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CPMR'S PRIORITIES FOR THE BLUE PAPER ON EU MARITIME POLICY

CPMR has already published a series of documents ahead of and in the wake of the publication of the Green Paper. These were circulated to the European Parliament and are available on request from the CPMR General Secretariat.

Once the ongoing consultations and discussions are completed within its network of 153 member Regions, CPMR will unveil its proposals for the end of the EU's public consultation period in June 2007.

The present document should therefore be considered as an informal technical report that does not necessarily fully reflect the organisation's positions.

1 - TWO LEVELS OF INTEGRATION TO BE GIVEN PRIORITY FOR FUTURE EU MARITIME POLICY: REGIONAL LEVEL AND SEA AREAS

Future integrated maritime policy needs to provide EU added value to a range of public policies led in sea and coastal territory. Aside from any new EU instruments that might be envisaged, the actual interest – but also the real difficulty – lies in improving the overall governance of the different policy areas when integrating them to the advantage of populations and regions to boost sustainable economic development and job creation.

For CPMR, two tiers of governance are especially well-adapted to respond to the challenge: the regional level and the interregional level of sea areas.

11 - Encouraging regional maritime planning

This should be one of the priorities of the EU's future maritime action plan. A certain number of Regions are acting as pioneers in this area, such as Tuscany, Schleswig-Holstein and Asturias. We believe it is necessary to:

- assess the experiences currently in progress
- draw lessons regarding good practices and good methodologies.

In addition to this diagnosis, which could be undertaken quickly by the European Commission (Maritime Affairs Task Force – MATF) with the support of CPMR, it is necessary to think about which forms EU incentives could take. In the short term, we might consider:

- setting up an EU network of regions of excellence in this area, which could receive matched funding through the interregional strand of Interreg 4
- introducing an EU "label" awarded to exemplary Regions

- drafting a specimen tripartite agreement between the EU, State and Region on the concerted development of maritime policies between these three tiers of government. Asturias Region is already working on drafting and negotiating this kind of contract in liaison with Madrid and Brussels. The MATF should contribute to this work area, in liaison with the Secretariat General of the Commission.

In order to bring all players concerned by maritime development within a Region round the discussion table, the 2007-2013 period can be used to advantage to set up "Regional Maritime Monitoring Committees". These would be informal bodies and would involve players from institutions, the professional sector and civil society (NGOs, etc.) working in the following sectors: environment, ports and shipping, fisheries, innovation and research. In addition to national and regional authorities, the departments of the relevant DGs of the European Commission could also take part. After 2013, these trial schemes could be put into actual practice for improving regional coordination of European funds such as the ERDF, EEF, Life and Marco Polo.

Financial incentives after 2013 for such initiatives may take various forms:

- awarding a bonus (+?% of the amount or intensity of aid) on the ERDF or EFF for Regions showing an effective and mature coordination
- if a "coastal fund" is introduced as a new EU financial instrument (as advocated by the Committee of the Regions and envisaged by the MATF), it could as a priority be targeted at these exemplary Regions.

12 - Establishing the sea area as a relevant level of sustainable maritime development

This, for CPMR, is one of the most awaited outcomes of the discussions on the Green Paper. Integrated Coastal Zone Management, the ecosystem approach, tourism development, responses to the effects of climate change, managing fish stocks and even harbour development or the location of industrial activities are issues where the reference frameworks can no longer just remain regional or national.

The European Union has understood this and is already developing a series of transnational approaches related to the sea, i.e. marine strategy, Interreg 4, Regional Advisory Committees on Fisheries and motorways of the sea. A certain number of regional conventions cover Europe's maritime territory to preserve the environment, such as Helcom, Ospar and the Barcelona Convention.

Future EU maritime policy needs to bind together these various ingredients in the natural recipients that are the sea basins to come up with a good quality recipe.

The European Commission will doubtless also need to take the initiative to cross-fertilise the different networks, programmes, committees and instruments at transnational level. Experience shows that it is rarely national governments that spontaneously undertake this exercise, since the way their administrative organisation is divided into sector based Ministries hampers their capacity to think and act in a joined up and transnational manner. (How many European States have a Ministry of Maritime Affairs?) Successes in this area can be attributed to initiatives taken at EU level (Regional Advisory Committees on fisheries), interregional level (Atlantic transnational cooperation) or by NGOs (Helcom), or are the result of interregional initiatives being backed by the Commission (e.g. CPMR and DG REGIO which together helped over time to develop the transnational strand of the Interreg programme).

It is therefore necessary to think about governance instruments that oblige States to become involved in the action. CPMR considers that:

- the transnational operational programmes of Interreg 4 definitely provide a unique opportunity to introduce an inter-sectoral organisation at sea area level for 2007-2013; however, this does not necessarily mean that the geographic boundaries of the sea basins should exactly match the 13 Interreg 4B areas. In particular consideration needs to be given to the relevance of areas such as the North Sea and Adriatic. As of 2008, once the running-in period of the cooperation areas is over, each programme needs to set itself the target of introducing aspects (which may be *ad hoc* and informal at first) of the future integrated governance of the sea areas.

- For the Baltic, Black Sea and Mediterranean this gradual introduction should be coherent with the new sea area based cooperation programmes currently being drawn up in the framework of the new neighbourhood policy.

The MATF has a key role and responsibilities here in terms of its ability to bring together the different DGs concerned, i.e. REGIO, ENV, TREN, RELEX, AIDCO and FISH.

For its part, CPMR is organising a seminar on 9 and 10 July 2007 in the Azores with the European Commission and the Portuguese Presidency of the Union to initiate discussions on maritime spatial planning at a global level, and in particular so that Europe might draw for example on Australian and Canadian experiences while also looking at how China is going about tackling what is a huge challenge for the country.

Furthermore, in its document due to be published next June, CPMR will indicate what from a regional point of view constitutes the strategic and thematic priorities and the model projects for the Mediterranean, North Sea, Baltic and Atlantic Arc areas.

Finally, a partnership is under way with the Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation (MSUO, a cooperation project headquartered in Denmark) to prepare the 2007-2013 generation of maritime-based territorial cooperation projects (cross-border and transnational cooperation). This first-class project funded by Interreg 3B in the North of Europe in 2000-2006 has to find the means to take forward its action over the current programming period. It needs to be able to act at European level as a reference point for expertise in maritime cooperation to help support relevant professional projects. DG REGIO and the MATF are asked to jointly acknowledge this necessity.

2- EACH SECTORAL POLICY NEEDS TO IMPROVE THE WAY IT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE MARITIME PRIORITY

It goes without saying that an integrated EU maritime policy cannot be introduced to the detriment of the maritime aspects already included within existing sectoral policies. It is clear that the Green Paper, and now the Blue Paper, are quite rightly focusing on segments of policies that are best adapted to integration, especially those that fall within the sphere of spatial planning, ecosystems and integrated coastal zone management.

CPMR is keen to make sure that the more “specialised” policy areas, such as transport or research, pay more attention to the sea and oceans than they do at present.

It is continuing to campaign on **maritime safety** issues as the Erika 3 package is being negotiated. A seminar on this subject is being organised on 13 and 14 April in Santander and its conclusions will be resumed in CPMR’s final contribution.

The issues of **research and development** are crucial if we want Europe to continue playing a role as a world leader in marine research. CPMR will propose arrangements for taking better account of the sea and oceans in the delivery of FP7. In particular, it seems that an effort needs to be made with regard to the contribution of the sea and coastal regions towards supplying renewable energies – especially in view of the fact that the EU is setting itself ambitious targets in this area. Our proposals regarding research will be drafted in partnership with Eurocean, an umbrella organisation bringing together the main European marine research centres.

With regard to **maritime transport**, CPMR considers that current EU policy lacks ambition. Maritime Regions will have the opportunity to debate this topic in the second half of 2007 with Vice-President Barrot at a seminar in Gijon, within the dual context of the debate on Commissioner Borg’s Blue Paper and the communication on ports policy promised by Mr Barrot.

CPMR considers that in between the motorways of the sea (that are slow to take shape and will concentrate traffic on a small number of selected ports) there is room and need for another EU instrument to support short and medium distance shipping. Discussions at EU level need to give greater consideration to the notion of improving accessibility, which is very much linked to the principle of territorial cohesion.

3 - OUTERMOST REGIONS AND ISLANDS: TWO KEY ELEMENTS OF GEOGRAPHIC SUBSIDIARITY IN FUTURE MARITIME POLICY

The CPMR advocates (see 12) that future maritime policy should be tailored to each of the sea areas with their specific geographic, climatic and institutional features.

Two types of territories deserve special treatment in the light of their geographic situation and related assets, challenges and handicaps. These are the outermost Regions and the islands.

These two groups of Regions are strongly involved in the thought process initiated after the publication of the Green Paper and are conducting their work closely with Commissioner Borg and the MATF.

CPMR will present their proposals in its "final" document next June. Notwithstanding, it invites the *rapporteur* and *co-rapporteurs* of the European Parliament to already establish relations with their representatives.