



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE ATLANTIC ARC TRANSPORT GROUP
NANTES, 26 MARCH 2009**

PARTICIPANTS:

Name	Institution
Jacques Gillaizeau	Conseiller régional du Pays de la Loire
Mireia Elkoroiribe	AATG Coordinator Basque Government – Transport Director
Javier Rivas	Basque Government – Transport technician
Hélène Fortier	Pays de la Loire – Responsible of Freight and Mobility Program
Isabelle Gardon	Pays de la Loire
Cecile André	Pays de la Loire
Julie Miclot	Conseil Régional de Basse Normandie – Chef of service of European Affaires
Patrick Anvrouin	CRPM - Director
Fabien Mesclier	CRPM – Technical Secretariat
Tamara Guirao-Espiñeira	CVAA – Mission Chief
Xavier Hurteau	Communauté d'Agglomération de Poitiers
M. Busnel	Nantes Metropole – Assistant General Manager
Benoit Cuvelier	Nantes Metropole – European Programs Manager
Hélène Donnat	Limousin – Foreign Affaires of ESC Limousin
Jean Pierre Crozat	Limousin – regional ESC
Jean Michel Gautheron	Aquitaine – regional ESC
Arantza Lopez de Munain Zulueta	Esukadi – Studies and projects Manager of ESC Basque
Anne Gallais-Bouchet	ISEMAR-Francia
Arantza Iturbide	Plataforma Logística Aquitania-Euskadi – Technician
Rosend Bosch	Technical Assistance



The following people apologised for not attending the meeting:

- John Cordwell, from Gloucestershire
- Colin Eaketts, from Wales
- Joelle Ballarin, from Aquitaine
- Julián Bonet, from the Principate of Asturias
- Mar Chao, from the Xunta de Galicia
- Marín Vazquez, from the regional Government of Cantabria
- Alfonso Rodriguez, from Junta de Castilla y León

Mr. Gillaizeau, Regional Councillor for Pays de la Loire welcomed those attending.

In his presentation on projects related to passenger and goods transport en Pays de la Loire, Mr. Gillaizeau emphasised, firstly, the improvements in the most sustainable transport mode such as rail and maritime transport, and as well the actions with a social component: the improvement of accessibility conditions for persons with reduced mobility, assistance to workers and senior citizens to facilitate their travel, etc.

Following Mr. Gillaizeau's presentation, and after solving some initial technical problems with the simultaneous translation, Mireia Elkororibe, Coordinator of the Atlantic Arc Transport Group (AATG), began the session with a round of introductions by all those attending.

CURRENT COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REGARDING TRANSPORT

Next, the Coordinator began the usual presentation on current community affairs in transport issues, this time with two main themes:

- Commission Communication 317/08 on state aid for the launch of Motorways of the Sea
- Action plan for the deployment of intelligent transportation systems (ITS)

FUTURE ATLANTIC SPACE COOPERATION PROJECT 2007-2013

The following speaker was the Technical Assistant who presented the results of the consultation of the regions on their priority issues in order to decide on a future cooperation project, within the Atlantic Space Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.

Of the four projects presented, the nine regions that responded with their views clearly favoured the study of logistics platforms: **Improvement of the efficiency of the network of logistics platforms in the Atlantic Corridor.**



The two additional projects proposed by two of the regions consulted must also be noted:

- Study of rail traffic harmonisation and management (suggested by North Portugal)
- Experience sharing on public transport systems in rural areas (suggested by Castilla y León)

The Technical Assistant proceeded to develop an initial description of the project selected: objectives, possible members of the interregional consortium, organisation into issue-based working groups, work calendar, results; although he noted that the complete definition was still open to submissions from the regions interested.

The representative of ESC (Economic and Social Committee) for Aquitaine proposed that the study should include a benchmarking of the platform already functioning in the Atlantic Arc, to which the Technical Assistant responded that this would be included since it fully coincided with the project philosophy: learning from current experience to improve future logistic platform developments in the Atlantic Corridor.

The Coordinator gave a 15 day time limit to the regions to contribute ideas for the detailed development of the project, and regretted that only one idea could be selected since the other project proposed were also interesting.

The Basse Normandie region expressed its wish to take part in the project, and added that, up till now, only a few initiatives have been presented to the Atlantic Space Cooperation Programme, so the possibility of success is high.

Isabelle Gardon of Pays de la Loire asked what the calendar was for calls for proposals for the Cooperation programme. A representative of Nantes Metropole explained that on April 2nd a meeting was to held in Madrid to put forward the conditions for the upcoming call for proposals (for more information see <http://atlanticarea.inescporto.pt/>).

Mireia Elkoroiribe proposed requesting more information from the Basque Government and, to conclude discussion of the subject, also called for a region willing to lead the project, an essential figure to ensure that the proposal goes forward.



PRESENTATION OF THE GREEN PAPER ON THE TEN-T

In line with the meeting agenda, discussion was opened on the presentation of the Green Paper on the TEN-T (Trans-European Network - Transport) recently published by the European Commission. The presentation includes two parts:

- A first part of the Green Paper presentation, presented in February this year by the Commission: summary of TEN-T policies followed up till now, future challenges for the trans-European transport network and options for the future development of the TEN-T.
- A second part which noted the points of convergence and divergence between the earlier document prepared by the AATG to contribute to the drafting of the Green Paper and its final content.

Specifically, the Green Paper summarises some of the reflections on the matter earlier sent by the AATG, but leaves out others which will have to be noted and requested once again in the public consultation process open until 30th April.

In relation to the consultation process opened, discussion began on the content of a possible AATG document responding to the Green Paper, document which would be prepared jointly with the Conference of the Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC).

As a starting point, two documents are available:

- The CAAC response document, already drafted with the idea of being a joint document from the CAAC and the AATG.
- A draft response document to the Green Paper by the AATG, which was presented during the meeting (since it had not yet been circulated to the regions).

The AATG Coordinator asked for contributions to this consultation on the TEN-T Green Paper for inclusion in the common response document. For this, a response period of approximately 15 days was opened, which will be immediately communicated to all the regions with a double objective:

- Prepare a draft joint response, from the CAAC and the AATG, before 17th April, the day on which the CPMR working group on the TEN-T is to meet in Zaragoza (Aragon).
- Complete the definitive joint response document to be sent to the DG of Energy and Transport before the closure of the consultation period on 30th April.

None of those present objected to this calendar and the Coordinator then gave the floor to Patrick Anvrouin, director of the CPMR, who recalled the CPMR's very active role in this issue and clarified the upcoming calendar of activities for discussion of the TEN-T:



- 16-17th April, meeting in Zaragoza of the work group coordinated by Aragon, with the participation of representatives of the different geographical commissions (including that of the Atlantic Arc) and experts on the TEN-T.

The objective of the meeting is to set out the work method and the calendar to define an official CPMR position. This official position will be presented at the meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPMR in Odessa (Ukraine) planned for June 2009.

- In Odessa it is expected that detailed analysis will be made of aspects of the new TEN-T relating to conceptual bases, financing details, corridors, nodes, etc.
- During the first half of 2010, in line with the calendar which the Commission is to define, another meeting of the CPMR will be held to further discuss its contribution to the review of the TEN-T.

Regarding the drafts of contributions to the public consultation process on the Green Paper, Mr Anvrouin stated that the documents of the Baltic Sea Commission and Atlantic Arc Commission have the format and background required. He also predicted that the geographical contributions from the CPMR will stress the following aspects:

Motorways of the Sea

Territorial cohesion

Possible: demographic evolution, the new geopolitical situation (relationship with Russia), etc.

How to overcome the current acceptance of domestic priorities in the TEN-T

The structure of the TEN-T

The governance of the TEN-T

The role of the regions (e.g., on their contribution to financing infrastructures which they did not select)

Infrastructure usage charges

The promotion of maritime and rail transport

The Gothenburg strategy will be brought up, now that it appears to have been put aside in favour of that of Lisbon

The vision of regions "passed through" and of the peripheral regions

Patrick Anvrouin summed up his presentation with an assurance that efforts will be made to make particularly innovative contributions.

Mireia Elkoroiribe reminded the meeting that submissions from the regions for the joint CAAC-AATG contribution project are expected. These will be requested immediately from the regions by Gothenburg.



Next, the representatives of the CAAC presented their proposal for a joint contribution, stating that there are definitely enough elements in common with the AATG draft for a joint contribution to be agreed upon.

According to the CAAC, a reading of the Green Paper raises three questions:

1. What role will the Atlantic Space play in the Europe of the future?

There is a risk that the Atlantic Space will be considered an area already served by infrastructures, when in reality it is neither a competitive nor unified area. For this reason the territorial cohesion criteria must be maintained.

2. What governance should the TEN-T have?

The Commission passes on the responsibility for the non-execution of the TEN-T to the member states, but forgets that the resources contributed by the EU have steadily dwindled.

For example, while the EU has reduced its participation in the financing of the Atlantic seafront rail corridor, the states have sought help from the regions to compensate for the lack of resources. Nevertheless, the role of the regions in the planning and execution of the TEN-T has never been fully recognised.

The role to be played by the cities and regions in the definition of the priority network must be defined.

3. How can operational aspects be resolved?

The differentiation between freight and passengers can be positive, as long as this does not make it necessary to double-track all the corridors selected.

The definition of an overall network is necessary, but the definition of a secondary network to ensure capillarity also seems to be a desirable objective.

Interoperability, both in systems and in information, is also an objective.

Maritime-land intermodality (with road and with rail) must be developed to ensure that unnecessary freight interchange takes place, especially taking into consideration that the Atlantic seafront is the Europe's main entryway.

Current points of congestion (Pyrenees, Paris, etc.) must be removed in order to create an adequate connection to the rest of Europe, both Northbound and Southbound and towards Eastern Europe:

The Coordinator explained that she had no doubt that the final joint contribution would emphasise all the areas where the two groups coincide, which are numerous. She added that both groups are seeking recognition of the role of the regions and cities in the definition of the TEN-T priority network, and the creation of an overall European network, through the homogenisation of the criteria applied to national networks.



In concluding, Mrs. Elkoroiribe reminded regions of the need to collaborate in drafting the joint CAAC-AATG contribution to the public consultation process for the Green Paper and that it is hoped to have a draft for the 17th April meeting in Zaragoza.

Patrick Anvroin said that he will circulate the contribution of the Baltic Sea Commission to serve as a model.

AGENDA OF UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

On behalf of CAAC and CPMR representatives present in the meeting a final reminder was given of the upcoming activities:

- 17th April: meeting in Zaragoza (Aragon) of the CPMR work group on the TEN-T review.
- 14-15th May: Political Bureau and General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission in Santander (Cantabria), with a session dedicated specifically to transport (for further details see <http://www.arcatlantique.org>).

NEXT MEETING

After these items, Mireia Elkoroiribe, as Coordinator of the AATG, thanked all those present for their participation as well as the simultaneous translation service for the work carried out, and closed the meeting.

The next meeting of the group is planned for Poitiers (Poitou-Charentes) at the end of June (the exact date will be communicated to the regions as soon as possible).