



CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Mr President Martini,

In the capacity of our assignment within the CPMR I would like to inform you about present issues within the BSC and the CPMR.

The BSC Executive Committee joined together for a meeting on the 13th of February in Brussels with an important agenda. Amongst other things we had discussions with CPMR's General Secretary, Xavier Gizard, Priscilla Wohl of Northern Forum and with Mr Dirk Ahner from DG Regio.

Our Executive Committee (EC) has a very active number of Working Groups (WGs) of which our transport group will be one of the most important for the future, alongside the innovation, energy and fisheries working groups. Regarding CPMR intercommission WGs, we are taking an active part in the WGs of Human Recourse (leading role), TN-Ris (leading role), the future of the CAP and sustainable tourism.

During our meeting we have had a very good discussion regarding the future of the CPMR. The EC expressed its satisfaction that Mr Jean Didier Hache is effectively involving the regions in these reflections that are underway and we in the EC will actively contribute to a constructive discussion in our regions and during our General Assembly. Nevertheless, it was noted in our meeting that while the Political Bureau Members may well be able to form an opinion concerning the future development of the CPMR, the formal and final decision on this matter should be taken at the CPMR GA in 2009.

The issues of CPMR and the global network of FOGAR were also up for discussion. The regions have had access to available background material and are now undertaking a joint analysis of the issue as seen from the BSC perspective.

During the meeting of the EC, criticism were again expressed regarding the process with which CPMR's engagement was developed, in particular, the lack of transparency and that not enough had been done in the early stages to ensure a democratic involvement of all CPMR's member. However, we took great care to ensure that the discussions remained constructive and have been able to reach a common understanding.

*Irrespective of what has happened in the past, our aim is to now look forward. We appreciate that the creation of an organisation like FOGAR may be needed and that if there is an interest in its activities we should not stand in the way its development.*

*However, we take for granted that the CPMR's share of the work to create FOGAR should come to an end by 2009, by which time the organisation should have in place an independent statute, have found its own premises and have secured its future financing. In short, FOGAR should be ready to manage its own affairs on an independent basis.*

*By this point it would be appropriate for the CPMR to evaluate the benefits and costs regarding a decision on our organisation's future membership of FOGAR.*

*We request that an open account of all the CPMR cost's incurred in setting up FOGAR be made available. In addition, we work from the basis that the activities of establishing FOGAR is not in any way affecting the CPMR's traditional focus of lobbying on behalf of its Member Regions and its effectiveness in monitoring and influencing EU activities.*

We hope that at the PB in Rhodes will bring about an open and constructive dialogue regarding FOGAR and that our efforts to create this organisation will eventually be brought to an end with both CPMR and FOGAR retaining good working relations between one another.

I will end this letter by expressing our willingness for a continuing collaboration.

Best regards,

Christel Liljeström  
President  
CPMR Baltic Sea Commission