The Atlantic Strategy in Action
CoR, 08/06/2016
Opening address
Mr Jerry LUNDY, CoR (IE/ALDE)

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Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,

Good morning, and welcome to this one-day event that will focus on the implementation of the Atlantic action plan. As a member or the Committee of the Regions I am particularly happy to see gathered in one place here in Brussels people that are involved in the management of EU funds. Thanks to everyone involved in the organisation of the event, and especially to the "Support Team for the Atlantic Action Plan"

For those of you less familiar with the institution I represent, the European Committee of the Regions is the European political assembly of regional presidents, mayors and local and regional councillors. We all have been entrusted with a democratic mandate from our voters, and we all want to make our communities thrive. Regions and cities are at the frontline of policy implementation, and the Committee of the Regions is important for local and regional authorities, because it is entitled by the Treaties to promote the interests of regions and cities in the European decision-making process and make their voice heard.

Investing in and developing blue growth is something that European coastal and maritime regions are particularly interested in, and the reason for that is the fact that the blue economy creates quality jobs in regions that are often in a less competitive position. Most coastal and maritime regions are in the periphery of their countries, struggling under the outflow of skilled people and young families. I

can assure you that my fellow members of the European Committee of the Regions are fighting for every job in their regions, cities and municipalities, and the blue economy is our friend in this fight.

This is why it is very important that we are holding an exchange like the one today. I sincerely hope that the meeting will be beneficial for everyone attending, and I hope we could turn this event into tradition.

Investments in smart and sustainable businesses are no longer seen as "exotic", and we see in our European regions more and more innovative projects being rolled out. Focusing on how precisely to fund those investments is extremely important especially for local and regional authorities, because they often lack the scale to fund big projects publicly, and a well-planned funding and execution might allow us to allocate more budget to really important policies such as education and healthcare.

At the Committee of the Regions we have always tried to look at the challenges on European level from a cross-policy perspective, and I am really happy to see how this approach has been adopted for today's event, with speakers from many different commission directorates and national administrations. I would like to wish you fruitful discussions, and a very good meeting today.