Council of the European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
No. Cion doc.:	13016/26
Subject:	Conclusions on the Commission's Communication 'Strengthening the Union's global reach: A new strategic vision for the EU's outermost regions' *- Approval*

1. On 10 September 2026, the General Secretariat of the Council received the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Strengthening the Union's global reach: A new strategic vision for the EU's outermost regions".

2. The Commission presented the communication at the meeting of the Working Party on Structural Measures and Outermost Regions of 18 Septermber 2026.

3. Draft Council conclusions were examined at the meetings of the Working Party on Structural Measures and Outermost Regions of 6 and 22 October 2026, and 9 November 2026. Delegations agreed in principle to the draft Council conclusions as set out in the Annex to this note.

4. The Permanent Representatives Committee is asked to advise the Council to approve these Council conclusions as set out in Annex to this note.

ANNEX

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Strengthening the Union's global reach: A new strategic vision for the EU's outermost regions

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. WELCOMES the new Commission Communication on the EU's outermost regions, "Strengthening the Union's global reach: A new strategic vision for the EU's outermost regions ('the Communication')", which builds on successive Commission strategies for these regions. Also WELCOMES the Communication's focus on the geostrategic potential of the outermost regions and on their regional integration; on competitiveness and enhanced access to the single market; on resilience and preparedness; and on social fairness and supporting people; as well as the broad range of commitments and recommendations made in it;

2. ACKNOWLEDGES the specificities of the outermost regions – Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Réunion, Mayotte, Saint-Martin, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands, including their remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography, economic dependency on a few products, and high exposure to extreme weather events, external shocks and crises;

3. RECOGNISES the opportunities offered by the outermost regions for the benefit of the whole Union, notably in the current international context, in terms of their strategic locations in critical sea lanes and on major trade routes, their role as the EU's gateways to the world, vast maritime zones, exceptional geographic characteristics, diverse ecosystems and climate, biodiversity and potential for renewable energy production. RECOGNISES that harnessing the outermost regions' strategic assets and competitive advantages can contribute to the Union's own prosperity, competitiveness, resilience, preparedness and strategic autonomy;

4. HIGHLIGHTS the important role the outermost regions can play in EU trade, regional cooperation, security and defence, the space sector, the blue economy, fisheries, agriculture, bioeconomy and biotechnology, marine sciences research and innovation, renewable energy, tourism, including sustainable tourism, logistics, and the EU's clean transition, including by contributing to diversified and resilient value and supply chains;

5. UNDERSCORES that the permanent constraints faced by outermost regions have resulted in high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people, a high cost of living and other additional costs resulting from geographic remoteness, low gross domestic product per capita, greater economic disparities; and lower educational attainment;

6. NOTES the strategic role outermost regions play in their neighbourhoods and SUPPORTS their increased regional integration, particularly through Interreg, Global Europe and other trade and cooperation initiatives, including strengthening economic ties and regional value chains with neighbouring non-EU countries and territories, as well as territories associated with the EU such as the overseas countries and territories;

7. HIGHLIGHTS the continued competitiveness gap faced by the outermost regions, due mainly to their small market size, limited economies of scale, high cost of living and remoteness, which limit their attractiveness for investment. SUPPORTS initiatives to capitalise on their assets, support strategic products, boost competitiveness and innovation, promote economic diversification and smart specialisation, and deepen their access to the single market;

8. NOTES that the outermost regions are highly vulnerable to crises, external shocks, geopolitical instability and disruption in international supply chains, notably due to their remoteness, dependence on external supplies and, where relevant, isolated or non-connected energy systems, and therefore RECOGNISES the need to enhance their resilience and preparedness, including by strengthening energy and food security, inter alia by supporting local agricultural production, protecting critical infrastructure, strengthening transport and accessibility, diversifying supply chains and, where relevant, facilitating access to strategic and critical raw materials in their regional environment;

9. WELCOMES the commitment to promote social fairness and support people living in outermost regions, who are at higher risk of poverty than the population of the continental EU and face more difficulties in accessing essential services and basic goods;

10. WELCOMES the Commission's commitment to strengthen dialogue with the outermost regions and raise awareness of the challenges they face, as well as its commitment to implement a systematic application of Article 349 of the TFEU and to screen initiatives to ensure the integration of the 'outermost regions angle' as part of its impact assessment process and into the design of future Commission initiatives;

11. AGREES that it is essential to strengthen administrative and technical capacity in order to maximise the impact of EU funds in the outermost regions. WELCOMES the Commission's commitment to improving its advisory tool to provide enhanced support to stakeholders in the outermost regions;

12. RECALLS that Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union allows the Council to adopt, on the basis of a proposal from the Commission, and after consulting the European Parliament, specific measures aimed, in particular, at laying down the conditions of application of the Treaties in order to take into account the specific characteristics and constraints of the outermost regions;

13. TAKES NOTE of the first regulatory package accompanying the Communication aiming to address challenges for outermost regions under current EU legislation as well as of measures proposed in sectoral legislation;

14. WELCOMES the Commission's commitment to a continuous process of addressing issues affecting the outermost regions;

15. STRESSES the importance of continuing to address the specific needs and challenges of outermost regions in the future and of supporting their sustainable growth based on their unique assets.