

INSULEUR ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT as EU ISLAND POLICY GAINS MOMENTUM

Brussels, 4 April 2025 – The Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union (INSULEUR) successfully held its General Assembly at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels on Friday, 4 April 2025, marking a significant transition in leadership and reaffirming its commitment to advancing the interests of European island economies.

After six and a half years at the helm, Joseph Borg (Gozo CCI) stepped down as President of INSULEUR, passing the leadership to newly elected President Giannis Roussos (Cyclades CCI). Under Mr. Borg's tenure, INSULEUR strengthened the position of islands within EU policy discussions, successfully advocating for increased recognition of their unique challenges and economic potential.

A Milestone for Island Policy During the General Assembly, a major milestone was highlighted—the European Commission's acknowledgment of islands in its Mid-term Review of Cohesion Policy, with a commitment to launching a dedicated consultation on an Island Strategy. This long-awaited recognition is a direct result of INSULEUR's persistent advocacy over the past 25 years. *"We have always believed that islands are not Europe's periphery but key contributors to its economic and social development,"* stated Joseph Borg in his farewell speech. *"Now, we have confirmation that our work is making a tangible impact."*

New Board of Directors The General Assembly also elected the new Board of Directors, which will support the implementation of INSULEUR's strategy and reinforce its role as the voice of island businesses at the European level. The newly elected board members are:

- President: Mr. Giannis Roussos, President, Cyclades Chamber of Commerce (Greece)
- 1st Vice-President: Mr. Luis Padrón, President, Chamber of Commerce of Gran Canaria (Spain)
- 2nd Vice-President: Eng. António Jardim Fernandes, President, Chamber of Madeira (Portugal)
- 3rd Vice-President: Mr. Gaetano Attilio Nastasi, Member, Chamber of Cagliari-Oristano (Italy)
- 4th Vice-President: Mr. Joseph Borg, Vice President, Gozo Business Chamber (Malta)
- Treasurer: Mr. Andreas Pantelios, 1st Vice-President, Chamber of Kefalonia & Ithaca (Greece)
- Secretary General: Mr. Antonio Grimalt, Chamber of Commerce of Mallorca (Spain)

New Leadership, Renewed Vision Incoming President Giannis Roussos brings a forward-looking strategic plan for the next two years, emphasizing four key dimensions for island economies in his **Strategic Plan of INSULEUR (2025-2027)**

1. **Securing Achievements:** Strengthen INSULEUR's influence in EU decision-making processes, enhance participation in public consultations, and maintain key interventions like VAT status for Aegean islands.
2. **Promoting a New Dynamic:** Improve cohesion and collaboration among member chambers, establish contact points, and leverage expertise within the network.
3. **Financial Resources:** Ensure timely payment of membership fees and seek new members, particularly from Northern Europe, despite financial constraints.
4. **Encouraging Collaboration:** Continue partnerships with organizations sharing similar goals, such as Eurochambres, CPMR Islands Commission, ESIN, and EUROMONTANA.

"I am honored to take on this role at such a crucial moment for European islands," said Giannis Roussos. *"With the European Commission finally recognizing the specific needs of islands, we must seize this opportunity to push for concrete measures that will translate recognition into action."*

Continuing EU-Funded Engagement INSULEUR will also continue its active participation in EU-funded projects that support island economies, including initiatives focusing on sustainable tourism, digital innovation, and blue growth. These projects play a crucial role in building resilience and fostering long-term economic opportunities for island businesses.

INSULEUR remains committed to ensuring that island economies are fully integrated into the EU's economic and cohesion policies. With renewed leadership and a clear strategic roadmap, the network will continue to champion the interests of Europe's islands, turning challenges into opportunities for a more resilient future.