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**Maritime policy and maritime regions:
next steps**

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

2010 General Assembly of the CPMR (Conference of Peripheral
Maritime Regions)

Aberdeen, Scotland, 1 October 2010

Mr President, Ministers, Honourable Members of the European Parliament, Dear Corrine Lepage, Members of the CPMR, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am really glad and honoured to be here today amongst the political leaders of the European Maritime Regions. Your General Assembly is indeed one of the most important annual political events. For the Integrated Maritime policy of the European Union and obviously for me, as European Commissioner responsible for Maritime affairs and fisheries.

To begin, I would like to congratulate Mr Le Drian on his election as President of the CPMR. You can count on my full support and cooperation as you and your new team take the CPMR forward. And I know from what I've heard from you this morning that I can trust on your active cooperation.

The diverse subjects you have been dealing with have one very positive thing in common – they are all forward-looking. This is exactly the kind of approach I am taking to our future challenges.

In all this, working with maritime stakeholders is absolutely crucial. The coastal regions in Europe, which you represent, are the most directly concerned by our policies. It is indeed from you that we derive many of the ideas and much of the support we need for our work.

This has become very clear recently, in a number of areas.

Through its regional commissions, the CPMR has helped develop our IMP strategy for the Baltic and Mediterranean seas. In fact, if a Communication on the Atlantic sees the light in 2011, it will be thanks to the CPMR and its Atlantic Arc Commission. Your ongoing support will help us produce a first-class document for Member States and regions to endorse.

I would also urge you to strengthen cooperation across regions, across Member States and, most importantly, between the regional and the national authorities.

Our cooperation can go much further as well. The "Maritime Agenda" presented by President Le Drian a few minutes ago, is impressive it is an example of the fine work you consistently produce.

I would like to stress particularly the "Vasco da Gama programme" which looks really promising and could be instrumental for the social dimension of the Integrated Maritime Policy. I look forward to learn more about the concrete content of this project.

However, I would stress that all coastal regions need to be equally involved in the concrete implementation of maritime policy. The CPMR has a crucial role to play here. The work of your Aquamarina working group shows your commitment and I have no doubt that it will bear fruit.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the right time to be forging ahead.

We have completed the phase in which we designed the blueprint for the Integrated Maritime Policy and laid its foundations. Now we have set about the actual building work, which I want to see completed. The time has come to help the Commission flesh out the bare bones of the IMP.

So I am glad to see the IMP moving from theory to practical delivery, in a considerable number of areas.

What have we done till now?

I have launched at the beginning of September the Communication "Marine knowledge 2020". This communication aims to a better understanding of the sea and boost growth perspectives of the sector, by making the use of marine data easier and less costly. At the same time I announced with my Colleague Commissioner Maire Geoghegan Quinn responsible for research, a 45 Millions Euros programme to support European Marine research in 2011.

We have charted a course for maritime spatial planning. Alongside this, we are making great strides on maritime surveillance to group all available systems into a seamless whole, which will benefit the environment, transport efficiency and safety and security.

Thanks to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive – which has spawned key legislation such as the Marine Bills adopted here in Scotland and in the UK – we are now in a much stronger position to manage jointly the sea areas.

Fisheries policy is also moving forward, with our ongoing root-and-branch reform of the CFP. This process must – I repeat, must – involve integrating the CFP into the wider context of maritime policy. I thank the CPMR for its contribution to the Green Paper and to the reform process so far.

But there are also challenges to be dealt with and you've mentioned some of them in your Maritime agenda.

The economic crisis has left its mark on maritime economy too. We now need to work on how maritime policy can trigger growth and both economic and environmental sustainability. It is what I like to call "blue growth". The final declaration from last year's CPMR General Assembly meeting, called us to generate maritime activities and jobs. We have heeded that call. Commission President Barroso and I, we are convinced that maritime regions can and must serve as key drivers of the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth that the Europe 2020 Strategy will deliver.

We can look now into untapped maritime domains, such as the effects of climate change on coastal communities, marine renewable energies other than wind, and interaction between knowledge and business.

We should pursue greener maritime transport, improved sea-land inter-modality and enhanced short-sea shipping.

Obviously, nothing will be possible without money.

I am therefore happy to announce that this week the Commission has formally adopted the draft Regulation for the European Parliament and the Council. We establish a financial Programme of 50 million euro to support the further development of an Integrated Maritime Policy for 2011, 2012 and 2013. This will enable the Commission to keep striving for a sustainable use of our oceans, seas and coasts. Admittedly, the funds provided are not unlimited – but they will add to the existing and future financial instruments made available by the EU, the Member States and coastal regions. We now need the full support of the Maritime regions to help us for a quick adoption by the European parliament and by the Council of the Legal basis which will make this Regulation really effective

And this is a first step. As we speak, all Commission departments are working on the future Financial Perspectives to take us from 2014 to 2020. My department is looking at ways to mainstream the IMP dimension into all EU funding from 2013 on.

Dear friends,

Your contribution, in helping us make the right choices for our maritime regions and sectors, cannot be underestimated. Keep up the good work. You have already been vital companions along the path we have taken together. And for me, the fact that

we have all embarked upon the same journey is vital for the future of the IMP. Because it is your IMP as well as ours. Henry Ford once said, "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."

This does not mean that we should all lay back and let maritime policy drift with the tide. On the contrary, it means that if we work alongside one another to steer it in the same direction, we cannot go wrong. That is why I am so looking forward to charting our future path together with you.

Thank you.