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CPMR BALKAN / BLACK SEA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
KAVALA, GREECE

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING**

ENLARGED POLITICAL BUREAU

31/03-01/04/2005

MEETING VENUE - HOTEL IMARET

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**Thursday, 31 March 2005**

A conference on the topic of *the Balkan and Black Sea Area and future EU cooperation policies for 2007-2013. Future objective 3 and the new neighbourhood policy*, was held on Thursday, 31 March evening. This conference was addressed to local administration in order to present the current events at political level as well as in Athens and in Brussels, and to present the role and importance of the CPMR Balkans and Black Sea Regional Commission in these matters.

Speeches were addressed by:

- Michalis Angelopoulos, President of the BBSRC, Secretary General of the Region of East Macedonia and Thrace.
- Anastasios Alexandridis, Head of Management Authority of INTERREG, Ministry of Economy and Finance
- Konstantinos Tatsis, President of the Prefectural Self Government of Kavala-Drama-Xanthi
- Yavuz Mildon, President of the Chamber of Regions, Council of Europe
- Xavier Gizard, Secretary General of the CPMR
- Philippe Cichowlaz, Director of the CPMR

**Friday, 01 April 2005**

**Enlarged Political Bureau of the Balkan/Black Sea Regional Commission**

**Opening and introduction session**

The meeting was opened by Xavier Gizard, Secretary General of the CPMR. On behalf of the President of the Commission he thanked all the representatives of the regions for their presence at this meeting. He also underlined the importance of this commission, particularly with regard to the sustainable development of the area.

Mr Gizard gave an overview of the CPMR activities since its last General Assembly held in Stavanger. He pointed out the most important political priorities for the CPMR in the near future:

- **Financial Perspectives for 2007-2013.** CPMR was actively participating in the debates and negotiations of the new perspectives of the European Union for the period of 2007-2013. He underlined the importance of this issue for CPMR and for regions. CPMR activities undertaken on this topic were presented.

- **State aid**, second issue which is of vital importance for the regions and for CPMR.

European regulations allow regions to be assisted and become stronger on a social level. This allows regions to create new activities, in order to have further development and growth. On 6 of April, the proposal for new

regulations was due to be issued by the European Commission. This regulation intends to reduce significantly the assistance to the regions. CPMR started to work on this issue last year, and for this purpose close contacts with the European Commissioner were established. For this reason on 18 April, CPMR will be organising a seminar in Asturias with the participation of DG Competition of the European Commission. The main topic of the discussions will be the review of the budget. This topic is very important vis-à-vis the development of regions in the following years.

- **support for the approval of the European Constitution.** CPMR has supported and prepared a number of actions during the preparation of this constitution. For example all the activities related to article 5 of the draft constitution, which states that regions play a leading role in Europe. CPMR has insisted that there will be consultations with the regions and cities in their concerned fields of actions. CPMR also lobbied for territorial cohesion to be added to the constitution.

-**Maritime issues, Europe of the Sea.** The maritime disasters of previous years such as the sinking of the Erika have reinforced EU maritime safety measures and legislation. The other issue concerns further development of motorways of the sea and finding new opportunities. The new European Commissioner Mr Joe Borg, is in charge of preparing the green paper on the European dimension of the sea. This paper has an objective to determine what maritime activities represent for Europe (e.g. its contribution to GDP, how it is related to other issue like energy, fisheries etc). and how this field can contribute to the Lisbon and Göteborg strategies. CPMR is working actively on this issue and is contributing to the preparation of this paper. A working group has been established in which 50 CPMR member regions are participating. Results of the work and proposals will be presented and discussed at the CPMR General Assembly in Murcia 2006.

Mr Gizard proposed that the Balkans and Black Sea Commission should designate one or two persons from the regions who are sensitive to maritime issues and who could participate on behalf of the commission in the CPMR focus group on maritime security.

He also invited the members of the commission to participate as observers in the other CPMR geographical commissions, in order to see and compare different kinds of possibilities for good operational methods.

Yavuz Mildon, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe presented the priorities of this organisation and the activities undertaken to promote transborder cooperation in the Balkan countries. The Council was able to provide an appropriate framework for enhanced international, interregional and intermunicipal cooperation in the area and offer its political platforms for a dialogue among different institutions and political bodies concerned. He underlined that the Congress and its Chambers would support the work of the CPMR, especially in a fields of maritime policies and sustainable territorial development issues for the future of the Balkans and Black Sea Area.

Philippe Cichowlaz, Director of the CPMR made a presentation on the Balkan/Black Sea area and future EU cooperation policies for 2007-2013 (presentation available at CRPM secretariat).

He gave an overview of the background of the EU's new neighbourhood policy and presented the new guidelines and efforts made by the European Commission concerning new neighbourhood instrument. The European Commission, which is responsible for approving this programme, is now working on the finalisation of the guidelines, which should be published by the end of 2006.

It was also mentioned that the Commission was seeking a place for the coordination secretariat for the instrument (like for Interreg programmes) and why not propose to locate this secretariat in Kavala.

Secondly, information, together with current issues at stake, was given on European cohesion policy and financial instruments available for the 2007-2013 period.

Nikos Lampropoulos, Adviser to the Secretary General made a presentation on cooperation between the regions in the area particularly regarding cooperation and actions in the field of youth cooperation and exchange.

The representatives from Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Serbia and Montenegro presented the strategic priorities of their regions:

Mr Palagachev, Governor of Smolyan from Bulgaria pointed out Bulgaria's priorities regarding the accession process to the European Union. He also underlined the importance of Greek-Bulgarian cooperation which aims to contribute to the stability process and sustainable development of the area.

Mr Miroglu, Governor of Edirne, presented Turkey's priorities, underlining the importance of cooperation, and mentioned the difficulties which they have to face from time to time in this regard.

Mr Kamci, Governor of Canakkale, participating for the first time in the CPMR meeting and being a very recent member of the organisation, made a presentation of his region. He underlined the importance and positive expectations of being member of CPMR and BBSRC, particularly in the field of maritime security. He invited to hold next meeting of the CPMR BBSRC in Canakkale.

Mr Bunduc, President of Tulcea county council in Romania gave an overview of his region's efforts regarding interregional cooperation and towards to the enlargement process. He also listed the priority areas for regional cooperation, such as river and sea transport.

Ms Hasanagic, representing the standing conference of towns and municipalities of Serbia and Montenegro, gave an overview of the efforts of the country towards integration in the European Union.

### Practical issues

Anthony Papadimitriou, was elected unanimously as the Executive Secretary of the BBSRC.

Mr Papadimitriou presented the new political priorities for the Commission (policy paper enclosed).

He made a short overview on the background of this commission and recalled the objectives why this commission was created. He proposed to define concrete areas of action for the near future among the priorities followed by CPMR. Topics like maritime safety; territorial cooperation and sustainable development were put forward.

Regarding the membership issues, he recalled that in the coming years, the geographical area which covers the BBSRC was going to be one of the most important areas in Europe with a huge political potential, especially bearing in mind the current policies and priorities of the EU. Therefore the enlargement of this commission was very important. The work and activities of CPMR and its BBSRC had to be presented among the national governments and local and regional authorities. Further steps in this regard were listed.

Concerning the financial instruments, it was expected that all member regions should contribute to the expenses of both CPMR and BBSRC, in order to give a flexibility and continuity to the effective functioning of the organisation.

Mr Grimbas gave an overview of the commission's financial situation and the current challenges regarding the budget. Currently the commission's funds are issued from the budget of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace region.

Discussion on the budget and membership fees issue were held. It was agreed that the secretariat of the commission would prepare concrete proposals regarding the membership fees, following the model of CPMR membership dues, which took into account the level of income of each region.

It was also asked that each member region identify the contact persons for BBSRC matters. The names and contact details were to be forwarded to the secretariat in Kavala or Rennes.

All the regions present at the meeting adopted unanimously the resolution which was to be addressed to the heads of states and government leaders meeting under the Luxembourg presidency. Its stated support to the European Union's proposal on the future of Regional Policy and more specifically the aspects of cross-border cooperation.

### Next meeting

Following the kind invitation of Mr Kamci, Governor of Canakkale region in Turkey, it was decided to hold next meeting of Balkans and Black Sea Commission at the end of September (29/09-30/09) in Canakkale. The meeting will be combined with the seminar on maritime safety and sea motorways. Exact issues were to be finalised in cooperation with the CPMR general secretariat, secretariat of the BBSRC and the representatives of Canakkale region.

List of Participants: attached