



## **EESC Workshop**

European Island Economies need more attention at the New Cohesion Policy after 2027

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Distinguished Guests, Colleagues, and Partners,

Good morning. On behalf of INSULEUR I am honoured to welcome you to this workshop on “European Island Economies Need More Attention at the New Cohesion Policy After 2027.” First of all I extend my gratitude to the European Economic and Social Committee, the CPMR Islands Commission, and the European Small Islands Federation for their collaboration in organizing this event.

We convene today at a critical juncture for the future of European island regions. The unique challenges and opportunities faced by our islands necessitate focused attention and policy frameworks to ensure their sustainable development and seamless integration into the broader European agenda.

In my recent correspondence with Mr. Charles Michel, President of the European Council, I emphasised the urgent need to incorporate island-specific measures within the EU’s Strategic Agenda for 2024-2029. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the permanent natural and demographic handicaps that our islands face, and it is imperative that these are addressed in future policies. I hope that our appeal and considerations contained in the letter are duly taken into consideration. Our team at INSULEUR will continue to work so that our aspirations are met with.

The 9th Report of the European Commission on Cohesion Policy clearly states that island regions require particular consideration to achieve convergence with mainland regions. These regions encounter distinct socio-economic and geographical challenges that demand tailored policy approaches.

Cohesion Policy is instrumental in fostering harmonious economic, social, and territorial development. Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union mandates particular attention to regions suffering from severe and permanent natural or demographic disadvantages, including islands. Yet, despite these provisions, island territories are frequently neglected in policy implementation, resulting in a substantial support gap.

Successive Cohesion Reports over the past years have often failed to propose concrete measures for island territories. While the 8th Cohesion Report made some progress, there remains an urgent need for targeted provisions to address the unique challenges of island regions. Today's workshop aims to highlight these issues, ensuring that the post-2027 Cohesion Policy framework duly considers the specific needs of our islands.

Furthermore, the discussions within the European Council regarding the Just Transition Fund must include island-specific measures to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the EU's green transition. It is crucial to integrate the "insularity clause" into EU legislation. This clause will mandate that all significant economic or social decisions include a thorough analysis of their impacts on island regions.

Our islands confront distinctive challenges: limited accessibility, over-reliance on tourism, inadequate healthcare facilities, and significant demographic changes. These factors have compounded the economic impacts of the

pandemic, underscoring the critical need for the integration of insular considerations into all national and EU policies.

In conclusion, the deliberations we engage in today, and the collaborative efforts of stakeholders across European institutions and island communities, are essential in shaping a future where no region is marginalized. By addressing the specific needs of island economies, we can foster resilience, promote sustainable growth, and ensure that our islands prosper within the broader European framework.

Thank you for your attention and for your unwavering commitment to the advancement of European island economies.

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Joseph Borg  
President of INSULEUR

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