GUADELOUPE

RUP 25-26

Présidence de la conférence des Régions Ultrapériphériques



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1. Foreword by President Ary Chalus

Guadeloupe held the presidency of the Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions (CPRUP) from April 2025 to November 2026, during a pivotal period for the European Union. Faced with an international environment marked by profound geopolitical shifts, growing defence and security challenges, as well as heightened competitiveness and sovereignty imperatives, the Union is called upon to redefine its strategic priorities and rethink the levers of its autonomy and global reach through the renewal of its budget for the 2028–2034 period.

In this context, Guadeloupe has chosen to champion a clear political ambition: to bring about a lasting shift in how Europe perceives its Outermost Regions (ORs). It is no longer a matter of viewing these territories as distant peripheries faced with structural constraints, but of fully recognising their strategic value, their potential and their vital contribution to the future of the Union. Owing to their geographical location, their reach into vast regional and maritime spaces, their natural resources and their expertise, the ORs serve as leading European outposts and major levers for sovereignty, resilience and influence. Their challenges in economic development, ecological and energy transition, social cohesion, territorial justice and security require public policies that match our shared ambitions.

Faced with these major challenges, the Guadeloupean presidency placed dialogue, consultation and influence at the heart of its action. In close liaison with the other ORs, a collective effort to analyse European legislation and formulate proposed amendments was conducted before all European institutions.

This work was pursued with a clear objective: to voice a united and ambitious stance for the Outermost Regions ahead of European decision-making.

The revision of the European strategy for the ORs, accompanied for the first time by a regulatory simplification package, was the direct outcome of our commitment, marking the beginning of dedicated efforts to adapt EU policies to our realities and leverage the assets the ORs represent for the development of the Union.

As it prepares to hand over the presidency, Guadeloupe reaffirms its commitment to sustaining this collective momentum alongside all the Outermost Regions. The stakes go beyond merely defending our territorial interests: it is about helping build a more coherent European Union that knows how to apply the ‘OR reflex’ in full.

Ary CHALUS
President of the Regional Council of Guadeloupe
President of the Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions of the European Union





2. Foreword by President Miguel Albuquerque

It is a great pleasure for the Autonomous Region of Madeira to assume the presidency of the Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions.

In a context of acute international uncertainty, it is essential to reaffirm the enduring principles that have guided the action of the ORs over recent decades: defending outermost region status and upholding the application of Article 349 TFEU. This is the very cornerstone of our work, which Madeira intends to honour and steadfastly defend during the negotiations on the upcoming MFF and across all European policies affecting the ORs.

The presentation of the new EU strategy for the ORs marks a significant turning point in the European Union's relationship with its most remote regions. We look forward to monitoring the effective implementation of this new strategy and contributing to the achievement of its objectives through ongoing dialogue between the Commission, the Member States and the ORs, as well as tracking the legislative measures identified in the new legislative and regulatory package that enable a more systematic application of Article 349. We are confident that the rollout of further regulatory simplification measures, grounded in a concerted approach, will deliver tangible benefits for all ORs.

Last but not least, the Autonomous Region of Madeira will strive to foster dialogue and institutional cooperation among all ORs, as well as between them and the European institutions, in the interest of our regions and for the well-being of our citizens.

Miguel ALBUQUERQUE
President of the Regional Government of Madeira



29th ORs – Handover of the Presidency – April 2025

3. What is the CPRUP?

The Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions (CPRUP) brings together the heads of executive of the nine outermost regions of the European Union: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Mayotte, Réunion and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain).

Established on 31 March 1995 in Gourbeyre, Guadeloupe, the CPRUP has defended the interests of over five million European citizens before all EU institutions with one single, powerful voice for more than thirty years, striving to secure full recognition of the specific characteristics of the outermost regions.

The CPRUP pursues four primary missions:
- Representing the territories before the European institutions;
- Defending the interests of their institutional stakeholders and local civil society;
- Upholding the achievements and acquis of outermost status;
- Providing information on the opportunities offered by European Union policies and programmes.

Its activities are steered by a Monitoring Committee, comprising designated representatives from each of our outermost regions. This collaborative framework ensures continuous coordination among the territories, enabling them to voice a united stance before the European institutions.

The Monitoring Committee is notably responsible for:
- Monitoring and analysing European policy developments;
- Preparing the Presidents' joint political positions;
- Formulating operational proposals tailored to OR realities;
- Taking part in European consultations and negotiations to shape legislative acts in favour of outermost territories;
- Cultivating institutional relations with EU bodies and wider European regional networks.

Through its collective action, the CPRUP helps enhance the visibility and development of the Outermost Regions within the European Union.

4. Political priorities of the 30th Conference of Presidents of the ORs

Turning Article 349 into a genuine lever for differentiation

Article 349 TFEU must become a tool fully deployed in support of the Outermost Regions (ORs), rather than a mere derogatory provision. Every European policy must take into account, from its inception, the specific realities and constraints of these territories, through the introduction **of a systematic 'OR reflex' in impact assessments and legislative proposals**.

Translating the new European strategy into tangible commitments

The European strategy for the ORs presented on 10 September 2026 must materialise in a clear roadmap, backed by a precise timetable, funding commensurate with the stated ambitions, and a regular monitoring mechanism. Its implementation must be designed in close consultation with the outermost regions to ensure responses are tailored to their realities and needs.



Forum for the ORs in Brussels, November 2025

Transforming the outermost regions into strategic levers for Europe

As Europe's outposts in the Atlantic, the Caribbean, the Amazon and the Indian Ocean, the outermost regions secure its permanent presence in direct proximity to strategic areas around the globe. They provide it with more than half of its exclusive economic zone—the world's foremost maritime domain—autonomous access to space from French Guiana, fisheries, energy and mineral resources, as well as exceptional biodiversity. Through their geographical location and their resources, they contribute directly to the Union's maritime power, the security of sea routes, global biodiversity preservation and the energy transition. Integrated within regional organisations, they also act as conduits of influence: through the cooperation, human, economic and educational exchanges they cultivate with their regional environment, they project European values and interests where Europe would otherwise be absent. In a world of intensifying competition between global powers, **investing in our territories means reinforcing Europe's sovereignty, influence and capacity to act on a global scale**.



The Coastal Road in Réunion

Securing dedicated funding within the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework

The next multiannual financial framework must fully reflect, both in its instruments and in its budgetary envelopes, the requirements of Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

It is essential to guarantee a dedicated, predictable and ring-fenced allocation equivalent to that of the least developed regions—regardless of whether their GDP per capita is below 75% of the EU average—ensuring they receive regional funding of no less than 90% of the corresponding amount allocated for the 2021–2027 period. This envelope must remain separate from standard national or regional mainstream allocations. It must preserve and reinforce specific allocations under cohesion policy, in order to offset the additional costs arising from remoteness, territorial continuity, energy, accessibility, sustainable mobility, digital connectivity, water, waste management and climate change adaptation.

Maintaining the Programme of Options Specifically Relating to Remoteness and Insularity (POSEI) as an autonomous instrument fully funded by the European Union is an absolute priority. Its appropriations must be secured and upgraded to take account of inflation, rising freight costs, climate hazards, health emergencies and the imperative to bolster food sovereignty. POSEI must continue to sustain local produce, agricultural diversification, generational renewal, the agro-ecological transition, as well as the investments essential to farm resilience.

Schemes dedicated to fisheries, aquaculture and the blue economy must likewise be preserved. They must offset the additional costs inherent to the ORs, support small-scale coastal fishing and local supply chains, modernise equipment in line with environmental requirements, enhance occupational safety for fishers, and foster a sustainable maritime economy.

Finally, European co-financing rates must remain aligned with the actual financial capacities of overseas authorities, businesses and civil society organisations. Maintaining them at a high rate is an essential prerequisite for projects to materialise effectively and to prevent the ORs from being shut out of EU funding due to insufficient self-financing capacity.



Bayonne Declaration of the ORs, June 12, 2026 – Meeting between France, Spain, Portugal, and the ORs

Simplifying and broadening access to European funding

Access to European funding must become simpler, faster and fairer for project promoters in the ORs. Management, audit and reporting rules must be proportionate to the size of operations, the funding requested and the administrative capacity of beneficiaries. Simplification must not stop at paperless procedures: it must genuinely slash administrative burdens and provide legal and operational certainty to project promoters.

Mechanisms tailored to small entities must be rolled out widely: local calls for proposals, fast-track procedures, lump-sum grants, simplified cost options, cash advances and accelerated payment schedules. Municipalities, associations, cooperatives, micro-enterprises, social and solidarity economy actors, professional bodies, training institutions, and grassroots project promoters must be able to access funds without requiring heavy administrative capacity.

European programmes must provide hands-on local support, from initial project incubation right through to implementation and final reporting. This entails strengthening local technical assistance, beneficiary outreach, capacity building for calls for proposals, guidance on proposal writing, and stakeholder networking. Targeted attention must be devoted to projects driven by young people, women, cultural operators, farmers, fishers, and initiatives promoting social innovation, biodiversity and climate adaptation.

Mechanisms inspired by BESTLIFE2030, which supports local biodiversity projects in the ORs via flexible financing modalities, must be sustained and extended to other territorial priorities. Dedicated small-project facilities with high co-financing rates must enable local stakeholders to respond swiftly to the tangible needs of the territories.

Broadening access to European funding must ultimately be paired with higher visibility of calls for proposals, user-friendly and intelligible tools, and ongoing dialogue with beneficiaries. Europe's presence in the ORs will be all the more palpable if it can finance, simply and effectively, the grassroots initiatives that transform the everyday lives of local citizens.

The upcoming multiannual financial framework must fully acknowledge the specific needs of the ORs and secure a dedicated, ring-fenced budgetary envelope for them. Preserving POSEI, the specific allocations under cohesion and fisheries, and maintaining co-financing rates tailored to the enduring structural handicaps of these territories are imperative.

Empowering outermost youth to build their future

The outermost regions, home to some of the youngest populations in the European Union, must occupy a central position in the upcoming European strategy. In the ORs, as everywhere across Europe, every young person must be able to access quality education and training, employment, mobility, culture, and viable future prospects within their homeland, without being driven into exile by a lack of local opportunities.



Education, Training, and Careers Fair, Guadeloupe

Fulfilling this ambition requires tackling the specific barriers faced by the ORs: distance from training and employment hubs, high mobility costs, digital divides, small-scale domestic markets, climate vulnerability, information gaps and complex administrative procedures. European youth policies must be shaped with young people from the ORs, not just for them, taking into account the rich diversity of their life paths, social circumstances and aspirations.

The second edition of the EU project YOUTH4ORs must help turn this ambition into reality. Its approach proves the value of user-friendly mechanisms for youth, non-profit associations and educational institutions: tailored calls for proposals, plain-language guidance in the relevant languages, hands-on support, streamlined funding and backing for projects embedded in school life and local communities. These arrangements must become permanent and scale up.

Youth participation must become structural, not tokenistic. Young people in the ORs must enjoy an established role in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the European and regional policies that affect them. This calls for setting up or bolstering permanent dialogue bodies, consulting youth systematically at every project phase, and ensuring their recommendations are effectively acted upon by public decision-makers.

The European Union and regional authorities must also provide dedicated multi-annual funding for youth-led initiatives. Micro-grants awarded through straightforward, rapid procedures can help seed concrete ventures in employment, entrepreneurship, innovation, digital skills, culture, sports, the environment, health, social solidarity and active citizenship. The YOUTH4ORs experience demonstrates that by eliminating red tape and funding bottlenecks, youth become full-fledged drivers of change in their home territories.

Special focus must be directed towards NEETs (youth not in employment, education or training), young people living in poverty or with disabilities, and those in disadvantaged urban districts, rural areas and isolated territories. Proactive outreach, supporting grassroots organisations that mentor them, and guaranteeing inclusive participation are vital prerequisites to ensure that no one is left behind.

Lastly, capacities must be enhanced both among youth and within the institutions serving them; giving outermost youth their rightful place means recognising their ability to propose, decide and act for a fairer, more inclusive Europe that stands closer to its territories.

A Europe that fully embraces the realities of its regions

The outermost regions seek neither special favours nor convenience exemptions. They demand genuine compliance with the principle of equality and the commitments enshrined in the European Treaties. Europe cannot claim to be united, bound by solidarity and mindful of each of its territories if its policies continue to be conceived exclusively through a continental lens.

Equal treatment does not mean uniformity. Applying uniform rules to territories facing radically different constraints serves, in practice, to widen disparities. Genuine equity requires tailored standards, earmarked funding, enhanced co-financing rates and the actionable authority to derogate whenever standard mainstream rules fail to address our populations' needs.

The ORs are not peripheries requiring compensation: they are strategic European territories. They anchor Europe in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic and South America; they expand its maritime domain, enrich its biodiversity, strengthen its geopolitical standing, and provide decisive testbeds of innovation for the ecological, energy, digital and agrifood transitions.

Fully recognising the ORs means standing by the political choice of a Europe that leaves none of its territories on the sidelines of its ambitions, that converts constraints into levers of opportunity, and that guarantees every European citizen, wherever they reside, an equal chance to forge their future.

5. Key Milestones

1988 : First meeting of the Presidents of the Outermost Regions, in Funchal (Madeira). They adopt a declaration calling for dialogue with the European Commission and their Member States, urging tailored solutions to the specific challenges of their territories.

1992 : The Maastricht Treaty recognises, in an annexed declaration, the distinct situation of the Outermost Regions.

1993 : At the 20th General Assembly of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), the Presidents sign the Saint-Malo Declaration. They commit to defining common positions within the European Union and rolling out joint cooperation initiatives.

1995 : First Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions, held in Guadeloupe under the motto 'Our differences resemble and unite us' ["Nos différences se ressemblent et nous rassemblent"]. The Presidents sign a cooperation protocol to coordinate advocacy for outermost region interests and strengthen joint projects

1997 : The Treaty of Amsterdam enshrines the Outermost Region status in European Union primary law (Article 299, paragraph 2)..

2009 : Under the Treaty of Lisbon, Article 349 TFEU becomes the definitive legal basis for specific measures benefiting the Outermost Regions.

2014 : Mayotte becomes the ninth Outermost Region.

2015 : The Court of Justice of the European Union confirms the full scope of Article 349, ruling that all EU policies may be adjusted to the realities of the Outermost Regions.

2022 :The Commission adopts the strategy 'Putting people first' for the Outermost Regions.

2025 : The CPRUP celebrates its 30th anniversary in Brussels.

2026 : Publication of the new European strategy for the Outermost Regions, on 10 September. "**Strengthening the Union's Global Reach**"



Jarry Industrial and Commercial Zone

6. Key Figures

TERRITORY	POPULATION	AREA
Guadeloupe	382,586 [1]	1,685 km²
Martinique	359,419	1,128 km²
French Guiana	297,455	83,534 km²
Saint-Martin	31,160 [1]	53 km² (French side)
Madeira	259,440	802 km²
Azores	241,718	2,322 km²
Canary Islands	2,258,866	7,447 km²
Mayotte	323,153	374 km²
Réunion	904,100	2,504 km²

Population data sourced from Eurostat for 2025, except for Guadeloupe and Saint-Martin (INSEE, January 2026)

5 MILLION	European citizens
80%	of the European Union's biodiversity

[1] INSEE population as of 1 January 2026



Memorial ACTe

7. The ORs in the Caribbean

La Guadeloupe

A French archipelago of nearly 383,000 inhabitants, Guadeloupe lies in the heart of the Lesser Antilles arc. An associate member of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Guadeloupe places regional cooperation at the core of its strategies: sustainable mobility, healthcare, security, education, economic development and disaster risk management are all areas in which it intends to breathe concrete life into the European project in the Caribbean.

Rainforests, mountain massifs, coastal environments, mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs make Guadeloupe a biodiversity hotspot of European and global significance. The Guadeloupe National Park alone spans 57% of the archipelago's land area within its partnership area.

Guadeloupe is likewise at the forefront of the energy transition: the Bouillante geothermal power plant—the only geothermal electricity generating facility in the ORs—exemplifies the archipelago's capacity to harness its indigenous resources.

The Grand Port Maritime de la Guadeloupe (GPMG) and the Société aéroportuaire Guadeloupe Pôle Caraïbes (SAGPC) operate infrastructure vital to territorial continuity and economic competitiveness. Guadeloupe intends to step up their modernisation, climate resilience and decarbonisation, turning them into gateway and connectivity hubs seamlessly plugged into Caribbean, Atlantic and European dynamics.

Major challenges nonetheless persist: high cost of living, narrow domestic markets, heavy import dependency, climate vulnerability, demographic ageing, youth out-migration and barriers to employment. In 2025, unemployment stood at 17%, climbing to 32% among youth aged 15–29. These realities demand commensurate European and national policies, tailored to the permanent structural constraints of insularity and remoteness.

As the birthplace of the CPRUP and the finish line of the Route du Rhum transatlantic sailing race, Guadeloupe embodies an open, maritime Europe connected to a world in motion.

La Martinique

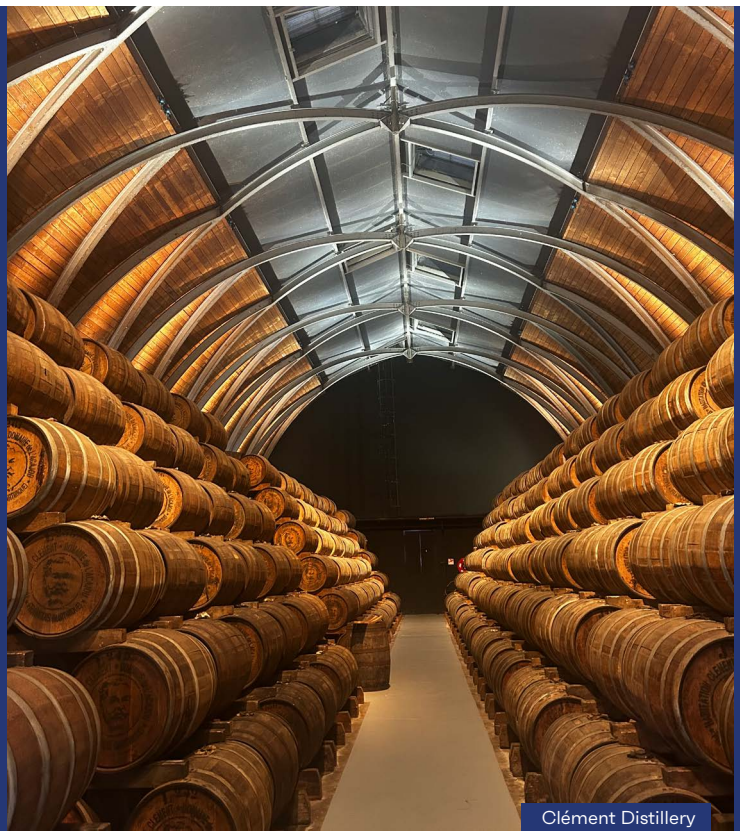
Martinique gave the world Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon and Édouard Glissant—thinkers who profoundly shaped twentieth-century philosophy, literature and political struggles. This legacy nurtures a rich, multifaceted identity expressed through vibrant cultural life, the Creole language and the arts.

It boasts numerous remarkable natural sites and constitutes one of the 36 global biodiversity hotspots recognised by UNESCO. The volcanoes and forests of Mount Pelée and the Pitons of Northern Martinique are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

A hub of innovation in the Caribbean, Martinique's recent accession to CARICOM crowns a sustained regional integration process, following its accession to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 2012, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in 2014, and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in 2015.



Serge Letchimy and Younous Omarjee



Clément Distillery

Martinique cultivates a diversified economy combining high-performing agriculture, dynamic manufacturing, and an entrepreneurial fabric active in services, tourism and hospitality. Firmly committed to food and energy autonomy, Martinique fosters food crops, the blue economy and emerging sectors to build sustainable, value- and job-creating growth.



SXM Airport

Saint-Martin

Long before free movement became a pillar of European integration, Saint-Martin had already made it an everyday reality.

Partitioned between France and the Netherlands since 1648, Saint-Martin is one of the smallest islands in the world divided between two states, where over 100 different nationalities coexist. This open border, experienced on a daily basis, stands as a tangible hallmark of European cross-border cooperation.

In the heart of the Lesser Antilles, the island serves as a crossroads for regional trade and international tourism. Severely battered by Hurricane Irma in 2017, the island committed to climate-resilient reconstruction.

Its binational cross-border model makes it a genuine living lab for governance and international cooperation.



Saint-Martin also boasts an exceptionally rich cultural heritage, forged by French, Dutch, Caribbean and international influences. This diversity shines through the spoken languages, folklore, gastronomy and cultural calendar that pace island life. English, French and Dutch bear witness to this linguistic plurality, which constitutes one of the territory's greatest assets.

Economically, tourism represents the lifeblood of Saint-Martin. Its beaches, tropical scenery, water sports and natural heritage attract large numbers of visitors each year. The island also enjoys a strategic position within the Caribbean arc, facilitating trade and inter-island mobility. Saint-Martin represents an invaluable testing ground for studying cross-border cooperation, island resilience and European integration across a Caribbean basin characterised by profound political and cultural diversity.



Oyapock Bridge

8. The ORs in the Amazon

French Guiana

As the only continental outermost region, French Guiana provides the European Union with a physical border in South America, adjoining Brazil and Suriname. This location endows it with a strategic role in relations between the European Union and the wider Amazon basin.

As Europe's gateway to space, it hosts the Guiana Space Centre, base for the Ariane 6 and Vega-C launch systems.

The Amazon rainforest blankets over 90% of its landmass. It encompasses the Guiana Amazonian Park, the largest national park in the European Union and one of the planet's premier biodiversity reservoirs.



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Demographically and culturally, French Guiana is characterised by extraordinary human diversity and cultural traditions. Creole, Amerindian, Bushinengue, European, Caribbean and South American communities all enrich the cultural tapestry of the territory.

Its economy rests on multiple complementary pillars: space technology, fisheries, agriculture, forestry and mining.

Robust demographic growth, a very youthful population, vast distances and the landlocked isolation of inland communes create unique challenges, especially regarding infrastructure delivery and access to essential public services.

Notwithstanding these structural constraints, French Guiana provides the European Union with a major opportunity: coupling innovation, solidarity and environmental stewardship while anchoring its presence in South America.

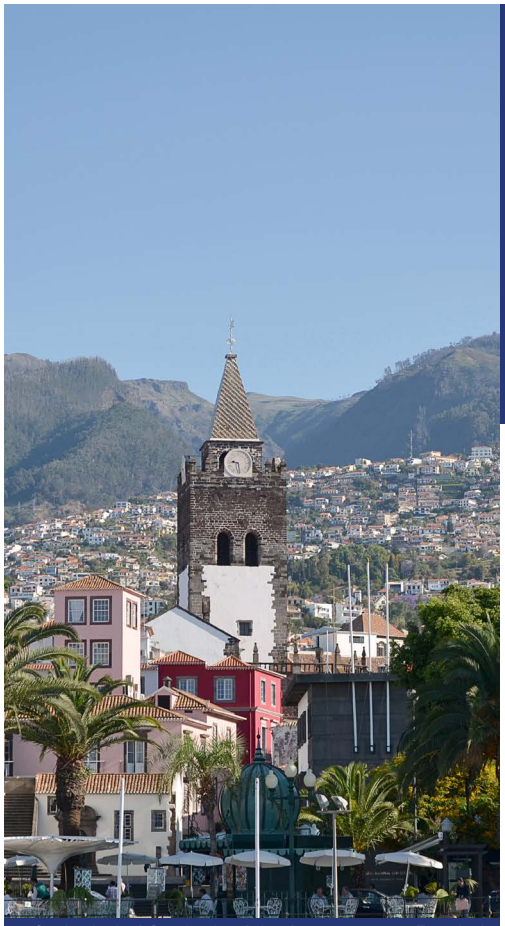


9. The ORs in Macaronesia

Madeira

Madeira is widely acclaimed for its exceptional natural capital, year-round temperate climate, high safety levels and the pristine quality of its environmental heritage. Foremost among its assets is the Laurisilva forest, inscribed on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List—an ecological jewel of priceless value that stands central to regional conservation policies and Madeira's leadership in sustainable tourism.

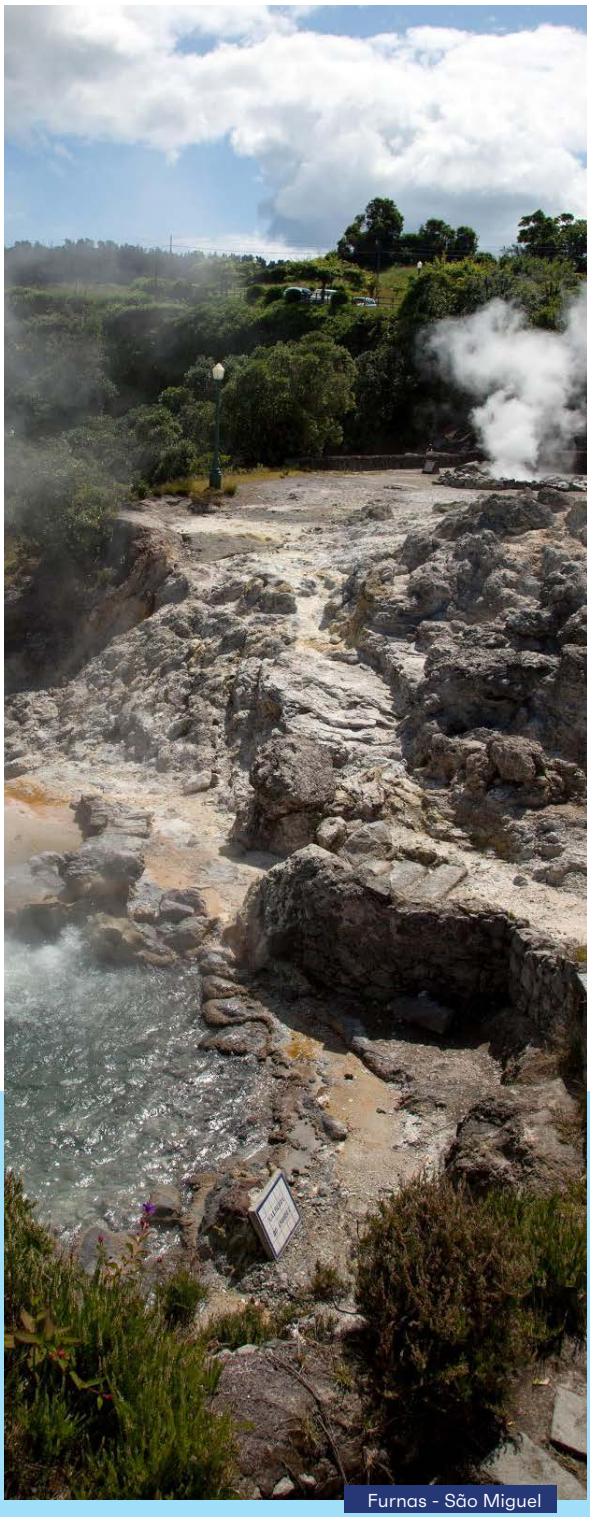
Tourism represents a foundational pillar of the Madeiran economy, backed by a strategic model harmonising economic growth, environmental stewardship and cultural promotion.



Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption in Funchal

The Region's steadfast commitment to sustainability has yielded tangible environmental results. In parallel, the Region has redoubled its drive towards the clean energy transition. In this context, particular emphasis must be placed on the Regional Government's capital investments over the past decade in renewable energy infrastructure. This concerted effort has led to a significant surge in clean energy generation.

Prioritising sustainable tourism, natural resource conservation and clean energy has yielded milestone achievements—notably a 73.1% cut in greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2024—solidifying Madeira's status as a sustainable tourism benchmark and a leader in climate action.



Furnas - São Miguel

The Azores

The Azores form a Portuguese archipelago of nine volcanic islands situated in the North Atlantic, roughly 1,400 km off Lisbon. Grouped into three clusters (Eastern, Central and Western), they constitute an autonomous region with its own devolved government and parliament.

The landscape is characterised by crater lakes, calderas, thermal hot springs, dramatic sea cliffs and laurisilva forests, bathed in a mild, humid oceanic climate. Its terrestrial and marine biodiversity, abounding with endemic species and world-renowned whale-watching sites, has earned UNESCO accolades, establishing the Azores as a premier nature tourism destination.

The nine Azorean islands also endow the European Union with a maritime jurisdiction spanning nearly 1 million km2. Their mid-Atlantic vantage point makes them a choice observatory for ocean and climate monitoring, as well as a natural laboratory for scientific research.

Pioneers in renewable energy, the Azores harness geothermal, wind and hydro power.

They have also established one of the most extensive marine protected area networks in the North Atlantic.

The Azores exemplify the strategic contribution of the ORs to Europe's green transition.



The Canary Islands

Situated off the north-west coast of Africa, the Canary Islands constitute the European Union's southernmost border and count over two million inhabitants, making them the most populous outermost region. Their strategic geographical position creates a natural crossroads for dialogue and cooperation between Europe, Africa and the Americas, underpinned by a distinct Atlantic vocation.

The archipelago boasts an exceptional natural and cultural heritage, internationally recognised by UNESCO, as well as remarkable scientific and technological capabilities, spearheaded by its universities, research centres and internationally renowned infrastructure. These assets place the Canary Islands in a unique position to advance European priorities in innovation, sustainability and the ecological transition, while fostering economic diversification and the creation of high-skilled jobs.

In the scientific arena, the Canary Islands combine exceptional conditions to serve as a natural living laboratory for Europe. Their terrestrial and marine biodiversity, volcanic features and exceptionally clear skies foster cutting-edge knowledge in fields such as astrophysics, marine sciences, renewable energy and climate change research. Strengthening ties between research and the business fabric, alongside the archipelago's active participation in European and international networks of excellence, is essential to convert this knowledge into innovative, scalable solutions transferable to other regions.

The archipelago's island nature likewise makes the circular economy and the blue economy two complementary pillars of its sustainable development. The efficient management of water, energy and raw materials, waste prevention and valorisation, alongside reduced dependency on external inputs, can advance hand in hand with the sustainable use of marine and maritime resources. Fostering marine biotechnology, sustainable aquaculture and ocean renewable energy opens up viable pathways to generate high value-added activities, preserve marine ecosystems and reinforce the islands' autonomy and resilience.

The Canary Islands serve as a forward-looking territory from which Europe can forge new solutions to the overarching challenges of our time. They demonstrate that the outermost regions are not merely territories requiring policies tailored to their specificities, but proactive solution providers generating opportunities for the European Union as a whole.



10. Indian Ocean ORs

Mayotte

Having achieved outermost region status in 2014, Mayotte anchors the European Union in the Mozambique Channel, along a strategic maritime corridor for Indian Ocean trade and energy flows.

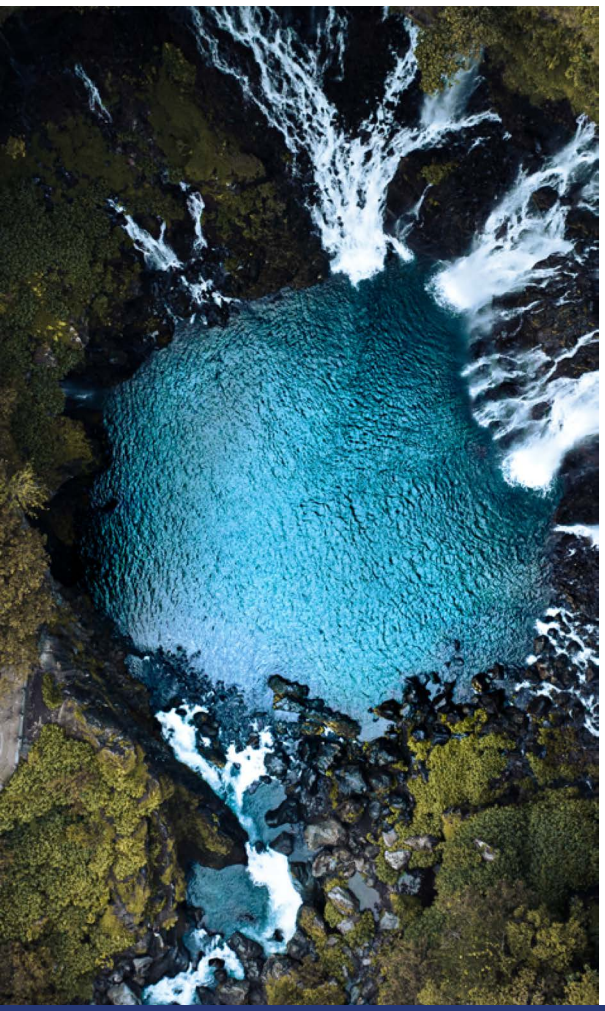
Regional cooperation can give fresh momentum to agrifood and fisheries, vocational training, and joint initiatives in maritime security, scientific research and natural resource management. Upgraded maritime, air and digital connectivity remains indispensable to unlock these regional exchanges.

Its lagoon, among the largest on Earth, is shielded by an extraordinary double barrier reef currently proposed for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Its outstanding marine biodiversity and active submarine volcano make it a prime scientific site for researching tropical ecosystems, climate change adaptation and volcanism.

Struck hard by Cyclone Chido in December 2024, Mayotte is currently undergoing comprehensive post-disaster reconstruction. Guaranteed access to clean water, sanitation, housing, healthcare, alongside climate-proof airport and port infrastructure, are fundamental to raising living standards and driving economic takeoff. Upgrading these assets must enable the territory to meet urgent current needs while preparing for future climate and demographic shifts.

With the youngest population in the entire European Union, Mayotte boasts a vibrant reservoir of youth, talent and innovation. Education, training and labour market integration, paired with consolidated development fundamentals, will harness this potential in a momentum toward convergence, benefiting both its population and the European Union.

Réunion



Réunion is an Outermost Region (OR) of the European Union in the Indian Ocean.
By virtue of its strategic position in the heart of the Indo-Pacific, Réunion reinforces European presence across a pivotal zone for international trade and diplomatic cooperation.

A genuine testbed of innovation, the island stands out for its exceptional biodiversity, its strides in the ecological transition, public health and renewable energy, offering concrete solutions to tomorrow's environmental and technological challenges.
Its cultural vitality and regional dynamism make it an engine of European outreach and influence.

Réunion boasts natural heritage of extraordinary richness, sculpted by its volcanic history and the diversity of its landscapes. Its pitons, cirques and ramparts, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, bear witness to the uniqueness of its natural environment and its remarkable biodiversity. As a genuine natural laboratory, the island possesses valuable assets to advance initiatives in biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and the ecological transition.

As the outermost region most remote from the European continent, Réunion relies on backbone transport and communications infrastructure that underpins its integration into regional and international trade:

- The Grand Port Maritime de La Réunion, handling over five million tonnes of freight according to reported data, stands as a strategic logistics hub in the Indian Ocean ;
- Roland-Garros International Airport, for its part, ensures the territory's air connectivity with Europe and several destinations across the Indian Ocean, Africa and Asia.

In terms of digital infrastructure, Réunion benefits from international submarine cable connections and an advanced rollout of very high-capacity broadband, covering 94% of its population.

It also features a structured education, research and innovation ecosystem, representing a major driver for its economic development and regional outreach.

Renewable energy stands as another priority sector, on an island setting where the energy transition is a critical imperative.

The territory also benefits from recognised know-how in agriculture and agrifood processing, facing key challenges in resilience and adaptation to climate and geographical constraints. Finally, the wealth of its natural and cultural heritage fosters the growth of sustainable tourism.



11. The ORs: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Imperatives

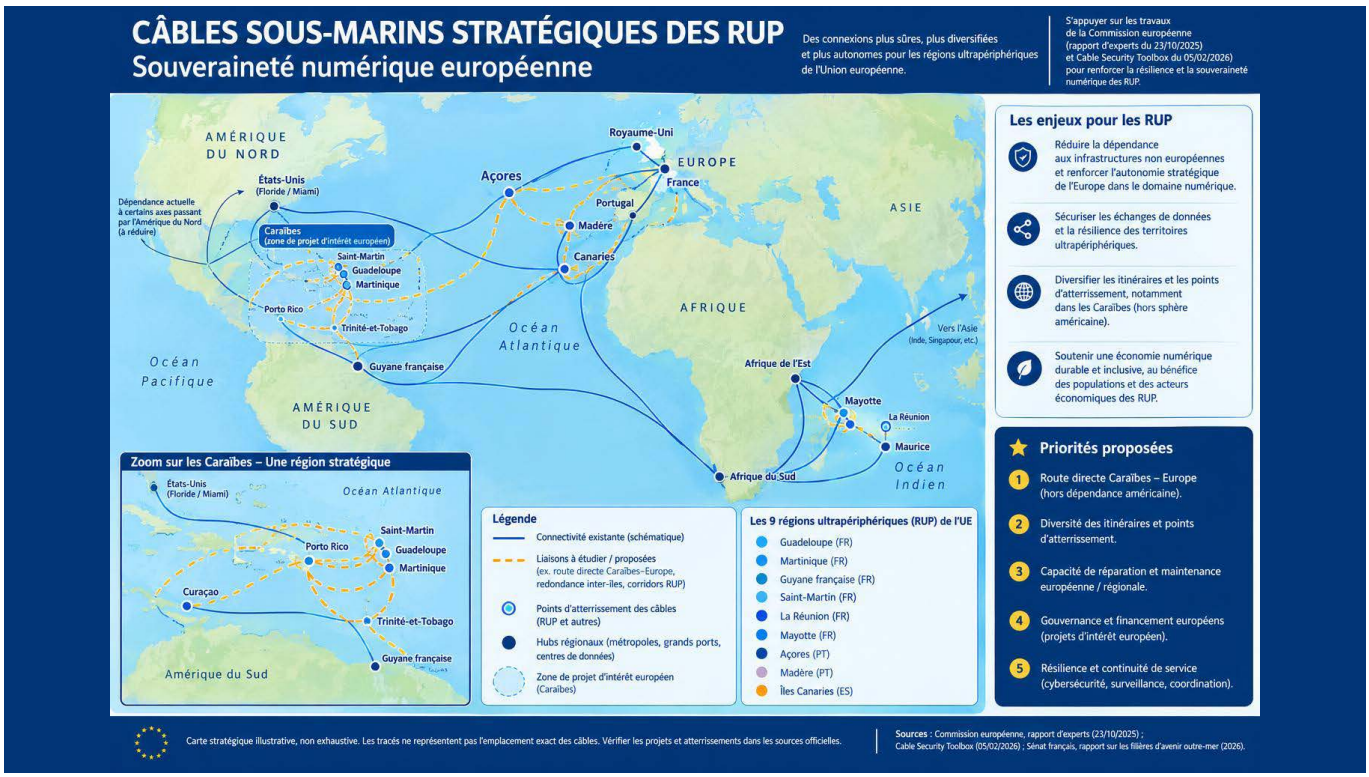
The world has entered an era of heightened instability and strategic competition, but also of unprecedented opportunities for those positioned to seize them. The outermost regions (ORs) hold a central place in this dynamic, and Europe with them.

Amid the restructuring of global affairs, one stark reality emerges: the ORs are, by their very nature, strategic territories of the first rank for the European Union. Their dual anchor—within the Union and within their geographical sea basins—is not a vulnerability, but a tremendous asset. The ORs endow the Union with vast exclusive economic zones and a permanent strategic presence across the Atlantic, the Caribbean, the Amazon and the Indian Ocean. They are direct building blocks of European strategic autonomy, ensuring Europe does not depend on third powers for essential assets: clean energy, coveted marine and mineral resources, secured sea lanes, autonomous space access, and beyond.

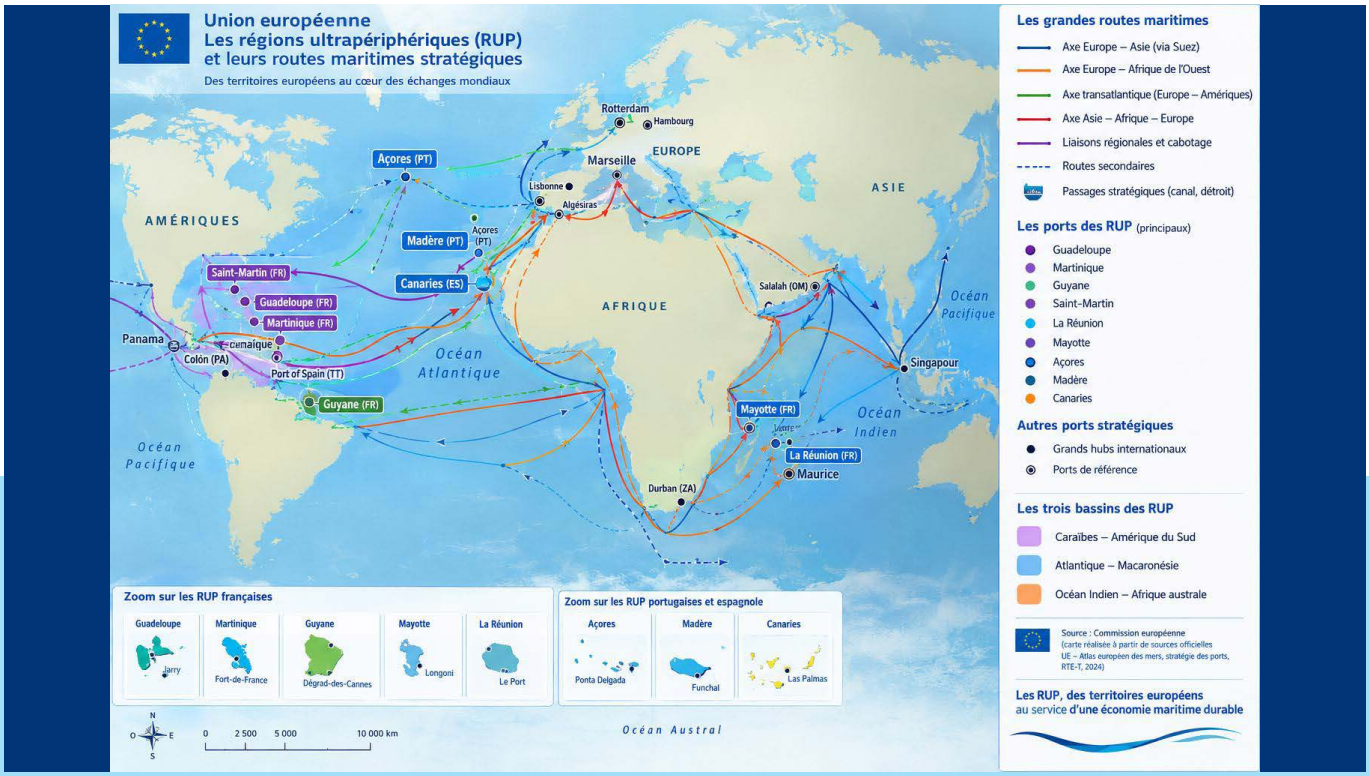
Other global powers have understood this full well. Between 2005 and 2022, China invested over $10 billion across six Caribbean nations, multiplying its bilateral trade eightfold between 2002 and 2019. There is no threat to decry here, but a clear signal to heed: the strategic value of the ORs' immediate neighbourhoods is already recognised by external competitors.

It is incumbent upon Europe to turn this into a full strategic asset.

The ORs are no longer remote territories: they are forward operating bases.



Map of submarine cables



Map of maritime hubs

In a multipolar world where critical resources are scarce and sea lanes have become hotly contested arteries of global trade, holding sovereign territories spanning multiple oceans and continents represents a decisive geopolitical advantage. Europe must therefore assert its sovereign presence with clarity against foreign influence strategies.

The Union is investing heavily in defence: in 2024, Member States dedicated €343 billion to defence spending[3], while the SAFE instrument can unlock up to €150 billion in complementary loans.

As underscored in the Draghi Report: competitiveness and security are henceforth inseparable.

This effort will only succeed if underpinned by forward outposts, of which the ORs are an indispensable component: stationed across multiple oceans, at the crossroads of the Atlantic, the Caribbean, the Amazon and the Indian Ocean, they extend EU projection right where maritime security, resource protection and access to space are determined. Without them, Europe would forfeit much of its capacity to monitor, protect and act beyond its continental borders.

The mid-term review of cohesion policy unlocks the possibility of reprogramming funds towards defence, energy and industrial competitiveness. The ORs must take full advantage of this flexibility, prioritizing dual-use port and airport hubs, maritime surveillance, and resilience in the face of climate shocks and geopolitical tensions—in short, everything that fortifies Europe's capacity to protect its vital interests.

Investing in the ORs therefore means investing directly in European security. The outermost regions do not ask to be treated as a fiscal liability: they are a strategic asset enabling Europe to stand tall as a global power in the 21st century.

[3] European Defence Agency, 'Defence Data 2024–2025', September 2025



Installation of the new gantry cranes at GPMG

12. Strategic Assets of the ORs

Sovereignty over Critical Resources

The outermost regions hold abundant fisheries, clean energy reserves and critical minerals. Since securing critical raw materials now underpins technological and industrial sovereignty, these territories represent a priceless asset for the Union.

Security of Global Sea Lanes

Over 80% of global trade by volume travels by sea. Positioned along major international shipping lanes, the outermost regions enable maritime domain awareness, secure critical supply lines, and deliver search and rescue assistance at sea. In the Caribbean, the growing foothold of external powers in regional ports makes this European sentinel role all the more vital.

Global Strategic Fulcrums

Seaports, airports and subsea telecoms infrastructure spread across several oceanic basins provide the EU with operational springboards for humanitarian relief, civil disaster management, oceanographic research, and security missions whenever required. Around the globe, competitor powers are investing massively in dual-use civilian infrastructure.

Diplomatic and Regulatory Soft Power

Every outermost region is a territory where European Union law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the world's most stringent environmental and social standards apply in full. In developing regional neighbourhoods, this normative presence represents a major strategic asset.

13. Projects

Overview of OR Flagship Projects

Spanning the Atlantic, the Caribbean, South America and the Indian Ocean, the outermost regions (ORs) confer an authentic global dimension upon the European Union.

Enshrined in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, they benefit from dedicated policies tailored to their realities: extreme remoteness, insularity, landlocked enclaves, climate exposure, and permanent structural handicaps.

Far from being mere liabilities, these characteristics unlock major strategic potential.

The ORs harbour extraordinary biodiversity and occupy key geostrategic hubs within vibrant regional basins.

They are living testbeds for innovation in the energy transition, climate adaptation, sustainable marine management and digital transformation.

Projects co-funded by the European Union and tailored for the ORs rise directly to these challenges. Their objectives are to:

- Bolster ecosystem preservation and climate change adaptation;
- Enhance connectivity and overcome the penalties of remoteness;
- Foster innovation, entrepreneurship and regional cooperation;
- Invest decisively in youth and human capital.

Beyond EU financial allocations, these initiatives reflect a bold political vision: transforming the ORs into **territories of excellence seamlessly woven into European headline priorities**.

Backing the outermost regions means expanding the Union's global footprint, s**afeguarding its maritime and energy sovereignty**, and incubating cutting-edge solutions ready for export to the continental mainland.

The ORs do not dwell on the periphery of Europe.

They are shaping its future.

REMOTE – Reshaping Energy Models for Outermost Territories

Project amount: €1,784,001
EU funding amount: €1,402,120

The ORs remain heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels and lack connection to major continental grids. For them, energy autonomy is a critical matter of sovereignty.

The project is coordinated by the Regional Council of Réunion and co-financed by the Interreg Europe programme. It brings together the Azores, the Canary Islands, French Guiana, Madeira, Mayotte and Saint-Martin. Guadeloupe and Martinique joined as associated partners in June 2025.

The nine ORs thus share a single objective: becoming 100% energy self-sufficient European regions.

From 2025 to 2029, the partners are co-developing 'transition pathways'. Every semester, a thematic task force and a field visit serve to benchmark regional energy policies and identify transferable solutions. A shared public energy policy benchmarking tool underpins the process.

REMOTE also amplifies the voice of the ORs in Brussels. The partners contributed to the public consultation on the EU 'Citizens Energy Package' and regularly exchange views on the implementation of the Social Climate Fund.

Energy autonomy cannot be decreed: it is built collectively, across the oceans.



YOUTH 4 Outermost Regions: OR youth in action

Nearly five million European citizens live in the outermost regions across the Atlantic, the Caribbean, the Amazon, Macaronesia and the Indian Ocean. Their youth represents a key asset for the Union, yet continues to face the enduring handicaps of remoteness, insularity and limited access to opportunities.

The YOUTH 4 Outermost Regions (YOUTH4ORs) programme is one of the headline initiatives set out in the European Commission's May 2022 Strategy for the ORs.

Nearly 70 actions were selected, each receiving grants of up to €10,000 over 6 to 10 months. Guadeloupe alone accounted for 11 winning initiatives, spanning labour market integration, education, culture, the environment, digital technologies and intergenerational solidarity. The programme also generated policy recommendations on youth participation in public decision-making across the ORs.

In October 2025, award winners showcased their initiatives at the European Parliament, and subsequently during the closing event of the European Week of Regions and Cities.



YOUTH4ORs - Native Scientists

YOUTH4ORs 2: a new edition announced

The Commission announced a second edition on 10 September 2026, alongside the publication of its new Strategy for the ORs. Calls for proposals targeting young people and youth organisations in the ORs will be published in the first quarter of 2027.

The youth of the ORs are not merely preparing for Europe's future: they are building it today.

Azores: “Cientista Regressa à Escola” (Scientists Return to School)



YOUTH4ORs - Native Scientists

The concept is straightforward: Azorean researchers return to their childhood primary schools to lead accessible, hands-on science workshops.

Backed by YOUTH4ORs (€10,000), this initiative scales up the Portuguese programme ‘Cientista Regressa à Escola’ across the islands of the archipelago. The programme was originally launched in 2021 by the non-profit organisation Native Scientist.

Each researcher is paired with the local school in their home municipality and trained in science outreach. In the classroom, science takes on the familiar face of someone who grew up in the same community, shares their background and sat at the very same desks.

Inspiring vocations where talent was born.

In an archipelago fragmented across nine islands, many children rarely have the chance to interact with researchers. Across Portugal, rural schools often lack extracurricular scientific activities: this project bridges that divide.

What is at stake goes far beyond a single workshop: the goal is to empower children to envision themselves as future scientists. The initiative also paves the way for brain gain: today, these researchers study oceans, volcanology and climate systems—fields in which the Azores serve as a world-class natural laboratory.

Nurturing and retaining talent begins in primary school.

Guadeloupe: CXC_PROJECT, ‘Towards a Caribbean school of excellence’

Since the start of the 2024–2025 school year, the Guadeloupe Education Authority has aligned with the educational standards of its regional basin. Over a three-year cycle, Guadeloupean upper-secondary students are selected and prepared for the CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate), awarded by the Caribbean Examinations Council. This qualification is an established benchmark across the English-speaking Caribbean, fully recognised by regional universities—notably the University of the West Indies—as well as leading international institutions.

A Caribbean qualification for European youth: regional integration begins in the classroom.



Derek Walcott Library

Guadeloupe lies at the heart of an English-, Spanish- and Creole-speaking region. Yet linguistic and credential barriers still hamper exchanges with neighbouring countries. CXC_PROJECT tackles this barrier right from secondary school: young Guadeloupeans earn a qualification recognised by their neighbours, master English in real-world settings, and unlock direct access to regional universities, internships and jobs.

The project embodies the regional integration ambition championed by Guadeloupe, an associate member of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). It also directly supports the EU Strategy for the ORs, which identifies cooperation with neighbouring third countries as a strategic driver of development.

The project also carries geopolitical weight: in a Caribbean region where global powers are investing heavily in educational soft power, it establishes a tangible European presence where it matters most—among youth. With a budget of €7,500, it demonstrates that a targeted grassroots action can deliver long-lasting impact.

Educating European citizens who thrive in their regional living space: that is what positioning the ORs as the vanguard of Europe is all about.

BEST LIFE2030: Funding biodiversity across Europe's Overseas Territories

Europe's overseas entities harbour extraordinary, yet highly vulnerable biodiversity. Co-funded by the LIFE Programme and coordinated by IUCN, BEST LIFE2030 awards grants of up to €100,000 to local nature conservation and restoration projects led by NGOs, local authorities and research bodies.

The CPRUP, through its association (ACPRUP), sits on the consortium alongside the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) and the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA).

Tangible impact on the ground

The first two calls for proposals funded 138 projects totalling over €13.5 million, spanning the Amazon, the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and Macaronesia. These projects actively restore mangrove ecosystems, protect endangered species, eradicate invasive alien species, and establish tailored management plans for designated protected areas.

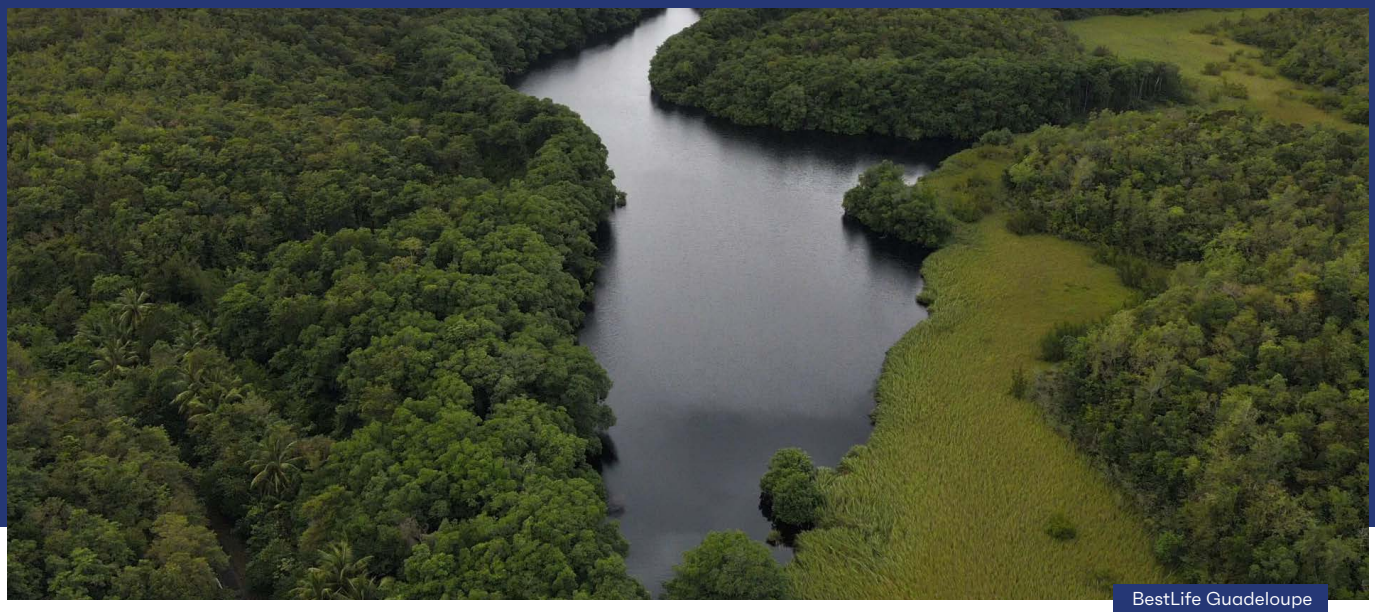
With two further calls in the pipeline, around 230 projects are projected to receive support by 2030.

Securing the Future of the Mechanism

The CPRUP, OCTA and IUCN are leading joint advocacy to secure a permanent LIFE financing envelope dedicated to biodiversity in the Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories, ensuring grassroots stakeholders retain direct, streamlined access to EU funds beyond 2030.

Local solutions, European impact.

BestLife Guadeloupe: Restoration of ecological connectivity at the mouth of the Vieux-Fort River in Saint-Louis, Marie-Galante.



BestLife Guadeloupe

BestLife 2030 French Guiana: Preservation and management of a pond used by explosively breeding amphibians.



Terminological note: The term «explosive breeding» is a scientific term referring to the massive, synchronized reproduction of amphibians over a short period.

BestLife Guyane

BestLife Canary Islands: Conservation of the last stronghold of the Tenerife giant lizard.



BestLife Canarias

BestLife Martinique: Protection and enhancement of the ponds of Les Anses-d'Arlet.



BestLife Martinique



Funchal

14. General Program

Wednesday 4 November

9:00AM – 12:00PM Visit to the Grand Port Maritime de Guadeloupe and presentation of the work of the Association of Outermost Region Ports

5:00PM – 6:00PM Exchange of Views with Members of the European Parliament

Thursday 5 November

9:00AM – 12:00PM Internal Session of the Presidents of the ORs

9:00AM – 12:00PM Espace Régional du Raizet: Meeting between Guadeloupe's political and economic stakeholders and the European institutions

2:00PM – 6:30PM Bilateral Meetings

Friday 6 November

9:00AM – 12:00PM Visit to the Memorial ACTe

9:00AM – 12:00PM Partnership Session

2:00PM – 4:00PM International Session

Cabo Verde Delegation and OCTA Program

Thursday 5 November

9:00AM – 12:00PM Bilateral Meetings

2:00PM – 6:00PM Bilateral Meetings

Friday 6 November

9:00AM – 12:00PM Visit to the Memorial ACTe

2:00PM – 4:00PM International Session


Funchal

OECS Delegation Program

Wednesday 4 November

9:30AM – 10:30AM Visit to the PIRAC
2:30PM – 4:00PM Visit to the CREPS (Centre for Sports Resources, Expertise and Performance)

Thursday 5 November

9:30AM – 11:00AM Visit to the University Hospital Centre (CHU)
2:00PM – 3:00PM Bilateral Meetings

Friday 6 November

10:00AM– 11:00AM Meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI)
11:00AM– 12:00PM Meeting with the Université des Antilles

IOC Delegation Program

Tuesday, November 3

10:00AM– 12:00PM Field Visit
12:00PM – 2:00PM Lunch
2:00PM – 4:00PM Field Visit

Wednesday 4 November

9:00AM – 12:00PM Visit to the Grand Port Maritime de Guadeloupe and presentation of the work of the Association of Outermost Region Ports
12:00PM – 4:00PM Valombreuse Estate

Thursday 5 November

9:00AM – 11:00AM Meeting between Guadeloupe's political and economic stakeholders and the European institutions
2:00PM – 6:00PM Bilateral Meetings

Friday 6 November

9:00AM – 12:00PM Visit to the Memorial ACTe
2:00PM – 4:00PM International Session

15. Photo Directory



M. Ary CHALUS
President of the Regional Council of Guadeloupe



M. José Manuel BOLIEIRO
President of the Regional Government of the Azores



M. Fernando CLAVIJO BATLLE
President of the Government of the Canary Islands



M. Jean-Paul FEREIRA
President of the Territorial Collectivity of French Guiana



M. Miguel ALBUQUERQUE
President of the Regional Government of Madeira



M. Serge LETCHIMY
President of the Executive Council of the Territorial Collectivity of Martinique



M. Ben Issa OUSSENI
President of the Department-Region of Mayotte



Mme Huguette BELLO
President of the Regional Council of Réunion



M. Louis MUSSINGTON
President of the Collectivity of Saint Martin



M. Thibault LECHAT-VEGA
Vice-President of the Territorial Collectivity of French Guiana



Mme Bénédicte DI GÉRONIMO
Executive Councilor in charge of European Funds, Territorial Collectivity of Martinique



Mme Zamimou AHAMADI
Vice-President of the Department-Region of Mayotte



Mme Sofia RIBEIRO
Regional Secretary for Education, Culture, and Sports of the Government of the Azores



Mme Naïma MOUTCHOU
Government of France, Minister for Overseas Territories



M. Benjamin HADDAD
Government of France, Minister Delegate for European Affairs



Mme Janica HOPFER ALMADA
Acting President of the Republic of Cabo Verde



M. Fernando SAMPEDRO MARCOS
Government of Spain, Secretary of State for the European Union



Mme Inês DOMINGOS
Government of Portugal, Secretary of State for European Affairs



M. Younous OMARJEE
Member of the European Parliament for Réunion (France, GUE/NGL), Vice-President of the European Parliament



Mme Marie-Luce BRASIER-CLAIN
Member of the European Parliament for Réunion (France, PfE)



M. Paulo DO NASCIMENTO CABRAL
Member of the European Parliament for the Azores (Portugal, EPP), Co-Chair of the Intergroup on «Cohesion Policy and Outermost Regions»



M. André FRANQUEIRA RODRIGUES
Member of the European Parliament for the Azores (Portugal, S&D)



M. Sergio GONÇALVES
Member of the European Parliament for Madeira (Portugal, S&D)



M. Juan Fernando LOPEZ AGUILAR
Member of the European Parliament for the Canary Islands (Spain, S&D), Co-Chair of the Intergroup on «Cohesion Policy and Outermost Regions»



M. Rody TOLASSY
Member of the European Parliament for Guadeloupe (France, PfE)



M. Raffaele FITTO
Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Cohesion and Reforms (DG REGIO)



M. Vasco DE MELLO
Member of the EESC and EESC Rapporteur on the strategy for the Outermost Regions (ORs)



M. Thibault LECHAT-VEGA
Member of the CoR and CoR Rapporteur on the strategy for the Outermost Regions (ORs)



M. Ibrahim NORBERT RICHARD
Secretary General of the IOC (Indian Ocean Commission)



M. Xavier LÉDÉE
President of the OCTA (Overseas Countries and Territories Association)



M. Didacus JULES
Director General of the OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States)

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