

Josep Santacreu, elected to lead ASCAME into a new era

- Josep Santacreu, President of the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, has been elected as the new President of the Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME).
- Santacreu's candidacy was approved unanimously by the Executive Committee, subsequently validated by ASCAME's General Secretariat and ratified by the General Assembly. The Executive Committee also endorsed both the renewal of ASCAME's Board of Directors and the restructuring of its commissions.
- ASCAME, in partnership with leading business organizations from Europe, Africa, and the Arab world, launched the *Barcelona Declaration for Mediterranean Economic Development*, setting out 30 strategic initiatives to strengthen cooperation, drive innovation, and foster sustainable prosperity across the region. The launch took place within the framework of the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process.

Barcelona, 18 November 2025. Josep Santacreu, President of the [Barcelona Chamber of Commerce](#), has been elected President of the [Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry \(ASCAME\)](#) by the institution's Executive Committee, the institution's highest decision-making body, met today at the Llotja de Mar in Barcelona. Santacreu's candidacy was approved unanimously by the Executive Committee, subsequently validated by ASCAME's General Secretariat and ratified by the General Assembly.

Alongside the election of the new President, the Committee has approved both the **renewal of ASCAME's Board of Directors** and the **restructuring of its commissions**, ensuring that the institution's mission remains aligned with the evolving economic context of the region. It also endorsed **the creation of the ASCAME Senate**, to be chaired by the outgoing President, **Ahmed El Wakil**, who will remain closely linked to ASCAME as Honorary President, Vice President, and President of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce.

In his first remarks as ASCAME President, **Josep Santacreu** paid tribute to his predecessor: *“Despite recent adversities in the Mediterranean, such as the global pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and natural disasters, Ahmed El Wakil ensured that ASCAME not only preserved but expanded its mission, strengthening support for its members and driving the region's economic development”*. He continued: *“Today, we*

honor a great man whose vision has been dedicated to reinforcing unity across Mediterranean countries, building bridges between businesses and cultures, and defending the vital role of Chambers of Commerce in shaping a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable Mediterranean”.

Santacreu concluded: *“I accept the responsibility of serving as President of ASCAME with the utmost respect for El Wakil’s legacy. I do so with humility and determination, committed to advancing the interests of the Mediterranean private sector and to building a stronger, more united, and more resilient Mediterranean for generations to come”.*

For his part, ASCAME’s outgoing President, **Ahmed El Wakil**, affirmed that *“the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce are uniquely positioned to guide the region — and the world— into a new era of transformation”.* He highlighted ASCAME’s central role in advancing Mediterranean economic development by fostering partnerships, strengthening business cooperation, attracting international investment, and promoting entrepreneurship among youth and women. El Wakil emphasized that *“ASCAME has become the leading voice of the region’s private sector and a trusted partner for multinational institutions such as the EU, representing the interests of local businesses”.* Furthermore, he stressed *“ASCAME’s pivotal contribution to building a more sustainable Mediterranean, driving the expansion of the green and blue economy across all sectors”.*

Barcelona Declaration for Mediterranean Economic Development

ASCAME, together with leading business organizations from Europe, Africa, and the Arab world, launched today the Barcelona Declaration for Mediterranean Economic Development, which includes 30 initiatives to strengthen cooperation, drive innovation, and foster sustainable prosperity across the region. The renewal of ASCAME’s governing bodies coincided with the commemoration of the **30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process**, a landmark initiative that reshaped Euro-Mediterranean cooperation by bringing together countries from both shores of the region and fostering political dialogue, economic integration, and cultural exchange.

As the Declaration states: *“The private sector must evolve from a passive observer to a proactive leader, driving inclusive growth, generating employment, and advancing regional integration”.* It further emphasizes that *“businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and entrepreneurial networks must come together to build a dynamic ecosystem that connects markets, empowers communities, and drives innovation”.*

The launch of the Barcelona Declaration coincides with the **New Pact for the Mediterranean**, approved this year by the European Commission to deepen cooperation and economic connectivity across the Mediterranean basin. Building on historic and cultural ties as well as previous EU initiatives, the Pact seeks to establish a common Mediterranean space that is connected, prosperous, resilient, and secure. Its

objectives include producing clean energy, unlocking private investment, and mobilizing large scale regional projects that generate opportunities for people and businesses, with a particular focus on youth, women, and small enterprises.

This milestone also aligns with the **European Commission's 2024–2029 agenda**, which places the Mediterranean at the heart of its strategic priorities. A key element of this effort is the appointment of the EU's first ever Commissioner dedicated exclusively to the Mediterranean. **Dubravka Šuica** will lead the implementation of the New Pact, reinforcing partnerships across the Southern Neighborhood and focusing on jobs, clean energy, investment, and regional stability.

About ASCAME

The Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Mediterranean (ASCAME) is a non-profit international organization representing the private sector in the Mediterranean. It brings together Chambers of Commerce and Industry and similar entities from 23 countries on both shores of the region and advocates for the interests of private sector and millions of businesses.

ASCAME, as an accredited partner of the European Union and international organisations, develops strategic actions aimed at increasing cooperation and economic exchanges between Mediterranean countries, as well as promoting the Mediterranean and its businesses around the world. ASCAME focuses on economic and commercial activities in which companies from Mediterranean countries participate. For more than 35 years, ASCAME has actively worked to provide tools capable of providing effective responses to the challenges and opportunities that both Chambers of Commerce and Mediterranean SMEs must face in a competitive global environment.

For more information

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