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## European Parliament initiative on regional airport adopted

The report seeking to redress a balance between regional and international aviation, was adopted by the transport committee of the European Parliament on the 27th of March 2012.

It addresses a wide scope of issues relating to air transport: from the revision of the definition of a regional airport to States aids.

Most of the MEPs agree on the need to revise the definition of regional airport and share the same opinion: the current definition, based on figures strictly, is irrelevant. They agree on a definition that takes into account the specific services and the different types of connections regional airports can provide decided to exclude airports whose principal catchment area is a capital city and to distinguish between major and minor non-hub airports.

Regarding State aids, direct and indirect public aids to airports infrastructures and air companies can be accepted but a balance needed to be found between the amount of the aids and their duration as well as between the advantages provided for the region by the airports and their functioning costs. The main fear of the European commission is the absence of concurrency, especially in islands where we count sometime only one single air company. Then the company enjoys a monopole and benefit from public subsidies while not offering a public service. Thus it is important to prevent divergent interests between the region and the air companies as it happened with the “single cabin luggage policy” which turned users away from buying products in duty-free shops of the airport and incited them to buy products in the plane.

The green MEPs, not in favor of this initiative, ask why non-profitable railways are closed while non-profitable airways are supported.

## The European Economic and Social committee adopted an own-initiative opinion on specific problems facing islands

An own initiative report on specific problems facing islands had been adopted by the EESC in plenary session on the 7th of March 2012.

The contribution tackles three main components of insularity: accessibility, food production (agriculture/fishery) and tourism. According to the EESC, the EU definition of islands

needs to be reconsidered in order to let these vulnerable regions benefit from certain European funds they would need to build their growth on a stronger economic development.

The draft had previously been presented by the EESC study group in a public hearing organized on the 17th of February in Mallorca (cf InsuleurVoice n°12). The final report repeats the importance of the territorial cohesion principle (so called articles 174 and 175 of the Lisbon treaty) and asks a revision of the EU definition of an island.

In addition the CESE members ask for a better consideration of the islands specificities in their participation to EU regional development programmes (a higher co-funding rate is suggested as well as the cancellation of the 150km rule for transborder cooperation).

[You can find a summary of this opinion on the EESC website](#) and [the Insuleur's contribution to this initiative on our](#).

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## **Trans European network of transport (TEN-T) negotiations are entering in a key phase at the European parliament**

On the 22th of March 2012, the council of transport ministers introduces only few changes in the maps of the TEN-T network by agreeing on the new guideline proposed on the 19h of October 2011 by the European Commission.

The novelty of this guideline is the choice of six or seven "core networks" i.e. the key corridors in which infrastructures will be built or renewed. Indeed, the TEN-T project aims at unifying the current patchwork of European roads and making it more coherent and efficient by identifying and creating the missing links between European countries. The TEN-T network includes all transport modes, of which maritime routes through the concept of motorways of the sea.

In the new guideline, intermodality is a key concept. The ministers agreed that ports which are part of the core network shall be connected with the TEN-T railway and road network by 2030 while the airports which are part of the core network have the same obligation by 2050.

A report on the selection of the "core networks" will be published by the autumn 2012 by the European parliament and the text will be voted in 2013

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## **Minimum level of training of seafarers: new rules to be adopted**

By the end of June, new international standards on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW) will be incorporated into the EU law.

Indeed, the European institutions are currently negotiating the inclusion of the 2010 Manila amendments, into the EU law in order to keep EU rules in line with international law in that respect.

The convention on STCW established basic requirements which signatory countries are obliged to meet or to exceed. The Manila amendments adopted include a number of training requirement in the fields of modern technologies (electronic charts and information system), environmental awareness and security.

[For more details on these new requirements, visit the IMO website](#)

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## **New trends of tourism in European islands: report on the OTIE workshop**

On the 22nd and 23rd of March 2012, the OTIE workshop on new trends of tourism in European islands took place at the Comité des Région, in Brussels. While the dozen of speakers invited focused their interventions on very differing topics, all of them emphasized the need for differentiation in European islands tourism. In the current context the "sun and beach" model is no more adapted to the demand. On the contrary each island would have to provide a unique and specific experience.

In their view, this differentiation through specialization is the best way for European islands

to survive in what had been called by the speakers “a competitive ocean”. As a result, islands would have to change the marketing of their territories toward a more sophisticated promotion by enhancing the diversity of their activities, traditions and landscapes. Speakers asserted that it is crucial to think beyond the European islands’ traditional schemes and to redefine the kind of targets aimed (culture or food tourism, health or green tourism, adults with or without children; young or old, mobile or sedentary people etc.) In order to determine clearly the needs of the population coming (cultural, age and economic constraints) and to develop efficient plans, the establishment of a solid data base is fundamental as well as a better inclusion of the islands residents.

[See OTIE website](#)

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### **INSULEUR’ participation in the SMILIES Conference on “Development and support of small Industries in Mediterranean Islands: one way to get out of the crisis?” – Rethymno, March 19th 2012**

This Conference has been organized by the CCI of Rethymno, Lead Partner of SMILIES (Small Mediterranean Insular Light Industries Enhancement and Support) project, a Project co-financed by European Regional Development Fund –ERDF under MED programme. ([see the website](#))

The event gathered representatives of MED Programme, of the Region of Crete, of Cyprus, of Sicily and France, INSULEUR, EEN, prized entrepreneurs from Greece, Cyprus and Italy and the partners of SMILIES.

Mr. George Benetos, President of the Professional Chamber of Pireaus and Treasurer of INSULEUR made an intervention on the role of INSULEUR to capitalise and collaborate on specific regional policies for EU islands and George Asonitis, Member of Technical Committee of INSULEUR presented INNONAUTICs project and possible ways of collaboration with SMILIES on capitalization.

During more than one year SMILIES partners and their experts have supported and coached on the field 100 pilots in MED islands, helping their promoters to develop their business project. Projects covered a wide variety of fields: renewable energies production, waste recycling and valorization, water management, electric cars development, new eco-building materials production, new types of boats, agrofood industries, fashion industries and the valorization of natural and cultural heritage through innovative ICT applications. A sample of the best of them was present to present their SMILIES experience and received SMILIES Awards.

SMILIES lesson out of this experience is that a new kind of innovation emerges which is different from the “innovation” we have seen in policies to date. It is an innovation carried out less by single individuals or companies but rather working across boundaries to link ideas and businesses to form an embedded system, which builds new social links and transforms innovative ideas in collective projects, making them not only possible but attractive and retributive.

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### **“Blue growth strategy” : consultation of the European commission**

A consultation had been opened (from mid-March until the 11th of May 2012) in order to improve the “blue growth strategy” by identifying the main challenges, highlighting synergies between sectorial policies, studying interactions between the different activities and their potential impact on the marine environment and biodiversity and by identifying activities with high growth potential in the long term. By basing growth on the maritime sector, this strategy involves directly the European insular regions.

"Blue growth" is a long-term strategy to support growth in the maritime sector (short-sea shipping, coastal tourism, offshore wind energy, desalination, use of marine resources in the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries). Maria Damanaki, Commissioner in charge of maritime affairs and fisheries, explains: "Europe urgently needs new far-sighted strands of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in a new low-carbon 'blue economy'. Emerging maritime industries have every chance to become one of the pillars of Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs." (EC Press release, 25 November 2011)

This consultation is a great opportunity to make your voice heard! Thus, do not hesitate to take part in it: [click here](#).

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## European Tourism Label for Quality Systems Initiative : European Commission consultation

To increase the competitiveness of the European tourism sector and to achieving a EU level playing field for providing high-quality tourism service throughout Europe, the European commission is planning to create a "European Tourism Label for Quality Systems" that would unify the wide range of initiative that curently exist.

The objective of this public consultation is to define the principles and criteria to be used by European tourism stakeholders for ensuring the development and provision of quality tourism within the EU.

The consultation deals with the issues of the definition of such a system, its possible implementation, the criteria selected and its impact.

It is a great opportunity to defend european island toursim and to make your voice heard : [click here!](#)

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## Erasmus For Young Entrepreneurs

The European commission published a new call for proposal for the "Erasmus for young entrepreneurs" programme. This call is addressed to all the intermediate organizations (among which the CCI) which create mobility schemes on a local scale.

The programme aims at allowing young entrepreneurs - which have or will launch their own enterprise - to benefit from another SME's chief experience in another EU country.

This call aims at selecting a number of individual or collective projects ( with at least two entities from one or several member states).

- Programme budget: 3 100 000€ to organize exchanges between new and experimented entrepreneurs
- Number of selected projects : between 25 and 40
- Co-funding : 180 000€ pe collective project and 150 000€ per individual project
- Co-funding rates : maximum 90% of eligible funds
- Maximum duration of the project : 24 months

For more information, [click here](#)

The deadline for application is the 31th of May 2012

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## Save the date !

- **Which new EU policies to face changes in the Mediterranean and the world ?** - 14-15th May 2012 Palermo, Italy, [more info](#)

- **European Maritime Day** - 20th May 2012, all over Europe, [more info](#)

- **AIC 12th Forum (Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of**

**Commerce)** - 6th-8th June 2012, in Brindisi, Italy [more info](#)

**- Insuleur's general assembly** - 16th June, Lesvos, Greece  
[more info](#)

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## Insuleur Questionnaire

Insuleur is updating its data on its members and more generally on the state of European islands. A broad survey is currently conducted on the networks's chambers. As a result, to reinforce the representation of your region in Brussels, it is important for you and for us to reply to the few questions asked in the questionnaire you received on the 11h of April 2012.

For any questions, please contact Anna Corlay (a.corlay\_ext@acfc.cci.fr) from the Insuleur representation in Brussels.

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