



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE ATLANTIC ARC TRANSPORT GROUP
BRUSSELS, 17 MARCH 2010**

PARTICIPANTS:

Name	Institution
Josu Benaito	AATG Coordinator Basque Government – Transport Director
Javier Rivas	Basque Government – Transport technician
Fabien Mesclier	CPMR – Technical Secretariat
Patrick Anvrouin	CPMR - Director
María González Pereda	Cantabria – Transports Division
Hélène Fortier	Pays de la Loire – Responsible of Freight and Mobility Programme
Marion Peronnet	Bureau Aquitaine Europe – Transport technician
Cédric Lehuédé	Région Basse-Normandie
Philippe Vanderpotte	Antenne Interrégionale Auvergne-Centre-Limousin in Brussels
Rosa Expósito	Asturias Bureau in Brussels
Julio Gabriel Mercado Batista	Fundación Galicia Europa
Arantza Lopez de Munain Zulueta	Euskadi – Studies and projects Manager of ESC Basque
Arantza Iturbide	Plataforma Logística Aquitania-Euskadi – Technician
Pablo Coto Millán	Economic and Social Council and ATN - President
María Garayo	Technical Assistance

Josu Benaito, Coordinator of the Arc Atlantic Transport Group welcomed and thanked the participants for their attendance and started the meeting in accordance with the planned agenda, with the first item being the current community affairs regarding transport.



CURRENT COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REGARDING TRANSPORT

Maria Garayo from Technical Support presented four issues related to the current community affairs regarding transport:

- **The opening up of international passengers transport by rail from January 2010:**
The ability to run international rail services with cabotage rights has been opened up to private companies holding licences and safety certificates. The liberalisation envisages the adoption of safeguard measures to avoid endangering the economic stability of regional and national public rail services.
- **Creation of a helpdesk on Motorways of the Sea:** Its objective is to eliminate hurdles in the launch phase for Motorways of the Sea projects, and assist operators in the search for co-financing solutions.
- **Madrid Declaration on Single European Sky:** The objective of this is to develop the implementation of the second Single European Sky package. Among other issues, this package is aimed at reducing the cost of flights and their environmental impact, as well as improving capacities and current safety results.
- **Declaration by the Regions on the future of the European shipbuilding industry:**
Support is sought from the Atlantic Arc regions for the implementation of an emergency programme for the industry.

ATLANTIC RAIL CORRIDOR STRATEGY

Josu Benaito presented this initiative whose core objective is to ensure that the Atlantic rail axis is operational as soon as possible. For this purpose, a public-private partnership will be created to promote lobbying and implementation of certain projects such as studies, promotion of specific services, etc.

This initiative from the Basque Government is intended to be an effective response in both infrastructure aspects and technical and legal terms to overcome the existing difficulties in rail connection of rail transport which mean it only has a testimonial presence when compared with road transport (e.g. only 400 rail wagons pass through the Biriatou border crossing for every 20,000 trucks that use it).

Arantza Iturbide then presented the main components of the initiative:

- The aim is to create a network including the main players (regions, logistic parks, chambers of commerce, transport industry companies, rail, maritime and road operators, professional associations and universities), in order to reinforce the Atlantic rail freight corridor and improve the quality and efficiency of rail services.



- Actions envisaged:

Preparation of studies, conferences and communication for the promotion of rail and inter-modal transport.

Participation in meetings of decision-making work groups at regional, national and European scale.

Monitoring the implementation of the action plans of regional and national governments and the EU in terms of rail infrastructure.

After the presentation of the project Josu Benaito emphasised the willingness of the Basque Government to present the initiative in different forums such as the Atlantic Arc assembly and to organise meetings in each country (Portugal, France, Spain and United Kingdom) in order to obtain the support of the maximum number of public and private entities.

In response to Fabien Mesclier's question on whether the initiative can be identified with the TEN-T project No 3, Josu Benaito indicated that it has the same main axis as priority project No 3 but goes beyond it because the aim is the integration of players and entities from other geographical environments affected by it, such as northern Europe, in particular, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Scandinavian countries.

Philippe Vanderpotte, asked whether this initiative could affect the Centre-Limousin. Jose Benaito explained that it attempts to integrate as many connections as possible and so this would include those of a transversal character, such as the one planned between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean spaces.

CPMR ACTION ON THE TEN-T REVIEW

Patrick Anvroin explained the calendar of actions planned with regard to the TEN-T review in the next months for both the CPMR and community institutions (Commission and Council). Thus:

- The CPMR supports and promotes the efforts of the inter-commissions working group on the TEN-T coordinated by the region of Aragón
- March 2010: The **Experts Group** of the **European Commission** reviewed the guidelines on the TEN-T. It is not known yet whether the documents prepared will be available online in April
- April 2010: The **CPMR** will draft a position statement **on conceptual, mapping and financial aspects of the TEN-T review**. For this purpose, it expects to receive work elements from the different commissions.
- May 2010: The European Commission **will publish a reference document on the methodological aspects of the TEN-T review** which will be used as the base for public discussion.



- June 7th 2010: CPMR is holding a seminar in Zaragoza. It is hoped that the geographical commissions will have prepared and submitted their contributions for this seminar.
- June 8th-9th 2010: Meeting of Transport Ministers with stakeholders in Zaragoza, which will discuss the European Commission document.
- June 24th 2010: The Council will adopt a position after considering the results of the Zaragoza seminar
- September-2010: The Commission will prepare a **proposal on financial perspectives after 2013**
- Autumn 2010: The CPMR should make progress on the geographical proposals
- November 2010: The Commission will publish the **review of the White Paper**. Subjects such as carbon reduction, technological advances, energy efficiency and governance proposals would seem to be central to the review

ATLANTIC ARC STRATEGY

Fabien Mesclier explained that the priority targets of the Atlantic Arc Strategy are centred on:

1. Identifying the priority challenges in the Atlantic space and contributing ideas for the recovery of sectors such as fishing, shipbuilding and energy
2. Developing an action against climate change
3. Creating a working document on technologies

The CPMR has circulated a survey form to find out the position of the regions with respect to the strategy. The answers obtained show there is a special emphasis on the defence of priority projects, the connectivity of the Atlantic Arc and Eastern Europe, as well as logistics parks.

In June, the Commission will present a document of proposals and the AATG has been requested to make an in-depth study by then of possible actions or proposals concerning transport infrastructures.

For the Atlantic Arc Strategy to become a reality, the CPMR is calling for political mobilisation with regard to the European Commission and the Member States to generate support for its adoption, especially since some may be reluctant.



Fabien Mesclier also informed of upcoming events of the CPMR to be held soon:

- A seminar in Santander (April 15th-16th 2010) on marine energy sources in which a study conducted by ATN (Atlantic Transnational Network of ESC) will be presented.
- A European maritime day to be held in Gijón (May 21st, 2010) in which four topics will be discussed, one of which relates to transport, with the planned participation of the Motorways of the Sea coordinator, Mr. de Oliveira.
- The Atlantic Arc General Assembly on June 17th-18th 2010 in Bretagne.

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE AATG 2010-2012

María Garayo explained that every two years a work programme is presented to the GTAA based on EU priorities in transport, the objectives of the presidency of the Atlantic Arc commission and the priority issues for the participating regions.

On this basis a proposal has been presented which gives priority to the following subjects

- TEN-T review
- Logistics parks and intermodality
- Development of SSS and the Atlantic ports
- Rail projects
- Urban mobility
- Other subjects:
 - Strategy for the Atlantic Arc Commission
 - Infrastructure and services pricing
 - Current EU affairs regarding transport

The work plan aims at setting work guidelines. In any case, the list of subjects proposed is not exclusive, so any regions is able to present proposals and projects which it considers to be of interest for discussion by the AATG.



EFFIPLAT PROJECT

Maria Garayo described the current situation of the **EFFIPLAT Project**

- After consulting the management authority, the primary objective of the project is the creation of a network of multimodal platforms for the Atlantic space. In the execution of this objective, a series of actions will be promoted and developed through the creation and development of four specific work groups. The technical contents are defined and agreed on with the regions which showed interest in participating (Euskadi, Asturias, Aquitania, Poitou Charentes, Basse Normandie, Pays de la Loire).
- Need to strengthen the partnership with Portugal, the UK and Ireland to complete the geographical representation.
- Final budget of the project will depend on the total number of partners.

On the situation of the **Atlantic Space Programme**, Maria Garayo argued that the management authority does not yet know when the next call will be made and whether this will give priority to transport and mobility, with which the EFFIPLAT project is concerned.

For this purpose, the Technical Support proposed the development of the following actions in the March-June period:

- Marketing action in the regions of Portugal, United Kingdom and Ireland to obtain new partners.
- Monitoring the managing authority on the progress of the programme.

María Garayo said she will send the latest version of the project to all members since the project documentation will not be accessible on the Atlantic Arc website until the project is definitive and has been approved.

All these matters will be addressed at the next AATG meeting.

Hélène Fortier asked about the circumstances that led the project to be focused on the creation of a network and whether there are operators interested in participating in the project.

María Garayo explained that the Atlantic Space programme wants to go beyond actions limited to experience-sharing and is calling for tangible results from projects. Initially the project objective was to establish a work group leaving participants to make the decision to creating a network or not in accordance with the results obtained. Given the management authority's position, it seemed more feasible to create the network and develop it with the works to be carried out based on the issues where agreement had already been reached.

In connection with partners, for the moment it has been presented only to regions and not to operators (rail, logistics parks, etc.) because certain regions expressed the difficulty of integrating



them as partners considering as more appropriate, even for the purposes of funding, that they take part as experts in the working groups but not necessarily as partners.

Cédric Lehuédé asked what the definition of a network was in this project. Maria Garayo explained that in this project the network of logistics parks is conceived as an informal mode of cooperation among its partners with regard to an issue of common interest to the regions. Unlike other informal methods, the network involves or presupposes a willingness to continue in cooperation. By way of example, the AATG is a network under the same terms and its dynamics or objectives depend on what members want.

NEXT MEETING

Once all the subjects on the agenda were completed, Josu Benaito, as Coordinator of the AATG, concluded the meeting by thanking those present for their attendance and informed that the next AATG meeting is planned to take place at the end of June in Portugal.