Activity Report

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“We need to continue working towards an European Union Agenda for Islands. An agenda that takes advantage of the characteristics of islands for the green and digital transitions. An agenda that sets the framework for island-proofing where the potential effects of a particular policy can be different. An agenda that puts islands on a level playing field with the continent.

(...) At the last Islands Commission Assembly held on the Island of Gotland last May, we took a giant step in this regard, reaching a consensus to move forward in a greater transversal attention of the island’s reality within the EU legislative process.”

Francina Armengol i Socias, President of the Islands Commission

This Activity Report - covering the period from September 2022 to February 2023 - highlights the extent to which the IC Secretariat and its Presidency remain active and committed to raising the voices of its members at the EU level and advocating for a visionary and inclusive strategy for European Islands.

PRIORITY AREAS

Cohesion Policy  Accessibility & Transport
Energy  Climate
Maritime Affairs  Tourism

Click on the newspaper icon to read the events’ full articles!
Launch of TwInSolar: a brand-new Horizon Europe project on the integration of solar energy production in insular territories

In September 2022, the TwInSolar project – Improving research and innovation to achieve a massive integration of solar renewables, was launched through its kick-off meeting in Freiburg, Germany. This is a 3-year project funded by the Horizon Europe Programme that aims at enhancing research and innovation to reach a massive integration of solar renewables in La Réunion. This project will also assist other insular territories to build a decarbonised & self-sufficient energy system. The IC leads the communication and dissemination of activities and will develop synergies to promote key project results among its members and beyond.

CPMR High-level Event on Macro-regional & Sea Basin Strategies

The CPMR General Secretariat organised an online high-level event on Macro-regional & Sea Basin Strategies on 21 September 2022. Two representatives from IC member regions actively participated in the discussions regarding in particular the Mediterranean Macro-Region strategy:

- Nanette Maupertuis, President of the Assembly of Corsica, highlighted that insular territories represent bridges between the North, South, West & East Mediterranean and need to be fully considered in view of a Mediterranean Macro-Region strategy.
- Antoni Vicens Vicens, Director General of External Relations of the Balearic Government underlined that a large number of islanders come from the Mediterranean Sea: it is therefore crucial to include their unique insular perspectives in the future Mediterranean macro-regional strategy, and ensure complementary coordination with the IC joint call for an EU Islands Pact and other strategies.
Several IC and CPMR member representatives from insular territories – from Sardinia, Balearic Islands, Corsica, Gozo, Crete and Ionian Islands - took part in a high-level event organised as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities on 12 October, in Brussels and online. They gathered together to take stock of the EU policies in islands in the last two decades to address islands’ challenges and move towards a real territorial cohesion.

Several MEPs, including the Chair of the Committee on Regional Development (REGI), vice-chairs and members of the Intergroup for seas, rivers islands and coastal areas (SEArca), and representatives of the European Commission, contributed to the debate towards the recognition by the European institutions of the challenges faced by island territories and confirming the commitment to bringing insularity issues in the European agenda.

To (re)watch the workshop recording, please click here: https://vimeo.com/760612038
October

25  Seminar on Smart Specialisation for Sustainable Blue Economy, Crete

On 25 October, IC members were offered the opportunity to participation in an event co-organised by CPMR ahead its General Assembly meeting – together with the Crete Region and the European Commission (DG MARE and DG REGIO) – that facilitated the creation of partnerships and synergies, as well as the exchange of ideas and good practices around Smart Specialisation Strategies in the Blue Economy to foster regional cooperation around sea basins to create value chains.

26  CPMR Intercommission seminar on “Ports as hubs of the blue economy”, co-organised with the ASPBAN project, Crete

On 26 October, the CPMR co-organised with the AspBAN project an Intercommission seminar on "Ports as Hubs of the Blue Economy". The event focused on the changing future of ports within the twin transition and involved CPMR members, port authorities, academia representatives and AspBAN partners. During the event, Xavier Ramis, Director General for Maritime and Air Transport, from the Balearic Islands Government reminded the importance of island ports as key elements for accessibility, taking stock of previous exchanges on this crucial issue discussed between the IC and the AAC in a dedicated joint webinar held in December 2021.

IC Secretariat participation in several energy-related events in October 2022:

The IC Secretariat was invited to participate in a number of energy-related events throughout the month of October 2022 - which confirms the importance of exchanging further on clean energy transition for European Islands - including:

- the Clean Energy for EU Islands - CE4EUI Advisory Committee meeting on 4 October;
- the Olympia Forum session on Future Energy Challenges in EU Islands on 21 October, to watch the recording of the session, please click here: YouTube
- the Greening the Islands (GTI) 2022 e-Conventio's roundtable on Speeding up renewables in European & Atlantic islands on 26 October.
During the 50th CPMR General Assembly meeting, the Islands Commission Plenary meeting brought together elected representatives from its Island Members and EU institutions, national experts, and academics. During the session, several Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) drew attention to the need to cooperate on actions to achieve an island perspective in all major European policies, fostering an equitable transition considering while their structural limitations.

Besides that, the IC Plenary meeting was also the occasion for the presentation of a national focus on Greece by M. Koutoulakis, Secretary General of the Aegean and Islands Policy from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy. He shared the long work his department has done so far to assess the impact of national policies on island territories, highlighting all the measures undertaken to facilitate the twin transition in Greek Islands.

CPMR Member Regions gathered at the occasion of the 50th CPMR General Assembly meeting, hosted by the Region of Crete (Greece) on 28-29 October 2022. European regions from different maritime basins – including IC members - came together and intervened in specific focused-sessions on Cohesion, Climate, Transport, Maritime Affairs and Migration, discussing how to approach new emerging challenges and opportunities.

CPMR members adopted a strong political declaration calling for a central role in the renewal of the European project and for stronger cooperation to the newest challenges they are facing. The declaration points to the importance of place-based European policies that reach citizens from all corners of Europe, including a mention to the EU Islands Pact as an example illustrating to what extent territorial specificities and vulnerabilities could be considered in EU policies.
In September 2022, the CPMR General Secretariat launched an Informal Working Group on Aviation, aiming to discuss key legislative files to better build related CPMR positions, by sharing best practices and having exchanges with key stakeholders. The second meeting of this working group was held on 15 November 2022 and was preceded by an event on air connectivity, co-organised by the CPMR General Secretariat at the European Parliament in Brussels and sponsored by TRAN Committee Vice-Chair Jan-Christoph Oetjen. The event aimed to tackle the key role of air connectivity for social and economic development for regions, their businesses and citizens.

During the event, Eftychios Eftychiou, Advisor to the Minister of Transport of Cyprus on Air Connectivity, addressed the specific challenges islands face regarding the implementation of the ‘Fit for 55’ package. During the meeting of the Informal Aviation Group, Alessandro Portoghese, Policy Officer for the Autonomous Region of Sardinia, also underlined the crucial role of aviation and Public Service Obligations (PSOs) to ensure vital connectivity and connections to the mainland.

In November 2022, MAESHA celebrated its two-year anniversary! At its 5th semestrial Consortium Meeting on 15-17 November 2022, the project partners gathered online and in Mayotte. This represented an opportunity to review the progresses, challenges and next steps on the decarbonisation process of energy networks of islands.

The group visited some of the main energy facilities in Mayotte: the diesel-based power plant in Longoni operated by Electricité de Mayotte (EDM), currently providing 70% of the electricity on Mayotte, and the battery energy storage system operated by Albioma. Then, different workshops were held on the planning of the implementation and deployment of the various energy flexibility solutions and their interaction with the Flexibility and Trading Management Platform.

Find out more about the MAESHA project by watching this short video: YouTube

In November 2022, the IC Secretariat participated in the submission of a project proposal to LIFE-2022-CET call for proposals on Developing support mechanisms for energy communities - Local authorities collaborating with citizen-led-initiatives, together with a consortium that involved partners from four of its member regions – Gotland, Ionian Islands, Madeira and La Réunion.

The project proposal focuses on pilot actions in insular territories and the strategic regional dimension through coordination with local authorities/municipalities on energy communities and the results of its evaluation process by the European Commission will be shared in the spring 2023.
The first European Tourism Islands Convention took place on 1-2 December in Gran Canaria (Spain) gathering European islands to address tourism as both a strategic sector for insular economies and a major threat for local sustainability. The first day focused on the European framework for island tourism, reflecting in particular on climate change challenges as well as twin transition implications in European islands in the post-COVID context. Claudia Guzzon, IC Executive Secretary took part in a roundtable discussion chaired by INSULEUR on “Monitoring the European Transition Pathway for Tourism” briefly presenting the CPMR involvement in the related process launched by the European Commission and providing some key examples of tourism-related activities implemented at IC level with a focus on island territories.

The second day was followed by roundtable discussions on air connectivity as well as specific opportunities and challenges for European Tourism Islands - featuring several IC members such as Azores, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Corsica, Gozo, Madeira and Sardinia. On this occasion, it clearly emerged that in the new resilience paradigm, sustainability and economic development can no longer be seen as antithetical concepts but as interrelated ones.

Publication of a technical note on Green investments: towards the sustainable and competitive recovery of islands

In December 2022, the IC published a technical note on “Green Investments: towards the sustainable and competitive recovery of islands”. The note outlines how the European legislative framework has evolved in recent years and which instruments and funds are available to support European Islands in the green transition. A few EU-funded projects carried out in IC member regions – including Green Hysland in the Balearic Islands, LIFE IP Climaz in the Azores and PROMO-GNL in Corsica – are showcased underlining lessons learnt and the main challenges and opportunities islands are facing in pioneering the twin transition.
All throughout the last months of 2022

Online Workshops as part of the EU Programme of Exchange on climate change adaptation in ORs

As part of the EU Programme of Exchange on climate change adaptation between Outermost Regions and their neighbouring countries, colleagues from the CPMR Secretariat and the IC Secretariat were involved in the moderation of online workshops co-organised by the DG REGIO of the European Commission and ECORYS, between September and November 2022.

The four online workshops – two with a focus on the Caribbean-Amazonia basin and two with a focus on the Southwest Indian Ocean basin, co-hosted by IC members from French outermost regions – Martinique, Saint-Martin, Guadeloupe and Mayotte – covered the following themes:

- **15 September 2022**: climate change adaptation to extreme weather events and coastal resilience in the Caribbean-Amazonia basin;
- **5 October 2022**: solutions for adaptable and resilient agricultural systems and food security in the Southwest Indian Ocean basin;
- **6 October 2022**: climate adaptation and risk management in coastal areas in the Southwest Indian Ocean basin;
- **10 November 2022**: resilient agricultural practices for climate change adaptation in the Caribbean-Amazonia basin.

In 2023, two other online workshops will be organised in the spring for the French outermost regions on other specific topics and one final in-person event will be held in Canary Islands (Spain) in June 2023 involving outermost regions of both the sea basins previously mentioned, as well as those located in the Macaronesia basin (Azores, Canary Islands, Madeira), gathering all relevant stakeholders at European level.
February

1-3

Greening The Islands (GTI)
Observatory Summit –
Gran Canaria, Spain

GTI organised its 1st Observatory Summit, gathering global islands’ stakeholders to discuss about the current status and possible scenarios on key islands’ topics such as climate change and resilience, as well as technology policy and finance for the sustainable transition. The CPMR IC was represented by Pep Malagrava, DG for Energy & Climate Change of the Balearic Islands Government, who took part in different sessions and side meetings. The event ended with the 8th edition of the GTI Awards.

13-17

TwinSolar Consortium meeting –
La Réunion, France

During this week field-visit in La Réunion, project partners got to know some of the island’s solar installation and research facilities. Technical workshops were organized on solar energy, to share knowledge and foster exchanges with other EU Islands stakeholders.

Finally, partners also had the opportunity to meet with La Réunion’s Regional authorities on solar and sustainable energy.
February

22 Islands Commission Political Bureau & General Assembly meeting – Palma, Balearic Islands, Spain

The annual event of the Islands Commission will be the opportunity for members Regions to gather and discuss with high-level speakers the next steps towards the implementation of an Island Agenda. Complementary sessions on sustainable territorial development, energy and transport, and blue economy will also allow members to share their priorities and challenges, as well as good practices.

23 Joint IC/IMC Deminar on Nature Restoration Law – Palma, Balearic Islands, Spain

The Island Commission and the Intermediterranean Commission of the CPMR are organising a joint seminar to reflect on the role of Regions in relation to the upcoming Nature Restoration Law. The seminar be the opportunity for members to contribute with their views to the CPMR reflections on the law, to discuss opportunities and implications regarding its implementation. Following the event, a common position paper will be drafted by the IC & IMC, that will be built on the valuable contributions coming from the seminar’s debase, to be circulated and approved by members in the next months of 2023.
Upcoming Activities (1/2)

2 March 2023: Meeting "Call for action to implement the Mission Ocean & Waters: the role of the European islands" – online

30 March 2023: Webinar on Biodiversity in the Caribbean-Amazonian Basin - online

20 April 2023: Webinar on water management and water resource in the South-West Indian Ocean Basin - online

11-12 May 2023: Consortium meeting of the MAESHA project – Athens, Greece

9-10 March 2023: CPMR Political Bureau meeting – Murcia, Spain

29 March 2023 (TBC): SEArica event on the "De Minimis" rule

May 2023: Celebrate Islands – online/hybrid events
First half of June 2023 (TBC): **Final event** in the framework of DG REGIO contract on climate change in ORs, Canary Islands, Spain

August 2023 (TBC): **Summer school** of the TwInSolar project, Denmark

16-18 November 2023: **51**\textsuperscript{st} CPMR General Assembly meeting, St-Malo - Brittany, France

8-9 June 2023: **CPMR Political Bureau meeting** – Tuscany, Italy

24-25 May 2023: **European Maritime Days** – Brest - Brittany, France

20-22 June 2023: **European Sustainable Energy Week** – online/Brussels

24-25 May 2023: **European Maritime Days** – Brest - Brittany, France

October 2023: **European Week of Regions and Cities** - #EURegionsWeek – online/Brussels

16-18 November 2023: **51**\textsuperscript{st} CPMR General Assembly meeting, St-Malo - Brittany, France
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ISLANDS STAND TOGETHER!
Islands stand together

#CPMR2023Islands

Islands Commission
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