

**THE INTERREG IVB NORTH SEA PROGRAMME
JOINT ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND
GENERAL ASSEMBLIES 2008
HERNING, DENMARK**

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

**North Sea Commission and Baltic Sea Commission
Political Seminar
Wednesday 11 June 2008**

**‘Defining the broad outline of CPMR’s mission and objectives for
the coming decade – political priorities from the North’**

Seminar Report

Introduction

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) has agreed to hold an enquiry into the future of the organization. The purpose of this enquiry is to help the CPMR achieve a clear vision of the nature of its membership, and of the political goals commonly shared by its members.

As part of this enquiry process they have arranged open debates in the annual conferences of the Geographical Commissions. The CPMR has identified two sets of questions to be raised during the interviews and in the course of the Geographical Commissions debates:

SWOT Analysis

- What do you consider as CPMR’s biggest achievements during the recent years?
- In what occasions, or in what areas, do you consider that CPMR has failed, or could have done more?
- What do you consider as the most important issues which CPMR should address in the foreseeable future?

CPMR external relationships

- Do you think that CPMR should get more actively involved with other stakeholders on the European scene, and if so which ones?

- Do you think CPMR should play a greater role with the territories covered by the EU Neighbourhood Economic Policy?
- Do you think that CPMR should become increasingly involved with other structure or networks of regional organisations worldwide?

The NSC and BSC Political Seminar, Herring, Denmark

Approximately 50 representatives from the North Sea Commission (NSC) and the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) attended a seminar in Herring, Denmark on the 11th of June 2008.

The event identified a number of issues and ideas in response to these six questions. All the responses have been separately recorded for the NSC and the BSC. A summary of the key findings and the common themes were also agreed at the end of the seminar.

The results are included in this report.

Baltic Sea Commission Feedback

The Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) participants identified a wide range of ideas and issues.

SWOT Analysis

1. What do you consider as the CPMR's biggest achievements during the recent years?

For the BSC groups, the most popular and common themes in the answer to this question were:

- The CPMR has done a lot for EU regional policies by doing a good job in including all regions.
- The CPMR has become a strong lobbying organisation which is established and respected.
- The CPMR is well known in Brussels.
- The CPMR has close co-operation with the Commission.

Other comments (in approximate order of popularity) included:

- The CPMR has done a good job on influencing the Maritime Policy
- The CPMR provides a good base for co-operation
- The CPMR is more political than AER – focusing more on partnership
- The CPMR's voice is heard by others
- The CPMR's President is close to the Commission
- Through the CPMR good Practice is available to the regions on common challenges
- The CPMR is active in opening discussions on different issues
- The CPMR has not been excluding regions
- The CPMR has an active and professional secretariat

2. In what occasions, or in what areas, do you consider that CPMR has failed, or could have done more?

For the BSC groups, the most popular and common themes in the answer to this question were:

- There has been a lack of marketing ([internal communication](#)) and information sent out to the Regions.
- There has been too much focus on the southern regions and not enough attention paid to the Baltic Sea and northern parts of the CPMR area.
- The CPMR has not handled the enlargement and the involvement of the 'new' regions in a good way.
- The CPMR could have handled the FOGAR (Forum of Global Associations of Regions) discussions in a better way.

Other comments (in approximate order of popularity) included:

- The CPMR could have included the member regions better
- The CPMR requires better evaluation and follow up
- There has been too much focus on the Maritime Policy
- There is not always enough information for members
- There is a lack of recognition of the CPMR
- The CPMR could have done more on the Common Agricultural Policy

3. What do you consider as the most important issues which CPMR should address in the foreseeable future?

For the BSC groups, the most popular and common themes in the answer to this question were:

- The CPMR should still focus on the successful regional policies.
- The CPMR should continue to focus on sustainability - including climate change, energy and fisheries.

- The CPMR should focus on preparing for actions required post 2013.
- The CPMR should consider Regional competency issues.

Other comments (in approximate order of popularity) included:

- The CPMR should consider the inclusion of regions from new member states
- The CPMR should strengthen the links between the Baltic Sea and North Sea activities
- The CPMR should focus on Demography and migration
- The CPMR should focus on Energy and climate change
- The CPMR should focus on the protection of coastal areas
- The CPMR should focus on the link between new and old members
- The CPMR should [focus on lobbying](#) to increase the EU budget for regional policies
- The CPMR should focus on Maritime Policy implementation and development
- If external policy is a part of CPMR's goals – the focus should be on Russia
- The CPMR should focus on European self sufficiency in raw materials
- The CPMR should focus on Infrastructure/accessibility

Slettet: focus on lobbying

CPMR external relationships

4. Do you think that CPMR should get more actively involved with other stakeholders on the European scene, and if so which ones?

The most popular and common themes in the answer to this question were:

- The BSC groups thought that, overall, the CPMR should get involved with other stakeholders on the European scene – but it should focus on specific issues and working together where appropriate.

- The BSC groups thought that there should be more activity with the Barents Regional Council.
- The BSC groups also stated that there should be more co-operation with AER - including practical work on specific issues - but also on a presidential and secretariat level.
- The BSC groups felt that the CPMR should be involved with the Committee of the Regions - but it should fill the dialogue with more concrete questions.

Other comments included:

- The CPMR should get more actively involved with Northern dimension stakeholders

5. Do you think CPMR should play a greater role with the territories covered by the EU Neighbourhood Economic Policy?

The most popular and common themes in the answer to this question were:

- The BSC groups thought that, overall, yes the CPMR could play a greater role with the territories covered by the EU Neighbourhood Economic Policy – and it should do this by actively inviting and collaborating with the neighbouring countries. This could be dealt with by the Geographical Regions.
- There was, however, also an alternative view that was less supportive of the CPMR playing a greater role. Some of the BSC participants thought that the CPMR should focus on Regional Policy and implementation for existing members.

6. Do you think that CPMR should become increasingly involved with other structure or networks of regional organisations worldwide?

- The majority of the BSC group members thought that there was no need for more organisations. They also thought that there were not enough resources for new organisations. The BSC group members thought that the CPMR should concentrate on doing its existing activities better, and focus on the BSC's near neighbours eg Russia and Northern Africa.

North Sea Commission Feedback

The North Sea Commission (NSC) participants identified a wide range of ideas and issues on each of the six questions under discussion.

SWOT Analysis

1. What do you consider as the CPMR's biggest achievements during the recent years?

The most popular and common themes for this question were:

- The CPMR was now recognized as a reputable body by the EC. This has led to greater and valuable access to the EC, the Commissioners and information. By improving its performance in Brussels, the CPMR was able to influence and lobby the EU at a high level through policies, the Commission and the Parliament.
- The NSC group members thought that the CPMR had developed a strong knowledge base and had access to useful information for members .
- The CPMR membership offered good networking opportunities - and the chance to share best practice.
- The CPMR was also seen as a 'watch-dog' for the regional level of activity - and helped to enhance democracy in the European Union.
- The CPMR was also seen as a tool for implementing EU Policy.
- One of the NSC groups also highlighted that the Maritime Policy Green Book had started from a proposal from the CPMR.

Other themes identified (in approximate order of popularity) were:

- The CPMR can influence Regional Policy.
- The CPMR enhances the reputation of the EU at a local level.
- The CPMR is an important voice for the peripheral regions.
- The RAC within the Fishery policy could be used as a model for the European oceans.
- The CoR was a result of lobbying – similar to the CPMR and the AER

- The CPMR provides Norway with a link to the EU and an opportunity to discuss EU policy.
- The CPMR assists with the continuation of Interreg instruments.
- The CPMR is helping provide the EU with a focus on energy issues.
- The CPMR has involvement with the structural funds and the new mechanism for these.
- The CPMR, as an umbrella organization, is a good scale for important EU policies.
- The CPMR can act as one active stakeholder for its members.

2. In what occasions, or in what areas, do you consider that CPMR has failed, or could have done more?

The most popular and common themes for this question were:

- The CPMR lacks strong political involvement [at member level. A 'bottom up' approach to decision making is required.](#)
- The CPMR has an unclear decision-making structure and mechanisms. (eg the membership of its groups).
- The CPMR is, perhaps, dominated by a Mediterranean culture – with too little active debate, a centralized decision-making style and a 'top down' approach. It is seen to lack the 'Brussels' diplomacy style.
- The CPMR lacks focus. It is working on too many issues and needs to prioritise its activities. The lack of commonality within the growing CPMR membership also affects the clarity of the organization and this results in a lack of focus.
- The CPMR works too much on generalities and this results in too much compromise on issues.
- There is competition between regions and commissions.
- The CPMR needs to consider and clarify its involvement in FOGAR (Forum of Global Associations of Regions).
- The CPMR underestimated the value of Interreg.

- The CPMR has not provided clear information on territorial cohesion, and its importance to members.

Other themes identified (in approximate order of popularity) were:

- The CPMR fails to disseminate results/successes to its members
- The CPMR now includes both non-maritime and non-peripheral regions.
- Some members question whether they are getting value for money.
- The CPMR could do more to help it become better known to citizens and politicians.
- The CPMR has poor induction for new members.
- The CPMR should be relocated to Brussels.
- The CPMR produces too much information (paperwork) for members.
- There are reporting issues between the Commissions and the CPMR
- There are big differences between the geographical commissions – and there is a lack of supervision.
- The CPMR only has a small Secretariat.

3. What do you consider as the most important issues which CPMR should address in the foreseeable future?

The most popular and common themes for this question were:

- EU funding and regional policy post 2014.
- Maritime and marine issues
- Funding issues: Interreg A/B – 4/5 and TEN-T.
- Climate change and environment issues – and the technological developments required to cope with climate change etc.
- The CPMR needs to focus on key, limited policy areas – eg structural funds, energy etc (eg through a 3 year policy action plan).

- The CPMR should consider re-distributing/decentralizing its staff to the Commissions' areas. The CPMR staff should not all be based in Rennes – the Commissions need full-time staff too (they should not have to just 'borrow' staff!).
- The CPMR needs to rationalize the size and composition of its membership.
- The CPMR needs to recognise that its overall aims flow from its members. The members are currently defined by their maritime nature (eg 7 regions with seas). The CPMR, therefore, must be clear that these remain the right definitions on which to build commonality and coherence, and to produce clear and focused aims for the future.

Other themes identified for future consideration by the CPMR (in approximate order of popularity) were:

- Reinvigorating the CPMR's decision-making and responsibility
- Improving the CPMR's communication with the geographic commissions.
- Energy
- Reinforcing and strengthening the CPMR organisation
- Territorial cohesion
- Transport, Accessibility and Infrastructure
- Education and knowledge
- R&D

CPMR external relationships

4. Do you think that CPMR should get more actively involved with other stakeholders on the European scene, and if so which ones?

The NSC group members provided a range of answers to this question:

- One of the NSC groups thought that CPMR should only be a European organization and should not become worldwide (in addition – the costs would be too high to do this). The CPMR should, therefore, stay unique

within Europe and should not get tied up with other European 'umbrella' organizations.

- Another NSC group thought that the CPMR should not necessarily get more actively involved – as they were happy with the existing situation using alliances.
- Another NSC group thought that the CPMR should be more actively involved with the strong stakeholders such as the CoR and AER.
- Another view was that the CPMR should be pragmatic in its choice of active involvement with other stakeholders in the future. The decision really should depend on the issue being addressed eg role of the regions issues would involve organizations such as the AER, but rural development and mountain policy issues would be of relevance to organizations such as Euromontana.

Other feedback included:

- The CPMR should build on good relationships with MEPs instead of getting more actively involved with other stakeholders.
- There are no benefits in looking beyond Europe (The EU is big enough!).

5. Do you think CPMR should play a greater role with the territories covered by the EU Neighbourhood Economic Policy?

The majority of the answers received for this question stated that:

- No we do not think this should not be done on a CPMR level with a reach outside the EU. The purpose, capacity and funding of the CPMR does not allow it. It is a huge area - and this work should be left to the individual geographical committees (it should be more project based between neighbouring areas).

One NSC group did suggest, however, that maybe peripheral non-members could be encouraged to become members and benefit from the work of the CPMR.

6. Do you think that CPMR should become increasingly involved with other structure or networks of regional organisations worldwide?

- The majority of the responses to this question were that the CPMR should stick to its core activities and not get involved with worldwide work. The NSC group members thought that there was still a lot of work required to be done in Europe. The priority for CPMR, therefore, should remain as Europe. The group members also thought that the staff and funding resources required for worldwide involvement would be too high - and existing members would not be prepared to fund this work.
- A minority of the NSC group members thought, however, that wider working might be considered if there was a different organizational model and a sustainable funding structure.

Points of clarification

Following the feedback session at the end of the Political Seminar, Jean Didier Hache (CPMR) asked for clarification on 2 points:

What had the group members meant when they talked about the need to 'rationalise' the CPMR?

The group members agreed they meant that peripheral and maritime issues should be the focus of the CPMR's future activities. There were different ways of involving other areas in the future.

What had the group members meant when they talked about 'weak political involvement' of the CPMR?

The group members agreed they meant that many top politicians were not attending the CPMR. They also felt that some politicians attended CPMR but didn't say anything – which questioned whether their area was really fairly represented at the CPMR meetings.

The group members also thought that, although the CPMR had a good secretariat, the organization would benefit from more political commitment (or energy) at an earlier stage when considering issues.

The group members also felt that the nature of the organization meant that the results of discussions at the CPMR were often just a compromise – which can be unsatisfactory.