



Regions, indispensable partners for a new European climate ambition

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BACKGROUND

The new President of the European Commission has announced her intention to make climate the hallmark of her mandate, and for Europe to become the first climate neutral continent.

The CPMR Member Regions are at the heart of climate challenges, as they are already facing the growing impacts of climate change, and also implementing ambitious policies to mitigate its causes and to adapt to it.

This Policy Position expresses the support of CPMR Member Regions for the strengthening of the European Union's climate action. It also stresses that the integration of the objective of economic, social and territorial cohesion and a full partnership with the regions is a prerequisite for the success of Europe's ambition.

These messages will guide the CPMR's initiatives in the coming months.

1. Strengthen the European Union's climate action

- 1. The CPMR urges the European Union to respond to the climate emergency by opening a cycle of unprecedented ambition in its political action.** A stronger European ambition is essential to support the ambitious policies put in place by the regions in light of the major and growing consequences of climate change in their territories.
- 2. The CPMR welcomes the proposal of a “European Green Deal” and supports the objective for the European Union to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest.** Carbon neutrality cannot only be, as it is the case today, an optimistic scenario within the long-term strategy of the European Union.
- 3. The CPMR calls for the carbon neutrality objective to be supported by increasing the European Union's greenhouse gas reduction target to a minimum of 55% in 2030,** as well as promoting the implementation of carbon capture and storage.
- 4. The CPMR also calls for the development of an integrated European strategy that mobilises all the European Union thematic policies to achieve carbon neutrality.** The CPMR welcomes the intention of the new President of the European Commission to stimulate new initiatives to put the European Union thematic policies at the service of climate action, particularly in the areas of biodiversity, transport, blue growth, industrial strategy, circular economy, agriculture and active forest management.
- 5. The CPMR stresses the importance for the European Union to strengthen its support to innovation and competitiveness, so that its climate action generates economic opportunities in all territories.** The new industrial strategy of the European Union must be an instrument to strengthen, through all relevant European programmes, value chains within the European Union in strategic areas such as renewable energies, low carbon industries, or hydrogen technologies.
- 6. The CPMR calls on the European Union to do more to mobilise massive private and public funding in support to climate action.** The volume of these investments is today insufficient in view of the stakes, and the European Union must play a stronger role than today.
- 7. The CPMR therefore supports the intention of the President of the European Commission to develop a “Sustainable Europe Investment Plan”.** The CPMR welcomes at this stage the intention to increase to 50% by 2025 the share of European Investment Bank investments dedicated to climate action, as well as the adoption by the European Investment Bank of a new lending policy which puts an end to support for fossil fuels. The CPMR also welcomes the objective that 25% of the EU budget will support climate action. Cohesion Policy will provide a major contribution to this objective.

2. Adopt a European climate pact integrating the objective of territorial cohesion and involving the regions

8. **The CPMR calls on the European Union to make territorial balance and partnership with the Regions a major enabler for the success of the new European Green Deal.** To a great extent, economic dynamics and policies that are necessary for the success of these initiatives lie with the territories and the action of Regional Authorities. In the current situation of emergency, the European Union's climate action can not succeed if it does not rely more effectively on the regions. Due to their territorial specificities, CPMR member Regions develop innovative solutions that are essential to the success of EU climate action. Stronger action is also needed to support the most vulnerable regions to adapt to the impact of climate change.
9. **The CPMR welcomes the spirit of the European Climate Pact proposed by the President of the European Commission. However, the CPMR considers that the Pact cannot be limited to being a forum where Regions and other stakeholders would only discuss their respective commitments.** The European Climate Pact must lead to major political change, through the full inclusion of the objective of territorial cohesion and of the partnership with the Regions within the European Union's climate action.
10. **The CPMR therefore calls for the European Climate Pact to set a strong ambition to better integrate the objective of economic, territorial and social cohesion into the European Union's climate action, so as to ensure that the energy transition is fair for the territories and populations of all Europe.** Climate change and climate action create a growing and colossal risk of a new territorial and social divide within the European territory. This risk stems from the heterogeneous vulnerability of the territories and economic sectors of the European Union to climate change and their economic dependence on sources of greenhouse gas emissions.
11. **The CPMR calls for the European Climate Pact to boost European Union initiatives in support of the regions most affected by climate change.** Therefore, the CPMR supports initiatives such as Clean Energy for EU Islands, the Secretariat for Islands and the EU Islands Facility, which the CPMR has actively promoted, as well as the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition, and the specific assistance that the European Investment Bank will offer to the most fossil fuel-dependent territories.
12. **The CPMR also supports the setting up of the "Just Transition Fund". However, The CPMR asks for the budget of this fund to be in addition to the Cohesion Policy budget.** The CPMR also asks for the "Just Transition Fund" to be integrated within Cohesion Policy, for instance by adjusting its thematic concentration objectives. Its integration into Cohesion Policy is a guarantee of efficiency, since Cohesion Policy is the main investment policy of the European Union for climate action in the territories, and its "*raison d'être*" is to compensate territorial imbalances. The CPMR considers the "Just Transition Fund" to be a key enabler for the transition towards carbon neutrality of peripheral and maritime regions.

13. Beyond this, the CPMR considers that the European Climate Pact should allow for a new political orientation of European Climate policies, based on multi-level governance in partnership with the regions. At this stage and in this perspective, the CPMR asks for greater involvement of the regions in the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), which are key in the implementation of the European Union's objectives. On the basis of its study on the draft NECPs, the CPMR recommends for the NECPs to:

- Integrate a regional dimension in the NECPs focusing on how the Member-States's policies are implemented with the regions. This dimension is today almost absent from the NECPs;
- Involve the regions explicitly in their development and implementation. The involvement of regions in the NECPs is currently insufficient, which might hamper their implementation;
- Integrate more ambitious measures, especially areas that are key for CPMR Member Regions, such as marine energies and transport;
- Be much more detailed, to allow an accurate follow-up. The study carried out by the CPMR shows a lack of accuracy, also underlined by the European Commission, of the measures, notably financial ones envisaged by Member-States, and consequently a very great difficulty to compare the contents of the different NECPs

14. Finally, the CPMR considers that the European Climate Pact should inspire a new initiative to strengthen the mobilisation of all European Union investments in support to climate action at territorial level. This initiative could include the development of synergies between the regions' investment priorities, particularly in the context of their smart specialisation strategies, with the main programmes of the European Union, including Horizon Europe, as well as with the European Investment Bank. Beyond this, such an initiative should lead to proposals for new and innovative mechanisms to channel EU investments in support to territorial climate actions policies implemented with the regions.



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The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) brings together some 160 Regions from 25 States from the European Union and beyond.

Representing about 200 million people, the CPMR campaigns in favour of a more balanced development of the European territory.

It operates both as a think tank and as a lobby group for Regions. It focuses mainly on social, economic and territorial cohesion, maritime policies and accessibility.

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