



Council of the  
European Union

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COHAFA 99  
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TOUR 72  
CULT 110  
ATALANTA 21

**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Intention to seek a "Dialogue Partner" status for the EU to the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

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**DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (19.03.2026)**

Delegations will find attached a note on the above-mentioned subject, as received from the European External Action Service, to be considered in COASI on 10 November 2022.

# EEAS(2022) 1823

## EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



AFRICA.2

**Working document of the European External Action Service**

**of 28/10/2022**

<b>EEAS Reference</b>	<b>EEAS(2022) 1823</b>
<b>To</b>	<b>COASI/COAFR</b>
<b>Title / Subject</b>	<b>Intention to seek a “Dialogue Partner” status for the EU to the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).</b>
<b>Ref. prev. doc.</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**SUBJECT:** Intention to seek a “Dialogue Partner” status for the EU to the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

**CONTACT POINTS:**

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**REMARKS:**

The Council Conclusions on an EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific<sup>1</sup>, adopted on 16 April 2021, foresee that the EU: i) “will pursue a broad-based agenda within the region communicating and entering into dialogues about its new strategy with its Indo-Pacific partners” and ii) “will support partners in the Indo-Pacific in strengthening regional governance, promoting regional economic integration and growth, ensuring the safety and security of maritime and aviation routes, preventing trafficking, tackling migration and managing mobility as well as ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, including marine resources, especially with the Indian Ocean Rim Association” (IORA).

This note seeks the Council’s agreement to present a formal request, on behalf of the EU, to become a “Dialogue Partner” of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

IORA is an inter-governmental organisation, which brings together representatives of Government, business and academia of 23 countries, with the objective to promote sustainable growth and balanced development of the region and its member states. IORA is the only body which unites the entire Indian Ocean region.

The IORA Secretariat is based in Mauritius and some IORA MS (like India and South Africa) expressed interest in a closer cooperation with the EU on several occasions. In 2019 and on 29

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<sup>1</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7914-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

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September 2022, the EU Member States gave a positive appreciation during joint COASI-COAFR meetings. France is a full Member of IORA, while Germany and Italy are Dialogue Partners.

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Becoming a Dialogue Partner to IORA is both natural and logical at a time when the EU wants to assert itself as a key player in the Indo Pacific region and implement its Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The Strategy underlines the EU commitment to support its partners in the Indian Ocean, in dealing with these challenges and it mentions IORA as an example of such partnerships.

While the IORA activities are related to discussion forums and capacity building projects, it does have the potential to develop into a more politically relevant organisation, given the fact that it is the only regional organisation to cover the entire Indian Ocean region.

Considering the strong competition amongst global powers in the region and the growing influence of China, India and Russia, the EU should also be involved in future development of the organisation as one of its Dialogue Partners. Ten countries are Dialogue Partners of IORA: China, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, and most recently Russia.

According to Article 1 of the IORA's Charter, Dialogue Partner means States/Organisations with which IORA enjoys consultative relationship in agreed areas of common interest.

Article 4 of the IORA's Charter also states that the Council of Ministers may grant the status of Dialogue Partners or Observers to other States or Organisations, having the capacity and interest to contribute to IORA.

Becoming a Dialogue Partner, the EU will be invited to attend the opening session of the IORA Council of Ministers and the meetings of the IORA Committee of Senior Officials. In line with the institutional mechanisms established in the IORA Charter, the Committee of Senior Officials meets annually or as often as mutually decided. It reviews the implementation of decisions taken by the Council of Ministers. It also establishes the priorities for economic cooperation and develop, monitor and coordinate the work programmes. The Committee of Senior Officials submits periodic reports to the Council of Ministers, and refers as and when necessary, policy matters for the Council's decision.

The EU would not engage in any binding legal/political/financial commitments by becoming a Dialogue Partner to IORA. Any involvement in supporting projects, providing technical assistance or contributing to the IORA Special Fund<sup>2</sup> would be done in accordance with existing EU legal framework and procedures.

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<sup>2</sup> According to the IORA Charter, the Special Fund is the financial mechanism that the IORA uses to support and complement the funding of its projects and programs. It is also used to support capacity-building initiatives. The Special Fund finances projects of public or non-profit organisations from IORA Member State countries. Contributions from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners are on a voluntary basis.

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