Islands Commission Draft Action Plan
(2022 - 2023)

To be approved by the Islands Commission General Assembly and updated at the beginning of each new mandate of the Islands Commission Presidency

Executive Summary

This Action Plan aims at contributing to the global programming of the CPMR Islands Commission activities over the 2022-2023 period, taking into account the new Islands Commission political orientations - while harnessing the past political declarations and activities as well - but also the CPMR general objectives and actions and the EU agenda.

The present document should constitute the main reference as a “framework for action” for Islands Commission members, built on the intensive discussions carried out between the IC Secretariat, the IC Presidency and all the IC member regions to turn into concrete actions the new political orientations of the Commission and enhance its political visibility at EU level.

This document constitutes also the perimeter of concrete actions to be undertaken and promoted by the IC Presidency which should support the definition and implementation of activities in accordance with the whole IC membership.

To ensure the participatory approach of this exercise, this document should be agreed in the main principles during the first Islands Commission Political Bureau (February 2022) and approved in its final version at the next Islands Commission General Assembly (May 2022) by the overall membership. The Draft Action Plan would be updated in a bottom-up process built on participatory contributions from all members and following up to the previous actions of the organisation, as well.

In a logic of continuity of the action, this participatory process will not prevent the Islands Commission to be involved in short-term activities in the meantime and according to the main principles agreed in by the Political Bureau or in the recently amended Rules of Procedure.
1 Global Approach and Transversal Priorities of the Action Plan

1.1 New Islands Commission political priorities

To respond to the important challenges linked to the current pandemic context, the European Union, the member states and the regions have mobilised substantial financial and human resources.

Despite the promising efforts, because of their geo-economic characteristics, island regions, continue to be among the most affected EU territories by the heavy impacts of COVID-19. Such consequences are simply added to the structural socio-economic vulnerability of these territories, already severely suffering by the well-known additional costs of insularity, in terms of production, transport, logistics, energy – just to mention a few – that slow their development and competitiveness. We must therefore prevent island territories from finding themselves, at the end of the crisis, with an even more increased disadvantage vis-à-vis the continental regions.

In the current context, with member states launching the implementation of their respective National Recovery and Resilience Plans, it seems imperative to carry out an exhaustive analysis of the state of play of EU islands economies, that should lead to the identification and quantification of those additional costs that insularity imposes on the entire economy of these territories. Indeed, in the absence of a realistic estimate of these costs, the leverage effect of these Plans may not meet the objectives expected in island territories. Furthermore, there should be an active role at national level for local and regional governments to be involved in implementing these Plans.

Calling for a better consideration of islands’ specificities, in accordance with Article 174 Paragraph 2 TFEU, the REGI Committee of the European Parliament has been working intensively on its INI report on Islands and Cohesion Policy. At the same time, considering the scheduled coming Presidencies of the Council of the EU – currently France, and next year Sweden and Spain – there is a strategic window of opportunity for the Islands Commission to play an active crucial advocacy role in the next months. Indeed, this could be the perfect timing to gather further support for key IC requests and in particular, lead to the approval of a specific EU Pact/Strategy for islands, as final output and real factor of change, materialising significative impacts on insular territories in all EU policies.

In light of all these considerations and in line with the political positions approved in recent years by the Islands Commission, the IC Presidency – currently held by the Balearic Islands – proposes therefore to adapt its policy lines to take into account the present socio-economic and political context.

The IC political orientations are summarised below:

1. Making the most of new EU instruments (EU Recovery Plan and new Multi-Annual Financial Framework) and EU policies linked with the Green Deal for the benefit of the Islands Regions’ key economic sectors to face the challenges deriving from insularity and further ones linked to the COVID-19 outbreak.

2. Based on the key elements highlighted in the INI report on Islands and Cohesion Policy, by the European Parliament, actively working for an exhaustive application by the European institutions of the principles set out in Article 174 Paragraph 2 TFEU, providing concrete specific actions and compensatory measures to overcome islands’ major challenges. The adoption of a EU Pact/Strategy for Islands, with the necessary support of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the EU - based on a holistic approach while at the same time considering also the specificities of each EU sea basin - should
strengthen existing policies and launch new ones in areas such as cohesion policy, accessibility and transport, state aid, energy transition, adaptation to climate change, circular economy, blue growth (focusing on the priorities defined in the IC roadmap on Blue Economy), etc.

3. Enhancing the visibility of the Islands Commission’s action towards new members, the EU institutions and relevant fora; and increasing partnerships as well as synergies, notably with the other CPMR Geographical Commissions (GCs).

1.2 Key actions for the mandate

In the context of the current mandate and in coherence with the above-mentioned political orientations, the Islands Commission – with the support of its member regions – will put in place different type of actions, such as: drafting of policy messages; coordinating advocacy/lobbying activities; participating and organising/co-organising high-level political sessions/events fora in cooperation with its member regions and key partners in the area, at international, EU or sea-basin level; developing its membership, alliances and partnerships; getting involved in cooperation projects of interest linked to its main political orientations; etc.

1.2.1 Political Positions

As a crucial part of its work, the IC will keep conveying key policy messages in areas of greatest interest for its members, in different ways:

- **Two IC political declarations** should be prepared in the framework of the IC General Assemblies in 2022 and 2023, which should be jointly elaborated together with the IC Presidency exploiting the transversal work, covering the different political priorities, as well as the main achievements of the cooperation projects in which the IC is involved.

- **Possible ad hoc political documents** could be developed according to the specific needs and interests of the IC and its member regions, in agreement with the IC Presidency.

- Contributions to the CPMR political positions and policy papers are also foreseen, via the definition of relevant messages from the angle of the IC members’ needs and priorities.

1.2.2 Advocacy/Lobbying activities

Planning and delivering ad hoc advocacy and lobbying actions vis-à-vis of relevant stakeholders, at different governance levels, will be an essential activity for the IC during the current mandate, in order to keep strategically influencing the legislative process in favour of islands. In this respect, the following activities will be carried out:

- Contribution to and exploitation of the INI report on Islands and Cohesion Policy of the REGI Committee to be voted by the European Parliament in the first semester of 2022. This will include relevant actions – such as ad hoc communications and meetings – aimed at seeking the support from all EU institutions (i.e. EP, EC and Council), the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee and other key stakeholders (e.g. Secretaries of State) for the development and adoption of a specific EU Pact/Strategy for islands.

- Participation in relevant public consultation and follow-up joint lobby actions with a focus on islands’ core issues (e.g. state aid, transport, etc.), as necessary, in coordination with the CPMR Policy Team.
1.2.3 High-level sessions/events FORA participation and organisation

With the purpose of raising awareness on key insular issues to the widest audience and target stakeholders, the IC will foster its participation and work on the organisation, co-organisation and labelling of high-level sessions, events and FORA of interest, through either the direct involvement of its Secretariat, or via its Presidency and member regions, as well. In this sense, a non-exhaustive list of potential event-related activities in which the IC will be involved is presented below:

- Co-organisation of Sea, Rivers, Islands & Coastal Areas (SEARICA) Intergroup events with a specific focus on Islands’ core issues (e.g. Sustainable Tourism, Cohesion Policy, Circular Economy, etc.)
- Participation in the European Maritime Day and One Ocean Summit (e.g. with CPMR/other Geographical Commissions, potential co-organisation of workshops/sessions on topics of interest, such as sustainable tourism, coastal resilience, S3, etc.)
- Participation, including via members’ delegations, in key conferences and FORA such as, the SEANERGY FORUM (International Forum on Offshore wind and Marine Renewable Energy), the EUSEW (European Sustainable Energy Week), the EUWRC (European Week of Regions and Cities), etc.
- Support to and labelling of members’ events (e.g. high-level event “Conditions and Costs of Insularity” organised by Sicily on 10 December 2021 in Rome, high-level event on islands’ expectations from the CoFE promoted by Sardinia to be hosted by the CoR in 2022, etc.)
- Encouraging its Presidency and members to be actively involved in the CPMR Intercommission Working Groups and Task Forces (e.g. CORE Group, Transport WG, Climate TF, etc.) and closely work with other CPMR Geographical Commissions to ensure synergies on topics of common interest, including the co-organisation of related events (e.g. Sustainable Tourism with IMC, Ports with AAC, etc.)

1.2.4 Alliances/partnerships consolidation and development:

Building up and strengthening strategic alliances and partnerships keeps representing a major priority of the IC Action Plan. Indeed, joint actions and initiatives with other key players dealing with insularity result to be more powerful and have stronger impact on target stakeholders (e.g. EU Institutions). Such cooperation constitutes an added value for the IC and its members and works mainly via:

- the development of stable relations (e.g. memoranda of understanding or similar agreements);
- the participation in advisory boards or experts/steering groups;
- ad hoc interactions and sharing of information in the framework of specific FORA/meetings/initiatives/projects.

A non-exhaustive list of key partners with whom the IC is in contact is provided below and could be further integrated, based on specific emerging needs and interests, in line with the priorities of the IC Presidency and its members:

- OTIE – Observatory on Tourism for Islands Economy (2-year MoU signed in March 2019 and to be renewed)
- GTI – Greening the Islands (2+2-year MoU signed in March 2019)
- SMIL0 – Small Islands Organisation (2-year MoU signed in October 2019 and to be renewed)
- **AIP** – Association of the Islands of Ponant (2+2-year MoU signed in February 2021)
- **ESIN** – European Small Islands Federation (MoU under development)
- **CE4EUI** – Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat (Advisory Committee member)
- **H2 HYSLAND HUB** – EU coalition for H2 deployment in islands created by the project GREEN HYSLAND (Hub member)
- **Clean Hydrogen JU** – Previously FCH JU – Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking) regular cooperation linked to specific events/initiatives/projects)
- **BOFA** – Bornholm’s Waste Management Authority (regular cooperation linked to specific events/initiatives/projects)
- **SINLOC** – Sistema Iniziative Locali as lead partner of NESOI – New Energy Solutions Optimised for Islands – European Islands Facility (ad hoc cooperation linked to specific events/initiatives/projects)
- **INSULEUR** – Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the EU (ad hoc cooperation linked to specific events/initiatives/projects)
- **DAFNI** – Network of sustainable Greek Islands (ad hoc cooperation linked to specific events/initiatives/projects)
- **FEDARENE** – European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and Environment (ad hoc cooperation linked to specific events/initiatives/projects)

### 1.2.5 Membership consolidation and development

In line with the CPMR membership strategy, the IC will work to consolidate the current membership and achieve new members, with a focus on recovering ex-members from UK (focus on Scotland) and Denmark and ideally attract target ones from countries that are already members (e.g. Greece, Finland, UK). In this sense, with the support of the IC Presidency and its members, the IC Secretariat will:

- Encourage and support - in cooperation with other Geographical Commissions - **CPMR and IC regions that could work as ambassadors**, acting as a bridge between non-CPMR members’ needs and priorities on the one hand, and CPMR/IC objectives and services on the other hand. **Ad hoc political meetings** between regions, **technical meetings** with CPMR staff or punctual **invitation to IC meetings and events** could be a relevant tool to be used in this respect.

- Contribute, by further **developing specific partnerships for projects in the framework of EU programmes** (e.g. HORIZON Europe), to closely exploring the possibilities of cooperation also with non-EU regions to re-approach UK member regions - in particular those who left the CPMR in the last few years - also capitalizing on the work initiated by the CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission on this matter.

### 1.2.6 Cooperation projects’ involvement

In order to support the priorities of the IC membership and thus the implementation of this Action Plan, the IC Secretariat, together with the CPMR Secretariat, will monitor and access funding opportunities (mainly EU programmes) that can materialise a “win-win” cooperation and grant additional resources for concrete actions. For the time being, in this regard:
• Two Interreg MED projects (WINTERMED and DESTIMED+) are being implemented and concluding their activities in 2022, one Horizon 2020 (MAESHA) is in progress, two Horizon Europe project proposals (TwInSolar and NEB174) are under evaluation by the EU Commission, and other ideas are being discussed (e.g. Interreg Euro-MED, Interreg Europe, Horizon Europe, etc.). Some of these actions will open the door to concrete collaboration with other CPMR Geographical Commissions in the framework of the CPMR strategy on EU projects (e.g. the IMC, the BBSC, etc).

• The IC is also currently involved as subcontractor in a 48-month framework contract (FWC) with the DG REGIO led by ECORYS to support the implementation of the Commission Communication on a Strategic Partnership with the EU’s Outermost Regions (COM(2017)623 Final). Under this FWC, the IC contributed to developing a Study on the impact of COVID-19 on the outermost regions and it has recently started to support the implementation of a Programme of exchanges of good practices and solutions to common challenges of adaptation to climate change between the EU outermost regions and with their neighbouring third countries.

• The IC will also promote the replication and/or capitalisation of results from key past projects and specific relevant actions - including those developed by its members or implemented by other CPMR Geographical Commissions - as well as the sharing among its network of specific partners’ contacts for new cooperation project proposals that can be related with its key priorities (e.g. at the initiative of its members or external partners).

• The IC will finally work to influence EU programmes and initiatives of major interest (e.g. Interreg Euro-MED, Interreg Europe, Horizon Europe, WestMED initiative, etc.), in relation to the need for specific calls targeting island territories, as necessary.

1.2.7 Communication activities

The IC will keep working on the definition of its key messages according to the targets of internal and external communication (tailored communication), in order to fully exploit the use of channels and instruments made available by the CPMR, whilst contributing to their improvement and renewal.

Especially due to the COVID-19 context, the IC had to and will need to further rethink and reinvent its communication strategy to keep engaging its audience and ensuring visibility of the work carried out by itself and its member regions.

In this sense, the IC will in particular:

• Keep improving communication flows with the CPMR Secretariat and the rest of Geographical Commissions by making the most of the numerous tools at disposal (e.g. emails, regular CPMR Policy Team’s and Geographical Commissions’ coordination meetings, ad hoc meetings, etc.).

• Ensure the necessary IC representation and contribution in all CPMR communication activities (e.g. providing input to the CPMR communications, newsletters, etc.).

• Develop seasonal IC newsletters to update members on activities developed, along with the rest of regular communications via email on all relevant information to share in relation to key events, initiatives and projects in which it takes part.
- Constantly update its **webpage**, including in particular **articles and news** of interest for the IC members, as well as the **calendar** of main events, also those organised by key partners, in which it is directly or indirectly involved.

- Dynamize the **IC Twitter account** as well as fully exploit the **twitter accounts of projects and initiatives** in which it is involved.

- Interact and join forces with **key partners** for **joint communications** towards specific groups of stakeholders (e.g. EU Institutions).

2 Geographical and Sectoral Approaches of the Action Plan

In order to increase the overall impact of the IC transversal activities and for the most efficient and operational implementation of this Action Plan a **geographical approach**, acknowledging basins’ specificities, is proposed by the IC Presidency, as stated at the beginning of its mandate.

Based on previous internal discussions and a specific request coming from some of the members, the creation of a pilot Task Force on “**Mediterranean Islands**” is put forward and subject to the approval of the Political Bureau.

The main aim of this first pilot Task Force on “**Mediterranean Islands**” will be to coordinate in a more structured way the work at technical level for the concerned basin based on detail Terms of Reference to be developed, describing the perimeter of the action, the organisation and calendar of activities. The Task Force will run under the co-leadership of two designated coordinating members – of which at least one member of the Political Bureau – that express specific interest in assuming this responsibility. The Task Force will gather together all interested members – including potentially insular CPMR members of other Geographical Commissions (i.e. IMC) in view of strengthening technical collaboration and active participation of insular regions facing similar challenges, via best practice sharing, specific cooperation projects and relevant joint initiatives.

Also subject to the approval of the Political Bureau, in the framework of this new configuration a thematic approach could be also integrated, by proposing to delegate specific portfolios to Political Bureau members – within the different Task Forces or jointly at IC level depending on the theme – that express their particular interest, so that to cover key thematic areas and fields of priority to the IC, mainly corresponding – but not limited to the core CPMR topics.

On behalf of the IC and in collaboration with other regions interested, the **delegates** will in particular coordinate the action of the IC as a whole or of a specific Task Force in relation to the concerned thematic areas, representing the IC in internal and external meetings (e.g. CPMR Task Forces and Working Groups), contributing and reacting on specific CPMR orientations with a specific insular perspective, following very closely policy developments (e.g contributing to public consultations), boosting the related advocacy efforts.

The delegates will coordinate their work with the IC Secretariat and Presidency and regularly report to the Political Bureau (and to a specific Task Force, if relevant) on the key activities in the pipeline. They will collect feedback and advise from other members, in order to represent the IC or a specific Task Force orientations and objectives on a particular thematic area, in the most inclusive and complete way possible.
The different portfolios will be assigned and renewed by the Political Bureau to those of its members that express specific interest and/or are particularly active in the different thematic areas proposed and are therefore keen on taking the lead in the coordination of activities. The distribution of portfolios should ideally ensure a certain geographical balance among members, with some flexibility, and it is subject to the approval of the Political Bureau members.

For the time being, the IC Secretariat, in agreement with the IC Presidency, kindly puts forward for consideration the following portfolios, to be discussed with the members of the Political Bureau:

- Cohesion
- Transport
- Maritime Affairs
- Energy & Climate

If considered necessary, the list of portfolios may be revised or updated, including further specific priority areas (e.g. environment, RIS3, state aid, sustainable tourism, migration, etc.).

An indicative summary of the roles/objectives and activities related to the two proposed approaches is presented in the table here below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Implementation of the IC Action Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role / Objective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Activities | ▪ Sharing best practice  
▪ Designing cooperation projects  
▪ Planning joint initiatives (e.g. events’ participation and organisation) | ▪ Participating in relevant external/internal meetings (e.g. CPMR TF & WG)  
▪ Monitoring related policy developments (e.g. contributing to public consultations)  
▪ Contributing and reacting to CPMR orientations on the matter  
▪ Boosting relevant advocacy efforts |

In cooperation with the IC Presidency and under the supervision of the IC Secretary, Task Force coordinators and delegates will closely interact and exchange of key issues, making sure that the different basins’ perspectives are properly considered, so to transversally contribute to the implementation of the IC Action Plan. In this regard, the following diagram aims at providing an overall idea of the operational relations and interactions within the proposed setting.
3 Annex: Update on IC meetings/events

A detailed calendar of key meetings/events is available and regularly updated on the IC website, in the “TeamUp” format showing items per month, year, category, overlaps with different views:

The main categories of meetings/events identified are the following:

1. CPMR Statutory and Thematic meetings (GA, PB, WG & TF meetings)
2. EU Institutions’ events of interest for the IC Members
3. Events of interest of CPMR/IC Members and partner organisations
4. IC Statutory and Thematic meetings/events (GA, PB, Plenary meetings and other events)
5. Projects’ meetings/events involving the CPMR/IC
A preliminary non-exhaustive list of key IC meetings/events planned for the period January 2022 – April 2023 is provided in the table here below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting/Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-3 February 2022</td>
<td>WINTER MED Steering Committee meeting (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 February 2022</td>
<td>GCs/CPMR One Ocean Summit’s Coastal Regions’ Forum “200 million users of the sea” (Brest/online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 February 2022</td>
<td>IC Political Bureau meeting (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 March 2022</td>
<td>IC/CPMR Webinar “The role of islands in the delivery of recovery and cohesion funding” (online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March-April 2022</td>
<td>DESTIMED+ Associated Partners’ engagement webinars (TBC) (online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 April 2022</td>
<td>SEARICA Event on Islands &amp; Cohesion Policy (TBC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-28 April 2022</td>
<td>WINTER MED Study Visit (Palma)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-11 May 2022</td>
<td>MAESHA Consortium meeting (TBC) (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-13 May 2022</td>
<td>IC General Assembly (Gotland)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-20 May 2022</td>
<td>GCs/CPMR European Maritime Day Workshop on S3 (TBC) (Ravenna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2022</td>
<td>DESTIMED+ Final Capitalisation Event (TBC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2022</td>
<td>WINTER MED Final Capitalisation Event (TBC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2022</td>
<td>IC Plenary meeting (TBC) (Crete)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September/October 2022 &amp; April/May 2023</td>
<td>Online Workshops linked to the Programme of exchanges on climate change adaptation in the EU OR (DG REGIO contract) (TBC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) represents more than 150 regional authorities from 24 countries across Europe and beyond. Organised in Geographical Commissions, the CPMR works to ensure that a balanced territorial development is at the heart of the European Union and its policies. One of these Commissions is the Islands Commission.

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