



## The importance of regional and cohesion policies in achieving sustainable island development

Carine PIAGUET

INSULEUR, the Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union

Brussels, 16 March 2011



## What is INSULEUR?

- An association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) located in EU islands
- The only European network representing insular businesses' interests before the EU institutions
- 35 CCI from 6 EU countries

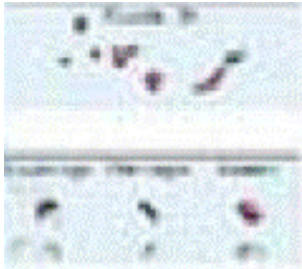


# What is INSULEUR?



**Chambers of  
Commerce located on:**

EU islands (mainly  
from the  
Mediterranean)



+ 4 Outermost regions



## What is INSULEUR?

- **Our mission** : to ensure close collaboration between island CCIs, to collaborate closely with EU institutions, and to encourage initiatives in order to promote the economic and social development of the island regions of the EU
  
- **Our actions:**
  - Participation in the EU lawmaking process
  - Close cooperation with the EESC
  - Studies
  - Organization of conferences and seminars
  - Participation in European projects: Isle-PACT, Innonautics, EUROISLANDS, etc.
  - Member of the Group 174 (<http://intergroup174.com/>)



## Specific characteristics of islands regarding sustainable development

Sustainable development means a radical change in the development policies that have led to social and environmental damage => islands are highly concerned, both in a negative and positive way:

- Islands are impacted negatively by development models (ex: impact of mass tourism); we need to find other models
- Natural and cultural assets constitute a promising potential for islands that can help the development of islands in a sustainable way (ex: renewable energies)



## Specific characteristics of islands regarding sustainable development

- Diversification of **tourism activities**: we are moving from the “sun and sand” model to other tourism products that are more favorable to the environment
- EC communication on a new political framework for tourism in Europe aims at promoting diversification of the supply of tourists services
- Chambers also welcome the EC planned action to create a true “Europe brand” that would promote EU destinations as ones that best meet the standards of sustainable development and lay special emphasis on quality => will help to address unfair competition by third countries (social dumping)



## Specific characteristics of islands regarding sustainable development

- The CCIs support the development of a European 'Qualité Tourisme' brand that would lead to a clarification of the different existing labels.
- Implication of CCIs in the “CAST Project” (Chambers Active for Sustainable Tourism): to contribute to the development of knowledge by the tourism business concerning environmental practices and the barriers they face
- The EU should support the redevelopment of mature tourist destinations and promote the exchange of best practices in sustainable development through the actions of networks like INSULEUR



## Specific characteristics of islands regarding sustainable development

- Islands benefit from highly valuable natural assets for the **development of renewable energies** for example...
  - The development of renewable energies on islands has positive social and economic results
  - Need support from National and EU policies (investment in R&D, etc.)
  - Role of the CCIs in the local promotion of sustainable development
  - Islands are an appropriate place to set up small-scale experiments of EU policies and pilot projects
- ...but at the same time their **physical characteristics become handicaps** that have to be taken into account in EU policies
  - Islands do not compete on an equal footing within the European single market
  - Implementation of EU policies is more expensive on islands
  - CO2 emissions reduction target





# The importance of the cohesion policy for islands

- Importance of Article 174 of the TFUE for the regions suffering from severe and permanent natural handicaps
  - Aims at strengthening the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU regions
  - Recognizes that special attention has to be paid to regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps, including islands

## Which cohesion policy post 2013?

- INSULEUR's expectations for the future of the cohesion policy:
  - to limit the most negative effects of insularity
  - to allow islands to take advantage of their opportunities



# The importance of the cohesion policy for islands

How could the cohesion policy better take into account the specific territories and thus duly implement the territorial cohesion principle?

- Respect for the proportionality principle
- Launch impact assessments including islands as a specific category of territory
- Abolish the 150-kilometre limit that hinders cross-border cooperation via maritime zones
- Complement the use of GDP per capita by territorial indicators
- Include islands in a future category of intermediary regions
- Make statistical data on islands available at local/regional level



## Conclusion

- Islands face permanent natural handicaps but are not handicapped territories
- There is a need for a strategy so that islands can capitalize on their assets and compete on equal terms within the single market as well as ensure sustainable development of those regions
- EUROISLANDS study (to be published): the aim of the EU policy framework should be to improve the attractiveness of the islands in order to increase their performance in terms of sustainable development.



Thank you for your attention!

**INSULEUR**

Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce  
and Industry of the EU

[www.insuleur.org](http://www.insuleur.org)