
Bridging the Gap: Responding to Connectivity and Tourism challenges for Resilient European Islands

Hosted by MEP **Vangelis Meimarakis**, Vice-Chair of the SEArca Intergroup

European Parliament, SPAAK 3C50, Brussels

July 02 – 13:00 – 15:00

Interpretation (English/Greek)

As Europe's islands face mounting pressures, connectivity and tourism are increasingly interlinked. The **SEArca event** "*Bridging the Gap: Responding to Connectivity and Tourism for Resilient European Islands*" will explore how a tailored, innovative and transformative EU approach to connectivity and tourism can underpin resilience in island territories.

Islands depend on reliable air and maritime links for essential mobility and economic vitality, yet these same infrastructures are often vulnerable due to seasonality, profitability constraints and environmental challenges. At the same time, tourism, which is central to many island economies, faces a pivotal transformation as acknowledged by key EU frameworks such as the *European Agenda for Tourism 2030* and the *Transition Pathway for Tourism*. In this context, it becomes evident that **supporting insular connectivity must be part of a broader redefinition of a European tourism model.**

By linking discussions on connectivity with the urgent need to redesign tourism models, this event offers a unique opportunity to exchange on the alignment of EU investments and EU regulatory frameworks with island-specific realities. It will highlight how connectivity can act as both an enabler of resilient tourism and a vector for broader territorial cohesion, economic diversification, and social inclusion.

SEArca event organised with the support of



AGENDA

Greetings by:

- **Vangelis Meimarakis**, Member of the European Parliament, SEArca Vice-Chair
- **Sofia Grammata**, Ambassador of Greece in Belgium
- **Ioannis Vrailas**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Greece to the EU
- **Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi**, Member of the European Parliament, TRAN Chair, SEArca Member

Keynote Address by:

- **Costas Kadis**, Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans
- **Apóstolos Tzitzikóstas**, Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism
- **Georgios Chatzimarkos**, Regional Governor of South Aegean

Intervention by:

- **Tonino Picula**, Member of the European Parliament, SEArca Vice-Chair for Islands
- **Zeljana Zovko**, Member of the European Parliament, EPP Vice-Chair, SEArca Member
- **Yiannis Chatzis**, President, Hellenic Federation of Hoteliers

Roundtable 1 – Island Challenges: Resilience and Connectivity

Moderated by Vangelis Meimarakis, Member of the European Parliament, SEArca Vice-Chair

- **Stefanos Gkikas**, Deputy minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, Greece
- **Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis**, President of the Assembly of Corsica, President of the CPMR Islands Commission
- **Efstratios Charchalakis**, Mayor of Kythera
- **Georges Asonitis**, EU Advisor, Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce (UHCC), Representative of the Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union (INSULEUR)

Roundtable 2 – Rethinking tourism in Europe's Islands: balancing local well-being and economic vitality

Moderated by Vangelis Meimarakis, Member of the European Parliament, SEArca Vice-Chair

- **Maja Bakran**, Deputy Director General, European Commission (DG MOVE)
- **Alicia Homs**, Member of the European Parliament, SEArca Vice-Chair for Tourism

INTERGROUP SEAS, RIVERS, ISLANDS AND COASTAL AREAS



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- **Dimitris Kafantaris**, Secretary General of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)
 - **Elias Kikilias**, General Manager of INSETE, the Institute of the Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE)

Conclusive remarks

- **Vangelis Meimarakis**, Member of the European Parliament, SEArca Vice-Chair