



# MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

May 18, 2022

For Immediate Release

## MEDIA RELEASE

### MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND HEAD OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**Port of Spain:** Minister of National Security the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish, today, Wednesday May 18, 2022 signed an historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU formalizes arrangements between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Expertise France to implement the Seaport Cooperation Project Phase V (SEACOP V) in Trinidad and Tobago. Expertise France will be administrating the SEACOP in this region.

The Signing Ceremony took place at the Ministry of National Security Head Office at Temple Court 1, 31-33 Abercromby Street, Port-of-Spain.

Speaking at the Signing Ceremony, both Minister Hinds and His Excellency Cavendish stated that the MOU signing demonstrates the further strengthening of collaboration between Trinidad and Tobago and the European Union, as it relates to combatting transnational crime, in particular the transshipment of illicit narcotics, which will redound to bolstering domestic, regional and international security.

Also speaking and signing the MOU, on behalf of Expertise France, was Project Director of the SEACOP Mr. Dominique Bucas.

In 2015, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago agreed to participate in the European Union SEACOP Project. SEACOP was established in 2010 and is one of seven (7) projects under the wider European Commission-funded Cocaine Route Programme (CRP), which is aimed at effectively addressing the broad spectrum of challenges presented by organized crime and drug trafficking, particularly cocaine trafficking. The Project seeks to enhance capacities and strengthen cooperation against maritime trafficking in countries on the transatlantic cocaine route, via the

creation of inter-agency units in key ports, as well as the establishment of a national maritime information system to promote information sharing.

SEACOP Phase V, will focus on reinforcing the effectiveness of the SEACOP maritime intelligence and maritime/riverine control network geographically and technically; sustainably integrating knowledge on maritime threats and interdictions emanating from the transatlantic illicit trafficking routes into national and regional curricula; as well as increasing cooperation and information sharing at the national, regional and trans-regional levels, to include organizations such as the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX).

Through the SEACOP Phases I to IV, local law enforcement officials have already participated in training exercises and subject matter expertise exchanges geared towards enhancing capacity in the detection and interdiction of narcotics. Additionally, there has been at least one official seizure of cocaine; and the receipt of equipment for use in operations to reduce maritime trafficking.

Also present at the Signing Ceremony were Permanent Secretary (Ag.) of the Ministry of National Security Mr. Gary Joseph; Chief of Defence Staff Air Vice Marshal Darryl Daniel; Commissioner of Police (Ag.) Mr. Mc Donald Jacob; Chief Immigration Officer Ms. Charmaine Gandhi-Andrews; Comptroller of the Customs and Excise Division (Ag.) Mr. Bernard Nicholas; Deputy Director of the International Affairs Unit, Ministry of National Security, Major (Ret'd) Richard Lynch; representatives of the Transnational Organized Crime Unit and National Operations Fusion Centre; as well as Programme Manager Ms. Monica Paul-McLean and Political Officer Mr. Sanjin Soldatic of the Delegation of the European Union in Trinidad and Tobago.

Following the MOU Signing Ceremony, Minister Hinds hosted a courtesy call with the Head of Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish, and Project Director of the SEACOP Mr. Dominique Bucas. Discussions reinforced the longstanding bilateral relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and the European Union, and focused on deepening engagements as well as expanding joint initiatives.

### **Photos and captions:**



1. Minister of National Security the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish sign the Seaport Cooperation Project Phase V (SEACOP V) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Wednesday May 18, 2022 at the Ministry of National Security Head Office, Temple Court 1, 31-33 Abercromby Street, Port-of-Spain. Witnessing the signing are Permanent Secretary (Ag.) of the Ministry of National Security Mr. Gary Joseph (standing at left) and Project Director of the Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP) Mr. Dominique Bucas (standing at right). Mr. Bucas also signed the MOU.



2. (Seated from left to right): Permanent Secretary (Ag.) of the Ministry of National Security Mr. Gary Joseph; Minister of National Security the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P.; Head of Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish; Project Director of the Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP) Mr. Dominique Bucas; and other representatives, at the Seaport Cooperation Project Phase V (SEACOP V) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Signing Ceremony on Wednesday May 18, 2022 at the Ministry of National Security Head Office at Temple Court 1, 31-33 Abercromby Street, Port-of-Spain.



3. Minister of National Security the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. (centre) hosted a courtesy call with Head of Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish (right) and Project Director of the Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP) Mr. Dominique Bucas (left), following the Seaport Cooperation Project Phase V (SEACOP V) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Signing Ceremony on Wednesday May 18, 2022.

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