18th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ISLAND TOURISM - ICIT

Islands in Transition: Policy, Development and Resilience

28th – 31st October 2026

SESSION 1:

Polo Universitario di Trapani

Trapani City - Sicily Island - Italy - EU

SESSION 2:

Council Chamber – Municipality of Pantelleria

Pantelleria Island - Italy - EU

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Richard Butler (University of Strathclyde) is an Emeritus Professor of Tourism at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, and an internationally renowned scholar in tourism geography and destination development. He is best known for developing the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, one of the most influential and widely used conceptual frameworks for understanding how tourism destinations evolve and transform. His research interests include destination development, sustainability, tourism in peripheral and island regions, overtourism, political change, and Indigenous tourism. Professor Butler has published extensively throughout his academic career, with more than 200 papers and book chapters, as well as numerous edited and authored volumes. He has also consulted for governments, international organisations, and tourism agencies worldwide. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to tourism research and the dissemination of knowledge, he was awarded the UNWTO Ulysses Medal in 2016

Razaq Raj (Leeds Beckett University) is an internationally recognised researcher and professor in tourism, events, and strategic management, with an academic career spanning Europe and Asia. He is a Visiting Professor at KEDGE Business School (France) and an Honorary Professor at the University of Vitez (Bosnia). A leading authority on sustainable tourism, cultural festivals, and religious tourism, he is the founding Co-Editor of the Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage and Series Editor of the CABI Religious Tourism & Pilgrimage book series. His influential publications include Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Management, Events Management, and Event Management and Sustainability, which academics and practitioners worldwide use widely. Beyond academia, Razaq Raj is recognised for fostering international research collaborations, advising higher education institutions on quality assurance, and contributing to public discourse on global issues, including appearances on BBC and Sky News as an expert commentator.

Giovanni Ruggieri (University of Palermo) is Associate Professor of Applied Economics and Chair of Economics of Tourism and Tourism Industries at the University of Palermo. He also teaches Tourism Systems Economics in the Master's programme at Florida International University (Miami, USA). An internationally recognised expert in tourism economics and sustainable destination development, he is President of the Observatory of Tourism of the European Islands (OTIE) and Founding Editor of the International Journal of Island Research. His research focuses on island economies, tourism ecosystems, heritage and UNESCO site management, sustainable tourism, and the economic impact of tourism on destinations. Professor Ruggieri has authored numerous scientific publications and has led the development of several UNESCO management plans.

Filippo Di Mauro has more than 30 years of applied economic experience as economist and research manager in Central Banks (Bank of Italy (1984-1990, 1996-98), US Federal Reserve Board (May-September 2010), European Central Bank (1998-2016)) and International Development organizations (Asian Development Bank (1990-94), IMF (1986-88, 1994-96)). He has been with the ECB since its start in 1998, and from then until 2010 he directed international economic analysis and global economic forecasts in its Economics Department. Filippo di Mauro has an extensive publication record, including in academic journals such as the Journal of Applied Econometrics, the Journal of International Money and Finance, and Economic Policy. An economics graduate of the University of Rome, di Mauro holds an MA and a PhD in Economics from the University of Chicago and the American University, respectively.

OBSERVATORY ON TOURISM IN THE EUROPEAN ISLANDS

Università degli Studi di Palermo

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18th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ISLAND TOURISM

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