



INSULEUR's G.A. and Annual Forum Drives Insightful Dialogue on Climate Change's Impact on EU Islands' Economies

On December 1st, 2023, The Network of Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union successfully orchestrated its General Assembly and Annual Forum at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens. The event, held under the auspices of the Union of Hellenic Chambers and the General Secretariat of the Aegean and Island Policy featured collaboration with CPMR - Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions Island Commission, Greening the Islands, Island Innovation, SMILO - Small Islands Organisation, ESIN - European Small Islands Federation, received support from the Piraeus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Piraeus chamber of tradesman, and endorsement by Interreg Euro-MED Programme - Mission for Natural Heritage and the COSME I-STARS Project.

Prior to the forum, the General Assembly of INSULEUR convened to discuss critical issues, where Joseph Borg presiding it, provided an overview of the activities of the Presidency during the past six months, including the various initiatives and activities that were undertaken to continue to promote the agenda of islands.

The assembly also showcased EU-funded projects dedicated to supporting insular communities. These projects, aligned with the objectives of fostering sustainability and resilience, underline the tangible efforts in place to enhance the well-being of EU islands.

The subsequent Forum featured three insightful panels moderated by **George Assonitis, Evangelos Myrsinias, and Nikolaos Tsipiras**: 'The Voice of Islanders,' 'Examining Islands in Climate Adaptation Policies,' and 'Exploring the EU's Initiatives.' These discussions not only illuminated the profound impacts of climate change on EU islands' economies but also underscored the indispensable role played by INSULEUR in elevating island concerns to national, regional, and European stages.

With 100 engaged attendees, the event served as a crucial platform for participants to engage in an insightful dialogue led by speakers from local, regional, national, and European authorities' representatives. The spotlight was on the vulnerabilities of EU islands to climate change, highlighting the urgency and importance for collaborative strategies in crafting adaptive solutions to insular realities and reinforcing the role of INSULEUR in advocating for these issues.

This collaboration is not merely a celebration of two decades of impactful efforts; it represents a milestone in the ongoing journey towards policy changes aiming at including the 'island dimension' in all the policy proposals put forward at an EU level and ensuring the territorial and social cohesion to which the EU continuously aspires. The active participation of **Joseph Borg**, President of INSULEUR and of Gozo Business Chamber, **Panagiotis Agniadis**, General Secretary, Union of Hellenic Chambers , **Ioannis Voutsinas**, President, Professional Chamber of Piraeus , **Dimitris Lemonakis**, BoD member, Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Piraeus, **Manos Konsolas**, President, Special Permanent Commission of Regions, Greek Parliament, **Emmanouil Koutoulakis**, Representative of the Greek Prime Minister, **Professor Dr. Theocharis Tsoutsos**, Director, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Lab, School of Chemical & Environmental Engineering, Technical University of Crete, **Josianne Cutajar**, Member of the European Parliament, **Ioannis Vardakastanis**, President of the ECO Section, European Economic and Social Committee, **Ioannis Sakiotis**, Representation of the European Commission in Greece, Team leader, Political reporting and media DG COMM, **Alison Gilliland**, Dublin City Councilor, Member of the European Committee of the Regions and Delegate to COP28, **Claudia Guzzon**, Executive Secretary of the Islands Commission, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), **James Ellsmoor**, CEO, Island Innovation, **Gaetano Nastasi**, Board Member of the chamber of commerce of Cagliari-Oristano & **Gianluca Cocco**, Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, **Maxime Prodromides**, President, The Small Islands Organisation (SMILO), **Eleftherios Kechagioglou**, President, European Small Islands Network (ESIN), President HSIN, EU Climate Pact ambassador, **Jorge Veiga França**, President, Câmara de Comércio e Industria da Madeira, Vice-President INSULEUR, **Emmanouil Koutoulakis**, Secretary General of the Aegean and Island Policy, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, **Prof. Ioannis Chatjigeorgiou**, Rector of the National Technical University of Athens, **Giovanni Satta**, Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, **George Vassilopoulos**, ex-Mayor of Ithaca, **Gianni Chianetta**, Chair, Greening the Islands Foundation, and other esteemed participants underscores the collective commitment to a sustainable and resilient future for EU islands.

“Europe would not be Europe without its islands. We all know this, but our Europe must also realize this fact and as consequence draw up an Island pact as soon as possible and see to it that it is implemented including amongst others the problematics related to the adverse impact of climate change on islands.” This concluding statement of **President Borg** encapsulates the essence of the discussions, emphasizing the commitment to both environmental resilience and policy advocacy for the prosperity of EU islands.

INSULEUR expresses deep gratitude for the diverse perspectives that shaped the dialogue, sealing 23 years of unwavering dedication. The Network remains pivotal in advocating for the interests of EU islands and ensuring their voices resonate at all levels.

