Activity Report
Foreword

“We need to build a better future for our islands and promote inter-island unity and solidarity, bringing them all towards the common goal of our development. To this end, we need to face up to the many challenges of modern times, particularly those of sustainability and of a geostrategic and political-institutional nature, not giving up on fulfilling the promise of equal European citizenship for islands, empowering and compensating them for the challenges of insularity.”

José Manuel Cabral Dias Bolieiro, Acting President of the Islands Commission

This Activity Report - covering the period from August 2023 to April 2024 - 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!
On 31 August, the 18th International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology (CEST) dedicated a specific session to discuss the issues around tourism pressure in insular territories. The session notably showcased examples from the Balos lagoon, in Western Crete, on environmental monitoring, and Voidokilia beach, in Messinia (Greece), on tourist carrying capacity in protected areas.

It also addressed topics such as the concept of ecotourism as a tool to achieve sustainable ecosystems and investigated methodologies to address food loss and waste in the hotel sector.

From 21 to 25 August 2023, TwInSolar partners, accompanied by 13 researchers from the University of La Reunion, were welcomed by the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) for a Summer School week on solar and wind energy. In addition to visiting innovative facilities, researchers from the University of La Reunion presented their research and exchanged with their counterparts from Fraunhofer ISE (Germany), DTU, and the University of French Guiana.
On 4 September 2023, the CPMR Islands Commission, which is part of GTI Island Advisory Committee, took part in the online Advisory Board meeting of the organisation. During the session, different interesting initiatives for sustainability in islands were presented, notably the 100% RES Islands Initiative and the launch of GTI magazine.

Between the months of September and October, the CPMR provided to its members a complete training course in European Project Management. This online training course was primarily addressed to regional and local authorities wishing to gain initial insights into the ins and outs of EU project management with a view to potential future involvement in projects, or to discover and exchange best practices based on existing experience. The IC team contributed significantly to the coordination of different modules of the training, while the participation from the Island member regions was also broad.
November
11
EU Regions Week 2023 - High-level dialogue on key challenges faced by Med Islands and next steps towards an EU Strategy for Islands

Six Mediterranean insular regions are joining forces through Med Insulae, a joint partnership gathering Sardinia, Balearic Islands, Corsica, Gozo, Crete and Ionian Islands. During the high-level event organised at the initiative of Sardinia, in the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities 2023, representatives from these Regions exchanged on the key challenges faced by Mediterranean Islands and the next steps envisioned towards an EU Strategy for Islands, together with representatives from the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the European Commission.

To (re)watch the workshop recording, please click here.

This week of events also provided the opportunity to present interesting results and best practices from two projects developed by the Sicily Region.

- **BloRin**, addressing Blockchain Technologies for Sustainable Energy;
- **IDMAR**, Europe’s Largest Submarine Telescope.
Publication of CPMR IC & IMC joint Policy Position on the future Nature Restoration Law

The Nature Restoration Law (NRL), represents a significant step towards restoring Europe’s ecosystems, habitats, and species. The joint Policy Position of the Islands and Intermediterranean Commissions of the CPMR provides some key reflections on the roles of regions in this framework as well on the law’s potential impacts, especially on peripheral and maritime regions, home to a rich natural and cultural heritage.

PREP4BLUE Stakeholders 2 Co-Design Workshop - Brussels, Belgium

On 17 October, Francisco Pinto, Senior Public Officer from the Azores, took part in a workshop organised by the Prep4Blue project, tackling innovation in blue economy. During this event, he presented the work developed by the Azores regarding Partnerships for Regional Innovation and other best practices developed by the Region in the field of Blue Economy.

1st cross-regional Workshop for the emergence of CoP in REGINA-MSP - Thessaloniki, Greece

The 1st REGINA-MSP Project’s Cross-Regional Workshop, hosted by the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, focused on establishing a "Community of Practice" (CoP) in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). As full partner in REGINA-MSP, the CPMR is encouraging the role of regional authorities in MSP implementation, including those of islands. The insular regions of Crete and Sardinia are among the case studies followed by the project.
French Office for Biodiversity (OFB) Event on French Outermost Regions as sanctuaries of biodiversity - Brussels, Belgium

On 25 October, Claire Helly, Project Officer at the Islands Commission, took part in an event organised by the French Office for Biodiversity (OFB), focusing on biodiversity preservation and conservation in French Outermost Regions (“Outre-Mers”). With contributions from the OFB’s Director General, the EC, MEP Orville and the French Permanent Representation, this was the opportunity to shed the light on the ongoing projects in the Collectivity of Saint-Martin and recall the central role of Regions in biodiversity protection and conservation.

CPMR Transport Working Group – Zaragoza, Spain / Hybrid

On 27 October, Claudio Mantero, Head of Research and Planning Department from Horários do Funchal (Public Transport operator of Funchal), Madeira, Portugal took part in the Transport hybrid working group meeting organized by the CPMR Secretariat. He presented the challenges regarding transportation on the island of Madeira, for both residents and tourists, and the different best practices implemented by the Regional government.

Publication of the “Compendium of good practices and solutions for climate change adaptation in the Outermost Regions of the EU”

The Outermost Regions are highly exposed to the negative effects of climate change. In view of supporting these regions in addressing this major challenge, the EC has recently released a comprehensive compendium showcasing innovative climate change adaptation projects in the EU’s Outermost Regions and neighbouring countries. Its compilation follows nine thematic workshops and one final event, taking place from September 2022 to June 2023, with the aim to foster exchanges of effective practices. This is the outcome of the related programme of exchanges, led by ECORYS and to which the Islands Commission also importantly contributed, in cooperation with the Outermost Regions members of the association.
The Islands Commission Annual Plenary meeting took place on the morning of 16 November, involving several political officials, MEPs, local, regional and national experts, as well as partner organisations. Island representatives exchanged their views on the challenges of insularity, reflected on the way forward for EU islands and followed through the IC recent activities.

In this context, special emphasis was given to the pivotal role of Cohesion Policy for islands and common issues and needs, such as those related to accessibility and connectivity. Most importantly, a persistent commitment was expressed by IC members and external partners for the pursuit of an Islands Pact and the full application of article 174 of the TFEU, towards the EU institutions.

Members of the CPMR returned to where it all began in Saint-Malo in 1973, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Association and voted to elect Mr Loïg Chesnais-Girard, President of Brittany Region, as CPMR President. More than 300 participants, including former CPMR Presidents, Members of the European Parliament, officials from the European Commission, and guests from Europe and Brittany, gathered for the occasion.

The CPMR General Assembly witnessed an active participation from Islands Commission Member Regions in sessions on cohesion, energy, transport, maritime and climate issues. The CPMR Manifesto to the EU Institutions, a crucial document approved by the General Assembly, includes clear messages also directly linked to IC members’ priorities.
November

20-21

MAESHA Consortium meeting
– Online

Partners of the Horizon 2020 Maesha project have gathered online for a 2-day Consortium meeting, discussing the latest updates and next steps for the project.

Consequently, a **white paper** has been released, together with other Horizon 2020 projects engaged on the topic, addressing the replication of energy decarbonisation initiatives in islands. It aims to deliver practical and implementable recommendations to stakeholders at the local, national or European scale.

14-30

Peer-reviews - Interreg Europe Policy learning platform –
La Réunion, France

The **Regional Council of La Réunion** became the first Outermost Region to host **online and onsite peer-reviews**, as part of the initiative launched by the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform, on two different topics:

- The first online session (14-16 November) focused on **Mobility on islands and participatory processes**, engaging also experts from Madeira and Azores.

- The second in-person exchange (28-30 November) focused on the **Prevention of school dropouts of young people**, notably involving experts from Balearic Islands and Malta.

Thanks to the close cooperation with the Interreg Europe Programme, the CPMR Islands Commission is delighted to have contributed to the materialization of such interesting best practices’ exchanges.
INSULEUR Forum on “Impacts of Climate change on the economies of European islands” – Piraeus, Greece

INSULEUR, in collaboration with the CPMR IC, GTI, SMIMO and ESIN, organized its annual conference on 1 December, in Piraeus, Greece, with the aim to address the substantial impacts of climate change on EU islands, with a focus on the crucial sector of tourism. The discussions mainly reflected on the urgency for islands to achieve climate resilience by 2050, including the presentation of best practices in this field. The Executive Secretary of the IC, Claudia Guzzon, provided an overview of the CPMR/IC recent activities related to climate change adaptation and tourism. In this context, she underlined the CPMR strong engagement to foster regions’ resilience via the Glasgow Declaration and presented some further examples of relevant projects, such as the Programme of exchange on climate change involving Outermost Regions led for DG REGIO, the Interreg Med WINTERMED and DESTIMED+ projects and finally the recently approved NaTour4CC.

Approval of EESC Opinion “Main challenges faced by EU Islands, and mountainous and sparsely populated areas”

On the Plenary Session of December, the EESC approved its Own-Initiative Opinion on “Main challenges faced by EU Islands, and mountainous and sparsely populated areas”, presented by Rapporteur Ioannis Vardakastanis.

The Islands Commission welcomes this new Opinion to which it has contributed on different occasions in these past months, notably during a public hearing in Umeå, Sweden, where Filip Reinhag, Deputy Mayor of Gotland carried the voice of the IC. Other events, such as a workshop on data and indicators in Islands organised by INSULEUR, and a 2nd EESC meeting, provided opportunities for the IC to share valuable input for the Opinion.
The MAESHA project partners were welcomed by CyberGrid in Vienna, to review the results achieved over the last year and a half, in presence of the European Commission.

This in-person exchange allowed to make progress on elements related to the implementation of MAESHA in Mayotte: deployment of electric vehicle charging stations, establishment of local energy communities and enhancement of interoperability solutions.

In addition to the project’s development in Mayotte, Maesha aims for greater replication through a replicability study involving the islands of Gozo, Favignana, Saint-Barthelemy, Gran Canaria, La Reunion and Madeira.

The Executive Secretary of the Islands Commission, Claudia Guzzon, presented remotely the CPRM contribution to the Glasgow Declaration, the EU transition pathway for tourism and Nature Restoration Law. She also highlighted key initiatives and projects such as the recent advocacy efforts for an EU Islands Pact, the IC-CPMR involvement in Clean energy for EU islands and Interreg Euro-MED Thematic Community project “Community4Tourism”.

On 19 January, Greening the Islands (GTI) Foundation organised the session “Islands as frontrunners in the sustainable transition of the Mediterranean and beyond” at Circle the Med – the Mediterranean Forum 2024 – a renowned platform for discussing sustainability in the region.
Valuable discussions took place at the meeting of the CPMR Climate Working Group on 13 February, hosted by the Regional Government of Andalusia in Brussels.

The emphasis was placed on converting challenges into growth opportunities, innovative and sustainable solutions.

The Islands Commission will continue to closely follow the Climate working group discussions and to support collaborative efforts to identify and share effective climate actions across regions.

On 20 February, the CPMR Islands Commission took part in an informative meeting with the European Investment Bank, specifically dedicated to CPMR members.

During the meeting an overview of the funding instruments available for regional authorities was provided, as well as detailed information on the provided advisory support to capacity building and project preparation.
The Second UfM Stakeholder Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy, held on February 19 and 20, was hosted by Greece. This gathering aimed to leverage expertise from stakeholders within the Mediterranean SBE community, positioning them as drivers of actionable solutions across the region.

Insights on SBE developments in the Mediterranean islands were provided by the Islands and Intermediterranean Commissions of the CPMR. They also engaged in discussions with the panel on the pressures faced by islands, the lack of socioeconomic data, and the imperative need for a strategic approach at the EU level to tackle their specific needs.

TwInSolar partners gathered online for a review meeting, in presence of the European Commission.

During this meeting, the activities implemented regarding knowledge and best practices exchange were presented. Following this conclusive meeting, partners are now preparing the upcoming Summer School, to be held in La Reunion in November 2024.
March

5

NaTour4CChange kick-off meeting – Online

The CPMR IC & IMC took part in the NaTour4CChange kick-off meeting, on 5 March. The partners gathered to discuss on an overview of different work packages and milestones of this three-year Interreg Euro-MED project, featuring islands like Sardinia and Crete. It will enhance the resilience of coastal Mediterranean regions to climate change via sustainable tourism and nature-based solutions.

5

Migration Seminar & TF Meeting – Valencia, Spain

The Migration Seminar, held in Valencia on 5 March, facilitated a discussion on the impact of the Migration Pact on Regions, shedding light on the underrepresentation of regional voices.

Canary Islands and Sicily, two members of the Islands Commission, participated as panelists. They emphasized the significance of a structured approach with direct funding, timely age testing and adequate resources for unaccompanied minors. The afternoon session of the Migration Seminar featured presentations on best regional practices and exploration of innovative projects and actions addressing various aspects of migration. The Seminar was followed by a meeting of the dedicated CPMR Task Force.

7

GTI Observatory Committee meeting – Online

The Islands Commission took part in the plenary meeting of the GTI Observatory Committee, of which the Islands Commission is a member. During this meeting, an overview was provided on the latest activities and new Chairs and vice-Chairs were elected.
March

14

General Assembly of the Association of the Islands of Ponant – Ouessant, France

The CPMR Islands Commission joined on 14 of March in Ouessant (France), the General Assembly of the Association of the Islands of Ponant, focusing on key issues such as energy transition, water management, real estate issues, biodiversity protection and sustainable tourism.

20-21

“Europe, let’s cooperate!”
Interreg Europe Forum – Antwerp, Belgium

At the occasion of the launch of the 3rd call for projects of Interreg Europe, the CPMR Islands Commission was present in Antwerp to meet with the attending Member regions and explore opportunities for cooperation. The third call is open until 7 June, with a budget of 130 million euros (increased compared to the last calls). It will most probably be the last one with all topics open. Other cooperation opportunities are permanently open through the Policy Learning Platform (link here). The Islands Commission team remains at your disposal to facilitate your cooperation efforts.

19-21

REGINA MSP 3rd Cross Regional Meeting – Nantes, France

The 3rd REGINA MSP Project Cross-Regional Workshop held in Nantes, focused on establishing a "Community of Practice" (CoP) in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). The workshop looked at several MSP challenges related to less represented types of local stakeholders and drafted a roadmap to enhance the role of regions in MSP governance. A field visit enabled to discuss multi-use of the sea issues, analysing the potentialities of Offshore Renewable Energies and its related implementation challenges at local level. It was attended by representatives from the project case studies regions and regional stakeholders.
March

21 Wat’savereuse Final Conference – Palma, Spain / Hybrid

The Wat’savereuse High-Level Final Conference convened in Valence on 21 March, with representatives from the Generalitat of Catalonia, the Occitania Region, and the Balearic Islands Government, the latter being a member of the Islands Commission of the CPRM.

The conference started with a presentation outlining the Life Wat’SaveReuse project and its outcomes, followed by discussions on best practices for local public authorities and policy recommendations for effective water management. Lastly, panelists addressed the challenges of drought in the Mediterranean, with a specific focus on industrial and intellectual property dynamics. The Islands Commission maintains a central focus on water management within its scope of action.

Wat’savereuse Final Conference – Palma, Spain / Hybrid

21-22 CPMR Political Bureau & Seminar on Climate Adaptation – Patras, Greece

The Spring Political Bureau of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), hosted by the Region of Western Greece in Patras, provided the framework for regional leaders to discuss the future of Cohesion policy.

The related Policy Position adopted in Patras provides clear and implementable solutions to guide the policy process and safeguard the fundamental principles of Cohesion policy. One of the key aspects advocated by the CPMR political position is the establishment of a renewed trust between the regional and European levels through a structured and meaningful dialogue for the construction of the post-2027 policy framework.
April

4

Participation in the webseries of Close the Glass Loop on “Glass collection and recycling on islands” – Online

On 4 April, the Executive Secretary of the Islands Commission, Claudia Guzzon, presented the crucial role of islands in EU’s sustainable transition on Close the Glass Loop webseries’ 11th episode, within the framework of an initiative aiming to achieve a 90% glass packaging collection for recycling rate in the EU by 2030. Emphasizing tailored strategies for island communities, the IC underscored the need for green investments and innovative waste management solutions.

8-9

TwInSolar technical workshop - Online

Organised jointly by DTU and the University of La Reunion in the framework of the TwInSolar project, this technical and scientific workshop addressed the topic of “Modelling individual components and a whole energy system, which integrates a large share of variable renewables”, and offered high-level lectures by DTU researchers on the topic.

As project partner, CPMR Islands Commission will continue to share these opportunities for scientific cooperation with its member regions.
April

9

Presentation of CPMR Study on enlargement at the REGI Committee

Filip Reinhag, Deputy Mayor of Gotland, was invited during the last Committee on Regional Development (REGI) of the European Parliament, to present the pioneer study of the CPMR on the impact of enlargement on Cohesion Policy. In particular, he provided his views on the importance of safeguarding Cohesion Policy, in order to match with the European Union objectives.

23-24

Islands Commission General Assembly meeting – Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal

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 Islands Agenda. Complementary sessions on blue economy, energy and transport, climate and environment will also allow members to share their priorities and challenges, as well as good practices.
## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

**Horizon Europe – Mission Restore our Ocean & Waters**

2 calls will open, targeting specifically islands

Other cooperation opportunities are available in the framework of the mission Ocean and Water and the mission Adaptation to Climate Change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the call</th>
<th>Main objective</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community-led actions to restore our oceans, seas and waters</td>
<td>Implementation of effective pilot actions and support for communities (including islands). Exploitation of resources and investments.</td>
<td>50 M€</td>
<td>4/6 at the end of the project</td>
<td>September 18, 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>(HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-02-01)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support for the Coalition of waterfront cities, regions and islands for Mission Ocean and Waters</td>
<td>Build a broad coalition of cities, regions and islands that contribute to the Mission's goals</td>
<td>4 M€ (Only one project financed)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>September 18, 2024</td>
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<td>(HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-02-02)</td>
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*More information in the Work programme*
Interreg Europe
3rd call is open until 7 June
All topics covered – 130 M €

More information available on the dedicated page

Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform
• Peer-review exchange with other local and regional authorities sharing a common challenge
• No funding but dedicated thematic sessions, which could serve as preparatory step before submitting a related project proposal
• Open all year long

More information available on the dedicated page

Interreg Euro-Med
• 5th call on Thematic Projects open from 18 June 2024 until 25 February 2025
• Strategic transfer projects
• Specific target on islands, rural and/or mountain areas
• Specific focus on water scarcity and waste reduction/prevention
• 8-10 projects to be selected – 35 M €

Call to be announced soon
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES (1/2)

29 April 2024
Interreg Europe presentation for CPMR members - Online

14 May 2024:
Cohesion Core Group meeting with Cohesion Policy Attachés – Brussels

May (date TBC):
Energy working group on hydrogen – Brussels/Online

27-29 May 2024:
NaTour4CC Kick off meeting & training – Zagreb (HR)

30 April 2024:
Regina MSP Symposium event “Shaping the future of Maritime Spatial Planning” (in the CoR) – Brussels

14-15 May 2024:
Clean Energy for EU Islands Forum – Pantelleria, Sicily (IT)

14 May 2024:
Cohesion Core Group meeting with Cohesion Policy Attachés – Brussels

Spring 2024 (TB): Online Consortium meeting of Maesha (TBC)

6 June 2024:
E-Sealearning pilot programme – Online guest lecture
11-12 June 2024: CPMR Political Bureau – Shkodër, Albania

28 June 2024: Insuleur General Assembly and Workshop – Brussels

7-10 October 2024: European Week of Regions and Cities #EURegionsWeek – online/Brussels

Autumn 2024 (TB): Consortium meeting of Maesha (TBC)

11-13 June 2023: European Sustainable Energy Week – online/Brussels

2-4 October 2024: CPMR General Assembly – Gozo, Malta

18-22 November 2024: Summer school #2 of the TwInSolar project – La Reunion
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ISLANDS STAND TOGETHER!
Islands stand together

CPMR Islands 2024

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