

**EU strategy for the Atlantic region**

**European Parliament resolution of 9 March 2011 on the European Strategy for the Atlantic Region**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the Council of 14 June 2010, which called on the Commission to draw up a European strategy for the Atlantic region by June 2011,
  - having regard to the public consultation launched by the Commission, with a view to publishing a communication on a European strategy for the Atlantic region,
  - having regard to the EU strategy for the Baltic sea region and to the EU strategy for the Danube region,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the 5th Cohesion Report,
  - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union and Title XVIII of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union set territorial cohesion as an objective of the European Union,
- B. whereas five EU Member States have Atlantic coasts: France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom,
- C. whereas the Atlantic region has its own specific characteristics, namely:
- a dynamic maritime area (thanks to maritime transport, fishing, marine energy, etc.),
  - an area whose fragile environment must be preserved and which is subject to the consequences of climate change (coastal erosion, extreme climatic phenomena),
  - an outlying area within the European Union, with accessibility and connectivity problems and with a low number of major city centres,
- D. whereas these specific characteristics stem from guidelines that transcend national boundaries and for which political answers have to be found at European level,
- E. whereas in June 2010 the Council asked the Commission to develop a strategy for the Atlantic region by June 2011, and whereas the publication of a Commission communication is scheduled for 2011,
1. Asks the Commission to shape as soon as possible the EU strategy for the Atlantic region as an integrated strategy dealing with maritime and territorial issues;

2. Is of the opinion that this strategy should be set within the cohesion policy objective of territorial cooperation (Objective 3), and be based on an integrated, cross-domain and territorial approach, aiming at better coordinating policies between the various levels of governance on a given territory, with a focus on relevant issues; is convinced that European territorial cooperation can contribute widely to the intensification of the integration process within the Atlantic region through a greater participation by civil society in the decision-making process and the implementation of concrete actions;
3. Stresses that the major added value of EU macro-regional strategies is seen in multi-level cooperation, coordination and better strategic investment of available funding, not in additional allocation of resources; underlines the conclusions of the Swedish Presidency regarding no new institutions, no new legislation, no new budgets;
4. Calls for this strategy to be opened to all EU regions along the Atlantic coast, including Macaronesia outermost regions;
5. Believes that the external dimension of this strategy may be reinforced due to the geo-strategic position of Atlantic regions, in particular in the fields of maritime safety and surveillance and in the sphere of international trade relations; is of the opinion that international cooperation and triangular cooperation initiatives also need to be addressed;
6. Believes that this strategy should implement a better coordination of goals and means, with strong links to the EU 2020 strategy and EU policies for beyond 2013; recalls in that respect that this strategy aims at better spending of EU money, not increasing expenditure;
7. Calls for this strategy to be well-connected to EU regional policy and integrated maritime policy and is of the opinion that it should also facilitate synergies with other EU policies such as trans-European transport networks, the common fisheries policy, climate and environment actions, the research and development framework programme, the energy policy, etc.;
8. Believes that the territorial dimension of this strategy is essential and will contribute to EU territorial cohesion; is of the opinion that this territorial dimension will have to address especially opening up, interconnection of transport and energy networks and development of marine energy, development of urban and rural areas and intensification of land-sea ties and of sea-interior waters ties;
9. Reiterates the importance of improving the accessibility in Atlantic maritime regions, and of increasing movement of persons, goods and services in these regions in order to achieve the aims of the internal market and the objective of cohesion policy, especially by the development of short sea shipping and the highways of the sea;
10. Recalls that the maritime dimension is a priority of this strategy, particularly through a maritime basins approach;
11. Strongly commends the promotion and support by the European Commission of the planning and setting up of maritime roads in the Atlantic region, such as the Gijon-Nantes maritime road, as an innovative way to improve and diversify the trans-European transport networks, to influence international trade relations, to stimulate the harbours' economic activity and strengthen tourism, and to contribute to the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions;

12. Is of the opinion that this strategy would address the following issues of common interest: marine energy, environment and climate change, including the prevention and fighting of marine pollution by ships, transport and accessibility, safety, security and surveillance, research, innovation, creative industries, culture, leisure and tourism, marine services and training, and fisheries and the seafood sector;
13. Believes that this strategy must develop synergies between relevant EU, national, regional and local policies and is therefore of the opinion that a renewed multi-level governance based on a closer involvement of EU, national, regional and local authorities is required;
14. Wishes for this strategy to work following a bottom-up approach, starting from local authorities and involving all stakeholders; insists on the necessity of associating regional and local public authorities, Member States, the European Union, private stakeholders and civil society organisations (including interregional networks and organisations concerned) in the design and the implementation of this strategy;
15. Insists that cooperation within the framework of this strategy should first and foremost be based on the needs of the stakeholders concerned and is thus of the opinion that the political priorities addressed have to be decided through a consensus;
16. Is of the opinion that the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) could be an interesting tool to facilitate cooperation within the framework of an EU strategy for the Atlantic region;
17. Is of the opinion that this strategy should be implemented from 2014 onwards and be coordinated with the next multiannual financial framework, and that it should go together with an action plan defined at European level and including a list of structuring projects;
18. Is of the opinion that the internal and external dimensions of this strategy will have to implement an Atlantic allocation of existing Community funds, based on shared priorities;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to set up simplified rules to facilitate the implementation of this strategy and reduce the inherent administrative burden;
20. Calls on the Commission to work closely with the European Parliament in defining the priorities for the development of the EU strategy for the Atlantic region, and calls on the Commission to regularly inform and consult the Parliament on the status of the implementation of this strategy;
21. Will express its views on the future communication of the Commission through an initiative report;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the other relevant institutions.