



Minutes of the Atlantic Arc Commission Coordination Committee meeting

Wednesday 3 March 2010
- Fundación Galicia Europa, Brussels -

List of participants: see link: [List of participants](#)

1- The European Commission's priorities for integrated maritime policy and progress report on the Atlantic communication: Yves Auffret, member of Commissioner Damanaki's cabinet, presented the work in progress and future guidelines of DG Mare, focusing on the following:

- The action plan launched at the end of 2007 at the same time as the Blue Book is being taken forward: 60 out of 65 actions are either in progress or have been completed: [More information](#)

- In November 2009, the European Council tasked the Commission with rolling out the integration of the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP): development of maritime sectors and industries, development of maritime governance in the Member States and reflection on economic growth, the environmental and social dimension of IMP: [More information](#)

- The guidelines of the Barroso Commission: taking forward efforts to integrate this policy: motorways of the sea, maritime spatial planning, maritime surveillance system, EU scientific data network [More information](#) (page 25).

- EU 2020 Strategy adopted by the College of Commissioners: [More information](#)

- On taking up her post, Commissioner Damanaki set two main work areas:

- Consolidating IMP by developing related tools: maritime spatial planning, European maritime surveillance (civil and military) and scientific knowledge of the sea (EMODNET, maritime Atlas, etc.)
- Developing so-called "blue zones", which means including the maritime dimension in EU policy areas such as transport, research, external relations, social issues (social protection, training, occupational retraining, etc.), combating piracy and development of the islands, etc.

Finally, Yves Auffret explained that the Atlantic Arc is a strategic area within EU Integrated Maritime Policy. DG Mare will specifically focus on drafting a communication about this area.

Questions:

How will IMP be involved in the EU 2020 Strategy and the budget: during her presentation before the European Parliament, Mrs Damanaki undertook to develop an instrument to support IMP, though she did not specify whether this would be a specific fund or whether it would be integrated into other financial instruments (between now and 2013 and for the post 2013 period). She also stated that this tool would remain separate from the financial instrument of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Content of the Atlantic Communication: Yves Auffret explained that the Commission's work was not yet at a sufficiently advanced stage to be able to give any guidelines on the content of this document. However, he promised to support the proposals put forward by the Regions.

Link between IMP and other policies, especially future cooperation instruments: Yves Auffret explained that DG Mare's priority was to continue improving coordination with other EU policies. An interservices group within the Commission bringing together 25 DGs had therefore been set up and Mrs Damanaki was chairing a formation of the College of Commissioners. Regarding the issue of the Atlantic Communication, Luis Cuervo specified that DG Mare was working hand in hand with DG Regio. With regard to the timetable, the Communication was due to be issued in March 2011.

2 - Presentation of the "Sea and Coastal Areas" intergroup of the European Parliament: After mentioning the major role played by CPMR in the emergence of the intergroup, Florent Saint-Martin, Corinne Lepage's parliamentary assistant, recalled the group's main objectives:

- To coordinate the EP's positions on maritime issues: fisheries, environment, industry, employment and social affairs, budget, etc.
- To raise issues that have so far not been given much profile during parliamentary debates: coastguard, marine energies, waste, adaptation to climate change, etc.

He then mentioned the possibility of organising a seminar on macro-regional strategies with the aim of discussing the feasibility of reproducing the "Baltic model". Finally, he stressed the possibility of giving a parliamentary dimension to the Atlantic strategy.

Jean-Michel Arrivé wanted to know more about the intergroup's thoughts on the instruments used to deliver integrated maritime policy (cooperation programmes, cohesion policy). In his view, it was necessary to look into how funds could be better coordinated and territorialised. Florent Saint-Martin replied that he would include this question in the intergroup's discussions, though he did point out that the European Parliament had no influence over how income from the EU budget was used.

3- Lobbying for an integrated strategy for the Atlantic Arc

A- Activity report and next steps in the lobbying process

Analysis of operational programmes and identification of Atlantic actors - Rosa Espósito and Juan Gago, Principado de Asturias: cf. Powerpoint: [The presentation by Asturias](#)

Analysis of replies to surveys - Fabien Mesclier: cf. Powerpoint [Replies to the survey](#)

Next steps in the lobbying process: Fabien Mesclier proposed that the Atlantic Arc Commission should continue its political lobbying by stepping up links with the European Commission, Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and Member States. Furthermore, the priority now is to work on the content of the strategy by identifying the priorities per theme and giving thought to the associated instruments (governance, future EU policies).

Rafael Hueso, from the Basque Government gave an account of the meeting between the Lehendakari, Patxi López, and the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Moratinos. During this meeting, the Minister proposed that the Atlantic strategy should be presented at the next European Council meeting in June, the idea being that the Council would then task the Commission with preparing this strategy. Moreover, the Minister suggested that a meeting should be organised in 2011 between the governments of the 5 Atlantic Arc states to discuss the actions that need to be undertaken at Atlantic Arc level. Rafael Hueso proposed that a letter should be written to Mr Moratinos asking him to confirm his commitments. He stated that the Regions would be involved in this Conference. His colleague, Marta Marín, added that it was vital to act now to take advantage of a very favourable

climate, i.e. Spanish Presidency of the EU and recognition of the concept of territorial cohesion in the Lisbon Treaty.

Maria José Rodríguez, speaking on behalf of the Principality of Asturias, evoked the speech by Manuel Chaves, Spanish Government Minister in charge of territorial policy, at the CPMR's Political Bureau meeting on 15-16 February last in Gijón. He had also provided support in delivering an integrated strategy for the Atlantic Arc.

B- Discussion on the content of the strategy

a- Content of the strategy

In relation to the strategy, Ronan McAdam, from Poitou-Charentes Region, recalled the major role played by territorial cooperation. He believed that cooperation should continue to contribute towards the delivery of EU policies. However, at present, it was difficult to measure its impact owing to a lack of indicators. He recalled that there had been four fact-finding missions carried out under the [Interreg IIIB-Atlantic Area](#) (water, maritime safety, climate change, marine energies) which had helped to identify 26 strategic projects for the Atlantic area.

Coming back to the issue of breaking down the Atlantic into sub-basins (an idea raised in the survey), Jean-Michel Arrivé from Aquitaine Region acknowledged that some issues needed to be dealt with on a smaller scale than within the Atlantic area as a whole. However, he dismissed the idea of a systematic breakdown of the Atlantic Arc. He believed that it was important to implement an efficient system of governance involving EU and national levels and regional and local government. Furthermore, it was necessary to give a high profile to the maritime dimension of the strategy and to focus on a limited number of themes. While sharing this view, Rafael Hueso recalled that some Atlantic issues were also land-based (e.g. rail).

Luis Cuervo from DG Mare explained that the opinion of Member States would be a determining factor when drafting the European Commission's communication on the Atlantic Arc. The approach would be to focus on the one hand on the general issues faced by the Atlantic Arc and, on the other, on issues concerning specific areas. The communication would not go into detail about the actions to be developed. It would be left up to the States, Regions and economic operators to specify these.

Tamara Guirao, from the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, presented the issues on which the CAAC had been working and which could constitute the urban strand of the Atlantic Arc strategy, namely urban mobility, sustainable urban development (in relation with the Leipzig Charter and the Covenant of Mayors), networking between research centres (*Know Cities* project) and trans-Atlantic relations (twinning): [More information](#)

To sum up, Christophe Le Foll, from Basse-Normandie Region, underlined three points that had arisen from the discussion:

- Subsidiarity/governance: we need to develop an overview of the Atlantic then identify issues at the most relevant scale.
- We need to take advantage of the current favourable climate to involve all actors.
- The maritime dimension is a priority but not exclusive. Furthermore, work areas need to be limited to issues specifically affecting the Atlantic.

b- Priority Issues

Atlantic Arc Commission Transport Group (AATG): Rafael Hueso recalled the main purposes of the group: EU policy watch, contribution to the debates on urban mobility and the TEN-T review and preparation of a project on logistics platforms. Finally, he recalled that the AATG had contributed to the enquiry on the Atlantic strategy and that it would be taking forward its action to promote this strategy. These different points would be addressed at the group's next meeting on 17 March in Brussels.

Marine energies:

- *Presentation of the ATN study on renewable marine energies:* Pablo Coto-Millán, Chair of the ATN, and Daniel Ruiz Schaefer, Secretary General of Cantabria's Economic and Social Committee, presented the content of this study that was currently being finalised. It presents the state of play of the political, technical, economic, financial, social and environmental situation regarding the development of marine energies within the Atlantic Arc. Although this geographic area has a real comparative advantage in this field, the study points out shortcomings in terms of strategic planning and the legal framework, flaws in the connection of Atlantic territories to the EU grid or a lack of political will to encourage the installation of these types of energies.

- *Information on the fact-finding mission on renewable marine energies under the Interreg IIIB-Atlantic Area programme:* Ronan McAdam recalled the main recommendations set out in the document and the priority cooperation projects that had been identified: [Interreg IIIB-Atlantic Area](#)

c- Summary of the discussion on the priorities of the strategy and the future actions to be implemented

- Regarding the method, Jean-Michel Arrivé and Sylvie Couratin stressed the importance of involving politicians in the debate on the priorities of the strategy. The General Assembly could in this respect be a good time to discuss this. Ronan McAdam suggested focusing on the objectives to be met, i.e. encouraging the emergence of strategic projects.

- The participants stated that they wished to limit the number of issues addressed by the strategy. Four priority themes were raised during the discussions:

- Governance;
- Maritime affairs: maritime safety, fisheries, planning, etc.;
- Peripherality: transport (maritime or other) ;
- The future (medium- and long-term): energies, innovation, green economy, etc.

- Two points were highlighted: to gain a more detailed knowledge of the needs of Atlantic territories (especially using indicators and mapping) and to have a forward vision of the challenges facing these territories in the medium- and long-term. Christophe Le Foll proposed that a meeting should be organised with Atlantic universities and cartographers (IAAT) to help identify these needs.

- Timetable of upcoming meetings:

- 17 March: Meeting of the Atlantic Arc Commission Transport Group (Brussels)
- 15 and 16 April: Seminar on marine energies (Santander, Cantabria-Spain)
- 21 May: Maritime Day – Workshop organised by the Atlantic Arc Commission (Gijón, Asturias-Spain): four subjects will be addressed: environment, climate change, transport and governance.
- 17-18 June: Joint General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission/CAAC (Rennes, Brittany-France): the aim is to hold a political discussion on the basis of an issues paper.