ASCAME reinforces its position as the leading private-sector representative of the Mediterranean before EU institutions

- ASCAME steps up its role in Brussels following yesterday's institutional meetings with the European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, Dubravka Šuica, several members of the European Parliament, and the Director General of Eurochambres to establish the association as the go-to voice for the private sector in implementing the *Pact for the Mediterranean*.
- The presidents and representatives of various Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce presented the business priorities of their countries to the European Institutions, consolidating a joint position with the European Union to promote the Pact for the Mediterranean and strengthen economic cooperation between both shores.

Brussels, July 2, 2026. The president of the **Barcelona Chamber of Commerce** and of the **Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry** (ASCAME), **Dr. Josep Santacreu**, led a high-level institutional mission in Brussels (Belgium) yesterday, marking an important step forward in the relations between Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and European Union institutions.

The delegation held meetings with the European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, **Dubravka Šuica**, with several members of the European Parliament, and with the Director General of Eurochambres, aiming to establish ASCAME as the leading representative of the private sector in implementing the *Pact for the Mediterranean*, approved in November 2025 by the European Commission to strengthen cooperation and economic connectivity in the Mediterranean.

During the meeting with Commissioner Šuica, President Santacreu introduced ASCAME as "the oldest business network in the Mediterranean and the main trusted interlocutor of the private sector of the European Union in the region", reaffirming the association's commitment to a strategic, long-term alliance with the European Commission to drive the development of the new *Pact for the Mediterranean*. Dr. Santacreu delivered a clear message: "If Europe wants to build real shared prosperity with its Mediterranean neighbors, it has to rely on

businesses. They're the ones creating jobs, investment, innovation, and opportunities on both sides of the Mediterranean".

For her part, Commissioner Šuica, accompanied by **Francisco Gaztelu**, Director of the European Commission in the Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG MENA), highlighted the strategic role of the private sector for the success of the *Mediterranean Pact* and stressed the importance of working with representative organizations like ASCAME to ensure effective implementation of this new European initiative.

The delegation included the presidents and representatives from several ASCAME member Chambers of Commerce, including **Sekib Avdagiç** (Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, Turkey), **Moncef Ben Jemaa** (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tunisia, Tunisian Republic), and **Gaetano Attilio** (Cagliari-Oristano Chamber of Commerce, Sardinia, Italy), who shared with the commissioner the economic and business priorities of their respective countries, reinforcing the Mediterranean dimension of the mission.

The institutional agenda also included meetings with the Vice President of the European Parliament, **Javi López**; MEP **Laura Ballarín**; and the teams of the rapporteur for the Pact for the Mediterranean, **Nicola Zingaretti** (S&D), and the shadow rapporteur of the European People's Party (EPP) Group, **Massimiliano Salini**.

The mission helped advance **two strategic goals**: strengthening ASCAME's recognition as the representative voice of the private sector on both sides of the Mediterranean before European institutions and consolidating a working alliance with the European Commission and the European Parliament to actively contribute to the implementation of the *Pact for the Mediterranean*.

During the various meetings, ASCAME advocated for the need **to place the private sector at the center of the new European strategy towards the region** and reiterated its willingness to collaborate in priority areas such as business cooperation, connectivity, skills development, innovation, and competitiveness.

President Santacreu also highlighted ASCAME's unique representativeness, which brings together more than 130 Chambers of Commerce from 18 countries and represents millions of companies on both sides of the Mediterranean: “Chambers of Commerce are the natural bridge between institutions and businesses. We want to contribute to making the Mediterranean Pact deliver tangible results for the economy, employment, and the shared prosperity of the region”.

As part of the visit, the president of ASCAME also held a meeting with **Ben Butters**, Director General of Eurochambres, to explore new ways of collaboration between the two organizations. Dr. Santacreu emphasized ASCAME's strong presence within the Eurochambres ecosystem and pointed out that closer cooperation will allow them to “amplify the voice of Mediterranean businesses at a decisive moment for the region's future”, especially with the Eurochambres Annual Congress coming up next September in Valencia.

Likewise, the president highly appreciated the work carried out by the European Parliament regarding the *Pact for the Mediterranean*, particularly the contributions included in the *Zingaretti Report* and the amendments promoted by the Socialist and Democrats groups and the European People's Party. In his opinion, “ASCAME brings the voice of thousands of Mediterranean companies and SMEs to European institutions and wants to be an active partner in turning the Pact for the Mediterranean into a true strategy for growth, investment, and shared prosperity”.

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