



CPMR Manifesto to EU Institutions 2023

***Building together a more sustainable and balanced Europe: Territories matter!
A CPMR Proposal for a new generation of EU Policies***

Preamble

In an ever-evolving world marked by the combined effects of climate change and the energy crisis, the COVID- pandemic, migration and the ongoing conflicts at the doorstep of Europe such as Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war creating geopolitical instability, our shared vision for a more united, impactful and prosperous Europe closer to the needs of the citizens and built on the democratic principles expressed in the Copenhagen criteria, remains constant and is based on our **common fundamental values and principles**.

Looking at the long-term development of Europe, we call on the EU to shape a more comprehensive strategic approach, consolidating the Green Deal as key pillar for a sustainable, greener, digital, equitable and more competitive Europe, and also articulating a more integrated vision for the rest of the EU's policies. Such an approach would lead to enhancing the EU's driving role in the new net zero-economy by strengthening its global leadership, while avoiding diluting the social market economy model, thereby setting a solid basis for any future enlargement. To this end we call for the EU's Green Deal's ambitions to be bolder, embracing regional aspirations in relation to social transformation, and for the EU's financial tools to be complementary and simpler, to avoid complexities that hinder efficient implementation and harm territorial cohesion and programming.

The CPMR firmly stands by the motto *all "Territories Matter"*! Regions have the competencies and strive to bring growth and jobs to their territories for their citizens. They are irreplaceable partners of the European project of today and that of tomorrow. We, therefore, advocate for a **new generation of EU policies based on the principle of subsidiarity and multilevel governance**, equipped with adequate budgetary resources, where peripheral maritime regions must play a vital role. Harnessing their **full potential and competencies** would help the EU to be more impactful when it comes to reducing the territories' socio-economic disparities, inequalities and discrimination, tackling their specific climate vulnerabilities, attracting or retaining talents, and allowing citizens to contribute to the green and digital twin transition. It would also **strengthen EU democratic values**, fostering a European project that thrives on the principles of solidarity and constructive debate.

It is with this conviction that we present our Political Manifesto 2023, which will guide our messages towards the EU institutions as they enter their new mandate in 2024. Only together we will build a Europe and a world that truly reflects the aspirations and needs of its citizens towards a new economic model focused on the wellbeing of our people and our planet.



Europe needs:

- I. A stronger empowerment and greater participation of the regions in the EU and National decision-making processes.
- II. More cohesion across EU Members and Neighbours
- III. A more sustainable and climate-resilient European Union, in particular the Energy & Transport system
- IV. A roadmap to a real "Blue Deal" with the regions at its core.
- V. A strengthened Social Pillar & greater Solidarity

For further details about CPMR actions and political recommendations regarding specific geographical areas, please consult the most recent declarations by its Geographical Commissions on the [Atlantic Arc](#), the [Baltic Sea](#), the [North Sea](#), the [Intermediterranean](#), the [Balkan and Black Sea](#) and the [Islands](#).



I. A stronger empowerment and greater participation of the regions in the EU and National decision-making processes. The CPMR:

1. Recalls that **economic, social and territorial cohesion is a key objective of the EU** enshrined in the Treaty, and remains a fundamental determinant of the European project. The economic, social and territorial integration of all regions of Europe is of paramount importance to ensure a well-functioning single market for all EU citizens.
2. Stresses that the European model of development is based on a **partnership with the regions**, in line with the principles of **subsidiarity and ownership**. This model mobilises territorial stakeholders and promotes place-based solutions, which would otherwise not be possible. It should, therefore, be reinforced, not watered down. A more effective application of the **subsidiarity** principle, of the **measures** mentioned in **Article 349** on Outermost Regions, as well as the **full implementation of Articles 174 and 175 of the TFEU** in all EU policies, would ensure that territorial disparities are better handled, thereby helping all regions benefit from and contribute to Europe's just development.
3. Recalls the European Commission's 8th Cohesion Report and the 'Do no harm to cohesion' principle that no action should hamper the convergence process or contribute to regional disparities. Hence, it strongly recommends a **new generation of EU policies** aligned to cohesion objectives. In coordination with Member States, the European Commission should ensure, in the rollout of its programmes, that territorial cohesion is contemplated. It therefore calls on the European Commission to include a systematic ex-ante assessment of potential differentiated territorial impacts on all types of regions of all new EU policies with a territorial dimension in their design phase.
4. Stresses that the **increasing role of maritime peripheral regions**, including those with territorial specificities, needs to be acknowledged in addressing some of the growing risks and challenges the EU faces now and in the future. Regional authorities not only provide local services to their citizens and promote local development, but also encourage strategic projects of their interest and undertake investments and **implement actions, benefitting the whole of the EU** in the areas of: climate adaptation and mitigation; education and awareness campaigns on pressing issues such as desertification; biodiversity protection; food; energy and border security; gender equality; trade; and migration. This includes the role of regions to develop and lead innovations, where Cohesion policy needs to play a key role in building innovation ecosystems with strategic investments essential to enhance Europe's long-term competitiveness. CPMR regions can play a key role in developing breakthrough innovations, for example for EU Missions and the **New Innovation Agenda**.
5. Expresses concern that **economic stagnation, depopulation and population ageing in territories** that are left behind prevent them from developing their full potential. At the same time many of these regions, in particular those that are maritime and peripheral, could with the right support be at the forefront of addressing the key global challenges Europe is facing today.
6. Emphasizes the need to ensure that the **European Union's Budget is endowed with the resources necessary** to achieve its evolving objectives. Is concerned that despite the increasing financial needs, the budgetary means are not increased to meet Europe's prerequisites. After the creation of Next Generation EU and several ad hoc instruments, the EU may fall back to the 1% GNI budget; this is a concerning development in view of the evolving objectives of the EU. It therefore welcomes ongoing discussions on the EU budget architecture and its resources.

II. Europe needs Cohesion within its members and with its neighbours. The CPMR:

7. **Recalls with concern** that regional disparities have increased in the last two decades. The reduction in investments during the financial and COVID crises exacerbated negative trends, particularly in regions in decline and the CPMR will closely follow and analyse the emerging focus on "development traps". **Highlights the importance of supporting the development of Strategic Technologies** within the



EU recalling the need to take strong measures to close the European regions' innovation divide with the US and Asian innovation leaders. Stresses the need for Cohesion Policy to expand the role of regions in transnational collaboration and partnership. Recalls, however, that for Cohesion Policy to keep in line with its fundamental mission, it is necessary that these efforts include provisions to avoid increased regional disparities.

8. Stresses that the green transition needs global cooperation and the role of the regions in the European external dimension, such as the New Agenda to strengthen EU's partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean. The transition materializes in regions and cities and transregional collaboration and partnerships on learning, sharing good practices, change management, multilevel governance, and conflict mitigation.
9. Welcomes the present EU debates to **complement existing economic indicators for the allocation of funding with other indicators beyond GDP** to reflect the diverse challenges faced by different territories. The development of such indicators must fully involve the regions.
10. Reminds the importance of **territorial cohesion**, which the CPMR fought hard to include in the Treaty twenty years ago, as a means to cultivate an actual sense of European citizenship, and stresses that **Cohesion Policy is a fundamental pillar** of the European Union's model of development and should thus remain the **central investment policy of the EU**. Cohesion Policy offers a blueprint for an equitable socio-economic development model and governance system that counterbalances the negative implications of the centre-periphery dynamics thus **leaving no one behind** and achieving core objectives of the EU by harnessing the capabilities of the public and private sectors of all regions.
11. Points out that in some regions, development is harder than elsewhere because of natural and territorial constraints which **result in permanent drivers for disparities as expressed in Article 174**, thus hindering the full achievement of the Cohesion Policy goals. In these contexts, one-size-fits-all schemes are not capable to meet territories' specific challenges. The EU's regulatory schemes having territorial impacts should hence properly be adapted.
12. Stresses that Cohesion Policy is a **formidable European tool for achieving the goals of the twin transition** at regional level. Is, however, concerned that **Cohesion Policy has increasingly become the main implementation arm of other sectoral and EU policies** not aiming specifically at regional development and not under the control of regional authorities. Similarly, the increasing trend of creating specific ad hoc funds that operate separately from regional programming may lead to inefficient investments instead of sound sustainable territorial development.
13. Underlines that regional decision-makers understand best the challenges on the ground and should be fully involved in the design of interventions in view of the challenges ahead requiring concerted regional and local action. Stresses that shared management in Cohesion Policy enhances democratic principles, as well as transparency and accountability. The CPMR strongly **opposes the growing trend of centralisation** at EU and national level for expediency. The subsidiarity principle and the regions' legitimate interests must be respected. All investment programmes in their territories need to be planned and undertaken in a transparent manner with the involvement of the regional authorities.
14. Reiterates the importance of accessible Financial Instruments in order to promote green transition and industrial modernisation. Financial instruments, supported by EU Cohesion Policy, can provide a substantial leverage to all businesses in European Regions. **Therefore, the CPMR supports the efforts to better access and adapt financial instruments to regional realities.**
15. Acknowledges the efforts undertaken by the European Commission on **simplification**, but **calls for** offering the **same simplification of procedures for shared management** as they exist for **direct management**; applying a system of control proportional to the level of risk and size of operations; avoiding a one size fits all approach; and ensuring coherence of the policy instruments with the political objectives.



16. Understands the importance of **structural reforms** requirements in the Country Specific Recommendations. However, introducing such conditionality within Cohesion Policy needs **to reflect actual competences** of the regional authorities for each specific recommendation and necessitates the full involvement of regions in all aspects that affect the legitimate interests they represent.
17. Calls for the EU to consider the application of the **key principles of Cohesion Policy**, such as the **partnership principle, the horizontal principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment**, and multilevel governance, **in the EU Neighbourhood Policy** and to recognise - and better support with the necessary tools and assistance – the role of EU and non-EU regions bordering the Neighbourhood in the areas of security, trade relations and cross-border collaboration. It also stresses the importance of boosting bottom-up, territorial and collaborative measures that complement higher-level diplomatic and development efforts.
18. Recalls that **INTERREG** is a cornerstone within Cohesion Policy and a **fundamental instrument for cooperation for peripheral maritime regions** across all Europe and its Neighbourhood. Its programmes contribute to achieve EU goals and address joint challenges and need to be boosted with more funding and keep responding to the needs on the ground. The CPMR emphasizes the key role of the European Commission (DG REGIO in particular) and the importance of both land and maritime cross-border programmes (including external IPA and NEXT) as well as of the strands for transnational, interregional and outermost regions cooperation that ensure key opportunities for enhanced synergies between peripheral maritime regions all over the EU and beyond.
19. Asks the EU Institutions to consider all possible **alternatives** when unexpected external factors such as geo-political issues interfere in or block the setting up or implementation of **INTERREG external programmes**. In such cases, the Institutions shall find joint solutions with the countries and regional authorities in ways that ensure the resources will still be kept within the EU regions initially concerned, avoiding the simple unilateral re-absorption or re-direction of resources.
20. Stresses the strategic relevance of **existing and emerging macroregional and sea basin strategies and initiatives** to solve common challenges affecting specific EU areas and to support the recovery and the twin transition. It recalls its [12 key messages](#) addressed to the EU Institutions on their future development. It stresses in particular the importance of ensuring the participation of the regions in their governance, as well as to keep promoting stronger synergies with INTERREG, mainstream and other EU programmes. It urges to reflect on a possible review of the “3 NOs rule” and on boosting emerging strategies in key geographical areas while reinforcing existing ones, fostering also the involvement of non-EU countries.
21. Requests the EU Council to endorse the demands and reflections coming from the CPMR Atlantic and Mediterranean regions alongside a wide array of territorial stakeholders, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament to set up, ideally by 2024 two new macro-regional strategies, one for the Atlantic and one for the Mediterranean area, building on the solid basis of the existing Atlantic and West Med maritime strategies, and EUSAIR. Welcomes and supports the initiative around the Greater North Sea Basin. The regional and local authorities should be directly associated to the governance of those new strategies. Besides, they should pay attention to possible synergies with existing territorial cooperation tools such as INTERREG, EGTCs and Euroregions which are rooted in the concerned territories. Furthermore, in view of the upcoming revision of the Action Plan of the EUSBSR, the CPMR requests the EU Council to reinforce the role of regions, as well as the Arctic dimension of the Strategy.



III. A more sustainable and climate-resilient European Union, in particular the Energy & Transport system. The CPMR:

22. Strongly supports the EU's action for **energy transition**, including its aim for **sustainable transport** and **connectivity**, as solutions both to tackle the consequences of climate change and to benefit citizens' resilience and well-being and notes that these solutions are impacted and accelerated by climate change and other crises, in particular, the war on Ukraine or the Israel-Hamas conflict.
23. Stresses the urgency for Europe to secure its energy supplies and become **more energy independent** diversifying its energy sources. Furthermore, it observes that securing transport connectivity forms a direct link with Europe's economic development and that of CPMR regions.
24. Recalls that peripheral maritime regions are contributing to the EU's **clean energy transition** and stresses the need for sufficient EU financial support and adapted legislation to continue this transition, ensuring that **no region is left behind**. **Accessibility** of our **peripheries**, especially of outermost, northern sparsely populated areas, remote and insular regions which are also more vulnerable to climate change and global warming, should be fully enhanced to exploit their full potential for green economic growth.
25. Points to the **untapped potential** of its **peripheral maritime regions** for **Europe's energy self-sufficiency** and emphasises that many clean energy sources are abundant in its territories (e.g. offshore renewable energies), as are some critical raw materials. The EU **Outermost and insular territories, have the potential to** act as laboratories for clean energy development. It also highlights the key potential of the European Arctic to tackle climate change and lead the EU energy transition through sustainable extraction, innovative refinement, efficient battery production and smart recycling of minerals and metals, while ensuring sustainable economic, territorial and social development with continuous ambitious EU investments.
26. Underlines the importance of an abundant and skilled workforce to deliver on the green and digital transition to forge a resilient circular economy and society and strengthen Europe and its peripheral maritime regions' strategic autonomy. Highlights the necessity to ensure training, re-skilling and upskilling of Europe's labour force to master the technologies and processes involved from, among others, the development of STEM competences to process management, digitalisation, AI, robotics, programming and handling of high-tech equipment. Stresses the key role that regions have in training, re-skilling and upskilling and calls for adequate financial instruments, tools and programmes to support and enable them, so to ensure no region, their businesses and their citizens is left behind.
27. Draws attention, with grave concern, to the growing and worsening of **extreme weather events which require the adaptation of transport infrastructures and energy infrastructures in regions**. Underlines that **national and regional authorities** are developing and implementing **climate change mitigation and adaptation** policies, plans and measures, to ensure the **resilience** of their **infrastructure**.-The CPMR is therefore convinced that these plans should be considered and capitalised in the evaluation of transport and energy infrastructure projects, in the framework of **European funding taking into account the specificities and vulnerabilities of some regions to climate change**.
28. Stresses that **multi-level governance, including CPMR regions**, and a **public-private stakeholder approach** will be crucial to achieve the EU's energy transition, as well as to secure supply chains, from sustainable extraction to reliable transport. It reiterates in this regard the **strategic role** of the CPMR **maritime ports**, as multimodal and energy hubs and that of its **airports as innovation laboratories**. It believes that Europe's **energy transition** must be **place-based** and anchored in the peripheral maritime territories. The CPMR thus calls for a **full involvement and empowerment of regional authorities** in the design and implementation of both Europe's transport and energy policies. In the transition process towards a climate-neutral transport, special attention should be paid to **insular, outermost, northern sparsely populated areas and peripheral** regions to avoid negative effects in the connectivity of these regions, given that **for some of them** there are no other **transport mode** options except from air and maritime transport.



29. Calls for attention and stronger **involvement of regional authorities** in the governance and implementation of energy transition reforms through **REPowerEU**, including sufficient funding for a territorially balanced transition. It is important that the EU recognises the role that CPMR regions and their ports will play in this transition and invests in the right infrastructure to ensure that all of Europe can benefit from it. Given the prominent role of hydrogen in the REPowerEU Plan, regions should be fully involved in the developments of the Hydrogen Corridors. It is important that the EU recognises the pivotal role of regions to ensure the development of a European hydrogen economy. Regions, given their knowledge of the local realities, should be actively included in the discussions regarding the type of hydrogen imports, necessary infrastructure, safety aspects, and the extent of EU co-financing for such projects.
30. Sees a crucial role for its member regions in achieving the objectives of the **Net Zero Industry Act** in relation to their experience with offshore renewable energy technologies, cross-border energy structures, and regarding the role of their maritime sectors, in particular ports as energy hubs. The Act should also ensure the active involvement of peripheral maritime regions when it comes to implementation. The CPMR reiterates the importance of unleashing the full potential of existing and emerging technologies and industrial ecosystems supporting the green transition in CPMR territories, whilst promoting the development of **regional and cross-border energy clusters**.
31. Recalls the importance of ensuring the effective implementation of the principle of **territorial continuity (Article 170 TFUE) in legislations related to trans-European networks in the areas of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures to ensure the links of peripheral, landlock and insular regions to the central regions of the Union**. In this respect, urges the European institutions to take the appropriate measures to ensure that the commitments already made by the Member States are fulfilled and new sections which are essential for the accessibility of certain regions can be included within TEN-T maps.
32. Restates its call to the EU to better address, within the Trans-European Transport Network (**TEN-T**), the pivotal role of strong connectivity and that of an efficient seamless transport infrastructure, paying special attention to **cross-border links and missing connections for peripheral maritime regions**. Welcomes the newly defined **maritime space and calls** on EU co-legislators to ensure that the ongoing negotiations on the TEN-T review will encompass comprehensive governance that specifically considers the interests of the affected regions allowing for their timely reconciliation and effective implementation. **It recalls that territorial cohesion and accessibility** are objectives of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and therefore **calls** on the EC to use these **targets as indicators** to assess the performance of the current CEF, as well as taking these into account for the development of the next CEF in 2024.
33. States its commitment to improve the quality of rail communications by implementing actions that guarantee the operability of high-speed and high-performance lines, including complying with European interoperability standards and prioritising the European standard nominal gauge, even in those construction works that have not yet started. Given the current geopolitical situation, it is important that all parties comply with this requirement, which would otherwise exacerbate the risk of isolation of certain areas which currently apply other standards, in particular in the Atlantic area, affecting the economic and social development of the regions concerned.
34. Welcomes the proposed **extension** of the **TEN-T** network from Sweden to Norway, as well as the extension of the network to Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova. In addition, as the Black Sea region is a critical geostrategic crossroad connecting Asia with Europe and acknowledged as an important economic trade hub and energy corridor with rich natural resources, special attention should be paid to the inclusion of Georgia in relevant EU networks.



35. Welcomes the EU's policy initiatives, as well as financial incentives in the light of the **war on Ukraine**, including among others the development of the **Solidarity Lanes**, to ensure the **connectivity** to and within these countries, by strengthening Ukraine's **land connections**, including singularly, the Mediterranean Corridor and Corridor VIII (Balkans) and its **maritime connections** (e.g., Black Sea ports), as well as the growing importance of the Danube region.
36. In addition, the current TEN-T Core Network corridors should be actively developed further, with particular emphasis on strategic safety and security of supply for all concerned regions, meeting military mobility and cross-border transport needs in the new geopolitical reality.
37. Urges the EU to guarantee that in the **future MFF** post 2027, the next TEN CEF and other relevant EU funding instruments related to transport and energy policies are given a sufficient budget, that corresponds to the objectives set in the TEN-T regulation, with a strong focus on transforming the transport sector to make it more sustainable and resilient, and reinforce the focus on developing cross-border links, hinterland connections, as well as transport bottlenecks in the European transport network, in particular the rail network, including for peripheral maritime regions in particular, ensuring territorial and modal balance. It recommends clarity on the variety of financial instruments, loans or combination of funding (e.g. CEF, ERDF, RRF, Research) for major Transport infrastructure projects.
38. **Calls** that the EU encourages the production, transport, distribution and rational use of endogenous energy resources in the most isolated regions, such as **in the case of** outermost, **northern sparsely populated areas, insular and peripheral** regions. **Special attention is to be given to** the Outermost Regions, which are unable to interconnect their networks with continental networks and benefit from the internal energy market. The development of clean energy infrastructures in **all** these territories is essential to reduce the isolation of less favoured **and less or not interconnected** regions, to promote security of supply and to contribute to the sustainable development and decarbonisation of these regions.
39. Highlights the **impact** of the **new geopolitical context** on transport and logistics and therefore calls on the EU decision makers to guarantee a **resilient** and **seamless connection** between **regions, across Europe and beyond including the strategically important connection to the European Arctic**. It therefore, **promotes** the role of CPMR regions within a global dimension, in particular the EU's **Global Gateway**, which aims for trusted connectivity with the EU's partner countries through quality infrastructure, connecting goods, people and services in a sustainable way.
40. Welcomes the steps ahead regarding the **Maritime Safety Package**, for clean and modern shipping, including maritime safety and prevention of water pollution, in particular the revision of the port state control and flag state control directive, especially the ship-source pollution directive. It believes that the legislative obligations for States and the controls and financial fines against companies responsible for marine pollution infringements need to be strengthened. Nevertheless, it notes that additional efforts should be made towards full recognition of the **polluter/payer principle**. Furthermore, it calls for co-legislators to ensure greater economic support to regional authorities and key stakeholders at the forefront of monitoring, first intervention and clean-up actions following marine pollution events.

IV. Europe must advance towards a real “Blue Deal” with regions at its core. The CPMR:

41. Highlights the **strategic climate, environmental and socio-economic importance that oceans and Seas have** and will continue to have in the years to come for Europe, its maritime regions and its citizens. It stresses that, despite considerable advances towards a more integrated and coordinated policy approach over the last 20 years, the current environmental, climate, geopolitical and energy crises require **maritime affairs** to be among the **top priorities** of the EU political agenda.



42. Strongly believes that the time has come to provide the EU with a **real “Blue Deal”** which should aim to deliver a more holistic and coherent policy framework for the future generation of European, National and Regional maritime policies, **including a maritime industry package** to boost the internal market and ensure that EU manufacturers can accelerate the deployment of the necessary industrial capabilities, net-zero vessels and technologies to reach the Green Deal and “Blue Deal” objectives.
43. Recalls that **maritime regions are at the forefront** to foster the development of the blue economy, in an integrated way, and to enhance sustainable exploitation, protection, conservation and restoration of EU maritime ecosystems. Therefore, it calls for co-legislators to ensure **full involvement of regional authorities** in the EU debate that will **accompany the adaptation of the EU legislative framework and the implementation of the future generation of maritime policies and strategic programmes**.
44. Calls for the **European Commission to publish a green paper** to gather stakeholder consultations in a reflection process **on the “EU Maritime Agenda post 2030”, by spring 2025**, that could lead to a white paper that should deal with future EU objectives and deliver scenarios of policy changes encompassing governance, EU financial support (including state aid rules) and delivery methods to allow European maritime policies to address emerging challenges, especially in maritime regions and harness new opportunities in an integrated way. To accelerate the achievement of the Green Deal objectives, special attention should be given to the modernisation of the fishing sector in maritime peripheral regions, where the fishing activity has a high social importance.
45. Strongly believes that EU maritime policies **should encompass and be consistent with development trends of coastal regions’ socio-economic fabrics** and the specific protection, conservation and restoration needs of maritime ecosystems, within each EU sea basin. **It calls for EU co-legislators to make systematic use of the sea basin and place-based approaches, paying special attention to peripheral and maritime regions**, as well as an ecosystem-based approach in the future generation of European maritime policies.
46. Points out that to tackle the environmental, climate and energy crises, **public policies must be rooted in the integrated and multi-areas strategic outlook**. In this regard, it calls for Member States and the European Commission to cooperate to increase synergies between European policies, especially in the fields of maritime and climate change adaptation and mitigation.
47. Calls for EU co-legislators to review and simplify the EU regulatory framework **to empower and equip regional authorities to adopt simplified procedures for EU co-funded actions**, where these actions are planned and implemented under regional strategies that fully comply with EU and national maritime, environmental and climate objectives and with the principles of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approach.
48. Highlights the **importance of cooperation between EU countries and regions** to achieve EU maritime objectives. It calls for Member States and the European Commission to strengthen the maritime pillars or “blue” priorities of already existing (e.g. Baltic Sea, Adriatic-Ionian, and Danube) and emerging (Atlantic, Mediterranean) macro-regions as well as for the North Sea Region.
49. Believes that it is crucial to reinforce the external dimension of EU maritime policies especially when it comes to the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the maritime pillar of the future Nature Restoration Law (NRL). Therefore, it calls for the European Commission to **foster and multiply bilateral and multilateral dialogue with non-EU countries and relevant International regional organisations to advocate for full sharing of EU maritime, environmental and climate objectives**.
50. Reiterates its concerns regarding the future cooperation between the **United Kingdom** and the European Union and welcomes as a positive step the recent agreement on the UK’s participation in Horizon Europe. The CPMR highlights the great added value of established and successful cooperation practices in the field of sustainable blue economy between regional authorities in the **Atlantic Arc, the Channel and**



North Sea. It calls for the European Commission to capitalise on them to deliver policy proposals and set innovative programmes and mechanisms to further promote the sustainable and fair development in these areas.

51. Draws the attention of EU co-legislators on the specific situation and needs of EU territories in the **Pacific and Indian Oceans and in the Caribbean Sea**. It calls for co-legislators to increase diplomatic and financial efforts to defend and promote the strategic maritime interests of the European Union and its citizens in these areas of key geopolitical importance.
52. Takes note of the renewed interest for cooperation on **maritime issues at international level** (Greater North Sea Basin Initiative, Transatlantic Cooperation initiatives from the United States and EU, Arctic strategy) and reaffirms that these initiatives need to be geared towards the territorial development of maritime regions.
53. Points out that ambitious political objectives should go hand in hand with effective policy and delivery methods and sizeable European funding support. It calls for the European Commission to engage in a structured dialogue with national and regional authorities and the European Parliament on how to ensure that the **MFF increasingly supports the next generation of EU maritime policies**.
54. Calls for Member States and the European Parliament to split the environmental and maritime portfolios and appoint a **specific Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries under the new European Commission**.
55. It also calls on the European Parliament to renew its support **to maintain the intergroup on Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas (SEArice) under the 2024-2029 legislative mandate**.

V. Europe must strengthen its social pillar and remain true to its principle of solidarity. The CPMR:

56. Recalls that the EU has been built upon the **principle of solidarity** between Member States and a social model that is inclusive and puts the well-being of its citizens at its core. The CPMR firmly adheres to the principles of equality, respect for human rights and non-discrimination, and advocates the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity as an asset.
57. Acknowledges the **European Union's efforts to promote a Union of Equality** and mainstream this principle in all policy areas. It recalls that as the level of government close to citizens, regions have an essential role to play in achieving this goal, since they have the responsibility to implement and in some cases design policies and strategies to promote social cohesion as a catalytic driving force for change and economic prosperity for all citizens irrespective of gender, in their territories. The CPMR Regions ask therefore to be guaranteed the necessary EU tools, programmes and financial instruments to assist them in this task.
58. Underlines the **strategic role of regional authorities in achieving gender equality**. In consideration of their place-based knowledge, potential for compilation of disaggregated data, close connection to local stakeholders and existing practices to respond to territorial gender-related challenges, regional authorities must be consulted in the design of gender equality initiatives and policies and must be given adequate resources to reach a *Union of Equality*, from the development of bottom-up actions to the implementation of EU legislation. The CPMR calls for a continuation of the European Commission's Gender Equality strategy 2020-2025 beyond the current mandate and highlights the need to further take into account the role of regional authorities in its implementation.
59. Highlights the need to give a more **demographic focus to territorial policies**. Factors such as ageing population, depopulation, seasonal population flows, and rural-urban imbalances must be considered when designing policies aimed at achieving cohesion among Europe's regions. For the peripheral maritime regions, creating the right social and economic conditions to retain and attract people, especially youth, is paramount to foster thriving communities and ensure no-one is left behind.



60. Urges the European co-legislators to **finalise and adopt the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum** based on a sustainable, organised, multilevel, respectful towards Human Rights and humane policy at the European level, in order to face present and future challenges linked to irregular migration and forced displacements, and also take better advantage of opportunities linked to legal migration.
61. Recalls the key role of regional authorities in ensuring the **reception, integration and social inclusion** of migrants and refugees in their territories, **and the specific situation** of many European peripheral maritime regions as first points of entry into the EU. The CPMR therefore calls for the co-legislators to **include provisions in the legislation within the Pact on Migration and Asylum** that give concerned regions a say in national migration strategies, acknowledge their situation and role in crisis management, solidarity, relocation and integration, and provide them with relevant funding and support.
62. Highlights, within a long-term vision, the need to reinforce the synergies and complementarity between **decentralised cooperation and the fight against those inequalities that constitute root causes of migration**. In this regard it draws the attention of co-legislators to the consolidated knowledge and impactful practice that regional authorities have in cooperating with their own counterparts, local stakeholders and international organisations in third countries of origin in diverse thematic areas (agriculture, water management, production of renewable energy, climate change adaptation, etc.).
63. Applauds the unity that the European Union has shown in its **support for Ukraine** since the start of the Russian aggression in February 2022, but is aware that the challenge of rebuilding the country and assisting its accession to the EU during the ongoing conflict will put European solidarity to the test. It expresses its continued solidarity with Ukraine and its people and urges all levels of governance within Europe to remain steadfast in their support. The CPMR recalls also its solidarity with all regions bordering Russia and Belarus that face major challenges due to the interruption of interactions with these countries and offer the cooperation and competences of the CPMR to support their process of reorientation in international cooperation. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of studying the applicability of these same solidarity mechanisms in other cases where they could be implemented.
64. Welcomes the European Council's decision to endorse the European Commission's proposal to extend the **Temporary Protection Directive for Ukrainians until March 2025** and calls on the EU institutions to envisage **longer-term solutions** in the case of a drawn-out war. In this regard, the CPMR regions pledge to continue their actions to support the integration and socio-economic inclusion of Ukrainian as well as other refugees in their territories. It encourages the evaluation of the applicability of the Temporary Protection Directive in other cases beyond its current use and to build on this experience for the application of the future Crisis Regulation.
65. Affirms its commitment as a member of the **European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine**. In this regard, the peripheral maritime regions are turning their attention to how they can contribute towards the country's reconstruction according to the "build back better" principle, especially with regard to sharing knowhow in their own areas of competence such as sustainable maritime and coastal development and the modernisation of port infrastructures. **The CPMR therefore calls for the EU to further enhance its support for peer-to-peer cooperation and capacity building projects** between Ukrainian and European local and regional authorities, notably through the new Ukraine Facility.

Adopted unanimously, Saint-Malo (Brittany, France), 17 November 2023



The Peripheral Maritime Regions listed below met for the 51st CPMR Annual General Assembly in Saint-Malo (Brittany, France) on 16 and 17 November 2023:

AÇORES (PT), AGDER (NO), ALENTEJO (PT), ANATOLIKI MAKEDONIA KAI THRAKI (GR), BALEARES (ES), BRETAGNE (FR), CALABRIA (IT), CALARASI (RO), CENTRAL OSTROBOTHNIA* (FI), CHANNEL ISLANDS*, CYPRUS (CY), DYTIKI ELLADA (EL), EMILIA-ROMAGNA (IT), FLEVOLAND (NL), GÄVLEBORG (SE), GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA (ES), GENERALITAT VALENCIANA (ES), GOBIERNO DE ARAGÓN (ES), GOBIERNO DE NAVARRA (ES), GOBIERNO VASCO (ES), GOTLAND (SE), GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC (CA), GOZO (MT), HALLAND (SE), HAUTS DE FRANCE (FR), HELSINKI-UUSIMAA (FI), IONIA NISSIA (EL), JÄMTLAND HÄRJEDALEN (SE), JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA (ES), KRITI (EL), KYMENLAAKSO (FI), LA RÉUNION (FR), LAPLAND (FI), LISBOA E VALE DO TEJO (PT), MADEIRA (PT), MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN (DE), MIDTJYLLAND (DK), NOORD-HOLLAND (NL), NOORD-NEDERLAND (NL), NORDJYLLAND (DK), NORRBOTTEN (SE), NORTHERN & WESTERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (IE), NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE (FR), OCCITANIE (FR), ÖREBRO (SE), ÖSTERGÖTLAND (SE), OSTROBOTHNIA (FI), OULU (FI), PÄIJÄT-HÄME (FI), PAYS DE LA LOIRE (FR), PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS (ES), REGION MURCIA (ES), RÉGION SUD (FR), ROGALAND (NO), SHKODËR AL, SKÅNE(SE), SOUTHWEST FINLAND (FI), STOCKHOLM (SE), TOSCANA (IT), TRØNDELAG (NO), TULCEA (RO), VÄRMLAND (SE), VÄSTERBOTTEN (SE), VÄSTRA GÖTALAND (SE), VESTFOLD OG TELEMARK (NO), VESTLAND (NO), VIKEN (NO), WALES - WELSH GOVERNMENT (UK), WEST-VLAANDEREN (BE), XUNTA DE GALICIA (ES), ZUID-HOLLAND (NL)

*OBSERVER