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COVER NOTE

From: Secretary-General of the European Commission,
signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director

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To: Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of
the European Union

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Subject: ANNEX
Comprehensive list of actions to the COMMUNICATION FROM THE
COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE
OF THE REGIONS AND THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK
A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost
regions

Delegations will find attached document COM(2017) 623 final ANNEX 1.

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ANNEX 1

ANNEX

Comprehensive list of actions

to the

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS AND THE EUROPEAN
INVESTMENT BANK**

A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions

{SWD(2017) 349 final}

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ACTIONS

This Annex establishes a comprehensive list of actions, including the key ones mentioned in the text of the Communication, to be taken at different levels: the Commission, the Member States and the outermost regions.

Governance

Commission:

- Ensure that the concerns and interests of the outermost regions are taken into due consideration as relevant in impact assessments and policy evaluation;
- **Set up with the European Investment Bank Group a dedicated initiative**, including through advisory support from the European Investment Advisory Hub, for the outermost regions, to enhance their access to the European Fund for Strategic Investments;
- **Set up an ad hoc platform** to exchange views on the interests and concerns of outermost regions, bringing together the Commission, national and outermost regions' authorities, as well as other relevant players;
- Launch **dedicated task forces**, upon request from the outermost regions, to review the efficiency of relevant EU policies on the ground and identify growth opportunities. Task forces would bring together representatives of these regions, national authorities and the Commission;
- Carry out a study analysing to what extent the European Regional Development Fund **specific additional allocation** for the outermost regions is sufficient as regards needs and coverage; **assess if such a specific allocation might also be justified for the European Social Fund;**
- Work closely with national statistics offices to **improve statistics** referring to the outermost regions, to enable a more refined assessment of their needs.

Member States, the outermost regions and their stakeholders:

- Take full advantage of the Commission's open governance procedures, including public consultation and feedback mechanisms at various stages of the policy cycle.

Blue economy

Commission:

- Consider specific measures and management arrangements (including a compensation regime) for the outermost regions under new EU programmes to support the sustainable development of fisheries and of other blue economy sectors¹;
- Propose to establish a **forum for dialogue and exchange of experience on fisheries** and maritime affairs with the outermost regions, the Member States and the various stakeholders from relevant sectors;
- With regard to **fleet capacity**, evaluate by the end of 2018 the current "entry/exit" scheme², in light of the evolving relationship between fleet capacities and fishing opportunities in these regions; propose, as appropriate, amendments to the scheme;
- Consider allowing **State aid for the construction of new vessels** in the outermost regions, by amending the State aid guidelines for fisheries on the basis of an assessment of justified needs and subject to conditions ensuring sustainable fisheries. An evaluation of the specific *de minimis* regulation in the fisheries sector, which also applies to the outermost regions, is planned in 2018;
- Take into account the outermost regions' specific needs when launching **calls for projects** under the European Maritime Fisheries Fund. First steps will be to assess the state of fisheries **scientific knowledge** and management measures in the outermost regions, and to provide **targeted technical support to public authorities** working on maritime spatial planning development³;
- Cooperate with the Member States to better involve the outermost regions in negotiations within regional fisheries management organisations and concerning **sustainable fisheries partnership agreements** with third countries; assess their impacts on the regions and, on this basis, take the appropriate measures.

Member States:

- Step up the **collection of fisheries scientific data** and support for fisheries and marine research;
- Adopt **fisheries management measures** in line with the Common Fisheries Policy, based on a bottom-up approach, so as to encourage stakeholders' involvement and organisation;
- Explore, where geographically feasible, the possibility to **restrict fishing** within a 100 miles zone **to vessels registered in the outermost regions**⁴;

¹ Building, inter alia, on the findings of the 2017 report GOCEA et al., Realising the potential of the Outermost Regions for sustainable blue growth, Publications Office of the European Union, 2017.

² For each EU country a fishing fleet capacity ceiling is established. In the case of outermost regions, a specific, detailed fleet capacity system is set out in Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC). According to this system, new fishing vessels may enter the fleet only after the same fleet capacity is removed from the fleet.

³ In line with Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 135).

⁴ In line with Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, Article 5(3).

- Increase the benefits of regional fisheries management organisations and of **sustainable fisheries partnership agreements** for outermost regions' small-scale fleets by improving their access to highly migratory stocks;
- **Strengthen** their efforts in the fight against **illegal fishing**, apply effective and dissuasive sanctions to offenders and enhance cooperation with outermost regions' neighbouring countries. In parallel, the Commission will put this issue on the agenda of the relevant bilateral and regional cooperation and economic agreements with third countries.

Outermost regions:

- Set up **blue economy strategies** to strengthen sustainable blue growth value chains and improve synergies of public policies and investments. As a first step, the outermost regions will have to improve collection and processing of data on the blue economy sectors, on marine resources and on marine ecosystem services, in cooperation with competent national institutes;
- **Facilitate access to finance** for small scale operators by promoting an increased use of micro-credits and financial instruments (such as loans and guarantee funds).

Agriculture and rural development

Commission:

- Seek the **continuation of the POSEI Regulation**⁵, without prejudice to the negotiations foreseen for the future multiannual financial framework;
- Seek to maintain **specific provisions for the outermost regions** in the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development⁶;
- Will, by 1 January 2019, assess the situation of Union banana producers, in the context of assessing the functioning of the banana stabilization mechanism.

Outermost regions:

- Set up operational groups and pilot projects on themes relevant for them under their European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development programmes through the "European Innovation Partnership Network", promoting **investments in new technologies for agriculture** and rural development;
- Use and develop the **tools of risk management** (insurance against economic losses, mutual funds, income stabilization) provided by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development regulation;
- Increase the number of **recognised Community or national quality schemes** for agricultural products and foodstuffs, encourage the participation of farmers and groups of farmers in these

⁵ Regulation (EU) No 228/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 247/2006.

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005.

schemes, support the promotion of these products including through the outermost regions' logo on the EU and international markets⁷.

Biodiversity

Commission:

- **Building on the experience of the BEST initiative, consider providing specific support for the conservation of biodiversity** and the sustainable use of the ecosystems services⁸, including for climate adaptation in the outermost regions and Overseas Countries and Territories in the new EU programmes;
- **Work together with partners** from Overseas Countries and Territories and African-Caribbean-Pacific countries on promoting common objectives in international agreements.

Circular economy

Commission:

- Propose a project topic under the **LIFE 2018-2020** work programme on waste to address the waste management problems encountered by the outermost regions;
- Support the outermost regions in becoming **testing locations for circular economy** pilot projects, in particular in the LIFE programme;
- Consider introducing provisions to facilitate the shipments of waste from the outermost regions to neighbouring countries for treatment through the review of the **Waste Shipment Regulation** foreseen by 31 December 2020.

Member States and outermost regions:

- Analyse the **potential of the circular economy** in creating economic development and employment in the outermost regions and identify priority projects, including promoting sustainable tourism;

⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products implemented in the internal market and in third countries and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 3/2008.

⁸ These are currently funded by the BEST initiative.

- Enhance **appropriate waste management** to increase the separate collection of waste materials; develop local compost of organic waste, re-use of products, repair and recycling and encourage waste prevention;
- Further improve the **promotion of environmentally-friendly practices**, including organic farming, and methods of sustainable management of natural resources in agriculture and forestry through the use of the Common Agricultural Policy instruments.

Climate change

Commission:

- Strengthen the outermost regions' dimension in the EU's instrument for environment and climate action (LIFE), by including outermost regions' preparedness for extreme weather events as a new policy area for Climate Change Adaptation under the 2018-2020 work programme;
- Launch a preparatory project on climate change adaptation in the outermost regions in 2019 in consultation with Member States and the outermost regions;
- Integrate the specific adaptation challenges of the outermost regions in the review of the 2013 EU adaptation strategy;
- Increase awareness of the funding possibilities available through the LIFE sub-programme for Climate Action, for mitigation or adaptation purposes, through informing the relevant Member States' national contact points;
- Encourage the participation of outermost regions' experts in the development of climate-resilient standards for infrastructure to be performed by the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs) in 2018-2020;
- Assess the implementation of the EU Solidarity Fund in the outermost regions in the context of the 2017-2018 ex-post evaluation of the fund.

Member States and outermost regions:

- Regularly update the specific needs, risks and vulnerabilities of the outermost regions, including possible adaptation measures, to be tackled in regional or national approaches to **climate change adaptation and disaster risk management**;
- Support exercises, training and exchange of best practices in the context of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, including in areas relevant to **prevention and preparedness** and, where relevant, associate the outermost regions' neighbours.

Energy

Commission:

- Develop a database of key characteristics of the outermost regions' energy systems and economies;
- Mainstream within the EU and internationally through the **Clean Energy for EU Islands** initiative the good practices developed by the outermost regions – in particular with regards to financial and regulatory tools and promoting best available technologies.

Member States:

- Ensure that their legislation and schemes fully support the development of **renewable energy and energy efficiency** in these regions (e.g. organisation of auctions specific for the outermost regions, local taxation schemes, development of electricity grids and storage capacity). National provisions on energy efficiency in the building sector, which transpose the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive⁹, can be adapted to take into account outdoor climate and local conditions in line with Article 1 of this Directive.

Outermost regions:

- **Take a leading role** in the Clean Energy for EU Islands Initiative;
- Participate to relevant calls for research projects – such as the call on efficient and clean energy systems of islands, to be launched under the 2018-2020 energy programme of the EU's research programme Horizon 2020;
- Organise **campaigns informing the population** and local communities on the payback to invest in renewable and energy efficiency;
- **Analyse the best renewable energy solutions** for electricity, heating and cooling and where relevant transport for each outermost region, the needs for local training programmes, and promote the participation of their experts in EU research programmes.

Research and Innovation

Commission:

- Launch a dedicated **Coordination and Support Action (EUR 4 million)** in the Horizon 2020 work programme 2018-2020 to enhance the capacities of the outermost regions to participate in the EU's Research Framework Programme;

⁹ Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings.

- Give particular attention to the outermost regions' assets and specific needs when drawing the **future EU Research Framework Programmes**.

Member States and outermost regions:

- Assess the outermost regions' **needs for long-term investments** in innovation and research;
- Take action to **increase the visibility** of the outermost regions' innovation and research activities to attract private/international funding based on their Smart Specialisation Strategies;
- Set up **contact points** in each outermost region, linked to the National Contact Points, to disseminate information on research opportunities and organise awareness-raising campaigns;
- Participate in **international research and innovation networks** and COFUND¹⁰ actions under the Horizon 2020 programme¹¹.

Employment, education and training

Commission:

- Intensify efforts to promote **Erasmus+, including Erasmus Pro** which is designed to promote mobility for apprentices, in the outermost regions; increase use of existing possibilities and encourage the outermost regions to better exploit these mobility schemes, to strengthen learning exchanges between these regions and third countries – covering higher education and vocational training;
- Promote the **European Solidarity Corps** for young people in the outermost regions and facilitate their mobility to give them opportunities to support those in need as well as to ease their access to the labour market;
- Intensify cooperation with the outermost regions to improve the use of available resources from the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative to **foster employability and skills in particular of the youth**, including by strengthening support for successful measures such as the *Service Militaire Adapté* in the French outermost regions;
- Better promote the existing opportunities for capacity building in the area of higher education under Erasmus +;
- Apply the specific funding rules for the outermost regions under Erasmus+ programme to the European Solidarity Corps.

Member States and outermost regions:

¹⁰ Co-funding of regional, national, and international programmes

¹¹ Based on the positive experience of the project Net biome (2007-2016) on biodiversity and the BiodivERsA Network among EU funding agencies.

- Further **promote mutual learning** in their ESF regional operational programmes, through transnational cooperation;
- Promote active labour market policies, where relevant, possibly with the help of international financial institutions;
- Consider reinforcing or setting up schemes, possibly similar to the French "International Internship Programme" (French acronym 'VIE'), enabling businesses to give young candidates temporary assignments abroad.

Competiveness, entrepreneurship and Single market

Commission:

- Consider the special needs of the outermost regions' enterprises in new **schemes supporting SMEs** (current "COSME" programme) to enhance their competitiveness in international markets;
- Promote participation of entrepreneurs from the outermost regions and assess the impact of a possible extension of the "**Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs**" programme to neighbouring countries on the basis of the pilot project allowing exchanges between entrepreneurs from the EU and third countries;
- Follow the progress of the outermost regions' **integration in the EU internal market** via a dedicated monitoring tool within the Single Market Scoreboard¹². The results will provide a basis for future action.

Member States and outermost regions:

- Raise awareness among citizens and businesses in the outermost regions of the *single market services* and provide dedicated training.

Outermost regions:

- Enhance the capacity of their businesses to **operate in the single market** and internationally.

Digital accessibility

Commission:

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/

- Encourage the exchange of best practices and information on **broadband roll out** through the EU network of Broadband competence offices;
- Upon the request of the relevant Member States, assess the designing of local or national State aid measures for broadband roll-out to connect areas of market failure.

Relevant National Regulatory Authorities:

- Continue **monitoring the situation of the outermost regions in their market analyses**, to detect competition constraints justifying specific regulatory measures.

Member States and outermost regions:

- Based on market failure, take the opportunity given by the Broadband State Aid Guidelines to **support the deployment of broadband**, as necessary;
- Update and monitor regional broadband strategies and ensure that **Broadband Competence Offices** are set up to provide assistance to the outermost regions to support broadband roll out;
- Mobilise national and regional stakeholders (businesses, social partners, public authorities) through the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition to **improve digital skills**.

Transport

Commission:

- Launch a study on the outermost regions' connectivity needs, including needs for EU funding support (from CEF, ERDF and other instruments), for technical assistance (project preparation and financial structuring) and for regulatory improvements and reforms;
- Take into account the specific connectivity needs of the outermost regions, when drawing future **Connecting Europe Facility work programmes** and reviewing the **Connecting Europe Facility Regulation**; based on the study and the specific review of needs, enable EU investments in **ports and airports** in the outermost regions, in duly justified cases;
- Consider the outermost regions specific needs when reviewing the Trans-European Transport Network guidelines by 2023, to better meet their connectivity needs in relation to the EU and to their neighbours and identify the missing links and bottlenecks. Examine which outermost region projects can be considered, under specific conditions, as **projects of common interest**;
- Upon receipt of substantiated proposals from the outermost regions: assess the use and effectiveness of the "**start-up aid**" for new air routes for these regions as part of any future evaluation of the current State aid rules in the aviation sector; and engage in a dialogue with the outermost regions on the need and possibilities for compliance of aid for new maritime routes towards third countries with State aid rules;

- Support the outermost regions in becoming **testing locations** for sustainable and clean energy **transport**;
- In the light of new international developments on a global emission trading system for air transport, assess and review the **EU Emissions' Trading System**, taking into account the situation of the outermost regions.

Outermost regions:

- Develop connectivity projects integrated in a regional vision and, at local level, continue testing and developing sustainable mobility solutions.

Cooperation with the outermost regions' neighbourhood and beyond

Commission:

- Consider targeting new EU investments on priority and larger scale projects in the outermost regions' geographic basins;
- Facilitate cooperation between the outermost regions and their neighbours by a closer alignment of rules of the relevant funding instruments and possible setting-up of joint programmes;
- Reflect on new means to facilitate and strengthen cooperation initiatives on the basis of the needs and assets of the outermost regions;
- Consider targeting EU investments on **key projects at regional level**, in particular in the area of disaster risk prevention and management, as well as other areas such as environmental protection and waste management, transport and energy in order to achieve economies of scale and rationalise provision of services;
- Work closely with relevant EU delegations to facilitate exchanges and projects between the outermost regions, their neighbouring countries and territories, and regional organisations;
- Encourage cooperation between the outermost regions and third countries on global issues, including international **ocean governance**;
- Work with the Member States concerned to explore concrete actions for advancing the ocean governance agenda in the respective geographical areas of the outermost regions.

Member States:

- Use all possible resources, including those available under Cohesion Policy programmes, to achieve **better integration of the outermost regions into their geographic environment**.

Outermost regions:

- Actively **participate in the "Smart Islands Initiative"**¹³ to showcase outermost regions as test beds for new solutions and give them access to international expertise;

¹³ <http://www.smartislandsinitiative.eu/en/index.php>

- Exchange information and best practices with regional and international organisations operating in areas that are confronted with similar challenges and develop joint actions.

Trade

Commission:

- Continue paying special attention to sensitive products from the outermost regions in the framework of trade agreements with third countries;
- Help the outermost regions, through current and future EU trade agreements, to maximize the benefits of trade agreements and make the best of trade opportunities in their geographic areas.

Member States:

- Engage with the outermost regions and inform the Commission of their specific issues at every stage of trade agreements negotiations;
- Consider strengthening the coordination of regions' representatives within the EU Member States' delegations taking part in Joint Trade and Development Committees.

Outermost regions:

- Express their interests and specific concerns through all available tools, including public consultations feeding into impact assessments and ex-post evaluations, and consultations carried out in the framework of the sustainability impact assessments during negotiations.

Migration

Commission:

- Take into account the outermost regions' concerns when negotiating or implementing **international agreements and mobility partnerships** with these regions and neighbouring countries.

Member States:

- **Maximise the use of EU funding instruments** - including the ESF, EAFRD, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund - to help the outermost regions manage migration, ensure security for citizens, inclusion of migrants and protection of children in migration¹⁴. For French Guiana and Mayotte, amendments to programmes could be considered to strengthen crime prevention and internal security.

¹⁴ "The protection of children in migration" - COM(2017) 211 final, 12.4.2017.