



OCTA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Aruba, 11 April 2026

POLITICAL DECLARATION

PREAMBLE

On 11 April 2026, the representatives of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union (OCTs) met in Aruba for the OCTA Annual Ministerial Conference.

Recalling that the objective of this meeting was to engage in constructive exchanges on OCTA governance and its renewed strategic direction, as well as on the cooperation with the EU and the future prospects of the partnership with the European Union, with particular reference to the Council Decision on the Overseas Association, including Greenland (DOAG).

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening the partnership between the OCTs and the European Union in a spirit of mutual benefit and cooperation, promoting shared values, and advancing common priorities in a range of areas.

Through this Political Declaration, the OCTs:

Regarding OCTA's governance and missions

- Reaffirm OCTA's legitimacy and importance, emphasizing the key role it can play in facilitating interaction among OCTs themselves, in engaging with the European Commission, and connecting with other programmes, while expressing a desire to see OCTA return to the level of activity and influence it had in the past.
- Reaffirm the need for OCTA to renew and adapt its governance to evolving geopolitical and institutional realities, ensuring greater transparency, efficiency and strategic autonomy.
- Confirm their attachment to OCTA's updated Strategy of 28 February 2024, which expresses OCTs will to contribute to a more equitable world in which their interests are duly considered and integrated into the agenda of the international community, as well as their new mission, which is to work collectively in close collaboration with the European Union and the Member States for the sustainable development and resilience of OCTs through the promotion of cooperation, capacity building, communication, and partnerships, and by leveraging the diverse geographical locations and cultural richness of the overseas countries and territories.
- Express their will to resolve to stabilize OCTA's financial situation by reimbursing the remainder of the 2022 recovery order, when income is sufficient, as well as exploring solutions to increase

its income with the objective of diversifying its activities and covering the rise of its running costs.

- Reiterate their will to continue improving OCTA's functioning in order to broaden, in the near future, its strategic priorities, which were recentered on Political and policy dialogue since 2024.

Political and policy Dialogue and Institutional Visibility

- Reaffirm the anchoring of the OCTs as countries and territories engaged in an association partnership grounded in the rule of law and in respect for each country and territory's institutional choices, within which they contribute together, in their diversity, to the global dimension of the European partnership.
- Reaffirm that the specific status and geographical dispersion of the OCTs require differentiated, transversal and geographically sensitive treatment within EU policies.
- Call for strengthened coordination within the Commission services, notably through the OCT Unit of DG INTPA, to ensure coherence across all Directorates-General in matters affecting the OCTs, including trade negotiations, regional integration, the Europe Global Gateway agenda, research and innovation, infrastructure, mineral resources, energy, education, oceans, fisheries, resilience, connectivity and strategic investments.
- Request enhanced internal visibility of the OCT-EU partnership across the EU institutional system, including joint participation in regional and international events of shared interest.
- Emphasize the importance of consolidating structured political and technical dialogue mechanisms, including Tripartite Meetings and Partnership Working Parties.

Strategic Investment Priorities

- Express a strong commitment to advancing strategic investment opportunities in key sectors essential to the resilience and sustainable development of the OCTs, notably:
 - **Energy transition**, including, waste to energy, renewable energy deployment, clean energy systems for islands and energy security;
 - **Environmental Conservation and Biodiversity**;
 - **Blue and green economy**;
 - **Critical utilities**, infrastructure to be resized and upgraded;
 - **Connectivity and transportation**, encompassing maritime, air and digital connectivity, regional integration infrastructure and supply chain resilience;
 - **Digitalisation**, including digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital public services, innovation ecosystems and skills development;
 - **Critical raw materials**, including mineral resources;
 - **Sargassum**, this issue must be recognized on international level, seeing that it can lead to disastrous consequences for the Caribbean OCTs.
 - **Sustainable tourism**
- Invite the European Commission and relevant financial institutions to explore concrete financing avenues under existing EU instruments, including Global Gateway initiatives and other relevant facilities, to support these priorities.

Regional and External Cooperation

- Reaffirm the importance of regional integration and cooperation with neighbouring countries, including ACP States, Outermost Regions and regional organisations.
- Stress the need for enhanced long-term technical assistance to support regional integration efforts.
- Encourage continued engagement of the OCTs in global climate, biodiversity and ocean governance discussions, including participation in relevant UN processes.
- Reaffirm the importance of strengthened cooperation mechanisms between the OCTs and with regional partners, aiming at sustainable development and genuine economic diversification.
- Confirm their willingness to continue dialogue with the UK Overseas Territories under the existing Memorandum of Understanding between UKOTA and OCTA, particularly in the field of regional cooperation.

With regards to EU's financial cooperation and assistance to OCTs for 2021-2027

- Request regular information on the amount available from the non allocated fund, the reflow from the European Investment Bank and the funds dedicated to studies and technical assistance measures.
- Thanks the Commission for the organization in 2025 of trainings on project design on EU programs for stakeholders in OCTs and request this initiative, funded by the current DOAG, to be repeated in 2026 and 2027.
- Welcome the signature of the future dedicated program on culture.
- Thanks the European Commission for the recruitment, through a technical assistance, of a technical expert on political and policy dialogue and reaffirm its need for the renewal of said expert contract for 2026-2027.

Regarding the OCTs-EU Partnership and Cooperation under the Multiannual Financial Framework and DOAG 2028–2034

- Reaffirm their commitment to strengthening and modernising the EU–OCT partnership in the context of the forthcoming Decision of Overseas Association with the EU including Greenland 2028–2034 and other texts referred to, ensuring that cooperation with the OCTs is reflected in a coherent, ambitious and adequately resourced framework.
- Affirm their commitment for the Executive Committee to participate in a dedicated technical working group, in close cooperation with the European Commission and the Member States, in order to:
 - Ensure a proper, shared and detailed understanding of any proposed modifications affecting the OCT-EU partnership framework;
 - Analyse their legal, financial and strategic implications;
 - Report back to the OCTs with consolidated analytical elements and structured options for possible joint positioning;



OCTA Ministerial Conference – Aruba – 11 April 2026
Political Declaration

- Formulate recommendations enabling informed political guidance and collective decision-making.
- Entrust the Executive Committee, where appropriate, with the responsibility to transmit the OCTs' Joint Declaration on the proposal for the DOAG 2028-2034, and agreed common positions to the European Parliament and other relevant EU institutions, ensuring enhanced political visibility and institutional follow-up.

Reference

This Declaration shall be referred to as the “Political Declaration of the 2026 OCTA Ministerial Conference”.

Signed in Aruba, this 11 April 2026

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "M.G. Eman", written in a cursive style.

For the Delegation of **Aruba**
The Honorable M.G. (Mike) Eman
Prime Minister of Aruba

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "John Soliano", written in a cursive style.

For the Delegation of **Bonaire**
The Honorable John Soliano
Governor of the Public Body of Bonaire

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Tyron Boekhoudt", written in a cursive style.

For the Delegation of **Curaçao**
The Honorable Tyron Boekhoudt
Minister of Health, Environment and Nature



OCTA Ministerial Conference – Aruba – 11 April 2026
Political Declaration

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Peaucellier".

For the Delegation of **French Polynesia**

Mr Bruno Peaucellier

Senior Advisor to the President of French Polynesia for international relations, European and Pacific affairs

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Quimbert".

For the Delegation of the **French Southern and Antarctic Lands**

Mr. Mikaël Quimbert

Prefect, High Commissioner

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Borg".

For the Delegation of **Greenland**

The Honorable Peter Borg

Minister for Fisheries, Hunting, Agriculture and Self-Sufficiency

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alcide Ponga".

For the Delegation of **New Caledonia**

The Honorable Alcide Ponga

President of the Government of New Caledonia



OCTA Ministerial Conference – Aruba – 11 April 2026
Political Declaration

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'E. Heyliger', written in a cursive style.

For the delegation of **Saba**
Mr Eviton Heyliger
Commissioner of the Public Entity of Saba

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'X. Lédée', written in a cursive style.

For the Delegation of **Saint-Barthélemy**
The Honorable Xavier Lédée
President of the Territorial Council of Saint-Barthélemy

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. Briand', written in a cursive style.


For the Delegation of **Saint-Pierre and Miquelon**
The Honorable Bernard Briand
President of the Territorial Council of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Merkman', written in a cursive style.

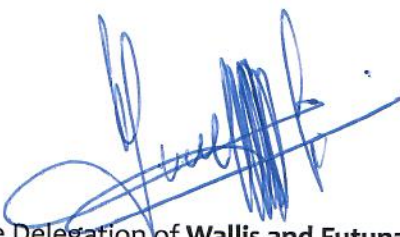
For the Delegation of **Sint Eustatius**
Mr. Reuben Merkman
Commissioner of the Public Entity of Sint Eustatius



OCTA Ministerial Conference – Aruba – 11 April 2026
Political Declaration



For the Delegation of **Sint Maarten**
The Honorable Drs. Gracita Arrindell
Minister Plenipotentiary



For the Delegation of **Wallis and Futuna**
The Honorable Muniipoese Muliaka'aka
President of the territorial Assembly of Wallis and Futuna Islands