

THE EU OCEAN PACT

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On 5 June 2025, the European Commission formally adopted the European Ocean Pact, unifying all ocean-related EU policies under six strategic priorities and pledging nearly €1 billion in voluntary commitments. This landmark framework paves the way for enhanced marine conservation, sustainable blue growth and resilience across coastal, island and outermost regions.

The Ocean Pact lays the groundwork for a unified European approach to ocean stewardship. INSULEUR applauds its ambition and urges tailored strategies that address islands' unique geographies and socio-economic contexts. By embedding insular needs at the Pact's core, we can transform vulnerabilities into engines of innovation and resilience.

First, island communities depend on healthy seas for food security, tourism and cultural identity. We call for marine protected areas co-designed with local authorities, co-funded restoration programmes and simplified access to EU financing. Such measures will empower insular regions to lead in habitat recovery and biodiversity conservation.

Second, the sustainable blue economy underpins island livelihoods yet often struggles to unlock EU support. INSULEUR proposes dedicated maritime-sector financing, reinforced value chains in fisheries, aquaculture and eco-tourism, and targeted investments in remote-area resilience. These steps will diversify insular economies and cushion them against external shocks.

Third, islands must feature prominently in ocean research and innovation efforts. We advocate for regional research hubs, expanded participation of island universities in EU initiatives and the inclusion of young islanders in the EU Ocean Youth Ambassador Network. Strengthened maritime security—via enhanced coast-guard cooperation and real-time monitoring—will further safeguard our waters from illegal fishing and pollution.

Finally, effective governance demands island representation at every level. INSULEUR calls for an "Island Chapter" within the forthcoming Ocean Act, a dedicated section in the EU Ocean Pact Dashboard, and formal consultative roles for chamber networks.

Through these commitments, INSULEUR stands ready to help realize the Ocean Pact's promise of healthy seas, thriving blue economies and resilient insular futures.

SAVE THE DATE

INSULEUR Forum & General Assembly
Aegean Cuisine Symposium
17-18 October 2025 | Syros, Cyclades, Greece

"Empowering Island Resilience Through Sustainable Agriculture"

A two-day event dedicated to Agriculture. Celebrating island flavours, traditions and forward-thinking ideas. Organic farming. Culinary Heritage. Sustainable tourism.

Let's grow resilience together.

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CURAÇAO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

OUR NEW MEMBER



The Curaçao Chamber of Commerce and Industry (est. 1884) is the voice of private enterprises in Curaçao. It represents the general interests of the Curaçao business community, keeps a complete registry of Curaçao businesses and other legal bodies and provides information services to companies with an interest in doing business in, trading and exporting through or from Curaçao.

The Chamber's Investment and Trade Promotion and Business Services Department provides training, orientation, initial mediation, and assistance for small business, investors and other entrepreneurs interested in doing business in or trading and exporting from or through Curaçao.

Execution of economic legislation: The Commercial Register keeps records of and provides information on registered companies, other legal entities and their activities and issues excerpts of company registrations, certificates of origin for re-export, and legalization of authorized signatures and other business-related documents. The Chamber also advises the Government on requests for business permits, executes official name checks, dissolution of companies as well as the official UBO Registry.

Advocating private sector interests: giving solicited and unsolicited advice to governments concerning matters that affect the economy and the business community.

Official website: www.curacaochamberofcommerce.com

The Digital Business Directory is available on www.curacaobusinesspoint.com

Social media:

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/curacao-chamber-of-commerce>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/curacaochamber

Twitter: www.twitter.com/curacaochamber

INTERVIEWING RAOUL BEHR

PRESIDENT OF THE CURAÇAO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



What inspired the Chamber of Curaçao to join INSULEUR, and which synergies do you see between Curaçao's economic priorities and our association's objectives?

The Chamber of Curaçao was inspired to join INSULEUR because we see a unique opportunity to collaborate with like-minded island regions across Europe, sharing knowledge and solutions for sustainable economic and social development. As a Dutch Overseas Country and Territory, Curaçao faces many of the same challenges and opportunities as European islands – from connectivity and transportation to tourism, innovation, and sustainability.

We recognize strong synergies between Curaçao's economic priorities and INSULEUR's objectives, particularly in areas like the blue economy, SME support, and tourism-driven development. Our Chamber has long been committed to promoting sustainable growth, fostering a vibrant business environment, and enhancing international cooperation. Through INSULEUR, we believe we can both contribute Curaçao's expertise and benefit from the collective experience of other island economies, especially in advancing digital transformation, entrepreneurship, and regional integration.

Climate resilience and sustainable development are vital for island economies. How is the Chamber driving green growth in Curaçao, and what best practices would you like to share with other INSULEUR members?

The Chamber of Curaçao fully recognizes that climate resilience and sustainable development are essential for securing the future of island economies. We have been actively promoting green growth through various initiatives, including hosting and executing the Europe Direct Curaçao Information Center.

Through this center, we have organized multiple awareness events and training sessions focused on the green economy, blue economy, and biodiversity, reaching not only the general public but also specifically engaging youth. These efforts aim to build a more informed and proactive community, equipping citizens and future entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills to support sustainable development.

Additionally, the Chamber works closely with local stakeholders to enhance Curaçao's connectivity, encourage sustainable tourism, and drive digital transformation – all key pillars of building a resilient island economy. We believe that sharing our experiences with public engagement, cross-sector collaboration, and promoting sustainability as a shared responsibility can offer valuable best practices to fellow INSULEUR members.

Post-pandemic recovery and diversification remain key challenges. What innovative initiatives is Curaçao pursuing to develop sustainable tourism, and how can collaboration within INSULEUR amplify these efforts?

Curaçao has been actively working to ensure its post-pandemic tourism recovery is both sustainable and diversified. The Chamber supports initiatives that promote responsible tourism models, focusing not only on increasing visitor numbers but also on enhancing the quality, safety, security and sustainability of the visitor experience. Some key efforts include promoting blue economy opportunities such as marine conservation and eco-friendly water activities, supporting local entrepreneurship to create authentic, community-based tourism experiences, and encouraging digital transformation in the tourism sector to improve efficiency and sustainability. Through INSULEUR, we see valuable opportunities to exchange ideas and best practices with other island regions facing similar challenges. Collaboration within the network can help amplify efforts around innovation in sustainable tourism, such as developing new certification schemes and improving (inter) island connectivity.

Connectivity and digital adoption are crucial hurdles. How is the Chamber supporting SMEs in Curaçao on their digital journey, and what role do you envision INSULEUR playing in fostering digital inclusion across island communities?

The Chamber of Curaçao is deeply committed to supporting SMEs in their digital journey through several practical digital tools:

1. Digital Excerpt Service: Enables businesses to order official register excerpts 24/7 online through www.curacaochamberofcommerce.com for streamlined legal and compliance processes
2. Curaçao Business Point digital directory: A centralized, searchable business directory that enhances SME online visibility both locally and internationally
3. Digital UBO (Ultimate Beneficial Ownership) Registry: Allows companies to digitally register and manage beneficial ownership in compliance with regulatory requirements

Through these initiatives, the Chamber is not only supporting SMEs in their digital transformation but also strengthening transparency, regulatory compliance, and business growth. Besides this, through its role with the Europe Direct Curaçao Information Center, we have organized digitalization and lifelong learning events tailored to various audiences—from youth to the elderly—fostering digital inclusion and empowering citizens to confidently navigate the online world.

We envision INSULEUR playing a key role in amplifying digital inclusion across island communities by:

1. Facilitating knowledge sharing on digital tools and platform strategies that have proven effective for SMEs.
2. Co-developing capacity-building programs—such as trainings to accelerate digital literacy island-wide.
3. Advocating collectively for improved digital infrastructure, addressing challenges like connectivity and access.

Together, through INSULEUR, we can ensure island SMEs are digitally empowered, socially included, and economically resilient.

Curaçao's strategic Caribbean location offers unique opportunities in maritime trade and logistics. How is the Chamber leveraging this advantage, and which partnerships or insights do you hope to bring back to the INSULEUR network to strengthen inter-island economic integration?

Curaçao's location at the crossroads of the Caribbean, Europe, and the Americas positions it as a key hub for maritime trade and logistics. The Chamber plays an active role in leveraging this advantage by supporting initiatives that enhance port connectivity, promote logistics innovation, and create a business-friendly environment for maritime-related industries.

We work closely with stakeholders such as the port authority, we are the initiators and are on the board of the Curacao Logistics Foundation, aiming to strengthen Curaçao's role as a transshipment center, support blue economy opportunities, and attract sustainable maritime investment. The Chamber also actively promotes SME participation in maritime supply chains and business missions in the region and internationally, ensuring that local businesses benefit from global trade flows.

Within the INSULEUR network, we hope to share insights on Curaçao's experience as a gateway between Europe and the Americas, including lessons learned on port modernization, regional connectivity, and public-private collaboration. At the same time, we are eager to learn from fellow island regions on how they address common challenges such as supply chain resilience, green shipping practices, and inter-island trade facilitation — all of which are critical to strengthening economic integration among islands.



On July 2, 2025, at the European Parliament, INSULEUR EU Advisor George Asonitis joined a SEArica session moderated by MEP Vangelis Meimarakis. Alongside Stefanos Gkikas, Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis and Efstratios Charchalakis, he urged tailored island policies on connectivity, accessibility and fair transport to enhance social cohesion. The speakers stressed tourism pressures, sustainable practices, economic diversification and fair transition, calling for EU-wide policies, infrastructure investment and a Charter of Insularity.

As European islands face mounting pressures from seasonal tourism, infrastructure gaps and environmental change, reliable connectivity and sustainable visitor models have never been more critical. Under the leadership of INSULEUR, our network is stepping up to shape EU policies that respond to these unique challenges and unlock new opportunities for resilience.

A major milestone in this effort was INSULEUR's participation in the SEArica session "Bridging the Gap: Responding to Connectivity and Tourism for Resilient European Islands," held on July 2, 2025 at the European Parliament in Brussels. Moderated by MEP Vangelis Meimarakis, Vice-Chair of the SEArica Intergroup, the roundtable brought together Stefanos Gkikas (Deputy Minister for Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, Greece), Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (President of the Assembly of Corsica), Efstratios Charchalakis (Mayor of Kythera) and George Asonitis (INSULEUR EU Advisor) to outline urgent priorities.

Speakers highlighted the need for tailored transport solutions—such as green ferry fleets and revised Cohesion Fund clauses—to guarantee equitable access to services and strengthen social cohesion. They called for sustainable tourism frameworks that extend visitor seasons, diversify local economies and embed circular practices in waste and water management. A Charter of Insularity was proposed to enshrine islands' distinct needs within horizontal EU strategies, backed by major infrastructure investments and fair transition measures.

INSULEUR's contribution highlighted the economic potential of islands' Exclusive Economic Zones and the importance of diversifying beyond tourism to foster long-term growth. By channeling these insights into concrete policy recommendations, INSULEUR is reinforcing its commitment to driving a green transition that both preserves island communities and advances European cohesion. Through forums like SEArica, our network continues to turn islands' challenges into a shared roadmap for sustainable development.

INSULEUR's SGEI Submission: Prioritising Affordable Housing for EU Islands

INSULEUR also welcomes the European Commission's revision of the SGEI rules and submits island-specific feedback [here](#). INSULEUR stresses the urgent need for key-worker housing in tourism hotspots, higher aid-intensity thresholds, and stronger support for sustainable, energy-efficient homes. We urge territorial differentiation of "affordable housing," exemption from the €15 million cap, simplified procedures with model templates, and explicit measures addressing islands' demographic, pricing, and land-use challenges, alongside inter-island cooperation schemes.

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 Adria area.

For more information on the project click here:

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

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

https://www.instagram.com/carousel_adria_/



OPEN CALLS

EU Funding Opportunity for the Support of Emerging Energy Communities



Call 1:

The European Commission's Energy Communities Facility has just kicked off its first call for proposals, offering a **€45 000** lump-sum grant to help nascent energy communities build rock-solid business plans.

Open from **2 June to 30 September 2025**, this round is supported by an extensive suite of guidance documents and FAQs that cover everything from eligibility criteria and submission checklists to expert tips on making your proposal stand out. Whether you're launching a new cooperative or scaling an existing project, these resources will fast-track your application journey. A second call is expected in the first half of 2026, so now is the time to act.

Explore the full details here: [Energy Communities Facility – Guidance Documents and FAQ](#) and share this with any local partners poised to drive a community-led clean-energy revolution.

Call 2:

The European Commission has launched a pilot-project call to foster (quasi-)cross-border energy communities, coordinated by MOT and AEBR for DG REGIO. Seven pioneering sites will be selected to receive tailored technical assistance and grants of up to **€15 000 each**, empowering them to jointly develop renewable installations, share energy services and strengthen regional cooperation. Consortia of local authorities, cooperatives or SMEs can **apply by 21 November 2025**.

Full details and application instructions are available on Futurium:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/334811739973895/permalink/23927800810248323/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

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