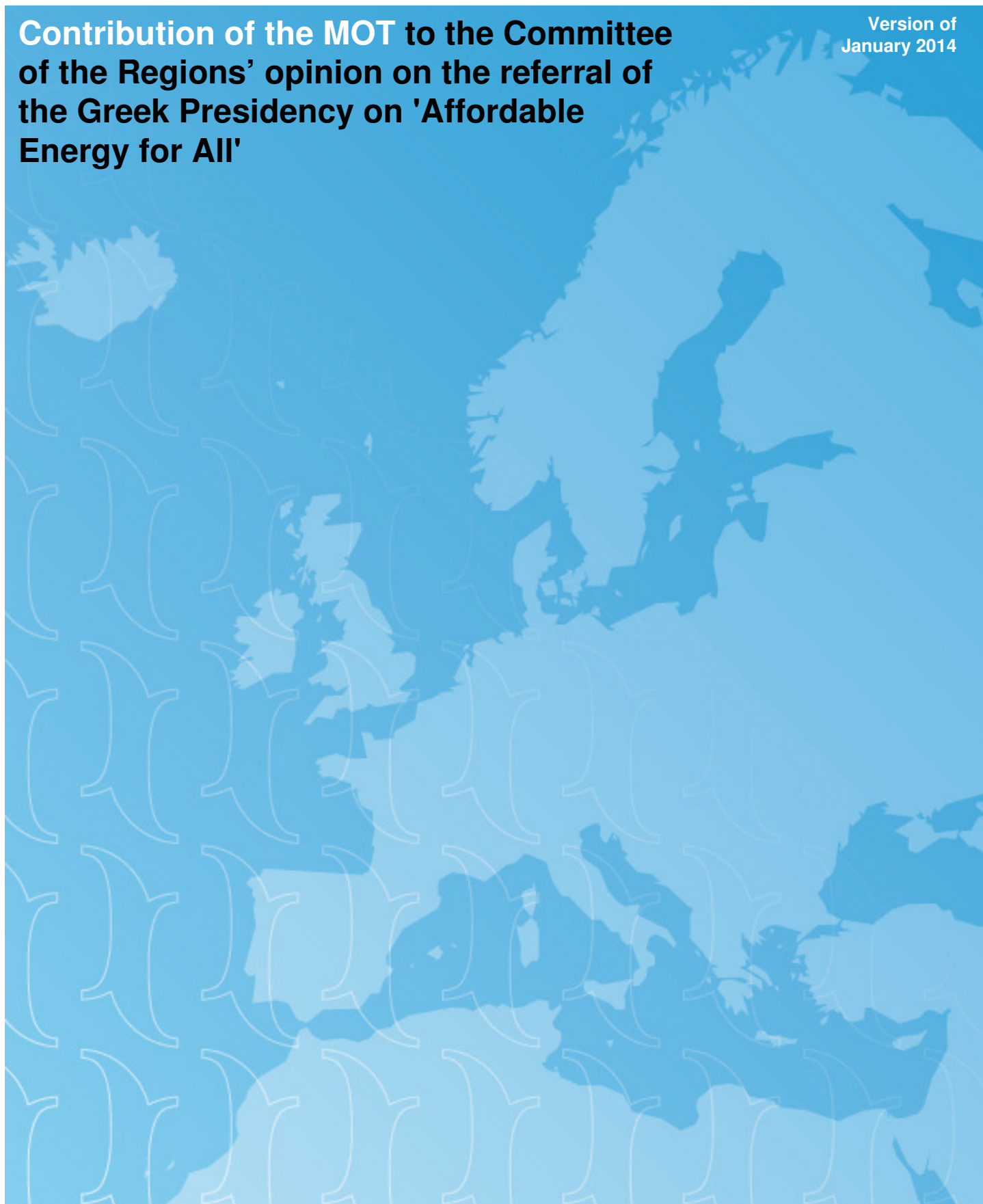


**Contribution of the MOT to the Committee
of the Regions' opinion on the referral of
the Greek Presidency on 'Affordable
Energy for All'**

Version of
January 2014



MOT Position paper for the stakeholder consultation of the Committee of the Region on the referral of the Greek Presidency on 'Affordable Energy for All'

I. Introduction

Responding to the invitation of the Committee of the Regions, the MOT network wishes to present a position paper on the framework for energy policies in Europe.

More than a series of answers to the questions raised about consumer protection and social impact of 'energy poverty', we aim to give some inputs about Energy in cross-border context: challenges, stakes, and benefits of territorial cooperation.

Presentation of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT - Transfrontier Operational Mission):

The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, created in 1997, is both an association and a French inter-ministerial structure, which has the main objective of facilitating cross-border projects. Its missions are operational assistance to leaders of cross-border projects (project development, legal structures, studies, etc.), networking, assistance in the definition of overall strategies in cross-border cooperation, and implementation of European projects. The MOT brings together within its network sub-national authorities and their groupings, associations, cross-border structures, large corporations, states, etc. involved in cross-border cooperation and situated on both sides of the border. It has about 60 members, from 11 European countries.

To date, the MOT has concentrated its work on cross-border proximity cooperation and assistance in the definition of policies regarding cross-border territories.

Website: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

II. The MOT contribution

II.1. Introduction

The challenges of climate change and the tensions in the global energy market have led the European Union to set ambitious energy management objectives as part of the Europe 2020 strategy, and in particular to "support the transition to a low carbon economy in all sectors" in the context of the thematic priorities for the 2014-2020 programming period.

Cross-border territories face specific difficulties with regards to planning and the differences between local, regional and national energy policies on either side of the border. They are consequently hindered in their implementation of European common energy policies and strategies, despite the asset that the different national approaches could otherwise represent in the context of cross-border cooperation, allowing the transfer of know-how and the development of synergies.

II.2. Cross-border issues in the energy sector

Besides the technical, environmental and economic challenges for territories, recurrent in the energy sector, in the context of cross-border cooperation there are also specific regulatory, fiscal and legal challenges.

The European Union is harmonising its policy with directives that set the same objective for all of its Member States, while leaving them to choose the means of achieving said objective, the

resultant national regulations differ and confront each other in cross-border territories. Coordination of these regulations is required in order to encourage and make possible the cooperation of neighbouring local authorities in this field. The cross-border dimension could subsequently be integrated into territorial programming to ensure cohesion in the energy sector across the cross-border territory.

With regards to the single market, the questions of subsidies or taxation also require coordination to avoid creating inequalities and imbalances in the cross-border market. Vulnerable consumers are the first 'losers' of such inequalities, especially in marginal areas - as cross-border territories often are toward central initiatives.

Cross-border cooperation in this field is essential for the harmonious development of new energy sources and their production, allowing in consequence balanced distribution. To make this possible, cross-border stakeholders require basic knowledge and technical competencies – which are currently not very widespread - to expand the adoption of these energy sources.

II.3. The benefits of cross-border energy cooperation

While the development of renewable energy and the promotion of energy efficiency could bring economic and financial benefits in the medium and long term, they represent costly investments in the short term.

Cross-border cooperation can enable businesses to join forces in the adoption of low-carbon technologies and control energy costs.

Supply problems in rural and remote areas (islands, ultra-peripheral or 'outermost' regions) could be overcome through the development of local energy production.

Although cross-border cooperation in the energy sector is complex to implement, the improvements it can bring to services, the economy and employment are considerable, with links to consumers' empowerment and to combat energy poverty. It therefore deserves to be taken into account in spatial planning and energy policy, as well as within the entrepreneurial strategy of cross-border stakeholders.