

STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE SEAN SOBERS,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF EUROPE DAY
7 MAY 2026

Good evening...

It is my profound honour to join you this evening to celebrate Europe Day – an occasion that rejoices in the birth of a vision for unity, peace, and prosperity on a continent once scarred by division.

Today as we reflect on the principles and values of peace, partnership, and common values championed at the onset of the European project, 76 years ago on 9 May 1950; we remember that it was the Declaration which laid the foundation for what we now know as the European Union (EU).

At its inception, it was a bold idea that transformed rivals into partners, and conflict into cooperation. Today that spirit of cooperation endures and the EU is a leading example of what it means to work together to achieve a shared future built on dialogue and not division.

Ambassador Tassin, please accept my utmost gratitude for affording me the opportunity to bring remarks on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. On that note, please allow me to share a personal note that the

2025 Europe Day reception was the first celebratory event that I attended in my capacity as the newly minted Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs. In recalling the success of that event and the warmth extended to me, it is a happy coincidence that last year's host, former Ambassador Peter Cavendish, whose Tour of Duty ended on 31 August, 2025, is present with us today.

Ambassador, when we met before you left our shores, I recalled you said you would miss Port of Spain, little did I know you would return so soon. I believe it is symbolic of the warm bilateral relationship we enjoy with the Delegation of the European Union.

Therefore, I believe, today presents a fitting opportunity to highlight the significance of the relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and the EU, which goes beyond symbolism and which has endured the test of time. Our 51-year old diplomatic relationship continues to blossom and remains a shining beacon to the world. Our mutually beneficial partnership is one that has evolved to be of greater significance over time. Importantly, the relationship is not only grounded in development cooperation and trade, but is one that encompasses various common objectives and shared values.

We are proud of the evolution of this partnership, which has taken on a more comprehensive nature by incorporating areas of security, economic relations and other critical themes. While we are pleased with the evolution

of the relationship, we must appreciate the reality that the EU continues to provide valuable support to Trinidad and Tobago.

We remain fully appreciative of the assistance provided by the European Union to our nation, including Technical Assistance Grant Funding, and the sustained development partnership that we have established in many areas of importance to Trinidad and Tobago. It is worth noting that various sectors of Trinidad and Tobago's society have benefitted from EU support, including education, healthcare, agriculture including fisheries, infrastructure, and, importantly, national security.

As is the case in any good partnership, we continue to work jointly and diligently towards the achievement of solutions and further advancement in spheres of mutual concern and importance. Recently we have seen an example of this cooperation bearing fruit. Through consistent dialogue with the EU, Trinidad and Tobago is no longer on the EU's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes. I am pleased to report that this announcement in February 2026 marked a major achievement in safeguarding Trinidad and Tobago's international financial reputation. The removal of Trinidad and Tobago from the list, highlights the Government's commitment to improving its tax practices and aligning it with international tax standards. We thank the EU for its cooperation and assistance in this regard.

As a member of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and as a signatory to the Samoa Agreement, we look

forward to continued engagement with the EU on the Agreement, which represents a welcomed platform for addressing issues related to sustainable development, trade and governance. Likewise, we continue to value our engagement with the EU through the EU-Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) mechanism.

Allow me to publicly underscore my sincere appreciation for the excellent communication and trust that we have established with Ambassador Cécile Tassin and other European Ambassadors in Port of Spain. Communication and trust are key components of any lasting relationship. I recently had the privilege to join their Excellencies at the April instalment of their EU Heads of Mission monthly working lunch, which afforded us another opportunity to build communication and trust.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we are witnessing a world in transition and a globe consumed by challenges from which the Caribbean and Europe are neither exempt nor immune. The EU's core guiding principles of peace and solidarity provide a roadmap to navigating these most challenging times.

As we consider the road ahead, Trinidad and Tobago pledges renewed vigour to its alliance with the EU, particularly in relation to deepening trade under the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, advancing

the prioritization of renewable energy and working on areas of mutual concern including combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

Europe Day compels us to honour the architects of unity and to build a future where our destinies yield mutual benefits. On that note of optimism, I wish you all a Happy Europe Day and on behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, please accept my best wishes for the continued peace and prosperity of the European Union.

I thank you.