



## VASCO DA GAMA INITIATIVE: STATE OF PLAY AND NEXT STEPS

This paper describes the various actions underway within the CPMR's (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions) Vasco da Gama initiative. Launched in 2010, this initiative aims to stimulate cooperation between European regions, universities, thematic networks and European institutions in the field of maritime education and training.

In this paper, the CPMR's actions are presented within the framework of the new skills agenda to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness in Europe, which was launched in June 2016 by the European Commission. These include:

- Improving the quality and relevance of training and education programmes;
- Enhancing the visibility and comparability of skills and qualifications;
- Improving the strategic monitoring of needs in terms of both skills and information, for more informed career choice.

The CPMR will draw on its various initiatives to contribute to the political development of the European strategy. With this in mind, the CPMR is also participating in the Blue Skills Expert Group set up by the European Commission, which started its work on 1 June 2016.

This is a new area of work for the CPMR and concerns the mobility and training of young students and job seekers.

## 1. Improving the quality and relevance of training and education programmes

### 1.1. blue biotechnologies: the Blue careers project (BBMBC) “a blue biotechnology master for a blue career”

The BBMBC project is one of six projects selected by the European Commission as part of the Blue Careers Call for Proposals<sup>1</sup>. Led by the University of La Rochelle, BBMBC is developing a new and innovative Master-level training course on exploiting the potential of blue biotechnology in the fields of health, nutrition and aquaculture. The development of this new training course is based on close collaboration between universities, businesses and Atlantic regions.

As a partner in this project, the CPMR Arc Atlantic Commission is responsible for dissemination and capitalisation activities and encourages the transferability of the initiative among the Atlantic Regions

### 1.2. Maritime transport: 2017 Vasco da Gama summer school

The Aldo MORO University in Bari (Italy) and the CPMR will organise a Summer School in Taranto (Italy) from 17 to 21 July 2017. This Summer School will focus on synergies between the development of maritime transport and the protection of the marine environment.

35 students will participate free of charge. The CPMR General Secretariat will also participate directly in the work through an intervention on European maritime transport policy.

This is the second Summer School organised by the CPMR, following the Summer School held in August 2015 in Kalmar (Sweden). The CPMR will continue this initiative.

## 2. Enhancing the strategic monitoring of skills and information needs

### Maritime technologies: the “maritime BLUEPRINT” initiative

As part of the strategy to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness, in February 2017 the European Commission launched the BLUEPRINT initiative<sup>2</sup>. With a budget of approximately €4 million and financed through the ERASMUS + programme, BLUEPRINT aims to develop platforms made up of those involved in professional training, and focusing on anticipating changes in skills needs.

Five thematic platforms will be developed, including one on maritime issues. More specifically, the maritime platform Blueprint which will be set up will focus on the issue of maritime technologies as defined in the LeaderShip 2020 report. This report, which the CPMR directly contributed to, defines

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/call-proposals-blue-careers-europe>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=fr&pubId=7969>

European priorities shared by a group of actors involved in shipbuilding, marine energies and associated technologies.

In addition, the platforms will have to produce roadmaps to improve and/or create new training and education strategies. Finally, they will have to make policy recommendations, addressed mainly to the Member States, which will be responsible for the implementation of the roadmaps by 2021.

In this context, the CPMR has joined a partnership led by the organisation SEAEUROPE<sup>3</sup>. Should this proposal be accepted, the CPMR will directly contribute to the setting up of the sector-based platform. In particular, it's role will be to organise the involvement of Regions that wish to participate in this initiative. In the event that the proposal led by SeaEurope is not accepted, the CPMR will be involved via other, less direct channels in the running of the maritime platform Blueprint.

### 3. Promoting educational and/or training courses in a context of exchanges and mobility between regions

#### **Students and job seekers' mobility: launch of the "Vasco da Gama - youth mobility" initiative**

Together with the Azores region, the CPMR is launching a new initiative to support the mobility of students and jobseekers in Europe. This initiative is in addition to the opportunities already offered by the European Union through programmes such as Erasmus.

Entitled "VASCO DA GAMA YOUTH MOBILITY (VDG YM)", this initiative targets two audiences:

- Young students (Master I or II level) who wish to participate in existing training programmes in another CPMR Member Region;
- Job seekers (18 - 30 years) who wish to have professional experience in a company located in another CPMR Member Region.

VDG YM will cover the thematic areas of "blue and green growth", in line with the CPMR's core business.

The initiative will be based on the principle that Region A may send a certain number of candidates to Region B, which in turn will have the right to send the same number of candidates to Region A. In this context, the Host Region will:

- Identify educational/training institutions as well as companies that are likely to offer hosting opportunities;
- Monitor the implementation of the exchange;

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.seaeurope.eu/template.asp?f=index.htm#box-nine>

- Cover costs relating to:
  - The running of the initiative (participation in the Regions, staff costs for the procedure of identifying candidates etc.);
  - The mobility of those involved (travel and accommodation expenses, insurance).

The governance of VDG YM will be provided by a core group of Member Regions, selected from the Regions that will join the implementation of the first pilot action. This core group will include a maximum of 2 Regions per participating country, as well as the CPMR Presidency and Secretariat.

Initially, the initiative will be launched over a one-year period, which will start no later than the second half of 2018.

During the CPMR Political Bureau in June 2017 in Stavanger, this initiative will be officially launched by the CPMR President. A Call will be made to Member Regions to join the initiative. The CPMR General Secretariat will then work together with the regions involved to develop specific terms of reference including the methodology and the thematic scope of the first pilot action of the programme. A specific document covering these aspects will then be presented for validation at the next CPMR General Assembly in October 2017.