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On October 2nd, Joseph Borg, President of INSULEUR, took part as a panelist in a thematic seminar discussing the opportunities and challenges of transport and tourism in peripheral maritime regions. This seminar is part of the ongoing CPMR – Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions – being held in Gozo.



Conference of Peripheral
Maritime Regions
Gozo 2024

NAVIGATING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS: TRANSPORT & TOURISM IN PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS

On October 2nd, Joseph Borg, President of Insuleur, participated in a key seminar on transport and tourism challenges in peripheral maritime regions. Held in Gozo as part of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), the seminar focused on balancing accessibility with sustainability for island economies. Mr. Borg emphasized the need for islands to remain connected in ways that align with EU environmental goals: "Combining accessibility and sustainability is not only possible but essential." The revision of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) was highlighted as crucial for improving island connectivity while reducing carbon footprints.

Peripheral maritime regions, particularly islands, face unique challenges. Tourism, a critical economic driver, puts pressure on infrastructure and natural resources, especially during peak seasons. To address this, the seminar spotlighted the importance of sustainable, multimodal transport solutions to manage both freight and passenger flows. The CPMR has been actively involved in shaping policies like the Tourism Transition Pathway (TTP) and the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, aligning with initiatives like the Bologna Charter to support climate resilience in coastal regions.

Looking ahead, three key priorities were identified for the next EU legislative term: securing targeted EU funding tailored to island-specific needs, establishing regulatory frameworks to support the adoption of alternative fuels and green technologies, and increasing support for green corridors and sustainable transport infrastructure. These efforts aim to create resilient island economies that remain competitive while embracing environmental responsibility.



INSULEUR PARTICIPATED IN A CONSULTATION ON INSULARITY WITH OECD EXPERTS

On the 17th of September, INSULEUR President Joseph Borg and other network representatives participated in an important consultation hosted by the Secretary General for Insular Policy, Mr. Manolis Koutoulakis. The meeting was part of a study visit by OECD experts focused on improving multi-level governance and enhancing the resilience of island economies in Croatia, Greece, and Sweden. This initiative, under the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument (TSI) and funded by DG REFORM, aims to support the green and digital transition of island regions, helping them adapt and thrive in an evolving global landscape.

It also aims to better understand the challenges of island economies and the policies that support their development. It seeks to create a global platform for knowledge exchange and dialogue among countries and island regions. Greece, in collaboration with Sweden and Croatia, is leading a transnational proposal focused on improving multi-level governance and strengthening the resilience of island economies.

GRAN GANARIA – ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

The economic outlook for the Canary Islands is currently favorable, primarily driven by tourism, a key sector that attracts 16 million visitors annually, representing 40% of the archipelago's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The growth of the Canary Islands' economy is supported by an attractive tax environment, offering incentives such as the Canary Islands Special Zone (ZEC) and Free Zones. In these regimes, companies can benefit from a tax reduction of 4%, with the exception of the tourism and construction sectors. Additionally, significant tax deductions have been established for R&D projects, audiovisual productions, and the Reserve for Investments in the Canary Islands (RIC), providing substantial competitive advantages to businesses operating in the region.

In parallel with tourism, the Canary Islands are striving to diversify their economy, aiming to strengthen exports and attract new investments. This effort seeks to advance sustainability and diversification of economic activity, prioritizing emerging sectors such as renewable energies and the audiovisual industry.

A highlighted aspect of this strategy is consolidating the Canary Islands as a strategic bridge between Europe, Africa, and Latin America. The Chamber of Commerce of Gran Canaria is playing a key role in this process, actively fostering international relations. In particular, the Chamber maintains close ties with the Ibero-American Chamber of Commerce Association (AICO); in fact, next year it will host its General Assembly. Moreover, Gran Canaria will host the future headquarters of the Ibero-African Chamber of Commerce Association (AFRICO).



INTERVIEW BY LUIS PADRON

What are your main expectations and objectives as the new Vice President of INSULEUR, and how do you see the evolution of this position?

It is essential to continue promoting a European regulatory framework that more equitably considers the particularities of insular territories, as legislation is often designed with continental realities in mind. Additionally, it is crucial to address the application of the European Union Emissions Trading System (ETS) in air and maritime transport, ensuring that regulations in this area do not harm the interests of regions far from the European continent, thereby guaranteeing greater justice and sustainability in the connectivity of these territories.

What are the main challenges and opportunities currently facing businesses in Gran Canaria?

SMEs in Gran Canaria are advancing in their digitalization process, one of the main priorities of the Chamber of Commerce. Through the Digital Kit Program, which we manage in collaboration with the Government of Spain, around 8,400 companies on the island have benefited, with a total investment of 23.1 million euros. In addition to promoting digital transformation, the Chamber also encourages the internationalization of local businesses through specific plans designed to facilitate their expansion into international markets, thus enhancing their competitiveness and global projection.

What other initiatives is the Chamber of Commerce of Gran Canaria focusing on, and what impact do you expect them to have on the local business community?

We are focused on several key initiatives to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs, which are the backbone of the business fabric in the Canary Islands. One of our priorities is to increase the size of these companies, improving their growth and adaptability in an increasingly global and demanding market.

Moreover, we are placing strong emphasis on training and entrepreneurship, which are fundamental aspects for fostering innovation and the development of new business ideas. These actions will help to energize the local economy, providing businesses with the necessary tools to face current and future challenges, and ensuring a more robust and lasting growth for the business community of Gran Canaria.

From your perspective, what key trends or challenges will affect the EU islands in the coming years?

The dependence on air and maritime transport for mobility and trade may be threatened by new European regulations regarding emissions and sustainability. It is crucial that EU policies consider the unique situation of the islands, ensuring that regulations do not harm their access to European markets or their ability to attract tourists, a vital sector for their economies. This implies continuous dialogue with European authorities to find solutions that ensure fair and sustainable connectivity. Furthermore, the islands must continue working on diversifying their economies, complementing traditional sectors such as tourism and investing in emerging areas such as the blue economy, technological innovation, and local entrepreneurship.

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ONGOING PROJECTS



Promoting Sustainable Agri-Food Products from Mediterranean Islands in Germany

The Mediterranean Islands for Sustainable Agriculture (MESA) project, overseen by the Network of Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union (INSULEUR), aims to raise awareness about the sustainable agri-food products and production methods from three Mediterranean islands. Key milestones of the MESA project include the development of a comprehensive communication plan and public relations activities designed to inform the German public about the sustainability aspects of these products. Additionally, the organization of the upcoming trade fairs in Munich on November the 21st is a significant milestone. These fairs will serve as a platform to showcase the sustainable agricultural practices and products of the Mediterranean islands, facilitating B2B interactions and expanding market reach. Our efforts aim to increase knowledge and perception among German consumers and create a robust ecosystem of committed producers and buyers, ultimately aiming for a substantial economic impact through enhanced exports and market presence.



Istars Virtual Library: A New Hub for Sustainable Tourism

We're thrilled to announce the launch of the Istars Virtual Library, a free and accessible platform offering a wealth of resources for sustainable tourism. This innovative tool provides comprehensive information on best practices and strategies for sustainable tourism, including principles and concepts, as well as insights into EU policies and initiatives supporting the green transition.

The library also features valuable resources such as certification schemes, training opportunities, and information on EU grants and funding for tourism SMEs aiming to adopt sustainable practices. Whether you are a tourism professional, a policymaker, or simply interested in learning more about sustainable tourism, the Istars Virtual Library offers tailored resources to help you stay informed and make impactful decisions.

Explore the Istars Virtual Library today and tap into its wealth of resources, all available for free. Visit the link here: [🔗 Istars Virtual Library](#)

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ONGOING PROJECTS

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MED-Routes



MEDRoutes Partners Kick Off Local Participatory Labs for Eco-Itineraries

The MEDRoutes project is moving forward as partners begin organizing local Participatory Labs to gather key inputs for designing sustainable eco-itineraries across the Mediterranean. These labs will bring together major tourism service providers, including waste management, water and energy suppliers, and transport and mobility experts. Local businesses offering tourism services such as accommodation, hospitality, restaurants, entertainment, and micro-transport will also participate, alongside local citizens and tourists.

The labs will take place in six destinations: Faenza (Italy), Castellò (Spain), Pafos (Cyprus), Kalamata (Greece), Dubrovnik (Croatia), and Vila Franca de Xira (Portugal). The goal is to create sustainable, culturally rich tourism paths that highlight the unique heritage of the Mediterranean while promoting eco-friendly practices.

Stay updated on the schedule and details of these Participatory Labs by visiting the MEDRoutes website: [🌐 MEDRoutes Website](https://www.medroutes.org/).

Interreg



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IPA ADRIAN

CAROUSEL

CAROUSEL Project: Advancing Circular Economy in ADRIAN Communities

On October 2nd, 2024, the CAROUSEL project officially kicked off, marking the beginning of a 36-month Interreg IPA ADRIAN EU-funded initiative aimed at promoting the circular economy in rural and island villages across the ADRIAN region. The project will focus on piloting innovative approaches to reduce waste and foster local ecosystems that promote circular lifestyles. Additionally, CAROUSEL aims to drive behavioral change among citizens, businesses, and public authorities toward sustainable practices.

A key component of the project is the creation of a Marketplace for upcycled products, which will serve as a hub for sustainable consumption and recycling. This marketplace will contribute to building more resilient and eco-friendly communities. INSULEUR, alongside partners such as Explore Gerace, EMBAWO, DIPSTOR Foundation for Management and Industrial Research, Institute Mihajlo Pupin, ZRS Bistra Ptuj, UZOR, RDA-RMK, and the Municipality of Chalki, is proud to be part of this initiative. Together, they aim to rethink consumption, recycling, and collaboration for a greener future.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO READ MORE ON CURRENT AND UPCOMING PROJECTS & EVENTS

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<https://www.insuleur.org/>



OPEN CALLS

Clean Energy for EU Islands: Join the Follower Islands Programme

A new call from the Clean energy for EU islands [secretariat](#)

THE FOLLOWER ISLANDS PROGRAMME

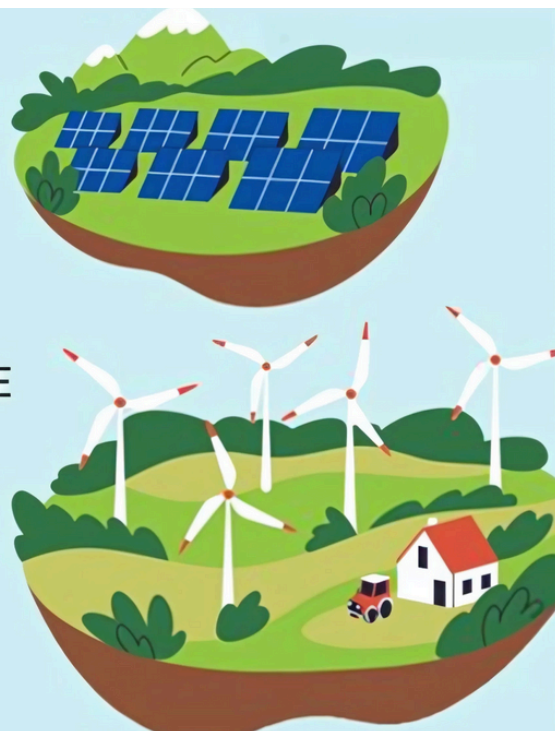
AS PART OF THE

"30 FOR 2030" INITIATIVE



European
Commission

#CE4EUislands



The Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat has launched an exciting opportunity for islands: the Follower Islands Programme, as part of the "30 for 2030" initiative. This program supports islands in accelerating their path toward decarbonisation by learning from 30 pioneering islands leading in clean energy adoption.

A Follower Island is an island committed to decarbonisation, whether starting from scratch or enhancing existing efforts. The programme offers a chance to adopt best practices and innovative solutions from more experienced islands. Key benefits include tailored capacity-building activities, peer-to-peer coaching, energy-planning workshops, and expert assessments to strengthen energy transition plans.

The Follower Islands Programme will empower participants through:

- Tailored capacity building to address specific energy transition challenges.
- Peer-to-peer coaching, drawing from the experiences of islands already at the forefront of clean energy.
- Energy-planning workshops with expert assessments and recommendations to refine energy strategies.
- Access to a knowledge-sharing platform that offers insights from ongoing and past initiatives.

Applications are open until **25 November 2024, 23:59 CET** and must be submitted by local island authorities, preferably involving multiple stakeholders. This is an opportunity to receive technical support for developing and implementing decarbonisation plans, with the ultimate goal of making islands energy independent.

The Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat is now in its third phase, helping 30 islands achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030. By joining the Follower Islands Programme, islands can fast-track their clean energy journey, leveraging the knowledge and experiences of the pioneering islands leading the way.

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