



Brest Declaration of Atlantic cities

On 16 and 17 July 2024, the members of the Atlantic Cities network met in Brest for their annual general assembly. During the meeting, they discussed the topics of Atlantic gastronomy, sustainable tourism and ocean protection.

The European elections last June allowed pro-European political forces to retain their majority in the European Parliament. But these elections were also marked by the rise of Eurosceptic forces and the growing rejection of the European integration project. In this context, we attach great importance to the values we share in our network, Atlantic Cities.

The solidarity, cooperation and projects we maintain in our territories, along the Atlantic façade, our joint contributions in Brussels (e.g. the Trans-European Transport Network, TEN-T) or at European events (e.g. the European Maritime Day, EMD) nourish this essential European regional and local dialogue and embody the need to reconnect the European project with the concerns of its inhabitants.

Our work carried out yesterday has provided us with a wealth of lessons and perspectives as we embark on this new European legislature.

The European debates promise to be complex, but we want to be a player in the many areas that are of interest in particular to our maritime cities: the deployment of the European Green Deal and its funding, the maintenance of a cohesion policy that is territorialised and adequately resourced, the question of the Atlantic macro-region, the challenge of accessibility and the implementation of the TEN-T, the blue economy and the protection of the oceans. These are all priority issues for us.

I. Atlantic Gastronomy

The Atlantic cities:

Recognise that Atlantic gastronomy is an important part of their cultural heritage, encompassing aspects regarding local gastronomic culture, culinary tourism, health and support for local producers. Cities should facilitate channels connecting producers with local markets, introducing consumption patterns that protect Atlantic producers and reduce the carbon footprint.

Encourage collaboration between different institutions and organisations to bring Atlantic gastronomy to the same status of acknowledgement as Mediterranean gastronomy. By promoting local products from the sea and the hinterland, local economies are supported and culinary traditions are preserved.

Announce their intention to develop a certification or label for Atlantic gastronomy, similar to that of the Mediterranean region.

In this context, the Atlantic cities advocate:

1. **The promotion of healthy and inclusive food:** encouraging the use of local products and responsible practices that contribute to the health of coastal ecosystems and the well-being of the local population.
2. **Support for local producers:** favouring short distribution channels (zero-kilometer concept), supporting the local economy, reducing carbon emissions and preserving regional know-how.
3. **Education and awareness-raising:** by organising culinary events and workshops via centres of excellence, enabling the savoir-faire of the Atlantic territories to be maintained and passed on.

II. Sustainable tourism

The Atlantic cities:

Recall the importance of tourism in the economic development of the Atlantic regions and commit themselves to sustainable tourism strategies, in line with the global challenges of decarbonisation and protection of the marine and coastal environment.

Recognise the importance of cooperation and exchange of good practices in this field, and welcome with interest the discussions on projects presented during the General Assembly.

Are committed to:

1. **Developing responsible tourism practices:** applying innovative policies and infrastructures that minimise environmental impact and promote sustainable development, participating in European collaborative projects.
2. **Protecting marine ecosystems:** supporting marine conservation initiatives and raising awareness among visitors about the fragility of ecosystems.
3. **Promoting inclusive tourism:** by ensuring that tourism development benefits the entire local community and respects cultural diversity.

III. The preservation of the oceans and their resources

The Atlantic cities, following on from the Biarritz Declaration and the signing of the Mission Charter "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030":

Reaffirm their concern and will to act in the face of global warming and its alterations.

Reiterate their commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 6 and 14 on the preservation of the oceans and their biodiversity.

In this context, the Atlantic cities:

1. **Actively support** the call for the development of a Blue Deal and any complementary action to the Green Deal on the oceans and the distribution of water resources, by joining all initiatives at European level,
2. Present at the European Maritime Days (EMD) in Svendborg, **Atlantic Cities supports the initiative of the EMD cities network, 'Restore our Ocean, Blue cities at the rescue!** 'and will continue its commitment with them in view of the next editions of this annual event: Cork in May 2025; Santander in 2027 and a privileged cooperation with the European Commission and DG MARE.
3. **Confirm their commitment to following up the work on the Action Plan of the Atlantic Maritime Strategy.** This is an essential forum for dialogue to identify relevant programmes and partnerships within the Atlantic Arc and on maritime issues.
4. **Express** their wish to participate directly in the definition of new European strategies on the oceans, by actively participating in Community calls for projects such as the "Lighthouse Atlantic Area Governance" call of the Interreg Atlantic Area programme.

The members of the European network of Atlantic Cities reaffirm their commitment to the sustainable and integrated management of maritime resources, the promotion of Atlantic gastronomy, the development of sustainable blue tourism and the protection of the oceans.