

Association of the overseas countries and territories with the EU including EU/Greenland /Denmark relations

2025/0264(CNS) - 03/09/2025 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend Decision (EU) 2021/1764 to ensure the continuation of the partnership between the Union and the overseas countries and territories (OCTs) under the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework (MFF).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the Council adopts the act after consulting the European Parliament but without being obliged to follow its opinion.

BACKGROUND: this proposal is made in the context of the future [multiannual financial framework \(MFF\)](#) (2028-2034) which has the political ambition of delivering on the Union's priorities while acting with strength and unity on the global stage over the next decade.

One such priority is stepping up support under the Council Decision on the association of the OCTs with the European Union, including relations between the European Union on one hand, and Greenland and Denmark on the other (Decision on Overseas Association, including Greenland - DOAG), to which the Commission is proposing an amendment.

The 13 OCTs, linked to Denmark, France, and the Netherlands, represent approximately 1 million inhabitants and have the largest EEZ in the world (15 million km²). They are not part of the EU, the single market, or the Schengen area, but their inhabitants are European citizens.

Unlike the NDICI - Global Europe, which establishes a financing instrument (2021-2027), the DOAG is a Council decision that establishes (i) an association of the OCTs with the Union in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, and (ii) a financing programme for the association. The DOAG does not include a sunset clause linked to the duration of the MFF (with the exception of its financing programme). For this reason, it cannot be merged with Global Europe.

The objectives and mechanisms of the DOAG remain relevant and appropriate. However, given its sunset clause, the financing programme for the association must be resubmitted, including its financial envelope and implementation arrangements.

CONTENT: the proposal seeks to amend Decision (EU) 2021/1764 on the Association of the OCTs with the European Union including relations between the European Union on the one hand, and Greenland and Denmark on the other.

General objective

The general objective of the amending decision is to promote the **sustainable economic and social development of the OCTs** and to **establish close economic relations** between them and the Union as a whole.

The association will pursue this general objective by:

- enhancing the OCTs' competitiveness,
- strengthening the OCTs' resilience,
- reducing their economic and environmental vulnerability and
- promoting cooperation between them and other partners.

Another aim of this amendment is to **preserve the existing ties** between the Union on the one hand, and Greenland and Denmark on the other, acknowledging the increased geostrategic position of Greenland in the Arctic, and to preserve existing ties between the Union and the other OCTs, acknowledging their geostrategic positions in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic, and the Pacific.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this decision are the following:

- to **foster and support cooperation with OCTs**, including in addressing their major challenges and reaching the sustainable development goals;
- to **support and to cooperate with Greenland in addressing its major challenges**, notably by raising the education level and strengthening the capacity of its public administration to formulate and implement national policies; and
- to **support the sustainable development of strategic sectors** - including critical raw materials, renewable energy, secured and trusted digital connectivity, and sustainable tourism - within the framework of a strengthened partnership between the EU and Greenland.

Boosting the strategic investment agenda under the Global Gateway

To bring the EU-OCTs partnership more in line with the commitments under the Global Gateway strategy, it is proposed to merge allocations for territorial (bilateral) and regional cooperation for OCTs, and prepare a separate financing envelope for Greenland, dividing financing between cooperation with the OCTs other than Greenland, and cooperation with Greenland, while providing for flexible implementation modalities.

Reinforcing coherence with the broader EU financing architecture

It is proposed to further reinforce the 'external' DOAG dimension specifying the eligibility and access of the OCTs to relevant Union programmes and external financing instruments by consistently applying related cross-references/mirror clauses across all relevant basic acts. The objective is to increase the complementarities of EU actions and strengthen the integration of the OCTs into the EU's competitiveness agenda.

Strengthening focus and improving the structure of the dialogue with the OCTs

- An 'OCTs-EU Forum' will meet every two years to bring together the OCTs' authorities, representatives of the Member States and the Commission. Members of the European Parliament, representatives of the EIB and representatives of the outermost regions will, where appropriate, be associated with the OCTs-EU Forum.

- Trilateral consultations between the Commission, the OCTs and the Member States to which they are linked will be organised at least three times a year on the initiative of the Commission or at the request of OCTs and of the Member States to which they are linked.

Multiannual indicative programmes, action plans and measures

The Commission will adopt, pursuant to this Decision, multiannual indicative programmes. Programming documents, action plans and measures will be adopted by means of implementing acts, with the exception of action plans and individual measures for which Union financing does not exceed EUR 2 million and special and support measures for which Union financing does not exceed EUR 5 million.

Budgetary implications

The European Commission proposes to allocate an indicative financial envelope of **EUR 999 million** (in current prices) to the association's funding programme for 2028-2034.