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Global Gateway: Five new cooperation agreements signed at the EU – Overseas Countries and Territories Forum

At the 20th Overseas Countries and Territories-European Union (OCTs-EU) Forum in Brussels, the European Union reaffirmed its strong partnership with OCTs. Commissioner Urpilainen signed five new cooperation agreements totalling €58.2 million to further enhance this partnership. The agreements focus on digitalisation, water and sanitation, preservation of marine ecosystems, sustainable tourism, and intra-regional cooperation.

Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta **Urpilainen** highlighted the shared values and collaboration between the EU and OCTs: *“The OCTs are part of the European family and the EU’s geostrategic agenda. We are Partners in Change with common values. Through effective partnerships centred around the EU’s Global Gateway investment strategy, we will continue to make progress on many common priorities, including digital connectivity, research and education, climate, and energy. Together we build a bright future for the OCT’s youth, who also are actively engaging in our Forum today.”*

The five signed agreements focus on the following areas:

- With Aruba on digitalisation through the e-government roadmap (€14.2m)
- With Bonaire on water and sanitation (€4.6m)
- With French Southern and Antarctic Territories (TAAF) on preservation of marine ecosystems and sustainable management of natural resources in the South West Indian Ocean (€4.0m)
- With Wallis and Futuna on socio-economic development, in particular, sustainable tourism (€20.4m)
- Intraregional cooperation agreements with all the OCTs (€15.0m)

In addition to the Forum, a thematic workshop on regional partnerships and integration was hosted, underscoring the importance of OCTs, neighbouring countries, and EU Outermost Regions in fostering economic stability and sustainable growth. The discussions focussed on leveraging opportunities within the Global Gateway strategy to enhance connectivity and promote resilient global communities. Another session was dedicated to youth and culture, including interventions from the OCT Youth network.

Background

The annual forum serves as a crucial platform for dialogue among OCTs (associated with the EU via Denmark, France and the Netherlands), EU Member States, the European Commission, and their partners.

Contacts :

[Name goes here hyperlinked with email](#) (Telephone number goes here)

Relations between Europe and the OCTs date back to the Treaty of Rome and are governed by the Decision on the Overseas Association, including Greenland (DOAG), setting the 2021-2027 institutional and financial cooperation framework. €500 million is allocated under the DOAG for cooperation in areas of mutual benefit, including digital, climate, education and private sector development, supporting a green growth trajectory.

Global Gateway

The EU Global Gateway strategy provides the framework for the EU's external action. It is the EU's positive offer to partner countries in support of their own strategic autonomy and resilience. This offer aims at narrowing the global investment gap with value-driven investments from public and private sectors, supporting global economic recovery and accompanying the twin green and digital transitions outside the EU. Across the world, Global Gateway aims to mobilise up to €300 billion in soft and hard infrastructure investments between 2021 and 2027 with a mix of grants, concessional loans and guarantees to de-risk private sector investments.