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On April 4, 2025, Giannis Roussos, President of the Cyclades Chamber of Commerce was elected President of INSULEUR, marking a new chapter for the Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union. The election took place during the Spring General Assembly held at the EESC in Brussels, where discussions focused on the recognition of islands within EU Cohesion Policy and the launch of a dedicated consultation for an Island Strategy. The event was followed by a workshop addressing how Cohesion Policy can help island regions adapt to the impacts of climate change, reinforcing the call for tailored support for Europe's insular economies.

As climate change increasingly impacts Europe's islands, these regions are taking center stage in the call for resilience and adaptation. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation pose urgent threats to insular economies and ways of life. Under the new leadership of President Giannis Roussos, INSULEUR is renewing its commitment to turning these challenges into pathways for sustainable growth.

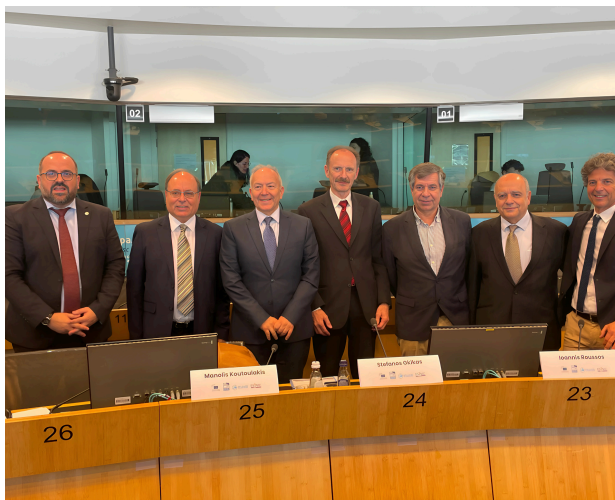
A landmark moment was the 2025 Spring General Assembly and Workshop held on April 4, 2025, at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels. Organized in cooperation with the European Federation of Small Islands (ESIN) and the CPMR Islands Commission, the event addressed how EU Cohesion Policy can better support island regions facing climate pressures. The workshop gathered European Commission officials, Members of the European Parliament, and key island stakeholders to shape a common vision for future policies.

President Roussos emphasized the need for tailored solutions—highlighting digital innovation, green energy transition, and targeted infrastructure investments—as critical pillars for building island resilience. The discussions also reinforced the importance of launching a dedicated EU Island Strategy to ensure that island-specific needs are fully integrated into post-2027 Cohesion Policy frameworks.

Through bold leadership and collaborative action, INSULEUR continues to elevate the voice of island regions within Europe's green transition, championing initiatives that protect insular communities while contributing to a more sustainable and inclusive European future.



# INSULEUR'S LEADERSHIP TRANSITION: FROM STEADFAST ADVOCACY TO STRATEGIC RENEWAL



The spring session of the INSULEUR General Assembly, held on 4 April 2025 at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels, concluded with the election of Mr Giannis Roussos, President of the Cyclades Chamber of Commerce, to the presidency of the Network for the period 2025-2027. The Assembly also approved a new Board of Directors and endorsed the strategic orientations that will guide the organisation over the next two years.

## Review of the 2018-2025 Presidency

Between 2018 and 2025 Mr Joseph Borg guided INSULEUR through a period of successive adjustments to EU regional instruments. During this mandate the Network delivered analytical papers on state-aid regimes, cohesion funding and the "island clause", organised technical briefings with the Commission and the European Parliament, and secured participation in many EU-funded projects (e.g. MESA, I-STARS, MED-ROUTES, CAROUSEL). These activities consolidated INSULEUR's standing as a reference body on insular economic questions and contributed to the explicit recognition of island needs in the mid-term review of Cohesion Policy.

## Strategic Agenda 2025-2027

In his inaugural address Mr Roussos set out a programme focused on evidence-based advocacy, wider geographic representation and stronger internal coordination. The presidency plans to establish a permanent Observatory of Island SMEs, designed to compile real-time economic, social and environmental indicators provided by member chambers. This instrument is expected to underpin INSULEUR submissions to forthcoming Commission consultations and parliamentary reports, with the objective of embedding a measurable island dimension in post-2027 legislation.

Internally, the new administration is introducing designated liaison officers in each chamber so as to streamline joint initiatives, facilitate the exchange of technical expertise and improve the management of membership contributions. At the same time, INSULEUR is preparing an outreach campaign aimed at insular chambers in the northern and outermost regions of the Union, thereby broadening both the Network's geographical coverage and its knowledge base.

On external relations, Mr Roussos intends to update cooperation agreements with Eurochambres, the CPMR Islands Commission, ESIN and Euromontana. The aim is to align advocacy positions and to develop joint proposals under upcoming Single Market, Horizon Europe and Interreg calls.

The first implementation milestone is scheduled for autumn 2025, when the Cyclades will host the INSULEUR Forum. The event is set to present concrete proposals on renewable energy, digital connectivity and climate adaptation tailored to island territories, translating empirical evidence into policy recommendations and reinforcing the role of Europe's islands in the Union's long-term cohesion and green-transition agenda.



## JOSEPH BORG – PRESIDENT OF INSULEUR 2018–2025



President Borg's leadership was defined by his strategic vision and unwavering commitment to the betterment of European islands. His ability to bring together diverse communities—from local councils and chambers to businesses across the islands—has paved the way for significant regional development. Through his leadership, our once-peripheral islands have emerged as central players in the broader European context, contributing to shaping policies that affect both local economies and global markets.

One of the hallmarks of Mr. Borg's tenure was his ability to advocate effectively for our islands at the highest levels of European policy-making. Through tireless efforts, he championed the modernization of cohesion policies, a cause that has always been close to the heart of INSULEUR. A recent declaration from Commissioner Fitto, acknowledging the urgent need for islands to address rising energy and raw material costs—exacerbated by geopolitical tensions—is a testament to the decades of advocacy and persistence championed by INSULEUR under Mr. Borg's leadership. His ability to bring these issues to the forefront of European discussions has cemented the importance of our islands within the fabric of EU policymaking. His leadership proved especially vital during the COVID-19 crisis, when island chambers faced sharp drops in tourism and severe supply-chain disruptions. At a moment when islands were largely absent from the drafting of the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility, Mr. Borg coordinated an open letter to the prime ministers of Europe's island Member States—and to the European Commission and Parliament—calling for targeted measures in the Facility to address insular transport, broadband and SME liquidity gaps.

### Strengthening Networks and Fostering Collaboration

Mr. Borg's efforts were not confined to advocating for policy change alone; he understood the importance of building networks that would allow island communities to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. His leadership fostered closer ties between diverse regions, creating platforms for cooperation that empowered businesses, councils, and chambers across the islands. By prioritizing green energy, digital economies, and the blue economy, Mr. Borg helped open doors for sustainable development initiatives that are now crucial for the future prosperity of our islands.

His commitment to collaboration was not only evident at the strategic level but also in his focus on capacity building. Through targeted training sessions, research initiatives, and workshops, President Borg empowered INSULEUR members with the skills necessary to adapt and innovate in a rapidly changing global economy. This approach, which was key to his administration, has equipped island communities with the tools they need to thrive, ensuring that they are not just participants in the global market but active contributors to its development.

### A Legacy of Empowerment and Transformation

President Borg's legacy is deeply embedded in the numerous initiatives that have reshaped the role of islands within Europe. The innovative events, such as public hearings, B2B meetings, and specialized workshops, organized under his administration, have provided invaluable opportunities for island communities to come together, share ideas, and forge new paths forward. These events have not only been instrumental in highlighting the rich cultural heritage of our islands but have also served as platforms for practical discussions on how to address the challenges we face in the modern era.

As we transition to a new leadership chapter, we do so with a profound sense of gratitude for the foundation that has been laid during President Borg's administration. His work, along with the support of dedicated colleagues like George Assonitis, Irene Mikelis, and Danai Krokou, has allowed INSULEUR to stand as a beacon of strength and resilience within European networks. Together, we have achieved groundbreaking progress, proving that through collective effort and unwavering commitment, our islands can and will continue to flourish.

### Looking Ahead: A Bright Future for INSULEUR

While we celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of the Borg administration, we also look forward to the future with optimism. The work that has been accomplished in the past six and a half years is just the beginning of an exciting journey toward further recognition, influence, and sustainability for our islands. The challenges that lie ahead are significant, but the strategic groundwork laid by Mr. Borg ensures that INSULEUR is poised to meet these challenges head-on.

Now, with the leadership of Mr. Giannis Roussos, we embark on a new phase of growth. His experience and dedication will ensure that the momentum built by Mr. Borg continues to drive us forward. Together, we are committed to advancing the vital causes of our insular communities, securing further policy advancements, and deepening the connections that will enable our islands to flourish in an ever-evolving European landscape.

# THE NEWLY ELECTED INSULEUR BOARD 2025 – 2027

## INSULEUR Board of Directors



**1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President**  
**Luis Padron**

President, Chamber of Commerce of Gran Canaria



**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President**  
**Eng. Antonio Jardim Fernandes**  
President, Madeira Chamber of  
Commerce and Industry



**3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President**  
**Gaetano Attilio Nastasi**

Member, Chamber of Commerce of Cagliari-Oristano



**President**

**Giannis Roussos**

President, Cyclades Chamber of Commerce



**4<sup>th</sup> Vice-President**  
**Joseph Borg**  
Gozo Business Chamber



**Treasurer**

**Andreas Pantelios**

1st Vice-President, Chamber of Kefalonia & Ithaca



**Secretary General**  
**Antonio Grimalt**  
Chamber of Commerce of Mallorca

In April 2025, INSULEUR elected a new Board of Directors to steer its mission of empowering island economies across the EU. Giannis Roussos, President of the Cyclades Chamber of Commerce (Greece), now leads as Chairman, bringing a strong Greek presence to the forefront. Luis Padron from the Chamber of Commerce of Gran Canaria (Spain) serves as First Vice-President, followed by António Jardim Fernandes from the Chamber of Madeira (Portugal) as Second Vice-President, Gaetano Attilio Nastasi from the Chamber of Cagliari-Oristano (Italy) as Third Vice-President, and Joseph Borg from the Gozo Business Chamber (Malta) as Fourth Vice-President. Andreas Pantelios from the Chamber of Kefalonia & Ithaca (Greece) was appointed Treasurer, and Antonio Grimalt from the Chamber of Mallorca (Spain) serves as Secretary General. This diverse leadership team underscores INSULEUR's commitment to addressing the unique challenges of insular regions through cohesive, cross-border collaboration.





## Driving Cohesion, Innovation and Advocacy across 24 Aegean Islands

Headquartered in Ermoupolis, Syros, and supported by branch offices on Andros, Milos, Mykonos, Paros, Naxos, Santorini and Tinos, the Chamber of Cyclades represents more than 26,000 member-businesses operating on the 24 Cycladic islands, one of the widest territorial mandates of any Greek chamber of commerce. The Cyclades Chamber is fully digitised since 2008, invests in the latest technology infrastructure for interconnection/teleconference between the islands to be close to its members on all the islands, thus bridging insular distances. Having headquarters in Syros, the Cyclades Chamber operates local offices on 7 other islands – Andros, Milos, Mykonos, Naxos, Paros, Santorini and Tinos, aiming to deliver day-to-day services locally while maintaining a single strategic voice in national and European fora.

### A Service Platform for Insular SMEs

Over the past decade the Chamber has invested in continuous professional-development programmes that range from digital marketing and e-commerce to cost management, export readiness and agri-food promotion. These short courses—delivered in person and online—equip micro-firms and family businesses with skills that are difficult to access in small island markets. Complementary advisory desks provide guidance on finance, taxation and EU funding, ensuring that companies on even the smallest islands can participate in national recovery schemes and territorial-cooperation projects.

### Championing Island Connectivity

In public consultations the Chamber has consistently stressed that reliable maritime links are a pre-condition for economic diversification and social cohesion. President Giannis Roussos has repeatedly called for coordinated ferry timetables to safeguard year-round access to education, healthcare and markets for Cycladic residents. Transport dossiers prepared by the Chamber feed directly into national route-planning decisions and strengthen the evidence base for future EU transport initiatives.

### Digital and Green Transition

The Chamber works with technology providers and island municipalities to pilot smart-island solutions. A flagship example is the Naxos “Smart Island” initiative, which deploys cloud-based mobility, healthcare and energy applications that can be replicated elsewhere in the archipelago. By facilitating stakeholder coordination and local training, the Chamber turns technological prototypes into operational services—making the Cyclades a reference point for both digital and green transitions.

### Contribution to the European Island Agenda

As an active member of INSULEUR, the Cyclades Chamber has supplied economic data for studies on SME demographics, co-authored position papers on the island clause, and—in April 2025—saw its President elected to the presidency of the Network. The Chamber is now preparing to host the INSULEUR Forum in autumn 2025, where it will present concrete proposals on renewable energy, digital connectivity and climate adaptation tailored to island territories.

### Outlook

With a permanent observatory of island SMEs under development and renewed outreach to chambers in the outermost and northern regions of the Union, the Cyclades Chamber is poised to translate local experience into European-level evidence and partnerships. Its blend of on-the-ground service delivery, connectivity advocacy and technology pilots shows how a regional chamber can act as both a support hub for businesses and a catalyst for wider island policy—locally, nationally and across the EU.

For more information, click here: <https://www.e-kyklades.gr/>



LOADING ...



## ONGOING EU PROJECTS



**MESA** promotes sustainable agri-food products from Crete, Sardinia, and Mallorca, highlighting their environmental and animal welfare benefits. Through targeted publicity and B2B initiatives in Germany, the project aims to increase awareness and boost exports by €12 million over three years.

**For more information on the project click here:**

<https://www.sustainagrislands.eu/> and our Facebook page: [MESA](#)



**I-STARS** supports 125 tourism SMEs across Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Spain, and Italy in adopting sustainable practices. By providing skills, tools, and financial assistance, the project fosters a resilient, innovative, and sustainable tourism ecosystem in island communities.

**For more information on the project click here:**

<https://ccci.org.cy/istars-project/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ISTARSproject>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/i-stars/>



**MED-Routes** develops low-impact, local-based sustainable tourism models across Mediterranean Cultural Routes. By creating eco-itineraries and a Green Label certification, the project promotes "slow tourism" rooted in shared heritage, aiming to reshape cultural tourism with greater sustainability.

**For more information on the project click here:**

<https://med-routes.interreg-euro-med.eu/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MEDRoutes/>



**CAROUSEL** establishes a marketplace for upcycled products, encouraging circular lifestyles in small villages. By piloting solutions that drive behavioral change among citizens, enterprises, and local authorities, the project addresses resource-intensive consumption patterns in the Adrion area.

**For more information on the project click here:**

<https://carousel.interreg-ipa-adrion.eu/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CarouselAdrion>

[https://www.instagram.com/carousel\\_adrion\\_/](https://www.instagram.com/carousel_adrion_/)