ENHANCING CPMR VISIBILITY AND PROFILE

PRESIDENT CORDEIRO MEETS COMMISSIONER CREȚU



Just three months after her nomination, Corina Crețu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, met Vasco Alves Cordeiro, President of the Regional Government of the Azores and of CPMR, on 3-4 February 2015. The aim of the meeting was to establish a close partnership on the simplification of Cohesion Policy and to ensure that regions remain its main actors. President Cordeiro also called for an active collaboration on financial instruments between the CPMR and the European Commission, because the Juncker plan might not reach out to regions which do not have an extensive experience with these instruments and lack the relevant structures to tap into the European Strategic Investment Fund.

ENRICO ROSSI REPRESENTS CPMR AT THE COHESION INFORMAL COUNCIL

The President of Tuscany Region, Enrico Rossi, represented the CPMR at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for territorial cohesion and urban affairs, which was held in Riga (LV) on 10 June 2015 in the presence of the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Crețu.

On this occasion, the Vice President of the CPMR highlighted that urban policy should not replace regional policy and Regions should remain the main actors in its implementation. Indeed, regional economic development cannot be achieved without the Regions being at the core of the policy. Regions play a legitimate role within Cohesion Policy, whether it is regarding Europe 2020 strategy objectives in their territories, or in relation to the design and implementation of operational programmes and, of course, when it comes to governance of the policy.

Enrico Rossi also recalled the importance of the Multilevel Governance Charter, launched by the Committee of the Regions and signed by the CPMR and a number of European regions.



Enrico Rossi, President of Tuscany and Vice-President of the CPMR, together with Pierre Karleskind, Vice-President of Brittany responsible for European and Maritime Affairs, participated on 17 June 2015 in the meeting of the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament. The two members of the CPMR Political Bureau were invited by the President of the Committee, Iskra Mihaylova, to present the CPMR and its main messages on Cohesion Policy and to exchange their views with the renovated members of the Committee.

During the discussions, the CPMR representatives focused on the renewed political priorities of the European Commission, namely the Juncker Plan, underlining that this plan should be an instrument complementing Cohesion Policy and not one that replaces it. Indeed, Cohesion Policy is often perceived as a “do it all” policy which serves to reduce regional disparities within Europe, deliver on the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy in all Regions and act as a conditionality instrument for the EU economic governance framework. If the EU has to cope with these increased investments it must be prepared to increase its resources allocated to this policy and therefore revise upwards the whole EU budget.

The CPMR Presidents called also on the European Commission to ensure better coordination between the Cohesion Policy regulations, country-specific recommendations, partnership agreements and operational programmes and by inviting DG REGIO to play a greater coordinating role with regard to preparing and implementing the operational programmes.

CONTEXT

Blue Growth is the long-term strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole. It is the maritime contribution to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

CPMR ACTIONS

MARITIME INVESTMENTS

EUROPEAN PLATFORM ON MARITIME INVESTMENTS LINKED TO REGIONAL STRATEGIES

As mentioned during the CPMR General Assembly in Umeå and then during the Political Bureau of Nantes, based on a [Technical Paper](#), the CPMR established a networking platform on maritime investments linked to smart specialisation strategies, in cooperation with the European Commission. The objective of this initiative is to stimulate the mobilisation of available EU funding in support of the maritime economy in the regions. Work has begun on identifying available funding for the maritime sector at regional level through an analysis of the maritime dimension of the Smart Specialisation Strategies and the Operational Programmes of the relevant funds (namely ERDF, ESF and EMFF). This includes a sea basin dimension and notably through the work of the CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission on the maritime priorities of the Regions relating to the EU Strategy for the Atlantic.



A first Conference, entitled “[Blue.invest – EU support to maritime Regions](#)”, was organised by the CPMR and DG MARE on 22 September 2015 in Brussels and provided an opportunity to discuss concrete examples of regional strategies with a strong maritime component. This first conference was followed by a [EC workshop on Maritime Regions, Blue Growth and Smart Specialisation](#) in the Canary Islands on 8-9 October 2015 in which the CPMR was actively involved.

In order to effectively promote a comprehensive approach to blue growth CPMR has already and will continue to strengthen its links with key stakeholders such as organisations active in field of the maritime and maritime research. To this effect, the CPMR participated in the [Euroceans 2014](#) Conference that was held in Rome in October 2014. This conference is Europe's top marine sciences event, delivering concrete messages to scientists and policy makers. It also participated in the first [JPI Oceans Conference](#) on 7 May 2015 where participants discussed the first Joint Marine Research programme set up by national authorities in the framework of the JPI.

A MORE COMPETITIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND SOCIAL COMMON FISHERIES POLICY (CFP)

In line with the priorities defined during the General Assembly in Umeå, the CPMR is pursuing a long-term reflection on the future of the CFP.

The CPMR is currently addressing the socio-economic impacts of the CFP, related to issues such as the obligation to land all catches, the link between fisheries and environmental regulations (e.g. MSFD) and setting up multi-annual management plans in the different sea basins. These issues were also addressed during the [Termoli seminar](#) organised, in October 2014, with the Intermediterranean Commission and the [Nantes seminar](#) held in February 2015 with the Arc Atlantic Commission.

Regarding European initiatives supporting the development of areas dependent on fisheries and aquaculture, the FARNET platform, co-funded by the European Commission (DG MARE), which is in charge of ensuring technical support to FLAGs (Fisheries Local Action Groups) in the framework of the implementation of the EFF 2007-2013, held its [Final conference](#) on 2-3 March 2015. The CPMR was part of the opening session of this event along with Commissioner Vella. The CPMR will continue its collaboration within FARNET II 2015-2021.



Finally, the CPMR contributed to strengthening the role of Regions in the governance of the CFP, through their role within the Advisory Councils (AC). At this stage, the North Sea Commission has Observer Status in the North Sea RAC, the Intermediterranean Commission is an observer in the Mediterranean RAC and the Atlantic Arc Commission is working with the South West RAC.

MARINE RENEWABLE ENERGIES AND MARITIME INDUSTRIES

Through its Working Group "Maritime Industries for Blue Growth", led by the Region of Pays de la Loire (FR) and following the Umeå Declaration, the CPMR is carrying out activities on maritime industries and marine energy by integrating the sea-basin dimension within its Geographical Commissions. During the [meeting](#) organised on 21 April 2015, the CPMR and its Geographical Commissions presented their priorities on the development of three sectors, namely shipbuilding, marine energy and oil & gas

and the important synergies that exist between these sectors. The priorities identified refer to both the need to support these three sectors, and to develop a unified European maritime industrial strategy involving current European initiatives in these areas. CPMR work also drew on on the [Marinamed Marseille seminar](#) organised in December 2014, and on regular collaborations with key organisations such Ocean Energy Europe, the Ocean-Eranet project and the European Skills Council.

MARITIME AND COASTAL TOURISM

The CPMR's action in this field is led by its Tourism Working Group, chaired by Region Västra Götaland (SE). The group focused on the implementation of the European strategy for coastal and maritime tourism. A [summary](#) of the link between the Regions' policies and this strategy, as well as prospects for action, were presented at the meeting of the CPMR Tourism Working Group in Brussels on 22 April 2015.

Following the Conference [Enhancing the Pan-European dialogue with Cruise operators](#), held on 5-6 March 2015 in Brussels, the CPMR has been included as an organisation within the ad hoc follow-up process set up by the European Commission. The CPMR also maintained relations with organisations such as the World Tourism Organisation, Necstour or projects such as [Mitomed](#), notably through the Marinamed [Florence seminar](#) in May 2015.

BLUE BIOTECHNOLOGIES

Since 2013, the CPMR has been working on the link between the Regions' policies and European priorities regarding blue biotechnologies. A [summary](#) of the prospects for actions in this field was presented during the [meeting](#) organised in Brussels on 22 April 2015.

In parallel, following the discussions started in 2012, a [working partnership](#) has been established between the CPMR and the European marine biological resources centre (EMBRC), which is the only research infrastructure part of the European STRATEGY FORUM ON RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES (ESFRI) in the field of blue biotechnologies. Today, this collaboration is continuing through the Horizon 2020 EMBRC PP2 project launched in October 2015, in which the CPMR is a partner and which aims at facilitating discussions with regions on the use of ESI funds to support blue biotechnologies at regional level. In this framework a link with the CPMR Geographical Commissions has been established, notably through the Innovation Group of the Atlantic Arc Commission.

COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION

MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING AND INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

In the framework of the work led by Region Noord-Holland, the CPMR is aiming at facilitating the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Directive (MSP) by focusing on the role of the Regions and on land-sea interactions. With this objective, CPMR Vice-president George Alexakis participated in the DG MARE conference on MSP and tourism in November 2014. Land-sea interactions were also discussed during a [meeting](#) organised by the CPMR on 22 April 2015, as a fringe event of the European

Commission's Expert Groups on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), in which the CPMR also participated as a member.

MSP and ICZM also generated initiatives in sea basins and in synergy with the CPMR Geographical Commissions, such as the Rome Marinamed seminar in November 2014.

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Work in this area includes active monitoring of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) implementation in connection with key issues already identified. Following its admission into the coordination group of the MSFD implementation coordinated by DG Environment, the CPMR constantly monitored the main issues that may affect the Regions, especially in connection with defining programmes of measures to be carried out by the Member States. Working priorities in this area were discussed during the [meeting](#) which took place on 22 April 2015.

COASTAL DATA

Production and use of coastal data from geoinformation services is an issue of strategic importance for public authorities and stakeholders that are active in the maritime field.

This work led to the establishment of a cooperation with national Hydrographical Services, in the framework of the "Coastal Mapping" project, funded by DG MARE. This project, which started in June 2015, will assess the current availability of digital coastal maps in the EU, disseminate this information by EMODnet, share experiences of coastal mapping in the EU, develop standards and an algorithm for the acquisition of data and propose how a future strategy and programme could operate. The CPMR will specifically work on the link between these objectives and the use of EU funds at regional level.

The CPMR also collaborated with Eurisy and supported the organisation of a [conference](#) on Blue Economy and Geoinformation Services, in Bari (Puglia) in November 2014, which was the occasion to discuss the contribution of Satellite applications to geoinformation services that can be of use to the regions.

MARITIME SAFETY

At present, the CPMR is focusing its efforts on the recognition of ecological damage on the basis of its [proposals](#) put forward in April 2013. In this area, the European Parliament's [Ferreira Report](#) on exploiting research and development potential in the blue economy to create jobs and growth is an important step forward, since it states that *"a maritime safety 'Erika IV' package should be launched to prevent further major maritime disasters; considers that this package should recognise the ecological damage to marine waters in European legislation"*. This echoes a strong commitment of the members of the Intergroup in this field.

In the meantime, the CPMR monitored the on-going revision of the Environmental Liability Directive (ELD), as the European Commission will publish a report in the autumn in this regard, which will address the coverage of environmental damage by EU and international regulations. CPMR expertise on this issue is notably based on results of the [Arcopol platform](#), which involved the Atlantic Arc Commission, and on outputs of the [Safer Seas Conference](#).

PRESIDENT CORDEIRO MEETS COMMISSIONER VELLA



Mr Karmenu Vella, new Commissioner for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Environment officially met President Cordeiro on 4 February 2015 to exchange views on EU maritime priorities. The President of the CPMR also met Mr Joao Aguiar Machado on 22 September 2015, a few weeks after he had been nominated as the new Director General of DG MARE. These have been unique opportunities to address imminent priorities and actions to be undertaken by the CPMR and the European Commission during the ongoing programming period.

THE SEARICA INTERGROUP CONFIRMED AS AN OFFICIAL EP INTERGROUP



After the EU elections, the renewed European Parliament confirmed the Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas Intergroup ([SEARICA](#)) as an official intergroup. MEP Gesine Meissner chairs this body, and the CPMR is continuing to act as its Secretariat and is collaborating through this closely with MEPs involved in maritime affairs.

SEARICA gathered in Brussels on 12 May 2015 for its official [Kick-off meeting](#) in the presence of Commissioner [Karmenu Vella](#). In addition to this event focused on “*Seizing the opportunity to develop a stronger Europe of the sea*”, the Intergroup organised other meetings on [Maritime Industry](#), [Marine data](#), [Marine Pollution](#) and [Oceans and Climate Change](#). The members of the Intergroup also submitted

18 amendments to the EP report on the potential of research and innovation in the Blue Economy to create jobs and growth presented by MEP Joao Feirerra, and signed by more than 30 MEPs.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING - VASCO DA GAMA



The initiative of a group of pioneering Regions led by Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to work on a “Maritime Erasmus” type initiative called Vasco da Gama, resulted in the launch of a [Vasco Da Gama](#) project co-funded by the EU DG MOVE for the 2014-2015 period . The project involves some twenty partners composed of Regions, teaching institutions and professionals. Led by the CPMR, it is being monitored by an “Advisory Board”, consisting notably of European shipowners(ECSA) and representatives of workers employed in the shipping sector (ETF).

The CPMR wishes to see Vasco da Gama as a first real step towards a multi-pronged initiative that could gradually become the “human resources strand” of the Integrated Maritime Policy and lead to a Europe-wide “Vasco da Gama community”. Using the recommendations produced by this project, and building on the first circle of engaged partners, the CPMR is encouraging further initiatives, notably at the level of the sea basins, with the support of its Geographical Commissions.



First Vasco da Gama summer school in Kalmar (Sweden)

ACCESSIBILITY

CONTEXT

There is unquestionably a relationship between accessibility and the economic development of Regions. Indeed, with only a few exceptions, all the Regions with a GDP below 75% of the EU average have a potential accessibility that is lower than the EU average. Without decisive intervention by the EU, the most difficult-to-access territories thus risk seeing their potential connectivity stagnate, while Europe as a whole will 'on average' have seen an improvement in connectivity. The connectivity gap between the territories could then widen further and ultimately result in a more pronounced loss of attractiveness for those regions which remain the most peripheral and difficult to access.

Despite "legal bases" which stipulate that EU transport policy must contribute towards territorial cohesion, this dimension has rarely been given a high degree of priority by the European institutions. It is for this reason that the CPMR is focusing its efforts on this issue, and has made improving accessibility one of its top strategic priorities.

At the end of 2013 European texts were adopted which set the thematic and budget priorities for infrastructure and transport services for the 2014-2020 period and beyond in the case of transport networks (2030 for the "core" network and 2050 for the "comprehensive" network). These are the guidelines of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), a mechanism that finances the TEN-T and other areas of EU transport policy.

Throughout the negotiation period of these instruments, the CPMR and its geographical commissions have worked – especially with the European Parliament - to make these texts as fitting as possible to support projects geographically distant from Europe's economic centre. Although insufficient, the result of this lobbying effort has helped to influence the final result of the negotiations, notably by improving the inclusion of peripheral ports in the TEN-T.

2014 and 2015 were years in which decisions taken at the end of 2013 were **implemented**. During this period the European Commission is able to exert wide discretion when applying the decisions. It is in this context that the CPMR launched a campaign for accessibility at its General Assembly in 2014. The campaign was planned and conducted together with the Transport Working Group, led by Aragon region.

For the CPMR Regions, maritime accessibility is obviously a priority. During the same period and under the leadership of Nord Pas de Calais Region, the CPMR has played an active part in work at European level for supporting sustainable maritime transport and in reflections on the Motorways of the Sea.

CPMR ACTIONS

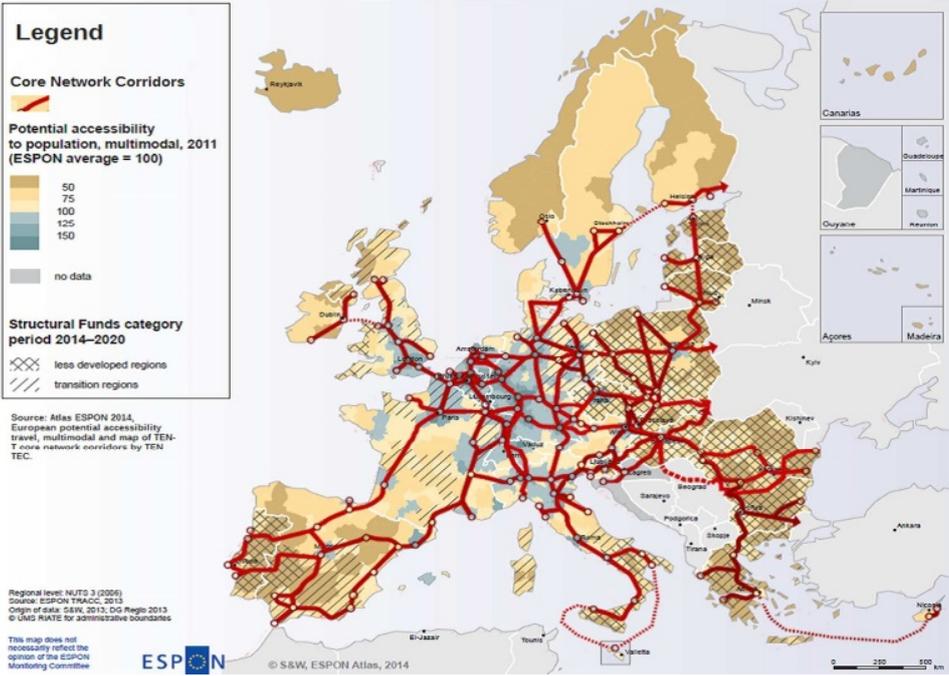
THE CPMR ACCESSIBILITY CAMPAIGN

The European Union does not give adequate priority to accessibility as a criterion that would ensure compliance with the principle of territorial cohesion. For instance, articles 90 and 91 of the Treaty state that the common transport policy should encourage territorial cohesion, and Article 174 stipulates that particular attention should be paid to regions which suffer from severe and permanent handicaps. Furthermore, although a number of peripheral, outermost and island territories have managed, in spite of their remoteness, to build success stories, the representatives of the CPMR Regions are well

aware of the price their firms and their inhabitants have to pay to access markets and decision-making centres.

In the [Final Declaration](#) of the 2014 General Assembly held in Umeå, the CPMR confirmed that improving the accessibility of its member Regions was one of its priorities. On that occasion maritime Regions decided to make 2015 the year of territorial accessibility, and an accessibility campaign was subsequently launched. The campaign is organised in synergy with the CPMR’s Geographical Commissions covering the different sea basins of Europe.

The map below clearly shows how the nine priority corridors of the CEF (which will receive the majority of CEF funding) serve – or do not serve – the least accessible areas of the European territory. It clearly reveals a number of areas not covered by the priority corridors.



Therefore, during its Political Bureau meeting held in Nantes (FR) on 27 February 2015, the CPMR published a policy paper on how to “[Improve the accessibility of the maritime regions and harness their potential in global transport flows](#)”. This action was pursued and – in the context of a CPMR response to a consultation on the [2011 White Paper on transport](#)– the Political Bureau, meeting on 12 June in Crete sent an address to the European Commission, asking for the nomination of a European coordinator dedicated to the remote areas, those situated at distance from the 9 corridors.

Furthermore, special efforts were made to ensure that regional authorities are involved in the governance of corridors. The steps taken in this direction have been successful, since the Regions located along these corridors were invited to two meetings of the forums that discuss the action plan of each of the corridors. The geographical commissions have played an important role in promoting and organising the participation of their members in the corridors that concern them.

However, participation in the forum does not mean participation in decision-making, this being split de facto between the Commission and the national Transport Ministers. The Regions located away from corridors have not been involved in these forums, and the port and maritime dimension has not dealt with adequately in all the corridors.

The island regions are clearly the most affected by accessibility issues, and this has been the focus of specific attention by the CPMR at the Political Bureau meetings in Nantes and Crete and during the event held in Marseille on 16 April (see below).

MARITIME TRANSPORT AND MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA

In April 2015, the CPMR [responded](#) to an EC [Consultation](#) on the strategic goals for EU maritime transport. It recalled that maritime transport must be encouraged as a sustainable mode, in particular at a time when the Sulphur Directive is provoking retro modal shift (trucks back on roads). There should be a longer term visibility on EU schemes and support, and this option is also defended by the CPMR in the framework of the **European Sustainable Shipping Forum**, a European consultation body in which the CPMR is representing regional authorities.

Motorways of the Sea are one of the tools which the EU is implementing in the field of maritime transport. A specific CPMR contribution is being prepared aiming to feed into the proposals which the European Commission is expected to publish in March 2016 on this policy.

ENHANCING CPMR VISIBILITY AND PROFILE

PORTS TOWARDS ACCESSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MARITIME TRANSPORT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The “[Ports towards Accessibility and Sustainable Maritime Transport in the Mediterranean](#)” event, jointly organised by the Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, the Junta of Andalucía, the University and the Port of Malaga, was held last 14 April 2015 in the Institute of Port Studies in Malaga.

The contributions highlighted that Ports are key to developing sectors such as blue energies and sustainable tourism. To better assess these elements, it appears that the evaluation of port activities needs nonetheless to be better monitored. For instance, by including breakdown analyses by port activities, harmonising protocols and data, performing a more thorough control of energy consumption and relative costs, developing R&D, as well as the exchange of information to stimulate innovation.

CPMR MEETS THE NEW EUROPEAN MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA COORDINATOR BRIAN SIMPSON

A CPMR delegation led by the Vice-President of Nord-Pas de Calais Region (FR) in charge of Maritime Affairs, Wulfran Despicht, and the CPMR Secretary General, Eleni Marianou, met the new European Motorways of the Sea Coordinator, Brian Simpson. During the meeting, the former Chair of the European Parliament Transport Committee invited the CPMR to play an integral role in the consultation process, which will conclude in March 2016 with the presentation of a “roadmap”.

SEMINAR IN MARSEILLE: HOW THE EUROPEAN UNION CAN HELP TO IMPROVE TERRITORIAL ACCESSIBILITY



A Seminar entitled “[How the European Union can help to improve territorial accessibility](#)” was organised on 16 April 2015 in Marseille (FR) at the invitation of Michel Vauzelle, President of Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region and President of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission.

The Seminar was divided into four sessions focusing on the priorities of the CPMR including “Periphery and handicaps for accessibility”, “Modal shift to maritime transport, a sustainable option the EU must support”, “Port framework serving a multimodal service for the hinterlands” and “Strengthening the connection between the two shores of the Mediterranean”.

Gesine Meissner, President of the Sea, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas Intergroup and Member of the Transport Committee, and **Désirée Oen**, Deputy Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Transport, Violeta Bulc, represented the European Institutions.

CPMR AT THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WEEK

Odessa hosted the [International Transport Week](#) in June 2015 in the presence of the Ukrainian Minister of Infrastructure, Andriy Pivovarsky.

The event combined the forum “*Implementation of global sourcing in the international traffic*” and the Seminar “*International Trade and Logistics Facilitation*”, but an “Inter-TRANSPORT” Exhibition was also part of the programme.

The CPMR organised a workshop entitled “Vasco Da Gama project for the Black Sea”. The discussions aimed at facilitating transnational mobility in the field of maritime education in the Black Sea Basin, and proposed practical steps and arrangements. In this respect, participants contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the sector and reducing problems such as youth unemployment and brain drain.

CPMR AT TEN-T DAYS

Erik Bergkvist, President of the Regional Executive Committee of Västerbotten (SE) represented the CPMR at [TEN-T Days 2015](#) held in Riga on 22-23 June. The event was promoted by the European Commissioner for Transport, Violeta Bulc, in cooperation with Anrijs Matīss, Latvian Minister for Transport representing the EU Presidency.

As demanded by the CPMR Political Bureau on 12 June, Erik Bergkvist pointed out that the areas located far from the TEN-T core network and the nine CEF corridors should benefit from the action of a specific European coordinator.

In all six Geographical Commissions of the CPMR there are clear examples of transport projects that need to be considered in the TEN-T core corridor system. Erik Bergkvist, in his capacity as President of a Swedish Region, presented one of them: the Midway Alignment of the Bothnian Corridor, which connects Norway via Umeå in Sweden across the Bothnian Gulf of Finland and beyond.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE

CONTEXT

The European Union has entered into a new political cycle and programming period for major European policies, including Energy and Climate Change.

On the one hand, energy efficiency and renewable energy, security of supply and an integrated European energy market are pillars of the energy policy with the aim of giving EU consumers - households and businesses - secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy. On the other hand, climate change constitutes one of the most important challenges for the sustainable human development of the 21st century, since it impacts global issues of a socio-economic nature, including poverty and inequality, economic development, population dynamics, energy production and provision, resource management and consumption and food security.

A new framework that encompasses Energy and Climate Policy was announced and launched by the European Union in 2015, the Energy Union. The Energy Union with a forward-looking climate policy is one of the 10 priorities of the new European Commission. It aims to become an integrated framework for energy-related policies that would also ensure enforcement of EU external energy policy and internal energy market rules.

Territorial actors are currently playing a major role in the fight against climate change and in policy shaping, implementation and monitoring within the Energy Union policy, being the ones taking concrete action on the ground every day. Particularly, Regional governments are responsible for the development and implementation of laws, policies, strategies, standards, programmes and fiscal mechanisms in areas that directly influence the levels of greenhouse gas emissions and deal with the impacts of climate change. At the same time, Regions can assume an exemplary role in energy efficiency and become facilitators in the development of renewable energy, as well as in innovation. Experience during the last decades shows that the territorial dimension can enable tailor-made actions adapted in each case to the population dynamics and local realities and needs, and can improve the

successful formulation of climate and energy policies and targets ensuring the most effective outcomes at subnational level.

Within this framework, the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), or [COP21](#), is taking place from 30 November to 11 December 2015 in Paris (FR). COP21 will bring together around 40,000 participants among national and regional delegates, observers, and civil society representatives and is expected to deliver for the first time a global and legally binding climate agreement that will enter into force after 2020.

CPMR ACTIONS

A ROADMAP TO COP21

The CPMR, both independently and through joint initiatives with other key actors, is closely monitoring the ongoing process of the international negotiations on climate. Through its Secretariat and Geographical Commissions, the CPMR developed a series of key actions in order to ensure its strategic involvement on the road to COP21.

Particularly, a [Position Paper](#) on climate was presented at its Political Bureau meeting in Crete in June 2015, highlighting key priorities and concerns of CPMR Members, such as tourism, maritime industry, coastal zone management, or adaptation policies in view of the climate negotiations and the possible agreement that will be adopted.

This document commits Regional representatives to undertake different initiatives against climate change, such as increasing framework cooperation within sea basins, further promoting the use of inventories and monitoring methods of greenhouse gas emissions, mobilising funds to implement adaptation and mitigation plans against greenhouse gas emissions, as well as encouraging concrete projects on renewable energy, energy efficiency and maritime transport. It also urges Member States to sign an ambitious and binding COP 21 agreement in compliance with the increasingly pressing alerts from the scientific community and to adopt a bottom-up approach that shares responsibilities with Regions in the implementation of the climate change adaptation and mitigation plans.

The CPMR will participate in COP21 as a legitimate stakeholder within the global networks working on the topic and will present the policy position and the commitments adopted, as well as good practices and pro-active initiatives on climate change mitigation and adaptation already put in place by its member-regions.

ENERGY UNION

Given that a considerable share of the Energy Union's provisions falls within the interest and competences of Member States, the CPMR published in May 2015 a [Technical paper on Energy Union](#) which underlines that the Energy Union priority is also an opportunity for the CPMR to address some relevant concerns of peripheral regions. Indeed, peripheral Regions and islands suffer from "energy insularity", having a limited number of electricity and gas connections with the rest of our continent. Furthermore, according to the CPMR, integrated governance is necessary for implementing the Energy Union and ensuring that all energy-related actions at European, national, regional and local levels contribute to its objectives.

The CPMR General Secretariat will work closely with its Energy Working Groups within the Geographical Commissions in order to identify and reveal points of interest and opportunities for Regions that derive from the Energy Union Communication.

REGIONS' COMMITMENT TO KEEP CLIMATE CHANGE HIGH ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA

After strengthening alliances with other actors, such as intergovernmental networks or NGOs and boosting its liaison with National Governments and the EU institutions, the CPMR together with its Geographical Commissions and members participated in different key events on the road to COP21.

In the framework of the Med Cooperation Days held in Rome (IT) on 11 November 2014, the CPMR together with its Intermediterranean Commission promoted the COASTGAP Final Conference and COM&CAP MarInA-MED Seminar "[Towards the framework conditions for Climate change adaptation in coastal areas and the Blue Growth in the Mediterranean](#)"

On 11 December 2014, the Region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA), hosted the Climate meeting of local and regional representatives of the Mediterranean. The event was organised by the Region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, the Mediterranean Commission of United Cities and Local Governments, the city of Marseille and the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission. A "[Declaration on Climate](#)" was signed.

The CPMR attended the [World Summit of Territorial Climate Action with Civil Society](#) that was held on 1-2 July 2015 in Lyon (FR). Different proposals were made so that the agreement that will be adopted in COP 21 enhances the capacity of non-state actors as well as local and regional authorities on the ground, particularly in terms of financing.

On 29 May, the President of the NSC, Tom-Christer Nilsen, joined a delegation led by the Vice-President of the European Commission for Energy Union, Maros Sefcovic, as part of the visit to the cross-border Energy Region of Northern Netherlands/Lower Saxony on the Energy Union Tour.

In the framework of the CPMR Islands Commission, representatives of islands gathered in Brussels on 24-25 June 2015 for the [SMILEGOV](#) final event that was marked by the Pact of Islands signing ceremony. With the accession of the new members, the Pact of Islands now consists of 117 members, welcoming 41 newcomers.



European Parliament, Brussels, 25th June 2015, Signature ceremony of the Pact of Island

On 28 November, the [ELIH-MED](#) final event took place at the European Parliament thanks to the invitation of Francesc Gambús (MEP). Representatives from the Regions of Catalonia, Valencia, Murcia

(ES), Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Languedoc-Roussillon (FR), Piedmont, Basilicata, Umbria, Sicily (IT), East Macedonia and Thrace, Western Macedonia (GR) together with different Municipalities, energy agencies, public bodies and associations, such as the CPMR, called on the European Institutions to increase the use of Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the energy renovation of low-income buildings.

Guadeloupe Regional Council hosted a high-level international meeting on biodiversity and climate change in the European Outermost Regions (OMRs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), and in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the same geographical areas. The event was organised by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the European Commission, the French Government, Guadeloupe Regional Council, the Government of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), the Association of Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTA) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on 22-25 October 2014.

On 4-5 June 2015, the CPMR InterMediterranean Commission attended the [MEDCOP21](#) aiming to introduce a sustainable dynamic on a Mediterranean scale, promoting active cooperation on climate change. The MEDCOP21, held in Marseille, anticipated the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) that will be held in Paris (FR) from 30 November to 11 December 2015.

CONTEXT

Since 2011, the context of Neighbourhood Policy has changed and evolved in an increasingly complex geopolitical situation at the borders of the EU, with several on-going conflicts, the consequences of the Arab Spring, increasing threats to security such as terrorism attacks, the humanitarian crisis related to migration issues and the long wave of the economic and financial crisis.

During the summer, the migration crisis in the Mediterranean reached unprecedented proportions as the improved weather offered smugglers a chance to dispatch more people on the dangerous crossing. At the same time, the dramatic increase of refugees travelling through the western Balkans has shown that the emergency stretches far beyond a few Southern Europe countries. Meanwhile, a European response to the emergency is beginning to take shape only now.

The current circumstances in different southern Mediterranean countries are very instable: Libya is in chaos and Tunisia and Egypt have been hit by two dramatic terroristic attacks.

The situation is also very tense within European and neighbourhood countries. For instance, France, Denmark and Turkey have been the target of violent expressions of antisemitism, radicalism, fundamentalism, and extremism that caused the death of innocent citizens.

CPMR ACTIONS

AGAINST ALL FORMS OF TERRORISM IN EUROPE

Following its "[Urgent Call to the EU Institutions and Member States](#)" approved in Umeå (SE) on 24-25 September 2014, the CPMR recalls its determination to never underestimate any act of fanaticism, anti-Semitism and intimidation and its commitment to be constantly vigilant concerning the respect for freedom of speech and expression within its Regions. Indeed, the CPMR Political Bureau, gathered in Nantes on 27 February 2015, addressed its [condemnation](#) of all forms of terrorism in Europe.

The CPMR Regions stand together to urge the European Union as well as the Member States to take the necessary measures against radicalism, fundamentalism and anti-Semitism as well as any form of extremism and will endeavour to promote any practical engagement to avoid clashes of society and ensure protection of their citizens' life and dignity.

THE ALL MEDITERRANEAN CAMPAIGN



While the Heads of State and Government of the European Union were gathering in Brussels on 23 April 2015 for an extraordinary meeting of the European Council on immigration, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission addressed an Open Letter to the European Council and Parliament to reiterate their strong commitment and solidarity towards the citizens of the Mediterranean. This pledge has been signed by both Michel Vauzelle, President of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission and the Region of Provence-Alpes-

Côte d’Azur, and Rosario Crocetta, President of Sicily and Chair of the dedicated CPMR Task Force on Migration.

Following this letter, the town of Palermo (IT) hosted, on 18 May 2015, a Seminar on Migration Management in the Mediterranean, at the invitation of Rosario Crocetta, President of Sicily. Linked to this Seminar, a visit to the migrant reception centre of Palermo was also organised.

A delegation of CPMR Mediterranean Presidents, led by Michel Vauzelle and Rosario Crocetta, including Apostolos Katsifaras, President of Region Dytiki Ellada, Joana Ortega, Vice-President of the Catalonia Government, Giusi Nicolini, Mayor of Lampedusa and Eleni Marianou, Secretary General of the CPMR, met on 20 May 2015 with Martin Schulz to seek the European Parliament’s support for establishing an effective Mediterranean Policy that takes into account the management of migration flows and addresses the challenges of the common destiny of Mediterranean people.



The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission also launched a campaign to raise awareness, which consists in a public petition, “[WE ARE ALL MEDITERRANEAN](#).” Signed by more than 1000 people and supported by the President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz, this campaign highlights the values of solidarity, cooperation, integration, and dialogue, as well as the fight against racism, xenophobia and terrorism.

PLATFORMA, A GOOD EXAMPLE OF DECENTRALISED COOPERATION



For the first time ever, local and regional governments and the European Commission are committed to working side by side to pursue objectives that will contribute towards achieving democracy, human dignity, equality, justice for all and in the spirit of solidarity throughout the world.

On 28 January 2015, five international networks of local and regional governments, including [PLATFORMA](#), signed the first strategic partnership agreement with the European Commission Directorate-General for Development and International Cooperation. This seven-year partnership is a political agreement whereby the European Commission and signatories commit to take actions based on common values and objectives to tackle global poverty and inequality, and to promote democracy

and sustainable development. The signature ceremony took place in the presence of the EU Commissioner in charge of international cooperation and development, Neven Mimica.

Local and regional governments represent the closest institutions to the citizens and offer significant expertise in terms of service delivery, building democratic institutions and effective administrations. They can also provide a long-term, country-wide vision on how to build inclusive societies as the actors with the necessary political legitimacy and the capacity to mobilise other stakeholders. This new partnership represents an important step forward for the local and regional governments' involvement in sustainable development policies and the new post-2015 Development Agenda.

2015 is the "[European Year for Development](#)", marks the end of the Millennium Development Goals and offers an exceptional opportunity to agree on a new development agenda for the next 15 years. In this context, the Regional and Local Authorities met in the Committee of the Regions on 1-2 June 2015 for the [4th edition of the Assises of Decentralised Cooperation](#). The CPMR External Cooperation Working Group, represented by the Basque Country which chairs the group, offered its contribution to the debates with Paul Ortega, Director of the Basque Government Cooperation Agency.

Lazio Region, the CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission and PLATFORMA organised [the Mediterranean Cooperation Days](#), on 10-11 November 2014 in Rome, with the key collaboration and contribution of the EU Med programme projects COASTGAP and COM&CAP MarInA-Med.

The seminar gathered a wide range of Mediterranean key stakeholders: political and technical representatives of the EU and Euromed institutions, the local and regional authorities and their networks, EU and ETC programmes, universities and research centres from the area, among others. It encouraged discussions on a shared vision for cooperation in the Mediterranean focusing on "*How to achieve sustainable development in the Mediterranean beyond 2015*", "*Towards Macro-Regional and Sea Basin Strategies in the Mediterranean*" and also "*Towards the framework conditions for Climate change adaptation in coastal areas and the Blue Growth in the Mediterranean*".

TOWARDS A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

The CPMR together with its Inter-Mediterranean (IMC) and Balkan & Black Sea (BBSC) Commissions participated in the Consultation on the review of Neighbourhood Policy launched with the document "*Towards a new Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)*", issued by the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

In this [response](#), the CPMR stated that the reviewed policy should rely on a genuine, partnership-based and long-term role for Regional Authorities and take on board the territories in their diversity and as contributors to development. It also called for a "territorialisation" of the neighbourhood policy, putting decentralisation at the core of the partnership principle, and referring to similar instruments and the methodology of EU Cohesion Policy.

Regarding the Mediterranean Basin, the CPMR response underlines a set of specific recommendations concerning in particular the effectiveness of territorial cooperation and the importance of introducing or applying macro-regional and sea-basin approaches in the whole Mediterranean area, following the pilot experience of the [EUSAIR](#).

For the Black Sea, the CPMR calls for an actual relaunch of the – until now very reticent– Black Sea Synergy. Together with the Committee of the Regions, the CPMR organised a [conference](#) entitled “The Balkan and the Black Sea Area on the move: perspectives for Regional Authorities” on 29 May 2015. The aim was to explore ways and means of becoming involved in the preparation and implementation of strategies and programmes related to this area.

The CPMR and its geographical commissions will be attentive to the proposals which the European Commission and the European External Action Service will make public in a communication expected on 18 November 2015 and will keep developing synergies in the framework of the CORLEAP and the ARLEM. Furthermore, the CPMR through its IMC and BBSC Commissions, will set up and participate as a partner in concrete EU cooperation projects and pilot initiatives involving key stakeholders of the neighbourhood partner countries (e.g. capacity building initiatives in the framework of territorial development, projects under the new ENI instrument and in particular the Cross-Border Regional Programmes for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea basins).