



## Introduction to General Assembly

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### Welcome Speech as an Introduction to the General Assembly

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen!

I hope that you are all keeping well. This is my initial greeting to you at the start of the General Assembly of INSULEUR. As much as we would like to meet again, I have to address you for the umpteenth time from the computer screen. I hope and wish that this will be one of the last meetings that we conduct in this way, but we have to accept the way things are.

At this initial stage I would like to thank George Assonitis and Irene Mikelis for the organisation of this meeting.

We represent businesses in the islands and this is not the best time to operate business. It is the time when our businesses are in jeopardy. This applies for businesses all over Europe but more so for businesses on islands.

Businesses need real partnership with the regions, a real partnership with islands from the central Governments. The Resilience and Recovery packages in our various countries need to put the comeback of islands on the front burners. We are the hardest hit by the crisis, we are the regions that need to be on the forefront when it comes to help, we need islands to be positively discriminated. Next Generation European Union needs to cater for islands. There are States/Governments which have been attentive to this but we need this to happen all over Europe. We are putting our pressure on this.

We need to make the digital and green transitions the hallmark of economic recovery in islands. Europe is keen of having islands as testbases for this transition but now we need words to be translated into actual projects, into actual reform that will build resilience and actual recovery on islands. We need adequate support tools, actual instruments that will help us build the economy after the collapse we are experiencing.

Let us be positive. There are a lot of dark clouds around but as the saying goes, every cloud has got a silver lining. Let us not miss the boat. Let us work even harder to transform our islands into resilient bulwarks that can withstand the high waves around us. This is what I wish our members, this is what I wish you all. Let us help each other achieve this! Thank you.

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