



**S&D SEMINAR**  
**ISLANDS: BRIDGING THE GAP**  
**Challenges and options for EU's insular territories**  
**1 July 2010, 14h00 - 17h30**  
**Room ASP 3G2**  
**European Parliament, Brussels**

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEMINAR**

**The S&D Group holds a very successful seminar on Island territories**

With a very high attendance and a high-quality panel of experts from a diversity of countries and backgrounds, the S&D Group organised a seminar on the topic of island territories, challenges and solutions.

The EU's islands are territories with immense potential and value, not only economic but also social, environmental and culturally.

For long, S&D Group has defended that territorial cohesion should be included in the EU's Treaties. This is now a reality and the new Article 174 of the Lisbon Treaty provides for a legal basis to set up a specific framework to deal with islands.

Islands face many challenges:

- Transport (of people, raw materials, etc.)
- Jobs (and access to proper education, especially high level and technical)
- Energy and water supply, environmental issues (pollution, intentional or accidental)
- Services (health, culture)
- Civil liberties issues (immigration, trafficking)

We believe that, if the political will is there, those challenges will be met.

As **conclusions** to our Seminar, the S&D Group:

- Wants for islands to be taken into account when any EU-wide legislative proposal is drafted. Proper impact assessment evaluations must become the general rule.
- Will closely monitor the implementation of new Article 174
- Wants new indicators to be designed, which are more territorialised, in order to provide a more accurate picture of islands' development needs and to allow them to be eligible for Community funding under the various financing instruments, avoiding the

risk of encompassing them into larger mainland units (GDP per capita does not offer a satisfactory insight into the real situation of islands in terms of sustainable development)

- Defends the use of a multiplicity of financing instruments for islands, and refuse the reductionist approach of only envisaging Cohesion Policy as the only EU policy fit to address islands
- Supports an integrated and flexible approach to the situation of island territories, in order for the multiple specificity of all the EU's islands to be taken into account
- Believes that the proportionality principle should be applied in order to enhance territorial cohesion: the implementation of EU policies had differing costs when done in island territories (and even more so when they are mountainous or archipelagos)
- Stresses the need to make sure that, when dealing with cross-border cooperation, this cooperation is effectively ensured to island territories: this means the suppression of the rule that stipulates a maximum distance of 150 km between maritime regions, as this excludes many islands from those projects
- Will propose that ex-ante impact assessments become mandatory for any piece of legislation that has an impact on island territories.