

**FINAL DECLARATION OF THE OCT-2004 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
CONTAINING THE POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
OVERSEAS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES (OCTs) ON THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH
RESPECT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
OCT-DECISION (2001/822/EC)**

POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS

**PAPEETE, FRENCH POLYNESIA,
MARCH 30, 2005**

The UNDERSIGNED REPRESENTATIVES of the Governments of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union (hereinafter "OCTs"),

IN CONSIDERATION OF :

- I. Part I, article 3, sub 1s, and Part IV of the Treaty establishing the European Community (hereinafter "the EC-Treaty"), with special reference to article 182 which states that the objective of the EU-OCT association is to promote the economic and social development of the countries and territories, and the establishment of close relationships between them and the Community as a whole. In accordance with the principles expressed in the pre-amble of the EC Treaty, the EU-OCT association must enable in the first place the promotion of the interests and prosperity of the inhabitants of these countries and territories, in order to lead them to the economic, social and cultural development they expect.
- II. The OCT-2000 Ministerial Declaration of Brussels of November 17, 2000, containing the resolutions of the representatives of the OCTs on the future association arrangements between the OCTs and the European Union.
- III. The Joint-Position document of the OCTs dated April 10, 2001 and submitted to the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission as mandated by the OCT 2000 Ministerial Conference of Brussels.
- IV. The Decision of the European Council of Ministers of November 27, 2001 regulating the provisions on the association of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Community (2001/822/EC) (hereinafter "the OCT-Decision").
- V. The Report dated September 18, 2002 of the work done by the OCT Committee during the period 2000-2002.
- VI. The OCT-2002 Ministerial Declaration of Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, of September 18, 2002, containing the resolutions of the representative of the overseas countries and territories ("OCTs") on their discussions with respect to the new OCT Association ("OCTA") and the implementation of the new OCT Decision (2001/822/EC).
- VII. The Report of the President dated December 4, 2003 of the work done by the Executive Committee during the year 2003.
- VIII. The Joint-Position Paper dated December 4, 2003 of France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Denmark, the OCTs and OCTA on the future status of the OCTs within the European Union.

- IX. The Response of the European Commission dated July 15, 2004 to the Joint Position Paper of December 4, 2003.
- X. The OCT-2003 Ministerial Declaration of Brussels, Belgium, of December 4, 2003, containing the resolutions of the representative of the overseas countries and territories (“OCTs”) on their discussions with respect to the new OCT Association (“OCTA”) and the implementation of the new OCT Decision (2001/822/EC).
- XI. The Report of the President dated March 30, 2005 of the work done by the Executive Committee during the year 2004 up to this Ministerial Conference.
- XII. The consultation between the Undersigned and their respective delegations at the OCT 2004 Ministerial Conference on March 30, 2005, in French Polynesia.

RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

GENERAL

1. The OCTs regret that, notwithstanding the fact that the organization of the Forum was delayed for the new Commissioner to be able to attend, the Commissioner has not participated in this meeting so that a political dialogue could be held with the Commission on the highest level as to the future of the relationship of the OCTs with the European Union.
2. The OCTs reiterate their call for recognition and protection of their particular status in the context of the European Union. With a view to the future status and treatment of OCTs, a Joint-Position was concluded on December 4, 2003, with the four Member States with which OCTs are constitutionally linked. This Joint-Position is still fully endorsed by the Undersigned and continues to form the basis for future discussions on the status of OCTs.
3. The OCTs affirm that sustained and sustainable development in all their major aspects remain an important challenge for their future. In this connection, they also emphasize that small and vulnerable economies are severely constrained by adverse factors such as their small-size, remoteness and limited resources, including institutional and administrative capability, and limited economies of scale. The OCTs therefore call for urgent attention to be given to their special needs and for support by the European Commission for initiatives being undertaken by them to promote sustained and sustainable development.
4. The OCTs call on the European Union to continue to direct appropriate attention to their needs and problems in ways that are in line with the objectives of the Association and their special relationship with the European Union. In that regard, the OCTs urge the new European Commission to take appropriate decisions as to the coherent and effective implementation of OCT policy in the interest of the people of the OCTs.

OVERSEAS ASSOCIATION DECISION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

5. The delegations express their satisfaction with the organization of this Ministerial Meeting and the third EU-OCT FORUM under the 2001 OCT Decision and they encourage the Executive Committee to continue to seek ways to cooperate with the European Commission and other EU Agencies in order to effectively implement the provisions of the OCT Decision in keeping with the objectives as stated in the current article 182 of the EC Treaty.

6. The OCTs urge the Council to ensure that after the 9th EDF a separate OCT Development Fund or Budget-line that is funded under the Community budget will be established as proposed by the European Parliament in 2001. The specific OCT Development Fund or Budget-line should be significantly increased in order to reflect the constitutional links of the OCTs with some Member States and the EU citizenship of their inhabitants. In addition, the criteria to be used for allocation of funds should allow all OCTs to benefit from EU financial aid.
7. OCTs consider that the European Union as their closest partner is under a political and legal obligation to assist them as much as possible to achieve the objectives mentioned in these provisions in article 182 and 183 of the current EU Treaty. Taking into consideration the specific possibilities available for e.g. the outermost regions of the European Union, the OCTs advocate that innovative instruments be created by the Commission to promote OCT exports to the Union.
8. The extra financial resources provided by transshipment operations has proven in the past to be able to contribute significantly to the implementation of a policy of sustainable development in OCTs. The OCTs therefore reiterate that the transshipment facility must continue to be implemented under reasonable and practical conditions. The OCTs also urge the Commission to take into account, on their own individual merit, all the transshipment proposals directly initiated by each OCT.
9. The OCTs would like to confirm their continuing willingness to subscribe to international regulatory standards, particularly in the area of financial services and where such standards are necessary for deterring money laundering and terrorism activities. However, the OCTs do not support measures which are selective in their application and fail to observe the principle of a level playing field, thus, accruing advantage to EU Member States at the risk of destabilizing small developing economies. In addition, and as a general rule of international negotiation, EU Member States should refrain from committing their overseas territories to observing newly promulgated standards without first arriving at mutual agreement on such standards with the affected territories.
10. The OCTs reiterate the call on the Commission to delegate, in the spirit of decentralized cooperation, more decision-making powers to the local/regional EC-Delegations and the Territorial Authorizing Officers of the OCTs, as long as this will accelerate the overall decision-making process and speed up the preparation, approval and implementation of projects and programs. In this respect, the OCTs believe that greater emphasis should be placed on the concepts of “partnership”, “subsidiarity” and “ownership”, based on an agreement in principle between the OCT and the European Commission on the development strategy of the OCT and local project management capabilities followed by mid-term or ex-post evaluation and periodic discussion.
11. The delegations furthermore declare that the next Ministerial Meeting (“The OCTA-2005 Ministerial Conference”) and annual OCT-EU Forum will be held in Brussels.

REFERENCE

12. This Declaration shall be referred to as the "Political Resolutions of the OCTA-2004 Ministerial Declaration of French Polynesia".

Signed in Papeete, French Polynesia, this 30th day of March, 2005,

For the Delegation of **Anguilla**:

Hon. Victor BANKS
Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Investment and Commerce

For the Delegation of **Aruba**:

Mr. Nilo SWAEN
Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs

For the Delegation of **British Virgin Islands**:

Mr. Orlando SMITH
Chief Minister

For the Delegation of **Falkland Islands**:

Hon. Michael SUMMERS
Councillor

For the Delegation of **French Polynesia**:

Mr. Gaston FLOSSE
President of Government

For the Delegation of **Greenland**:

Mr. Lars VESTERBIRK
Minister Councilor

For the Delegation of **Montserrat**:

Hon. John OSBORNE
Chief Minister

For the Delegation of **The Netherlands Antilles**:

Mr. Errol COVA
Minister of Economic and Labour Affairs &
Deputy Prime-Minister

For the Delegation of **New Caledonia**:

Mr. Pierre FROGIER
Vice-President of Government

For the Delegation of **Saint Helena**:

Hon. Mervyn Yon
Member of the Executive Council

For the Delegation of **Saint Pierre et Miquelon**:

Mr. Marc PLANTEGENEST
President of the General Council

For the Delegation of **Turks and Caicos Islands**:

Hon. Michael MISICK
Chief Minister

For the Delegation of **Wallis et Futuna**:

Mr. Robert LAUFOAULU / Christian JOB / Patalione KANIMOA
Senator / Préfet ordonateur Territorial / President of the Territorial Assembly
