



PRESS RELEASE

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<h3>LE DRIAN IS THE NEW CPMR PRESIDENT</h3>

Jean Yves Le Drian, President of Brittany (France) is the new President of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR). He was elected during the 38th CPMR General Assembly held on 29, 30 September and 1 October 2010 in Aberdeen (Scotland, UK) at the invitation of **Peter Stephen**, Lord Provost of Aberdeen City Council and **Bill Howatson**, Provost of Aberdeenshire Council.

Just after his election, the new President highlighted the top challenges of his mandate: *“The key policy areas will be cohesion policy, as this is what will help us to develop our assets, and maritime policy which is the root of our identity. However, concentrating on these issues does not mean excluding other areas for action: I will particularly focus on further developing the policy area of accessibility which has not yet reached a level that fulfils our expectations.”*

Regional and maritime policy have been also the major issues of this General Assembly that particularly focused on how regional policy can become a driving force of a new model for European development, and also on the implementation of EU integrated maritime policy.

Johannes Hahn and **Maria Damanaki**, European Commissioners for Regional Policy and for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs respectively took part in the discussions, establishing a real dialogue between CPMR regions and the European Commission.

“I am sure that in the future, Regional Policy will apply to all Regions across Europe and I think that several States already understand this.” **Johannes Hahn** reassured the Presidents present. The Commissioner also stressed that *“Regional Policy has to be considered as an investment policy and not a charitable policy.”* Commissioner Hahn finally emphasised the need to have an integrated approach to cohesion policy. Therefore, for the Commissioner, if we only have sector-based policies we will be spending more for fewer results.

In addition, **Maria Damanaki** welcomed the CPMR idea of a “Maritime Erasmus”. *“This programme, that you call “Vasco de Gama””, she said “looks really promising and could be instrumental for the social dimension of the Integrated Maritime Policy.”* Concerning the economic crisis, she highlighted that it has left its mark on the maritime economy too. *“We now need to work on how maritime policy can trigger growth and both economic and environmental sustainability. In addition, we are convinced that maritime regions can and must serve as key drivers of the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth that the Europe 2020 Strategy will deliver.”* Finally, she reminded participants that the Commission has just established a financial programme of 50 million Euros to support the further development of an Integrated Maritime Policy for 2011, 2012 and 2013.

As Member of the European Parliament, **Lambert Van Nistelrooij**, *Rapporteur* on “The Synergies between the Structural Funds and the Framework Programme for Research and Development” at the REGI Committee, recalled that *“Europe’s target for 2010 of spending 3% of EU GDP on research and development has not yet been realised. Europe is lagging behind countries like the US (2.6%) and Japan (3.4%) and other countries such as China and India are catching up fast”*. For the Dutch MEP, *“in times of severe economic and financial crisis, it becomes more and more clear that policies which enhance competitiveness and innovation are urgently needed to speed up restructuring and investment and to create new business opportunities”*.

Corinne Lepage, Member of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee and Chair of the Seas and Coastal Zones Intergroup, expressed satisfaction at the 50 million Euro budget announced by the

Commissioner, but she also declared that *“Integrated maritime policy must not forget its environmental pillar. We use the sea for a wide range of activities, such as transport, fishing, tourism, aquaculture, defence and so on, but all too often the sectoral policies conflict with one another, at the expense of the protection of the marine environment and biodiversity.”* She also spoke of a strategy for the Atlantic Arc and welcomed the idea of a Maritime Erasmus, which she has proposed with an amendment to the EP Transport Committee.

Mercedes Bresso, Regional Councillor of the Piemonte Region (IT) and President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) also participated in this General Assembly presenting the CoR’s proposals on the future Regional Policy.

Finally, this CPMR General Assembly was also an opportunity to pay tribute to, and to thank, **Claudio Martini**, former President of Tuscany and President of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) since 2002. *“Claudio Martini has helped position the CPMR at the forefront of European interregional organisations”* declared **Jean Yves Le Drian** after having been elected. *“Dear Claudio, do not think that you have finished with the CPMR: we will need you in the Political Bureau and be sure that we will count on your experience and your wisdom.”*

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