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DRAFT FINAL DECLARATION SUBMITTED TO MEMBER REGIONS

1. For the Peripheral and Maritime Regions, 2006 was a nodal year:
 - it saw the end of a set of negotiations on European Union policies and laid down a basis until 2013;
 - it opened a new period of preparation for a more distant and, for the moment, more uncertain future.

DISAPPOINTING FINANCIAL PROSPECTS FOR 2007-2013

2. In January 2000, the Conference turned its full attention to its contribution to the reformulation of an ambitious regional strategy to ensure the active involvement of its member Regions in the EU's objectives as translated in the strategies laid down in Lisbon and Gothenburg. The Conference provided constant support for the drafting process being led by the European Commissions and Messrs. Prodi and Durao Barroso, in close cooperation with Commissioners Barnier and Hübner. Indeed it would like, at this juncture, to express its most grateful and sincere thanks for their willingness to make themselves available, listen to others' points of view and discuss issues with them. Our thanks also go to the European Parliament and the Member States whose convictions resulted, in the final analysis, in preserving an essential place for regional policy in the financial perspectives adopted for the 2007-2013 period.
3. In the end, the risk of total renationalisation of the demand for territorial cohesion has been averted:
 - The essential solidarity with Regions that are lagging behind in development terms (Objective 1) has been provided for, especially with Regions in new Member States. However, the level of solidarity has decreased compared to previous periods;
 - Likewise, there is an ongoing policy with all the other Regions, to support their involvement in the competitiveness and employment objectives (Objective 2), despite the fact that the budget set aside for this is significantly lower than the initial proposals from the Commission and the CPMR;
 - The cooperation established through INTERREG during previous programming periods in the form of an EU initiative, has become the 3rd regional policy objective, taking it into the mainstream. The section most specifically devoted to transnational areas is the one which, unfortunately, has suffered most at the hands of Member States.
4. In the end, section 1b was the one subjected to the fewest restrictions as a result of the December 2005 compromise if we compare the final outcome with the result for the section dealing with research and transeuropean networks. The CPMR deeply regrets the major cuts that have affected these two key aspects of EU competitiveness and the low level of funding allocated to rural development. However, it is delighted to note the extent to which its Member Regions are willing to mobilise to inform their national governments of their desire for a continuation of the EU's solidarity and territorial development policy, based on successive opinions and addresses issued by their political Bureau and General Secretariat throughout the year. Without this mobilisation, the end result would not have been achieved. This lesson should be remembered in the run-up to the next stage of negotiations for an EU territorial policy for the 2014-2020 period.
5. Quite apart from negotiations on budgets, the CPMR has noted the lack of ambition in the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) and the Regulations passed on the following issues :
 - the demand for territorial cohesion;
 - the involvement of Regions in the preparation and introduction of new programmes.

In these two areas, it notes a backward step as regards the European Commission's ability to take control and observes a reappropriation of the available resources by the administrative authorities in Member States, going against the need for greater integration of territorial strategies in the European project.

A LACK-LUSTRE EUROPEAN UNION

6. The financial perspectives retained for the 2007-2013 period are only one of the signs of stagnating European ambition. They are combined with the "need to stop and think" about the institutional framework. On a deeper level, they reflect the doubts that are being expressed Europe-wide on the continent's ability to

be an active, innovative partner in the current climate of globalisation. They also question the usefulness of its Member States joining forces to achieve such a stage. Europe is suffering from a duality of forces, some already fully determined to become part of the global scene in the making and others seeing themselves as victims of the new global relationships that are upsetting the "European model" built up over many long decades.

7. To overcome euroscepticism, Heads of State and Government must propose a current and future vision of Europe for their citizens, set against the background of the profoundly different world of the 21st century. Only such a strategic proposal can provide the basis for positive mobilisation on the part of those who are currently available and have the necessary energy, without inappropriate defensive stances being taken. The European Commission led by its President has a role to play here - but the signatories of the Treaties must also make it an essential issue in which their citizens play a part. This is not the case. Just like the era of the first oil crises (in 1973 and 1978 - and perhaps to an even greater extent), they have a tendency to hold back and look for national solutions without producing joint leadership or European mechanisms that could create more credible, stronger responses on an EU level. If our citizens doubt the usefulness of a deeper European structure, it is because this doubt results first and foremost from the attitude of most of those in authority. The result is a feeling of inability on the part of the EU to withstand the sheer scale of the challenges facing us.

A WORLD MAP UNDERGOING CONSTANT CHANGE

8. Only a careful analysis of the world will produce a diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of Europe in a new world in which :

- it will be possible to formulate a vision of the future for our citizens;
- there will be a list of objectives to be met by the Union as a whole through its Member States and regional and local authorities.

There are countless studies by experts. It is up to the European Commission, Parliament and Council to go beyond a partial translation of these studies, as expressed in the Lisbon and Gothenborg strategies, to offer our citizens a stimulating European ambition and draw the consequences in terms of direction, changes to institutions, and financial resources. At this price, the Union will regain its credibility on the inside and win credibility on the outside. Having been the main player in globalisation for five hundred years, Europe must succeed in becoming one of the partners today.

9. Those in charge of the Peripheral and Maritime Regions are experiencing the new situation on a daily basis, whether through climate change, natural resources, distribution of population (particularly as a result of migration) or changes in economic activities. They are seeking to provide support for these changes so that, between territories on all five continents, globalisation produces "win-win" situations for the population. This being so, just as thirty years ago they did not ignore the emergence of an extra-national European scene which their territory joined by becoming a full-scale player, so they cannot, today, fail to understand the global scene in which radical change has a determining effect on the viability of their businesses and the future of their children. In fact, they support this. European growth over the past few years has already been based as much on trade with the rest of the world as on the continuation of intra-Community trade. And the OECD has emphasised that the reservoirs of growth for its Member States are based first and foremost on the vitality of their regional economies.

10. This is why our Member Regions:

- Play a role in sustainable development policies, both in Europe and through the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (NRG4SD) set up at the Johannesburg Summit, for which the CPMR provides the management skills ;
- Likewise, the Conference represents the Regions within FIPOL, expressing the concerns of proximity players;
- It is for the same reason that they considered the role of Regions in the European Union's energy policy and that they are continuing their work on maritime safety and security, integrated coastal zone management and adaptation to climate change;
- Many Member Regions have also created and increased the number of cooperative projects with other continents, either in the form of public policies or to support the integration and adaptation of their companies in the world market;
- In support of this effort, the CPMR signed a framework cooperation agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

11. Basically, the Regions are waiting for their States and the European Union to lay down the institutional, legislative and financial conditions that will enable their territories to be fully and positively involved in the construction and governance of the world. This should be the result of the clause relating to the agreement by Heads of State and Government to meet again in 2008-2009, with all that this entails for the institutional framework and budgetary prospects for 2014-2020. Once they have received responses to this, they will be able to emphasise to their people the central role of the European Union in the light of the challenges of the 21st century. The results of this meeting will weigh very heavily on participation in European Parliament elections in June 2009.

REGIONAL ADVANTAGES TO CREATE A STRONG EUROPEAN UNION

12. The Regions intend to contribute as actively as possible to the preparation of this meeting. It is central to the CPMR's 5 guidelines for the forthcoming year.

Create a new basis for the territories' contribution to the prosperity of the EU

13. The political, legal and financial framework on which the European regional policy was negotiated for the 2007-2013 period, although it reveals a major change compared to previous programming periods, is the last surviving relative of the generations of programmes launched in 1988 as part of the "Delors 1" package. It is implausible to suggest that it might still be used as the basis for the creation of a territorial dimension for European Union policy in the 2014-2020 period. New approaches must be proposed from the outset, at the discussion phase involving Heads of State and Government in 2008-2009. The regional and territorial advantage must be a factor as important as certain macro-economic variables in Europe's strategy of adaptation. The Kok Report underlined the limits of a system of control that was inadequately distributed and inadequately taken on board by all levels of governance.

14. To achieve this aim:

- Major work must be undertaken to capitalise on the interactions between globalisation and the regional territories for which our Member Regions are responsible;
- In the same way, our Regions must have real involvement in the governance of European policies, from the preparation stage to the implementation phase;
- Participation in cooperation programmes within the framework of Objective 3 will also continue;
- The CPMR wishes to be closely involved in consideration of the "territorial agenda" being undertaken by Member States. In this respect, it expresses its gratitude to the Dutch government and informs the next semestrial German Presidency that it is available and willing to establish contacts.

These preparatory elements will make a contribution to a meeting of European players from national, regional and local levels who will propose to the Council the new bases for the Union's regional and territorial dimension at the meeting of 2008-2009.

15. With the same concerns in mind, the CPMR will maintain its involvement in a few key-sector issues that affect the vitality of its Member Regions and their contribution to the achievement of EU objectives.

16. The General Assembly can only regret the low level of progress made in the promotion of maritime transport and its interconnection with other forms of transport. It also underlines the inadequate attention paid to accessibility in the TEN-T objectives. Furthermore, air services are at risk, an issue which a working group drawn from CPMR Member Regions intends to study in greater depth over the next few months.

The Conference will pay particular attention to the following :

- adoption of the TEN-T financial regulations and the Pluri-Annual Indicative Programme for 2007-2013.
- general proposal for infrastructure costing which the European Commission has announced for 2008.

17. Member Regions congratulate the Stockholm and Asturias Regions for the quality of the work that they have chaired with the Regions in the working group with a view to greater CPMR involvement in **employment and training policies**. The Regions share the conclusions drawn from this approach. The material collated could constitute a basis for new dialogue and partnership with the European Commission in this area. The Regions would like initial contacts with the Commissioner and his departments to allow for a stronger contribution from the regional authorities to the enhancement of their human resources.

18. In accordance with the guidelines, the CPMR has also begun considering the contribution made by its Member Regions to the European energy policy. The General Assembly expresses its gratitude to Navarre and the various Regions in the Energy working group for all their work. It has formed the basis of new dialogue with Commissioner Piebalgs and the relevant departments in the European Commission, as well as with the European Parliament. Efforts should continue and should focus on the following :

- adequate development of TEN-Energy in peripheral maritime areas,
- compatibility of environmental legislation with the development of renewable energy sources,
- developments in State environmental aids.

19. The Conference intends to continue its examination of the future of European agriculture, developments in supportive public policies, and the impact of these changes on the development of rural areas. It will examine the results of current considerations at its next General Assembly.

20. As far as the legislative and regulatory framework for competition is concerned, the CPMR would like to thank Commissioner Nelly Kroes and her departments for continuing the dialogue that began in 2005. The Conference is particularly satisfied with :

- the upholding of 87.3.c zoning,
- the raising of the minimum ceiling,
- awareness of a territorial dimension in the new measures introduced to encourage venture capital,
- clarification of the framework on grants for innovation and grants for R&D linked to the priorities of regional policy for 2007-2013.

The Conference will closely monitor the following :

- the implementation, on a State by State basis, of the new map of State regional aids in the light of the territorial cohesion principle,
- the publication of frameworks for State aids in the environment sector.

21. The work, which is internal to the European Union, will be rounded off by an analysis and discussion with Regions on other continents on the difficulties and successes of territorial development in the light of globalisation. At the invitation of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, the CPMR will be organising the first Global Seminar on Territorial Development on 5th, 6th and 7th March 2007 with the United Nations Development Programme. The aim of the seminar will be to clarify the conditions for fair territorial development; the aim will not be to exacerbate competition.

22. At its next General Assembly in Rome, with the 2008-2009 meeting on the horizon, the CPMR will summarise all these approaches with a view to using its proposals for greater involvement on the part of its Member Regions to contribute to the future success of the European Union's policies.

The sea at the heart of the European continental project

23. The General Assembly would like to express its congratulations and deepest thanks to the President of the European Commission, Mr. José Manuel Durao Barroso, to the Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Mr. Joe Borg, to the Director of the "Maritime Affairs" Task Force, Mr. John Richardson, and to their departments for the quality of the work undertaken during the preparation of the Green Paper on Europe's maritime dimension. It would also like express its gratitude to its 50 Member Regions and the cities that have joined it in the "Europe of the Sea" project, and to its Scientific Council, bearing in mind its wish to expand upon the Green Paper by including CPMR proposals. It includes in these thanks the Minister of European Affairs for Schleswig-Holstein, Mr. Döring, for his work as *Rapporteur* for the Committee of the Regions on this issue. The involvement of so many has enabled us to complete a first stage in the consideration of a very old concern of the Conférence.

24. Beyond the consultation phase in which the CPMR will play a proactive part, the Member Regions have underlined their desire for the ambition suggested as one of the main areas of the EU's future strategic guidelines to be effectively translated into law. However, they question the depth of the commitment expressed by the European Parliament and Council. Only real awareness of the advantages and force of the Sea as a means to the internal development of the European Union and its presence in the world of the 21st century will ensure that the approach launched through the Green Paper does not end with a short-lived and discouraging illusion. This subject should be the driving force for renewed ambition on the part of the European Union in the same way that the space policies were in the past.

25. The General Assembly ardently wishes to see the following :

- the semestrial presidencies of Finland in 2006, and Germany and Portugal in 2007 should turn the maritime dimension of the European Union into a central, major topic, to reflect Europe's real place in the world;
- the European Parliament should introduce an appropriate procedure for the reading of the Green Paper and all sequels thereto through a special ad hoc Commission capable of looking at all the aspects of such a transversal issue compared to the competences of its Commissions;
- both these approaches should, by the end of 2007, help to promote the adoption of an ambitious European strategy that might constitute one of the key elements to be taken into consideration at the 2008-2009 meeting.

26. As a corollary to this, under the aegis of the Shetland Islands which the CPMR would like to thank for their commitment, Member Regions will continue to monitor the implementation of the European Fisheries Fund, in particular Axis 4 covering the sustainable development of coastal fishing grounds, and Regional Consultative Committees. The CPMR will continue in 2007 to organise interregional meetings on fisheries with DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs. These meetings will provide an opportunity for direct dialogue between the representatives of maritime regions, EU Member States and the Commission.

27. The implementation of Erika packets 1, 2 and 3 will, as agreed with the Regions of Pays de la Loire and Cantabria, should be the subject of a seminar to evaluate and monitor the regulations on maritime safety and security at the invitation of the Region of Cantabria. In particular, a position will be considered in 2007 on the regulations applicable to container ships and a ship breakers' yards.

The conditions for sustainable development

28. Member Regions are particularly sensitive to the expected impact of climate change. Because of this, they have joined in the work to prepare a Green Paper on adaptation to climate change launched by the European Commission, based on responses to a questionnaire circulated by the CPMR.

They are also awaiting proposals from the Commission on the conditions under which integrated coastal zone management can continue. They are again making themselves available to play an active role in both these areas. In particular, they will contribute to the "Mediterranean 2020" pollution control initiative.

In all these sectors, the CPMR will identify cooperation projects to be undertaken during the next programming period.

29. On all these issues, the regions will encourage their global network, NRG4SD, to continue its work on climate change and to forge its own view of a global maritime policy. It can then table its proposals with the International Maritime Organisation. The Brittany Region has launched an invitation for the next NRG4SD summit meeting, in September 2008.

Promoting the place of Regions at different levels of governance

30. The information collected on the conditions under which Regions could be involved in the implementation of new generations of European policies for the 2007-2013 period reveal very strong contrasts from one Member State to another and from one policy to another. It is obvious that the administrative authorities of the 25 Member States which signed the draft Treaty created as a result of the work of the Convention for the Future of Europe did not align their documents on the political choices expressed by their Heads of State and Government:

- involvement of regional and local levels in European Union policies in their areas of competence;
- adoption of the principle of territorial cohesion.

31. The CPMR regrets this very much. This issue will be central to the 2008-2009 discussions. Its Member Regions intend to participate in these discussions using two different approaches:

- they will continue to observe and capitalise on best practices for the governance of territorial development and the involvement of the Regions in EU policies. This work will be undertaken as part of the Governance Observatory project that the Committee of the Regions intends to set up with the CPMR. The relevant idea of Tripartite Contracts must continue to be promoted, tested and implemented within this context, as one possible form of EU/States/Regions partnership.

- through the Committee of the Regions and any other regional and local authority organisations that wish to do so, they will be very careful to increase awareness of the regional dimension and the principle of territorial cohesion when negotiations on changes to the Treaty begin again.

32. The emergence of decision-making centres outside the EU is weighing more and more heavily on the measure of independence left to Member Regions. To meet this challenge, the CPMR will continue its reflection based on the conclusions drawn from the Azores Seminar, with the other global and continental networks of regional authorities. It will also continue its consideration of global institutions as regards the setting up of an ability, on the part of the Regions, to take part in the agencies that have the greatest significance for regional policies.

33. In the same way, Member Regions of the CPMR and their Geographical Commissions intend to play an active part in the inclusion of their territories at the various geographical levels on which their exchanges and chances of development are played out. In addition to cooperation within the EU (cross-border, transnational and interregional), the Regions express the need to be present in the decentralised section:

- of neighbourhood policies in the Mediterranean area, in the Balkans, in the North Sea and within the framework of the Nordic dimension of the European Union.
- of EU policies with other continents, especially Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and the Indian Ocean.

34. Dialogue has begun on this issue with the relevant departments of the European Commission and certain Member States. It is also part of the general agreement concluded with the United Nations Development Programme with a view to increasing, at their request, the effectiveness of countless bilateral cooperation agreements led by Member Regions. In 2007-2008, a total of 5 or 6 real projects should make it possible to develop efficient working methods.

EFFECTIVELY UNITING THE STRENGTHS OF OUR REGIONS

35. The new battles on the horizon for our organisation are very real challenges. None of the hopes and expectations of our Member Regions and their populations should be seen as won in advance.

In addition to the General Secretariat's adaptation to changes in priorities, the Conference must continue to question its ability to bring together all those Regions which support:

- a more polycentric development of the continent,
- a vigorous maritime development.

36. The CPMR should, in particular, be able to supply a stronger answer, at the risk of separate paths being followed by the Regions in the Europe of 15 Member States, Europe of the 25 and, soon, Europe with 27 members. The opinions of the peripheral Regions would be strengthened in dialogue and negotiations with the Commission and the Council. The years 2007 and 2008 should be turned to advantage to undertake internal consideration of a topic that is decisive for the future. As in 2003, an in-depth questionnaire will be sent out by the Political Bureau to all Member Regions and other Regions in spring 2007 asking them about their expectations in the face of an interregional organisation that supported a polycentric development for Europe. The 2007 General Assembly, at the invitation of the Lazio Region, will be required to take on board the responses that it has received.

The General Assembly invites the Political Bureau and the General Secretary to implement the guidelines outlined above.