



European Economic and Social Committee



ENTREPRENEURSHIP ON EUROPEAN ISLANDS

A Public Hearing organized by the Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the EU (INSULEUR) in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee

In collaboration the European Small Islands Federation (ESIN)

Friday, 2nd of June 2017 from 10.00 to 13.00

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Rue Van Maerlant 2, 1040 Brussels (Room VMA3)

This Public Hearing is a follow-up of the “Smart Island” and “Inclusive Island” initiatives adopted by the EESC and the opinion on “Entrepreneurship on Islands: contributing towards territorial cohesion”, to be adopted by the Committee of Regions next May.

The majority of insular SMEs are micro-enterprises – with fewer than ten employees – which produce and produce a large part of the economic value in islands.

Craft professions – carpenter, butcher, baker, roofer, metal worker or information technician – are at the heart of European islands communities. They produce mainly within their local base, ensure jobs and vocational training for young and old, and make an essential contribution to innovation in the European economy.

Craft and small enterprises face particular problems due to their small size and limited resources. The globalisation of the economy and enlargements of the EU have also considerably changed the challenges that these enterprises face. Starting up a new business and getting the required capital is a challenge, as is finding the right kind of finance to expand an established business. Due to their limited resources and remoteness they suffer more from red tape and administrative burdens than mainland enterprises.

The public hearing will examine if existing policies and tools to support SMEs are sufficient for insular SMEs or some new tools or mechanism, mentioned also in the opinions, are needed to help these companies to tackle obstacles and participate on a equal foot in the integration process and assure therefore a level playing field.

The Public Audience will start at 10.00 to 13.00. A preparatory technical meeting of INSULEUR will be organized the same day from 09.00 to 10.00.

Provisional program

10.00-10.30 Welcome Session

- **George Dassis**, President of the EESC
- **Nektarios Santorinios**, Greek Alternate Minister on Insular Policy
- **Arnaldo Abruzzini**, General Secretary of Eurochambres
- **George Alexakis**, Vice-President CRPM and Vice-Governor, Region of Crete **(tbc)**
- **Camille Dressler**, President, European Small Islands Federation **(tbc)**
- **Georgios BENETOS**, President of INSULEUR

10.30 – 12.00 The voice of insular businesses

Moderator: Joost Van Iersel, President of the ECO Section of the EESC **(tbc)**

- **Giannis Margaronis**, President, Chania Chamber, Treasurer INSULEUR, *Burdensome administrative procedures and red tape for insular SME's*
- **Gozo Chamber representative**, *Access to markets and finance*
- **Mallorca Chamber representative**, *Doing business in tourism, a panacea for islands?*
- **Corsica Chamber**, *Indirect (VAT) and Direct Taxation (Income, Capital etc) for Insular SMEs (tbc)*
- **Christian Vintergaard**, CEO, The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship, *EE-HUB expert "Nordic Entrepreneurship Island"*
- **Yannis Roussos**, President, Cyclades CCI, *e-kyklades: A model to support local entrepreneurs in islands*

12.00-13.00 European Institutions responses

Moderator: Pierre-Jean Coulon, President of the TEN Section of the EESC **(tbc)**

- **Stefano Mallia**, member of the EESC and rapporteur of the Opinion on *"Inclusive Island"*
- **Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis**, member of the Committee of Regions and rapporteur of the draft opinion on *"Entrepreneurship in Islands"*,
- **Giacomo Mattino**, European Commission, Head of Unit - Enterprise Europe Network and Internationalisation of SMEs (tbc)
- **Tonino Picula**, MEP, European Parliament

Discussion

Conclusions

Interpretation available in English, Greek, French, Spanish (Italian tbc)