



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE ATLANTIC ARC TRANSPORT GROUP  
GIJÓN, 6TH NOVEMBER 2009**

**PARTICIPANTS:**

Name	Institution
Julián Bonet	Director of Transport and Maritime Affairs, Principado de Asturias
Josu Benaito Villagarcía	Coordinator of the AATG Basque Government – Transport Director
Fabien Mesclier	CPMR – Secretariat - Atlantic Arc Commission
José Manuel Caldevilla	Principado de Asturias - Transport
María José Rodríguez	Principado de Asturias - Transport
Javier Rivas	Basque Government – Transport technician
Julie Miclot	Basse Normandie Regional Council – Service director for European Affairs
Hélène Donnart	Limousin – Regional Economic and Social Council
Pablo Coto Millán	Cantabria – President of the Economic and Social Council
José Luis Ruiz García	Euskadi President of the Economic and Social Council
Arantza Lopez de Munain Zulueta	Euskadi - Manager of studies and projects for the EESC
Arantza Iturbide	Aquitania-Euskadi Logistics Platform– Technician
Irene Andrés Moro	Cantabria - CTL Foundation
Rosend Bosch	Support person

Apologies for non-attendance were received from the following:

- Joelle Ballarin of Aquitaine
- Helene Fortier of Pays de la Loire
- John Cordwell of Gloucestershire
- Kevin Travers of Hampshire
- Nuno Almeida of Region Norte
- Miguel Burgarin of Galicia



The meeting began with a presentation by Julián Bonet, Director of Transport and Maritime Affairs for Asturias, on the transformation of the railway system in Asturias.

Julián Bonet referred to the region's mining background and the rapid development of railways through the large number of mine-based lines which, little by little, fell into disuse. However, it has been possible to restore some of these to provide a modern passenger rail service. Thus, as well as the region's established FEVE and RENFE services, the government wants to launch new train-tram services in the most built up areas, in most case taking advantage of FEVE routes.

Another project to improve public transport in the least densely populated areas is the change of conditions in the concession of school bus lines (which are used to transport pupils from rural areas to school every day), so that these can also be used to provide a scheduled passenger service to the wider population. Julián Bonet mentioned the enormous complexity of this process of changing the concessions system.

Josu Benaito, Coordinator of the Group of Transportation of the Atlantic Arc (AATG) and Transport Director for the Basque Government, asked about the rolling stock to be used for the train-tram services. Julián Bonet replied that rolling stock will be new and specifically designed for the service intended, although FEVE tracks will be used and FEVE will also be the operator.

## **CURRENT COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REGARDING TRANSPORT**

The AATG's Support person gave a presentation on current EU transport affairs centred on the recent reports presented by the European Coordinators of the different TEN-T priority projects with respect to both the future policies of the TEN-T and the evolution of priority project number 3 (the south-west European high speed rail line) in the Atlantic Arc.

The document of the nine European Coordinators on the review of TEN-T policies reached the following conclusions:

- They support the adoption of a core network to boost the market and the demand
- They give priority to the connection of the EU with external networks in third countries in ways that allow quick and competitive access to other markets.
- They propose to build a high quality network that will contribute to reducing emissions, with significant energy to be put into rail, maritime and river-based infrastructures.
- They insist that the European network must become truly interoperable and safe, with the prior adoption of the necessary legal and technical standards for the entire EU.
- They demand differentiated treatment for freight transport in both project management and financing.



- They also demand that efforts must be concentrated on freight corridors and, in particular, on ports
- Finally, they stress the need for the required quality in services between the different hubs as a key element in the logistics chain.

With respect to the report by Coordinator Etienne Davignon on priority project n° 3, the current situation of the Atlantic network was described. The reports states that the Vitoria-Dax cross-border section is one of the most complex due to the lack of common studies made on it, while also stating the need for assurances that the current rail infrastructure between Madrid and Burgos will be adapted to UIC gauge to allow goods trains to proceed to and from France.

Among the final proposals in the report, the Support person stressed the need for an overall vision of infrastructure and services, for a corridor-based approach, a constructive dialogue among the agents involved with the creation of a permanent Franco-Spanish group, a transparent system of information on the project, and finally a harmonised procedure for authorisation of cross-border projects.

The subsequent debate centred on the management of the rail infrastructure (by state institutions like the ADIF or RFF) and on the improvement and organisation of services by the regions (in the French case). Hélène Donnart, of Limousin, explained how her region's investments in the improvement of rolling stock were unable to be fully exploited due to the poor condition of the rail infrastructure, and the region had been unable to secure the RFF's commitment to improve this.

In turn, Julián Bonet and Josu Benaito explained the Spanish situation in which the regions do not participate so actively in the organisation of services, it being the operator (RENFE or FEVE) which really manages them with the cooperation to a greater or lesser degree (in some cases even with economic assistance) of the regional governments.

## **REPORT OF COORDINATOR DE OLIVEIRA ON THE MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA**

Before the presentation of the reports by the Coordinator Luis Valente de Oliveira on TEN-T priority project n° 21 concerning the Motorways of the Sea, the meeting was addressed by the Minister for the Environment, Land Use Planning and Infrastructures for the Principado de Asturias, Francisco González Buendía, who attended especially to welcome and greet the AATG members present in Gijón.

Following this, the presentation of the project dedicated to the Motorways of the Sea began.



The presentation was divided into two parts:

- A presentation of Coordinator Oliveira's 12 recommendations for future development of the Motorways of the Sea: integration of infrastructures and services, improved connections, development of intelligent services, improved education and training of human resources, integrated procedures and operations along the entire door-to-door chain, support for technological development actions, improved articulation of the different financial instruments, extension of the European experience to North Africa and the Sub-Saharan regions, among others.
- A summary of the current situation of the Motorways of the Sea in the Atlantic Arc after the decision on the Franco-Spanish tendering process for two new services: Gijón-Nantes Saint Nazaire and Vigo-Nantes Saint Nazaire-Le Havre (with a future extension to Algeciras).

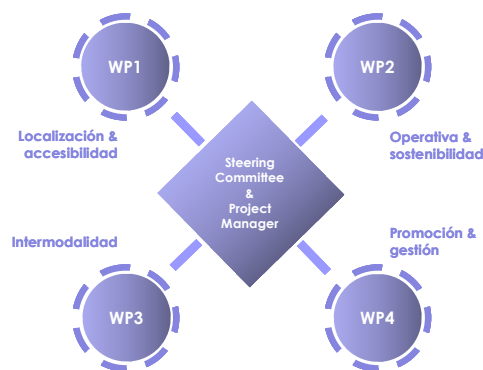
In spite of the difficulties imposed by the current economic crisis, Julián Bonet concluded that it was indeed expected that the concessionaire would be able to launch the new Motorway of the Sea as soon as possible between the port of Gijón and the port of Nantes-Saint Nazaire.

## EFFIPLAT PROJECT

The Support person is working on a complete description of the EFFIPLAT transnational cooperation project promoted by the AATG regions.

Thanks to the comments made on the previous project description, expressed at Poitiers and those subsequently received by email (Pays de la Loire, Aquitania...) the project description has been modified in certain ways:

- The number of WPs has been reduced to four (the old WP4 has been integrated in the WP2):





- A Support figure has been envisaged as necessary to guarantee the operation and provide technical support to the WPs, and similarly, the figure of Project Manager is also considered necessary
- As well as a final recommendations document, the creation of an Atlantic Arc Platforms Network has been planned due to the logistical efficiency which would outlive the project
- The budget has been restructured to include the Support person
- To close the budget, a response from the Management Authority is pending on how to remunerate the work of regional government technicians or that of the private agents participating in the WP.

Julie Miclot, of Basse-Normandie, completed her initial remarks, via email, with the following comments:

- She proposed to merge WP1 and WP2
- She proposed to strengthen the intermodality area (WP3) through greater presence of the ports and port activities
- She proposed to include subjects related to regulation and safety (eg, in the WP2)
- She thought that a 10 month period could be insufficient
- She stated that, in her opinion, remuneration for work by private technicians in WPs was a subject that had to be studied since the regulations of the programme were very restrictive.
- She also stressed that the project had to be especially directed at multimodal platforms

The Support person agreed to study these observations in detail and said that they would be largely accepted.

Fabien Mesclier, of the CPMR, asked for a list of project participants and for the name of the project leader. The Support person orally named the regions that have confirmed their participation (Asturias, Euskadi, Aquitania, Pays de la Loire, Basse-Normandie, Aquitania-Euskadi Logistics Platform...) and commented that the project leader has still not been decided.

Julián Bonet, of the Principado de Asturias, announced that for his part he would push for participation in the project by ZALIA (publically owned company for Logistics Activity Areas in Asturias) and FEVE (regional rail operator).

The calendar that the coordinator proposed was to define the project description and the list of participants before the end of the year. To achieve this, regions were asked to send their



observations on the project description as soon as possible, as well as the list of participants in their region.

On the other hand, the Support person agreed to send the new project description with the economic aspects resolved as soon as possible after resolving the inquiry to the Management Authority for the Atlantic Space programme (North Portugal Region).

## **PRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN ACTION PLAN FOR URBAN MOBILITY**

Rosend Bosch, the Support person, presented the Action Plan on Urban Mobility recently developed by the European Commission.

This plan consists of 20 actions programmed between 2009 and 2012, aimed at defining the European Union's action in the framework of the Green Paper on Urban Mobility. These 20 actions are grouped in six thematic areas:

- Promotion of integrated policies, such as the generalisation of sustainable urban mobility plans.
- Focusing on citizens' needs: improving information on journeys, improving accessibility for people with mobility restrictions...
- Greening urban transport: support for research into low or zero emission vehicles.
- Strengthening funding: optimising sources of finance.
- Sharing experiences and knowledge: creation of an observatory on urban mobility...
- Optimisation of urban mobility: intelligent transport systems, urban goods transport.

In this line of work, Julián Bonet explained the work being carried out in Asturias: they are working to introduce Operational Help Systems into public transport, and have introduced information on all public transport in Asturias into Google Maps.

## **ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION: A STRATEGY FOR THE ATLANTIC ARC**

Fabien Mesclier, of the CPMR, presented his document entitled: INTEGRATED STRATEGY FOR THE ATLANTIC ARC. This strategy proposes three objectives:

- Respond, in a more effective way, to the transnational challenges which affect the Atlantic regions: protecting the territory and, at the same time, appreciating its value.
- Apply integrated maritime policies in the Atlantic Arc sphere



- Prepare future European policies adopting an integrated vision

For the special field of transport, the priorities would be: accessibility, competitiveness and clean transport

As priority projects for the Atlantic Arc, Fabien Mesclier mentioned:

- Completion of the North-South rail axis (priority project n° 3 of the TEN-T)
- Creation of a West-East rail corridor which connects the Atlantic Space with Central Europe
- Increase in Short Sea Shipping and Motorways of the Sea along the Atlantic coast
- Development of an Atlantic logistics centres network
- Developing the full potential of Atlantic ports and airports
- Shipbuilding

To conclude, Fabien Mesclier requested the AATG's help in preparing the Atlantic Arc's transportation strategy, in parallel with the TEN-T review process and with the preparation of Maritime Day 2010 (19-21 May 2010 in Gijón) organised by the Atlantic Arc Commission in order to define its future strategy.

Specifically, Fabien Mesclier called on the AATG to present and debate its contribution to the Atlantic Arc Commission's transport strategy during the group's next meeting.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Josu Benaito, as AATG Coordinator, closed the meeting, thanking those present for their participation, and on behalf of the Principado de Asturias inviting them to attend a visit to the port of Gijón expansion works and then to share a meal at the Port Authority headquarters.

The next meeting of the group is planned for Portugal as a first option, in late March or early April (the exact date will be communicated to the regions as soon as possible).