



## INSULEUR GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, the Network of Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union-INSULEUR held its virtual General Assembly. During this meeting the President, Joseph Borg, presented the activities of the Presidency, highlighting among others his participation to a number of Eurochambres meetings where he had the opportunity to provide his input on the impact of COVID from an insular point of view.

He also highlighted INSULEUR's intervention to the President of the EC, Ursula Von Der Leyen on the need for 'Ensuring a Fair and Effective Recovery in EU islands through adequate measures in National Recovery and Resilience Plans'. The reply received to this letter by Ms Celine Gauer, Head of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force, led Mr Borg to share his "hope that the recovery and resilience would really be a vehicle through which the disparities faced by islands are addressed". Mr Borg also highlighted how "technology can bridge the gap with respect to the difficulties faced by islands and how EU funds will play an important part in this development". The importance of technology was also highlighted during his intervention in the opening session of the 8<sup>th</sup> Greening the island's e-Convention. Technology, together with the right policy framework and finance, in its various forms like for example through research and synergies with industry, will play an important part in the economic development of islands.

### INSULEUR BoD

Chairman: Joseph Borg,  
President, Gozo Business  
Chamber (Malta)

First Vice- President: Patrick  
Vial- Collet, President,  
Chamber of Commerce and  
Industry of Guadeloupe  
(France)

Second Vice-  
President: Prof. Heri Bezić,  
Ph.D. President of the  
Croatian Chamber of  
Economy - County Chamber  
Rijeka(Croatia)

Third Vice-  
President: Evangelos  
Myrsinias, President  
Chamber of Commerce of  
Lesvos (Greece)

Fourth Vice-  
President: Michael Galea,  
Gozo Business Chamber  
(Malta)

Treasurer: Nikolaos  
Tsipiras, Chamber of  
Commerce of Zakynthos  
(Greece)

Secretary General: Antonio  
Grimalt, Chamber of  
Commerce of Mallorca  
(Spain)

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During the GA, the Presidents and representatives of our CCI members, President Evangelos Myrsinias (Lesvos Chamber), President Michael Galea (CCI Gozo), Nela Vukadin representing President Prof. Heri Bezić, Ph.D (CCE Rijeka County Chamber), Nikolaos Tsipiras and President Fotios Kottis (Zakynthos CCI), Athanasios Zlatoudis (CCI Magnesia/EOAEN), Vice Chairman Josep Lluís Aguiló Veny (CCI Mallorca), and Giovanni Murru representing President Maurizio de Pascale (CCIAA Cagliari-Oristano), gave a thorough overview of the islands' current situation, challenges and economies with regards to the Covid-19 pandemic with special emphasis on the situation of tourism on the various islands. Overall, the impression is that while business restarted, this is nowhere near to pre-pandemic figures. Moreover, while various forms of state aid and/or tax exemptions certainly helped island businesses, these came either too late or the amount of aid was not enough to allow all businesses to survive the crisis. Opportunities emerging from new tourist markets and niches were also discussed. Concerns were also raised on the impact of climate change and the rising prices of many commodities affecting sectors such as agriculture, construction etc, but principally the living standards of insular populations.

The above interventions were followed by a presentation on the progress and current status of INSULEUR's ongoing Interreg EU funded projects (Blue Crowdfunding and Compose+) and the ones recently submitted, together with the 2022 annual budget proposal which was unanimously approved.

Lastly, Alicia Bueno (CCI Mallorca) shared Secretary General Luis Padron's (Gran Canaria CCI) proposal to host INSULEUR's next GA in Gran Canaria and in the framework of a Forum organized by the government of Canary Islands through its tourism Council. This Forum will deal with the "reactivation of tourism in islands". Alicia Bueno also invited INSULEUR to participate to an upcoming Forum on tourism focused on resilience and sustainability which will be jointly organized by CCI Mallorca and ASCAME.