



INSULEUR's General Assembly Drives Insightful Dialogue on the Importance of EU Islands' Economies and their Impact on the post -2027 EU Cohesion Policy

Brussels, June 28, 2024 – The Network of Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union (INSULEUR) successfully orchestrated its General Assembly at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels. The event, held under the auspices of the EESC with the cooperation of the European Small Islands Federation (ESIN), and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions Islands Commission (CPMR), underscored the critical role of EU islands in shaping future EU policies.

Joseph Borg, President of INSULEUR, presided over the General Assembly, presenting an overview of the activities undertaken by the Presidency in the past six months. His report highlighted various initiatives dedicated to supporting insular communities, emphasizing sustainability and resilience efforts. In his introductory comments, he highlighted that *"INSULEUR has been highly effective in advocating for island issues. I firmly believe that by maintaining our collaborative efforts, we can continue to advance the interests of islands at every level."* His intervention was followed by Danai Krokou and Irene Mikelis presentations on the progress and current status of INSULEUR's ongoing EU funded projects (I-STARs, MESA, Med-Routes, Carousel) and the ones recently submitted, together with the 2023 budget by Nikolaos Tsipiras, Treasurer, which was unanimously approved.

The assembly also served as a platform for insightful dialogue among its members. Key discussions centered on the need to integrate the ‘island dimension’ into post-2027 EU Cohesion Policy, ensuring that EU islands' unique challenges and contributions are adequately represented and addressed.

Prominent interventions included **Dr. Athena Kalyva**, Head of the Economic Policy Unit (Greek Permanent Representation to the EU) talked on “The Implications of Tax Policy on The Economic Development of EU Islands”, and **George Drakopoulos**, CEO of Tourism Generis presented the topic” The challenge of carrying capacity in island destinations. The case of Santorini.”

Their contributions provided in-depth analyses and actionable recommendations for bolstering the sustainability and economic viability of island communities.

In a significant move, President **Joseph Borg** addressed a letter to Charles Michel, President of the European Council, on June 19, 2024. In this letter, President Borg highlighted the unique challenges faced by EU island regions, stressing the need to prioritize these areas in the 2024-2029 EU strategy. He emphasized that the distinctive vulnerabilities of islands, such as their limited resources and dependency on external supplies, require tailored policy measures to ensure their sustainable development and integration into the broader EU framework.

Finally, the GA addressed institutional aspects of the Network, including the extension of the current mandate of the Board of Directors until April 30, 2025 and the election of Luis Padrón, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Gran Canaria, as INSULEUR's 1st Vice-President.

INSULEUR expresses deep gratitude for the diverse perspectives that shaped the dialogue, marking 24 years of unwavering dedication to promoting the economic and social sustainable development of islands in the EU. The Network remains pivotal in advocating for the interests of EU islands, ensuring their voices resonate at all policy-making levels.

