



EUROPEAN AWARENESS DAYS

A Safer Mediterranean for a Stronger Europe

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS AND KEY CONCLUSIONS

Dates	17–20 July 2026
Locations	Catania and Palermo, Italy
Organiser	ECR Party

1. Project overview and objectives

From 17 to 20 July 2026, the ECR Party organised the international conference “A Safer Mediterranean for a Stronger Europe” in Sicily. The event brought together political leaders, government ministers, Members of the European Parliament, national and regional parliamentarians, experts, academics, business representatives, journalists and institutional stakeholders.

The conference examined the Mediterranean's strategic importance to Europe and the specific challenges faced by island territories within the European Union. The programme addressed insularity, territorial cohesion, connectivity, economic competitiveness, energy security, migration, cultural heritage and infrastructure development.

The project sought to identify practical policy solutions to strengthen transport links, support local enterprises, improve economic resilience and ensure equal opportunities for citizens and businesses in island regions. The concluding programme in Palermo also placed particular emphasis on combating mafia-related organised crime and honouring the legacy of Judge Paolo Borsellino.

2. Event format and participation

The programme combined opening statements, keynote speeches, moderated interviews, thematic panels, video messages, networking sessions and institutional visits. The conference connected European and national decision-makers with regional institutions, civil society organisations, businesses and young participants. Youth contributions were developed through four dedicated information papers, each linked directly to the relevant thematic panel.

3. Conference proceedings – Catania

Friday, 17 July 2026

Opening greetings

Speakers: Antonio Giordano, ECR Party Secretary General; Enrico Trantino, Mayor of Catania; and Luca Sbardella, Member of Parliament and regional commissioner for Fratelli d'Italia (Fdi) in Sicily.

The opening greetings formally inaugurated the European Awareness Days and underscored Sicily's strategic position at the heart of the Mediterranean. The speakers presented the conference as a forum for aligning European policy priorities with the concrete needs of island territories, local authorities and regional communities.

Opening speech

Speaker: Carlo Fidanza, Executive Vice-President of the ECR Party.

The opening speech established the political framework for the conference and called for a stronger, more coherent European strategy for the Mediterranean. It presented competitiveness, security, sovereignty and territorial cohesion as interconnected priorities that must be advanced through coordinated European action.

Interview with: Adolfo Urso, Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy, interviewed by Valentina Menassi, journalist at Il Giornale.

Minister Adolfo Urso traced the crisis of European industry to regulatory choices that made technological targets more important than productive reality. On automotive policy, he argued that the

prohibition-oriented approach to combustion technologies exposed Europe to dependence on Chinese batteries, raw materials and supply chains. Italy had therefore pressed for an early review of the CO2 rules, removal of potentially destructive penalties and recognition of technological neutrality. He presented the revised Stellantis industrial plan - including new platforms, hybrid models and renewed Italian production - as evidence that industrial policy can support decarbonisation without accepting deindustrialisation.

Turning to semiconductors and renewable technologies, Urso identified Catania as a concrete example of the strategic autonomy Europe needs. He highlighted STMicroelectronics' investment of more than EUR5 billion in a silicon-carbide production facility in the Etna Valley, describing it as the largest microelectronics project of its kind authorised by the European Commission. He also referred to the recovery of the 3Sun photovoltaic plant, supported through Italy's Transition 5.0 measures and the principle of Made in Europe. In his view, European subsidies and public procurement should reward production and substantial supply chains located inside Europe rather than finance imports that deepen dependency.

The Minister then addressed the space economy, paying tribute to Italian Space Agency President Teodoro Valente and recalling Italy's historic role as the third country to launch a satellite. He outlined investments of approximately EUR10 billion through 2028, Italy's first national law governing private space activity, four Space Factories and a network of industrial space districts extending to Sicily. He also described Italian participation in the Artemis programme and plans to manufacture lunar habitation modules in Turin. These initiatives, he argued, show how public strategy, scientific capacity and private enterprise can restore European leadership in a sector that now has direct security and defence implications.

Urso concluded that Europe must overcome institutional fragmentation and create companies capable of competing globally. Project Bromo - bringing together Leonardo, Thales and Airbus in satellite constellations - was presented as a model for European industrial champions. Referring to estimates that Europe may need annual investment of up to EUR1.2 trillion to close its competitiveness gap, he warned that delay has become an economic risk in itself: Europe must simplify decisions, mobilise capital and protect its industrial base before it is reduced to an open-air museum for other continents.

Panel: Promoting the European Economy in the Mediterranean Area

Moderator: Zsófia Bódi-Rácz, Head of Communications at the Danube Institute.

Panellists: Edmondo Cirielli, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Marco Causarano, CEO of Sicania Chimica; Nikola Grmoja, Member of Parliament and President of MOST Party; Anna Romana Łukaszewska-Trzeciakowska, former Minister of Climate and Environment of Poland; and Denis Nesci, Member of the European Parliament.

The discussion addressed the conditions required for the Mediterranean to become a stronger centre of European production, trade and investment. The speakers identified connectivity, affordable energy, regulatory realism, strategic infrastructure and cooperation with neighbouring regions as the principal requirements. They also stressed that common European objectives must leave sufficient room for national and regional circumstances, particularly for islands and peripheral economies facing higher structural costs.

The panel examined how the Mediterranean can regain a central role in European production, trade and strategic connectivity. Edmondo Cirielli presented Italy's foreign-policy priorities as a combination of diplomatic stabilisation, infrastructure investment and equal partnerships with the countries of Africa and the wider Mediterranean. He described the Mattei Plan as the principal framework for cooperation in energy, education, healthcare, agriculture, digital technologies and

infrastructure, stressing respect for national sovereignty and rejecting a donor-recipient model. He also highlighted the importance of the Western Balkans, North Africa, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and Sicily's growing role in digital and energy connections.

Marco Causarano focused on Sicily's industrial base. He argued that ageing industrial zones must be renewed and adapted to technology, logistics and modern manufacturing. Sicily's ports, fibre-optic cables, proximity to Africa and position on major energy routes could make the island a European logistics, industrial, data and energy hub, but only if railways, roads, ports and intermodal connections are completed. In his assessment, infrastructure is the essential condition for restoring competitiveness and allowing Sicilian companies to reach central European markets efficiently.

Nikola Grmoja warned that European climate and industrial policies must not weaken domestic production or increase dependence on external suppliers. He called for affordable energy, protection of strategic sectors and greater attention to demographic decline, arguing that economic confidence and stable employment are indispensable if young people are to remain in their countries and start families. Anna Romana Łukaszewska-Trzeciakowska similarly stressed that European competitiveness depends on lower energy costs, technological neutrality and a greater willingness to finance innovation despite the risk of failure. Europe, she argued, cannot compete with the United States and China while discouraging investment and imposing unrealistic costs on industry.

Denis Nesci concentrated on the functioning of the single market. He called for fewer and simpler rules, greater recognition of territorial differences and better access to European finance for SMEs, family businesses and start-ups. He proposed a stronger guarantee role for the European Investment Bank so that smaller companies are not excluded by complex procedures or financial requirements. Across the discussion, the panellists agreed that Mediterranean growth requires pragmatic regulation, modern infrastructure, affordable energy, accessible investment and policies tailored to the realities of islands and peripheral regions.

Video message

Speaker: Mateusz Morawiecki, former Prime Minister of Poland and President of the ECR Party.

In his video message, Mateusz Morawiecki, former Prime Minister of Poland and President of the ECR Party, welcomed participants to the European Awareness Days and presented Mediterranean security as a direct component of Europe's wider resilience. He linked secure borders with stronger economies and greater political stability, stressing that investment in security, infrastructure and cooperation is essential if Europe is to respond effectively to the region's strategic challenges. ECR Party President Morawiecki encouraged the participants to use the conference to produce practical conclusions and strengthen exchanges among the ECR Party's national delegations.

Saturday, 18 July 2026

Opening greetings

Speaker: Gianmarco Mazzi, Minister of Tourism.

The opening remarks introduced the second day of the conference and set the stage for discussions on the strategic importance of culture, tourism, and cultural heritage in promoting sustainable development across the Mediterranean regions. Gianmarco Mazzi highlighted that these sectors are not only significant

economic drivers but also essential instruments for strengthening social cohesion, preserving shared identities, and fostering dialogue among Mediterranean countries.

He emphasised the role of cultural heritage as a bridge between past and future, noting that investment in its protection and promotion contributes to local economic growth, job creation, and community well-being. Tourism, when managed sustainably, was presented as a key mechanism for enhancing regional cooperation, supporting local businesses, and encouraging responsible engagement with historical and cultural assets.

The address also underscored the importance of cross-border collaboration between governments, cultural institutions, and tourism stakeholders to develop innovative policies that balance heritage conservation with economic development. Mazzi stressed that the Mediterranean's rich and diverse cultural landscape provides a unique opportunity to strengthen international partnerships, attract sustainable tourism, and reinforce the region's shared cultural identity.

The opening remarks concluded by encouraging participants to use the conference as a platform for exchanging best practices, developing new collaborative initiatives, and identifying practical solutions that enhance the resilience, accessibility, and long-term sustainability of the Mediterranean's cultural and tourism sectors.

Interview with: Raffaele Fitto, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Cohesion and Reforms, interviewed by Silvia Gasparetto, journalist at ANSA.

Executive Vice-President Raffaele Fitto began with his appointment as the European Commission's Special Envoy for Cyprus. He described reunification as a difficult but explicit objective and noted that the Commission had, for the first time, entrusted the file to a Commissioner and Executive Vice-President. Initial contacts with both communities and the United Nations were under way, supported by the Commission's existing cooperation programme for the Turkish Cypriot community. He presented the appointment as evidence of stronger European engagement with a long-standing Mediterranean conflict.

On cohesion policy, Fitto argued that flexibility and simplification must replace programmes that remain locked into assumptions made years earlier. He described the mid-term review that allowed Member States and regions to redirect resources towards five priorities: water, housing, competitiveness, defence and energy. Approximately EUR35 billion was reallocated across Europe, including more than EUR7 billion in Italy. For Fitto, this demonstrated that cohesion policy can respond to new crises without abandoning its territorial mission.

He then explained the Commission's developing strategies for islands and the right to stay. Seventeen million Europeans live on islands, but the challenges differ between small islands, large regions such as Sicily and island Member States such as Cyprus, Malta and Ireland. The strategy therefore addresses insularity, connectivity and additional costs without treating all islands as identical. The right-to-stay initiative focuses on inland, rural, border and depopulating areas, combining infrastructure and public services with productive investment so that young people are not forced to leave for lack of opportunity.

Fitto also discussed the Recovery and Resilience Facility. A formal extension, he said, is procedurally impossible, although implementation and financial instruments can continue beyond the immediate deadline once beneficiaries and milestones have been identified. He assessed Italy's repeated

revisions and achievement of instalment targets positively. While expressing personal support for a future common-debt instrument in strategic fields such as defence and energy, he acknowledged that this would require agreement among Member States.

On industrial policy, he welcomed the fact that revision of the Emissions Trading System had become politically possible, while recognising business demands for more ambitious changes. Decarbonisation, he argued, must be pragmatic and preserve Europe's productive base. He also distinguished between the administrative simplification offered by Italy's single Special Economic Zone and tax incentives governed by the EU regional-aid map. The SEZ model, in his assessment, had already improved authorisation procedures and contributed to stronger economic performance in southern Italy.

Panel: The Mediterranean as a Shared European Cultural Heritage

Moderator: Luca Ciliberti, journalist at Antenna Sicilia.

Panellists: Giampiero Cannella, Undersecretary of State for Culture; Angelika Gieraś, Operations Director at the Sobieski Institute; Sandro Pappalardo, President of ITA Airways; Marco Squarta, Member of the European Parliament; and Mariateresa Vivaldini, Member of the European Parliament.

The panel examined how Mediterranean heritage can be preserved while remaining economically, socially and politically relevant. The discussion linked culture with identity, education, tourism, transport and international cooperation. Particular emphasis was placed on presenting local traditions in contemporary forms, improving access to island destinations and involving younger generations in the transmission and promotion of Europe's cultural inheritance.

The panel explored the Mediterranean as a living cultural space whose heritage can support identity, tourism, international dialogue and economic development. Giampiero Cannella argued that conservative thought has a substantial cultural tradition and rejected the idea that culture belongs to one political camp. Turning to Sicily, he described its identity as the result of Greek, Roman, Arab, Norman, Spanish and religious influences. Heritage, he stressed, should not be frozen in museums: local festivals, religious celebrations, historical memory and contemporary artistic expression must remain active within communities. He identified young artists and cultural professionals as essential interpreters and ambassadors of this inheritance.

Angelika Gieraś emphasised the educational and civilisational dimension of Mediterranean heritage. She argued that Europeans must understand their own history if they are to preserve a coherent identity and conduct meaningful dialogue with neighbouring societies. Cultural diplomacy, academic exchange and cooperation among institutions can maintain communication even during political crises. She also stressed the importance of transmitting historical knowledge to younger generations rather than reducing culture to entertainment or tourism alone.

Mariateresa Vivaldini connected cultural heritage with European policy, local development and the protection of communities. She underlined the importance of safeguarding tangible and intangible traditions while making European funding more accessible to municipalities, associations and smaller cultural organisations. Culture, in her view, can strengthen social cohesion and create employment, but policy must recognise the specific needs of islands, rural territories and border regions.

Sandro Pappalardo focused on connectivity and tourism. He explained that cultural destinations cannot develop without reliable air links and modern transport services, particularly in island regions. Aviation should therefore be treated as strategic infrastructure supporting tourism,

investment and territorial continuity. Better connections would allow visitors to reach lesser-known destinations and distribute economic benefits beyond the largest cities.

Marco Squarta highlighted the relationship between heritage, technological innovation and Europe's wider Mediterranean role. He called for investment in digitisation, cultural routes, training and cooperation with the southern Mediterranean, arguing that culture can reinforce diplomacy and partnership when approached without paternalism. The panellists broadly agreed that Mediterranean heritage must be protected through use: by educating young people, supporting creators and local communities, improving physical and digital access, and presenting Europe's cultural identity in forms that remain authentic while speaking to contemporary audiences.

Interview with: Nello Musumeci, Minister for Civil Protection and Maritime Policies, interviewed by Barbara Acquaviti, journalist at Askanews.

Minister Nello Musumeci described the sea as Italy's largest strategic resource and argued that maritime policy must move beyond fragmented responsibilities. Italy's geography gives it an extensive coastline, major commercial routes, ports, fisheries, tourism and energy infrastructure, yet maritime competences have historically been divided among numerous administrations. The new Ministry for Civil Protection and Maritime Policies was intended to build a more coherent national vision and place the blue economy at the centre of economic and security planning.

He emphasised the need to modernise ports and connect them efficiently with railways, roads and logistics platforms. Mediterranean ports are competing not only with one another but also with rapidly developing terminals on the southern shore, some of which benefit from lower regulatory and environmental costs. Italy and Europe must therefore improve infrastructure and review rules that unintentionally divert traffic away from European ports. Maritime awareness also requires better data, surveillance and coordination among civilian, commercial and defence authorities.

A major part of the interview concerned the underwater domain. Musumeci explained that submarine cables, pipelines and energy connections now form essential national and European infrastructure, while technological development is opening new possibilities for research, resources and industrial activity below the surface. Italy's new legislation establishes responsibilities and legal principles for this domain, which had previously lacked an integrated framework. Protecting underwater infrastructure, he argued, has become a question of national security as well as economic continuity.

The Minister also connected maritime policy with civil protection. Climate-related emergencies, coastal risks, earthquakes and volcanic activity require prevention, public awareness and coordination before disasters occur. He rejected the idea that civil protection should operate only after an emergency and called for a culture of preparedness supported by local authorities and citizens.

Finally, Musumeci addressed swimming-pool safety, noting that preventable accidents continue because standards and supervision are inconsistent. He called for clearer national rules on controls, professional responsibilities and protection of children. The example illustrated his broader point: strategic policy and everyday safety both depend on institutions defining responsibilities clearly and applying them consistently.

Video message on the EU Regulation on Returns

Speaker: Tommaso Foti, Minister for European Affairs, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and Cohesion Policies.

In his video message, Tommaso Foti, Minister for European Affairs, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and Cohesion Policies, argued that irregular migration requires a genuinely European response based on common rules, effective instruments and the political will to implement them. He described the European Pact on Migration and Asylum as a change from a system centred mainly on redistribution towards an approach based on external-border protection, partnerships with countries of origin and transit, action against human-trafficking networks, faster procedures and more effective returns. Minister Foti also highlighted Italy's early implementation of the Pact and the protocol with Albania as examples of practical cooperation consistent with European and international law. He stressed that controlling the Union's external borders protects both national security and freedom of movement within Europe.

Panel: A European Approach to Migration and Human Capital

Moderator: Eleonora Tomassi, journalist at Il Tempo.

Panellists: Luca Ciriani, Minister for Relations with Parliament; Marcin Gwóźdź, Member of Parliament; Carlo Fidanza, Member of the European Parliament and Executive Vice-President of the ECR Party; and George Simion, Member of Parliament, President of AUR Party and Executive Vice-President of the ECR Party.

The discussion focused on the relationship between border security, lawful migration and Europe's capacity to retain and develop its own human capital. The speakers supported stronger external-border management, cooperation with countries of origin and transit, effective implementation of return decisions and a clear distinction between legal and illegal migration. They also stressed the need to invest in skills, employment and regional opportunities so that young Europeans are not compelled to leave their communities.

The panel examined migration policy together with the broader question of Europe's human capital: how to protect borders, distinguish lawful from unlawful migration and prevent European regions from losing their own young and skilled citizens. Luca Ciriani presented the Italian Government's approach as a shift from managing arrivals after they occur towards preventing irregular departures, strengthening external borders, combating trafficking networks and cooperating with countries of origin and transit. He stressed that migration rules must be credible and enforceable, and that solidarity cannot mean leaving frontline states to manage the consequences alone.

Marcin Gwóźdź drew on Poland's experience of external-border pressure and argued that border protection is a prerequisite for national security and freedom of movement inside the European Union. He distinguished refugees and legal migrants from organised or politically instrumentalised irregular flows. He also stressed that Europe must invest in families, employment, education and regional development so that its own citizens are able to build stable lives without being driven abroad by economic necessity.

Carlo Fidanza argued that European migration policy has begun to move away from automatic redistribution and towards prevention, agreements with third countries, faster procedures and more effective returns. He identified implementation as the decisive weakness: return orders that are not executed undermine both public confidence and the rule of law. He supported the new European framework on returns but insisted that administrative cooperation and political determination must convert legal decisions into actual outcomes. Fidanza also described the Mattei Plan as the complementary development pillar of this policy, intended to create opportunities in African partner countries rather than treating migration only as a security issue.

George Simion emphasised sovereignty, demographic decline and the loss of skilled workers from Central and Eastern Europe. He warned that uncontrolled migration cannot compensate for policies

that have encouraged young Europeans to leave their own communities. Europe should instead support families, competitive wages, entrepreneurship and national education systems while recruiting foreign labour only through transparent legal channels linked to real economic needs.

The discussion converged on a two-track approach: firm and effective control of illegal migration, combined with investment in legal mobility, skills and opportunities. The panellists maintained that Europe will be more secure only if it protects its borders and at the same time retains its own talent, supports families and creates credible economic prospects in regions affected by depopulation and brain drain.

Panel: From the Mattei Plan to Europe's Pact for the Mediterranean

Moderator: Małgorzata Samojedny, President of the Opportunity Institute, Poland.

Panellists: Gaetano Galvagno, President of the Sicilian Regional Assembly and Member of the European Committee of the Regions; Kaush Arha, President of the Free & Open Indo-Pacific Forum at the Atlantic Council; Franz Di Bella, CEO of Netith and Deputy Vice-President of Confindustria Catania; Monika Pawłowska, Member of Parliament; and Ruggero Razza, Member of the European Parliament.

The panel considered whether the Italian Mattei Plan could provide the basis for a wider European strategy for the Mediterranean. The discussion highlighted equal partnership with African and Mediterranean countries, strategic investment, secure trade and energy routes, modern ports, digital connectivity and private-sector participation. Sicily was presented as a potential European logistics and data hub, provided that infrastructure, regulatory stability and the specific costs of insularity are properly addressed.

The panel considered how Italy's Mattei Plan could develop into a broader European Pact for the Mediterranean based on equal partnership, strategic investment and shared security. Ruggero Razza described the Mediterranean as a "global" space linking Europe with Africa, the Gulf and the Indo-Pacific. He argued that Europe must move beyond viewing the region primarily through migration and recognise its importance for energy, trade, demographics, technology and geopolitical influence. The Mattei Plan, in his view, offers a model of cooperation between equal partners and is already shaping European structures, including the Pact for the Mediterranean, new institutional responsibilities and future budget priorities. He identified continuing political resistance within the European Parliament to substantial investment in the Southern Neighbourhood as one of the principal obstacles.

Kaush Arha placed the discussion within the transition from unrestricted globalisation towards stronger regional networks. He argued that Sicily should use its geography to become a major transshipment, logistics and digital hub rather than merely a point of passage. Its ports, submarine data cables and position between Europe, Africa and Asia could support data centres, advanced industries and employment for young people. He urged policymakers to connect the Mattei Plan with initiatives such as IMEC and to treat the Mediterranean as an economic bridge rather than a dividing line.

Monika Pawłowska stressed that security must be the first pillar of any Mediterranean pact, because neither economic development nor durable partnership is possible without secure borders and resilient states. Drawing on Poland's experience, she discussed external-border protection, hybrid threats, energy and food security, critical infrastructure and the protection of women and children from trafficking. National parliaments, she argued, have a central role in translating European objectives into legislation and ensuring that states remain prepared for crises.

Gaetano Galvagno focused on Sicily's regional perspective. He highlighted ports, refineries, energy routes and digital cables, but warned that insularity imposes additional transport and business costs that uniform European rules often fail to recognise. Sicily and southern Italy should be treated not as peripheral problems but as strategic assets capable of contributing to European solutions. He called for fairer rules, stronger infrastructure and policies adapted to territorial realities.

Franz Di Bella explained that the private sector must translate geopolitical vision into projects, investment and employment. Representing a business network of approximately 700 companies and 28,000 workers, he described Sicilian enterprises as potential partners in technological, industrial and professional cooperation with Mediterranean and African markets. The panel concluded that a European pact will succeed only if political strategy is connected with regional authorities, private investment, infrastructure and concrete opportunities for local communities.

Interview with: Ignazio La Russa, President of the Senate of the Italian Republic, introduced by Antonio Giordano and interviewed by Antonello Piraneo and Flaminia Camilletti.

President of the Senate Ignazio La Russa discussed migration as an issue requiring firmness, realism and legal fairness. He rejected both uncontrolled entry and purely rhetorical solutions, arguing that government must establish rules it can actually enforce. Border control, agreements with third countries and effective returns are necessary, but they should operate within a framework that respects human dignity and distinguishes between different individual circumstances. He credited the Italian Government with shifting the European debate from automatic redistribution towards prevention and external cooperation.

A substantial part of the interview concerned Sicily's infrastructure and the Strait of Messina Bridge. La Russa described the bridge not as an isolated construction project but as the missing link in a wider transport system connecting Sicily with the national and European networks. The island's geographical disadvantage affects citizens, companies, tourism and investment; improved rail and road connections could reduce that penalty and strengthen Sicily's role in Mediterranean logistics. He argued that major infrastructure requires political continuity and should be assessed in terms of long-term national development rather than short electoral cycles.

On Europe, La Russa defended cooperation among sovereign nations rather than a centralised model detached from national democratic identities. A strong Europe, in his view, does not require countries to abandon their history, culture or political legitimacy. Instead, European institutions should act where common scale is essential - security, strategic infrastructure, industrial capacity and international influence - while respecting the competences and distinctiveness of Member States.

He reaffirmed Italy's Atlantic orientation and the importance of NATO, while also supporting a stronger European defence capability. The two objectives were not presented as alternatives: Europe should assume greater responsibility within the Western alliance and develop the capacity to protect its own interests. This requires investment, coordination and political stability rather than duplication or separation from the United States.

The conversation also addressed the condition of Italian politics and institutions. La Russa stressed the value of stable government, clear electoral choices and a political culture capable of making decisions. He linked institutional strength with Europe's credibility abroad: a country that changes direction continuously cannot sustain strategic projects or negotiate effectively. His central argument was that security, infrastructure, national identity and international alliances must be treated as connected elements of a coherent long-term policy.

4. Palermo programme

Institutional visit to the Sicilian Regional Assembly

The visit to the Sicilian Regional Assembly gave participants direct insight into the history, constitutional status and democratic role of Sicily's regional parliament. It also connected the conference themes with the governance of a major European island region.

Participation in “Parlate di Mafia”

The ECR delegation participated in the “Parlate di Mafia” event at the San Paolo Palace Hotel. The initiative emphasised civic responsibility, institutional integrity, public education and a culture of legality in protecting democratic life from organised crime.

Torchlight procession in memory of Paolo Borsellino

The conference concluded with the annual torchlight procession from Piazza Vittorio Veneto to Via D’Amelio. The commemoration honoured Judge Paolo Borsellino and the members of his escort and reaffirmed a shared commitment to justice, the rule of law and the fight against mafia-related crime.

5. Youth contribution

Four Youth Information Papers were prepared, corresponding to the conference’s main thematic panels:

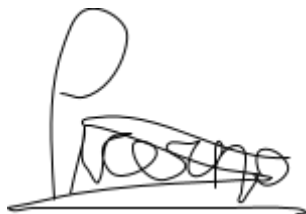
1. [Promoting the European Economy in the Mediterranean Area](#)
2. [The Mediterranean as a Shared European Cultural Heritage](#)
3. [A European Approach to Migration and Human Capital](#)
4. [From the Mattei Plan to Europe’s Pact for the Mediterranean](#)

The four papers are listed below and form part of the conference’s substantive record.

6. Main outcomes and European added value

- The conference established a high-level platform for dialogue among European, national, regional and local actors on the future of the Mediterranean.
- It brought together competitiveness, territorial cohesion, culture, migration, maritime affairs and security within a coherent policy framework.
- The event increased awareness of the structural challenges faced by island territories and the need for equal access to infrastructure, markets, investment and public services.
- The Palermo programme reinforced the project’s civic dimension by connecting European policy discussions with the defence of legality and the commemoration of Judge Paolo Borsellino.
- The Youth Information Papers ensured that young people’s analysis and recommendations formed part of the conference’s final substantive record.

Chiara Picerno

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcel Szpak', written over a horizontal line.

Marcel Szpak



Sergiu Hincu



Andrei-Razvan Craciun



Daniel Dalpiaz

