



European Committee  
of the Regions

Interregional Group for Insularity  
The President



Regione Siciliana

*Il Vicepresidente - Assessore per l'Economia*

## For immediate release

# ARMAO (Sicily): CONDITION OF INSULARITY TOWARDS FULL EUROPEAN RECOGNITION

**PALERMO, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022** — The "*EU islands and cohesion policy: current situation and future challenges*" resolution, whose rapporteur is French MEP Hon. Younous Omarjee, has been approved by the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development (REGI). The resolution will now be put to the vote at the Plenary Assembly in the next session of June.

A few days ago, REGI Committee's President Omarjee took part in a debate with government representatives, parliamentarians, and Italian experts on the issues of insularity and decline in the draft European resolution. The meeting was held at the Sicilian Regional Government's Rome headquarters.

*"Sicily, and all the island regions of Europe, congratulate the Hon. Younous Omarjee on the adoption by the REGI Committee of the resolution on the islands. With this resolution, the political centrality assumed by the condition of insularity is reinforced, allowing a further step towards affirmation at the European level, in line with the recognition in the Italian Constitution that is being completed in our Parliament"*, outlines Gaetano Armao, Vice-President and Regional Councillor for the Economy and Chair of the European Islands Intergroup at the European Committee of the Regions.

The MEPs, members of the REGI Committee, with the resolution approved by a large majority (39 votes in favor, 1 against), urge the European Commission to present a specific program and a "*Pact for the Islands*" to promote growth, innovation, tourism, biodiversity, and reduce the economic gap between the mainland and the island regions. Many of the requests for the rebalancing and compensation measures developed in recent years by the European Committee of the Regions are gathered in the resolution.

They have also proposed to the Commission to establish in 2024 the "*European Year of the Islands*" because they believe that the cultural and linguistic identities of the European islands should be preserved and promoted in a special way.

The European island regions have a population of more than 20 million inhabitants, distributed across about 2,400 islands belonging to 13 member countries, representing 4.6% of the total population of the EU. Italy is the country with the highest number of island citizens in Europe, with almost 7 million.

European islands, in addition to facing the issues of economic, social and territorial gaps, infrastructural equalization, territorial continuity and development taxation, are also in the front line of facing climate change that causes the rise in water levels, desertification, and makes natural disasters more frequent. Specific support for these issues is now necessary to enable greater resilience of islands to climate change.