



THE NEW EU STRATEGY FOR THE OUTERMOST REGIONS, ONE YEAR ON



“You know about my attachment to the outermost regions, places where the human wealth and natural resources of our Union are concentrated. It is in those regions, laboratories of excellence and guardians of biodiversity, that the future of Europe begins. One year ago, in Guiana, we renewed the partnership that unites us. Today, we have once again travelled the distance separating us to bring these regions new pledges of support.”

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission

Today, the Commission is presenting **a series of concrete measures to promote innovation, the circular economy and blue growth in these regions**, in line with the new strategy and in addition to the special position accorded to the outermost regions in the Commission proposals for the 2021-2027 EU budget, as well as support to promote better access to the Juncker Plan.

POSSIBILITY OF PUBLIC AID FOR THE PURCHASE OF NEW VESSELS IN THE OUTERMOST REGIONS

The Commission’s amendment of its guidelines on public aid for fisheries and aquaculture will allow, exceptionally, the **purchase of new vessels, with the possibility of higher assistance rates for small and medium-sized vessels**. This decision stems from the need to protect an economic activity which is important to these territories, and the dilapidated state of the fleet. It will provide a real boost to local communities. However, this public aid will have to be granted under certain conditions and, in particular, will have to respect maritime resources. It may be up to 60% for small vessels of less than 12 meters, and 50% for vessels up to 24 meters.

To develop the blue economy in these regions, and in line with the objectives of the strategy, the Commission has created a **forum for the exchange of experiences and dialogue** including these regions, as well as the Member States and stakeholders. The proposals were put forward at the first meeting in June 2018, in order to develop the sector. The Commission is also supporting maritime spatial planning measures in the waters around Madeira, the Azores, the Canary Islands and Réunion.



A NEW COORDINATION AND SUPPORT MEASURE FINANCED BY THE EU TO PROMOTE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN THESE REGIONS

The Commission has just launched an initiative backed by EUR 4.3 million under Horizon 2020. The project, known as FORWARD, will analyse innovation systems in these regions and mobilise local stakeholders around **long-term innovation strategies based on their specific strengths** ('smart specialisation') supported by the European Regional Development Fund. This initiative will also aim to improve the international profile of these regions, encourage the participation of researchers in European and international innovation networks, and prepare the outermost regions for greater involvement in the future Horizon Europe research programme.

Bringing together 24 partners from nine regions and coordinated by the region of the Canary Islands, the project will start in early 2019 and last for three years.

TAILORED SUPPORT FROM THE EU, WITH THE LAUNCH OF TWO TASK FORCES IN RÉUNION AND THE CANARY ISLANDS.

In its strategy, the Commission has undertaken to bear in mind the specific nature of each of the nine regions by setting up, on request, special working groups on specific issues. For example, a **new task force on waste management has just been launched in the Canary Islands**, bringing together local companies involved, the Commission, the Spanish State and the regional government, to work together on a plan of action. This is a major challenge for the archipelago, because of the expense of transporting waste between the eight islands and the impact of tourism.

It is the second task force launched within a year, following the launch of the one on energy transition and autonomy in Réunion in February 2018. There, several measures to manage the demand for energy, combat energy poverty, promote self-generation of energy and e-mobility have benefited from stepped-up monitoring and support throughout the year.



For a year now, the regions have also been driving their own change

The outermost regions have implemented initiatives for the deployment of renewable energy and to improve energy efficiency, for example with the La Gomera 100% Sostenible (La Gomera 100% Sustainable) project in the Canary Islands and information campaigns and exchanges of good practice between the Canary Islands, Martinique, the Azores, Madeira, Guadeloupe and Réunion, and a project promoting electric cars in Mayotte.

In the area of employment, the GROW RUP project, bringing together five of the outermost regions, is concerned with developing innovative businesses in the green and blue economy sectors, with the aim of getting long-term unemployed people back into work. Madeira has developed digital skills training and Saint Martin has launched a new programme of craftsmanship training to help young unemployed people.