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Extraordinary Assembly of the Atlantic Arc



Rennes (Brittany - France) -18 June 2010

Minutes

Opening session and taking stock of 20 years of Atlantic cooperation

Daniel Delaveau, Lord Mayor of Rennes, welcomed those in attendance, highlighting the importance of the Atlantic for Rennes. Pierre Karleskind, representing the Region of Brittany, announced the Region's commitment to the searching for solutions to the problems of the economy and climate change.

Key figures in the beginnings of Atlantic cooperation, such as Edmond Hervé and Yves Morvan appealed to the need to reflect on a polycentric Europe, improving the situation of the periphery, transport networks, the environment...through a dynamic of constructive lobbying and the search for cooperation with North America, from the perspective of the Atlantic as the front of Europe.

Laurent Beauvais, President of the Atlantic Arc Commission, explained the importance of an integrated maritime policy and large-scale projects that allow the development of the Atlantic Arc in the future. The strategy to be followed, based on past experience, will be based on innovation and closer ties with Atlantic entities and with citizens. Philippe Duron, President of the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, presented the San Sebastián Letter as a route to be followed to achieve these objectives from the cities, through a CAAC that had been strengthened the previous day through the approval of its bylaws.

Session 1: An integrated strategy for the Atlantic Arc - Objective 2013

Sharing views on key sectors for the development of Atlantic territories:

- *Accessibility, mobility, and transportation: Iñaki Arriola López ([presentation](#))*

Using good practices in the development of the high-speed rail line in the Basque Country and the implementation of metro systems in different cities, this presentation proposed the development of a rail corridor covering an integrated area of influence in the Atlantic zones, in order to integrate sea transport with the hinterland and as an instrument for inter-regional cooperation ([more information on the Atlantic rail corridor](#)).

- *Promoting the Atlantic's potential in marine energies: Yann-Hervé De Roeck ([presentation](#))*

Despite the high cost of research and development of renewable energies, the Atlantic holds the necessary potential to provide renewable energies, thanks to its climate conditions (rainfall, tides, wind, wave force, etc.) In this Space, initiatives are underway and operational in western Ireland, eastern Scotland, and pilot projects in central Portugal, the Basque Country (ES), and Brittany (FR), and the western UK. Yann-Hervé De Roeck emphasized the importance of cooperation amongst these test centres to create a critical mass against international competition and provide leadership in the sector of renewable marine energy. At the end of the presentation, he provided the example of a new Technology Platform for renewable marine energy that has been set up in Brest, with both public and private partners. The objectives are: to serve as a research network, coordinate sources of information, and associate itself with the test sites through projects such as "EQUIMAR" on the potential of wind and hydraulic power.

- *The vision of socio-professionals on marine energies and on the integrated strategy for the Atlantic Arc:* Pablo Coto Millán ([presentation](#))

As a conclusion of the studies carried out, the Secretary General of the RTA highlighted the Atlantic's potential for the development of renewable energies. He also mentioned the need for specific technical experts to obtain satisfactory results and the need for an integrated multi-level policy. A significant advance requires a coordinated strategy and the determination of a marine power transport network like the one in the North Sea. The lack of a framework and the investment risk hinder the development of these types of green energies. The solution is to increase awareness of users and involve all of the public sectors. The development of cross-border, inter-regional cooperation must take advantage of the synergies created to offset the lack of large-scale investment.

Debate

Inma Valencia (Government of Cantabria): Inma Valencia announced the creation of a new [working group](#) on marine energy within the Atlantic Arc Commission, which is supported by the president of the Commission and is open to all interested sectors.

Iñaki Arriola López explained the matter of transferability in the area of transportation, which is possible in the case of the Basque Country thanks to autonomy and internal financing. This and other examples in the Atlantic Arc demonstrate that projects must be adapted to the geography and use a nearby government as a base.

Panel discussion: What system of governance for an integrated strategy for the Atlantic?

- *The case of the Irish Sea Region:* Margaret Moore ([presentation](#))

Ms. Moore presented the advances made with the Irish Sea cooperation program, the main objective of which is to involve different agents and sectors to take advantage of synergies. A trans-national plan has been designed as part of a maritime planning dimension. The Irish Sea, considered to be an area of functional cooperation within the Atlantic Space, has defined the planning of maritime space, renewable energies, connectivity, and economic growth as its priorities. Ms. Moore recommended that the need for defined leadership that prevents efforts from being dispersed should be taken into consideration.

- *Example of the Common Fishing Policy:* Benoît Guérin ([presentation](#))

The reform of the Common Fishing Policy reveals the gaps in the governance of fishing zones. Consequently, the Regional Consulting Boards were created, grouping together all of the agents involved in order to facilitate agreement in regard to implementation and a direct link to European institutions. The keys are initiative, a long-term management plan, sustainable fishing on a territorial scale, a regional outlook, and an adapted modification in marine culture. It is also vital to increase the visibility of the agents and the dialogue with the European Commission. These principles are included in the GEPETO project, which the CCR-S would like to submit at the next meeting of the Atlantic Space Interreg.

Debate

Aspects to be improved:

Margaret Moore clarified that the difficulty lies in creating the common work mechanisms, which could block the development of projects that generate sustainable impact. This means that national interests must be overcome to define strategies, as well as maritime planning.

Benoît Guérin proposed the achievement of a real balance between the different marine basins, requiring the establishment of the principle of "ecological approximation" as the basis for common work. He also emphasized the desire to attract partners that would make it possible to obtain financing adapted to the Atlantic scale.

Audience participation:

The national correspondent for the IVB Interreg Atlantic Space program, Bertrand Tourillon announced that the Tracking Committee for this program will meet in October in Nantes to determine the future of the program. He insisted on the need for an integrated policy, setting aside zone-related questions.

The President of the Regional Board of Aquitania, François Maïtia said that an increased contribution by partners for the maritime project, especially in the fishing sector, must begin with the numerous Atlantic regions that support it.

Governance recommendations:

Margaret Moore recommended the establishment of contact with political leaders to start, and good planning of the different stages of the project in order to provide good management.

Benoît Guérin recommended the appropriation and participation in the project, since the involvement of professionals will drive initiatives with a subsidiary perspective.

Preparing for the post-2013 period: What place for an Atlantic macro-region in future EU policies?

- *Spanish Presidency of the EU: Isabel Moya*

Promoted by Spain, the European Council has just approved an integrated maritime strategy for the Atlantic space. This intervention underscores the need for stronger geographic cooperation within the framework of the EU's integrated maritime policy. As demonstrated by the mobilization of the CAAC and the Atlantic Arc Commission, the Spanish presidency considers the involvement of territorial agents in the Atlantic to be vitally important. Ms. Moya also appealed to the solidarity amongst the different agents in a crisis situation and to promote the strategy for sustainable and innovative growth for 2020.

- *French Government: Pierre Dartout*

This presentation highlighted the need for European coordination to confront the problems of maritime transport and safety, among others. The Atlantic Arc has enormous development potential that will contribute to the future of Europe based on continuous cooperation since 1989. Some clear examples: marine and maritime research, maritime safety, economic development, and environmental protection. An integrated maritime policy should not be limited to the coast; the hinterland and inland cities must also play a key role. Based on this, macro-regions could be one of the bases for the future, and France is studying the possibility seriously.

- *Proposals of the CRPM: Eleni Marianou*

A wager on macro-regions (based on the CRPM's definition) as a means to achieve political cohesion at different governmental levels, moving beyond local planes, as a solution to the existing challenges and as a strategy for evolution. The focus is therefore on a complex structure whose objective is to encourage cooperation by pragmatically approaching the current problems. Ms. Marianou proposed a macro-regional program that defines the priority projects and the responsibilities of the different agents (EU, member states, regional and local authorities), articulation between future trans-border cooperation programs and other trans-national programs that seek to improve the exchange of information and real cooperation on the activities carried out.

- *European Commission: David Sweet*

This presentation mentioned the principles required for a future macro-regional strategy, such as the implementation of a common participation strategy, the establishment of better use of funds by setting up large-scale, innovative, and integrated programs, and implementing actions that involve immediate results. However, he was reserved in regard to the evolution of the concept of the macro-region and the popularity that it has taken on.

Session 2: What scenario for the future of the Atlantic Arc?

Renewal of the Cooperation Agreement between the Atlantic Arc Commission and the CAAC

Signing of the agreement that promotes the development of an Atlantic strategy, through collaboration among the cities and regions of the Atlantic space.

Future orientation (presentation of the technical note: «[Proposed guidelines for an Integrated Strategy for the Atlantic Arc](#) »

For **Laurent Beauvais**, the marine problem is an area that must be continued to be developed and that involves not only the nautical and naval industrial sector, but also accessibility, intercommunication, and attractiveness of cities to increase Atlantic visibility. In connection with the sea, the Atlantic Arc is also tied to biodiversity and especially climate change, requiring the cooperation of all of the agents to achieve sustainable economic development. Options for the future such as renewable energies need the push provided by an integrated strategy that involves the coordination of actions and takes advantage of the fruits of the exchange of experiences. It is essential that policies be redefined to lead to a policy of active cohesion, with clear lines in regard to macro-regions. Political lobbying is an instrument to be considered because it promotes specific projects.

For **Philippe Duron**, the positive characteristics of the Atlantic Arc must be preserved based on a regional strategy of political integration, which involves measures for marine safety, protection of the environment, fighting climate change, and green transportation. The dialogue between Europe and citizens by virtue of the principle of subsidiarity is vital. The president of the CAAC also noted that the future lies in the cities because they are the engines that drive regional development. Also, the relatively protected environment of the Atlantic must not forget the problems caused by the significant demographic pressure on the coast, climate change (storms such as Xynthia), and maritime accidents. A convergent policy is needed at the European level, with the constitution of macro-regions one coherent means of progressing towards that.

The EU's commitment

Following the Council's request to present a communication for June 2011, it was announced that the European Commission is going to launch a survey of the agents involved in the Atlantic Arc to determine a maritime strategy.

After five years of integrated maritime policy, Eddy Hartog ([presentation](#)) explained that an integrated maritime policy for the Atlantic is based on two main lines: the economic agenda and the sustainability of the area, developing a strategy that brings regions closer together while keeping Member States involved. Questions that must be integrated include the definition of governance mechanisms and the coherent implementation of transversal policies. The goal is a sustainable ocean that takes advantage of economic wealth and establishes adequate limits on usage to protect marine sources. The EU is contributing to these policies by including them in the 2020 strategy.

In this sense, the contributions of land agents, as well as the documents of the Atlantic Arc Commission and the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities on the integrated strategy for their space are essential. It is important to determine an Atlantic identity and the macro-regional strategy is a possibility to be studied.

One element that Mr. Hartog said must be taken into account is the concept of connectivity: in regard to electrical power as well as to new technologies and the system of transportation. Coordination is also needed, for example, between the measures to promote renewable energy and fishing.

Presentation: Atlantic Watersports Games

From 31 July to 5 August, the 16th Atlantic Watersports Games will be held in Santander (Cantabria, ES). This event will also include a political meeting organized by the Government of Cantabria on the Atlantic strategy.