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Opportunities and advances in the construction of the EU-CELAC Higher Education Area

Authors: Francisco Sánchez, Sara Martín Bardera

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The European Union – Latin America and Caribbean International Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation) was created in 2010 by the Heads of State and Government of the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) member states. Its Members are the Member states of the EU and CELAC as well as the EU itself. The Foundation is a tool of the EU-LAC partnership and its activities feed into the intergovernmental dialogue.

The EU-LAC Foundation was entrusted with the mission of strengthening and promoting the strategic bi-regional relationship, enhancing its visibility and fostering active participation of the respective civil societies. For this reason, the EU-LAC Foundation has commissioned two external authors with the elaboration of the present publication to analyse the opportunities and make visible the progress made in initiatives, programmes and good practices aimed at building the EU-CELAC Higher Education Area.

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PRESENTATION

In a year marked by the revitalisation of the cooperation between the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union (EU) member countries through a Summit of Heads of State and Government held on 17-18 July 2023 in Brussels, Belgium, the EU-LAC Foundation would like to present the publication *"Opportunities and progress in the construction of the EU-CELAC Higher Education Area"* as a contribution to the dialogue between governmental actors, specialised entities, academic communities and research networks. It is a text addressing one of the fundamental pillars of the bi-regional strategic partnership: education, skills development, knowledge creation and transfer, to foster the insertion of young people into the labour markets and to equip our societies with skills to face the challenges of our times.

The idea of building a Higher Education Area between the two regions had been suggested in previous meetings of authorities at the highest level. At the II EU-CELAC Summit in 2015, the representatives of the States converged on increasing the bi-regional, regional and sub-regional integration of their Higher Education systems as well as their comparability, in order to improve access, quality and relevance of education, for example through scholarship and mobility programmes, exchange and capacity building of students, academics and administrative staff. It was also proposed to promote bilateral agreements for the recognition of degrees and curricula and joint programmes at master's and doctoral levels between the two regions. Similarly, it was suggested to generate higher education scientific programmes and meetings to increase joint scientific and research initiatives (see Chapter 9 of the EU-CELAC Action Plan 2015).

The EU-LAC Foundation has played a constructive role in this field by generating analyses, offering visibility to processes, tools, and joint good practices, and promoting a technical, inclusive and results-oriented dialogue between various public actors and academic networks in both regions. In 2017, a compendium on the *"Institutional and regulatory foundation for the establishment of the European, Latin American and Caribbean Area for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation"*[1] was published to offer decision-makers and the general audience interested in the matter, a systematisation of the processes and factors that have favoured the convergence between the educational systems and scientific ecosystems existing in the countries that make up the EU-CELAC Bi-regional Association. The Foundation has also coordinated a process of collective construction, with university and academic networks from the two regions, of the *"Matrix of Objectives and Strategic Lines for the Construction of the EU-CELAC Common Area of Higher Education"*[2], which is a reference database displaying the normative

1 See: https://eulacfoundation.org/system/files/highereducation_institbases_en.pdf
2 See: https://eulacfoundation.org/en/education

requirements of a Common Area of Higher Education as well as a register of the diversity of ongoing cooperation initiatives underway.

Although, as is common in academia, there are different views and interpretations of what is, or what should be, the 'EU-CELAC Common Area of Higher Education', there is also a great deal of common ground. If one were to look for signs of a process of macro-institutional convergence between higher education systems, taking as a central point of reference the regulatory framework of the Bologna process with which European countries have been establishing their own Higher Education Area, one could argue that the EU and CELAC regions still have a long way to go. However, if this space is interpreted as a socially constructed one, based on exchanges of students, teachers, academics, researchers and administrative staff; projects, seminars and meetings of academic networks, research consortia and university alliances; recognition generated by accreditation and certification agencies; agreements and joint programmes between universities and research centres, it could be argued that this common space does exist in fact and that it has also been a very dynamic scenario of exchanges and mutual benefit for the societies of both regions.

It is precisely from this second perspective that we at the EU-LAC Foundation conceive of the existence of the EU-CELAC Common Area of Higher Education. This is why we commissioned **Francisco Sánchez** and **Sara Martín Bardera**, from the University of Salamanca, to analyse, in this publication, the cooperation efforts generated over the last few years by a variety of institutions and government agencies, international and Ibero-American organisations, university associations and academic networks, to advance in the internationalisation, harmonisation and comparability of Higher Education systems at the bi-regional, regional and sub-regional levels. The study examines advances in some central areas, such as mobility, degree recognition systems and quality assurance, and programmes that promote scientific cooperation. In addition, it sheds light on programmes of interest generated by (alliances of) universities to contribute to the 2030 Agenda, which provides a framework for cross-cutting cooperation. With the reflections and questions presented in the concluding sections of each chapter, the authors also produce important inputs for further dialogue on the complexities and gaps, but also the strengths and potentials of this bi-regional process.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A3ES	*Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior* (Portugal)
ACAP	Central American Postgraduate Accreditation Agency
ACESAD	Colombian Association of Distance Higher Education
ACCECISO	Association for Accreditation and Certification in Social Sciences (Mexico)
ACSUCYL	Agency for the Quality of the University System of Castilla y León (Spain)
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AEFE	*Agence pour l'enseignement français à l'étranger*
AGCID	Chilean Agency for International Development Cooperation
AIESAD	Ibero-American Association of Distance Higher Education
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
ALFA	Latin America Academic Training
AMEXID	Mexican Agency of International Development Cooperation
ANEAES	National Agency for Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation (Paraguay)
ANID	National Research and Development Agency (Chile)
ANECA	National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (Spain)
ANUIES	National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (Mexico)
AQUA	*Agència de Qualitat de l' Ensenyament Superior d'Andorra*
ARCU-SUR	University Degree Regional Accreditation System
ASCUN	Colombian Association of Universities
AUGM	Montevideo Group University Association
AUIP	Postgraduate Ibero-American University Association
BELLA	Building the Europe Link to Latin America
BRAMEX	Brazil-Mexico Exchange Programme
CACES	Council for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (Ecuador)
CACEI	Council for the Accreditation of Engineering Education (Mexico)
CALED	Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Quality in Distance Higher Education
CAPES	Coordenação de aperfeiçoamento de pessoal de nivel superior
CBHE	Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education
CCA	Central American Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CEAI	Council for International Assessment and Accreditation
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CEUB	Executive Committee of the Bolivian University

CIEES	Inter-Institutional Committees for the Assessment of Higher Education (Mexico)
CIN	National Interuniversity Council (Argentina)
CINDA	Inter-University Centre for Development
CNA	National Accreditation Commission (Chile)
CNA	National Accreditation Council (Colombia)
CNACU	National Commission for Accreditation of University Degrees (Bolivia)
CNPq	National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (Brazil)
COIL	Collaborative Online International Learning
CONAED	Council for the Accreditation of Law Education
CONAIC	National Council for Accreditation in Informatics and Computing (Mexico)
CONACYT	National Council for Science and Technology (Mexico)
CONACYT	National Council for Science and Technology (Paraguay)
CONEAU	Argentinian National Commission for University Quality Assessment and Accreditation
CONFAP	Brazilian National Council for the State Funding Agencies
CONICYT	National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research
COPAES	Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education (Mexico)
CRISCOS	Council of Rectors for the Integration of the Central West Sub-region of South America
CSUCA	Higher Council of Central American Universities
CYTED	Ibero-American Programme on Science and Technology for Development
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service *(Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst)*
DEAP	Digital Education Action Plan
DIES:	Dialogues on Innovative Strategies in Higher Education
ECESELI	Common Space for Online Higher Education (UDUAL)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EDS	European Diploma Supplement
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EIC	Ibero-American Knowledge Area
EMJMD	Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training

EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ERA	European Research Area
ERC	European Research Council
ESCALA	Expanded Latin American Common Academic Space (AUGM)
EUA	European University Association
FINEP	Funding Authority for Studies and Projects *(Financiadora de Estudos e Projectos)* (Brazil)
FORCYT	Programme for the Strengthening of Science and Technology Systems (OEI)
GCUB	Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities
GUNi	Global University Network for Innovation
HCÉRES	High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education in France *(Haut conseil de l'evaluation de la recherche et de l 'enseignement supérieur)*
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HESI	Higher Education Sustainability Initiative
HICA	Harmonisation and Innovation in Central American Higher Education
ICETEX	Colombian Institute of Educational Credit and Technical Studies Abroad
IAU	International Association of Universities
IESALC	UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
INEP	National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Brazil)
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
JAN	National Accreditation Board (Cuba)
JIMA	Mexico-Argentina Youth Exchange Programme (currently PILA)
JIRI	EU-CELAC Joint Initiative of Research and Innovation
MACA	Colombia-Argentina Academic Mobility (currently PILA)
MAGMA	Mobility Programme for Academics and Management between Argentina and Mexican Universities (currently PILA)
MARCA	MERCOSUR Regional Academic Mobility Programme
MASUDEM	Erasmus+ European Project "Master Studies in Sustainable Development and Management"
MCESCA	Qualifications Framework for Central American Higher Education
MSCA	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union
NCPs	National Contact Points for Horizon Europe

NCRALC	New Regional Convention for the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
OAS	Organisation of American States
ODS	Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEI	Organisation of Ibero-American States for Science, Technology and Culture
ONCYT	National Science and Technology Agencies
OPCE	Pluri-national Observatory for Educational Quality (Bolivia)
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
ORACLE	Regional Observatory for the Quality of Equity in Higher Education
PAME	Academic Education Mobility Programme (UDUAL)
PAPRI	*Programa de Apoio ao Processo de Internacionalização de Instituições de Ensino e de Pesquisa Brasileiras*
PILA	Latin American Academic Exchange Programme
PIMA	Academic Mobility and Exchange Programme (OEI)
PIRESC	Plan for Regional Integration of Central American Higher Education
PIU	University Exchange Programme (CINDA Network)
RANA	Network of National Accreditation Agencies
RecoLATIN	Credential Evaluation Centres and Recognition Procedures in Latin American Countries
RedCLARA	Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks
Red LAC NCP	Latin American and Caribbean National Contact Points Network
REDS/SDSN	Spanish Network for Sustainable Development
RIACES	Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SEDUCA	Central American University Editorial System
SEGIB	Ibero-American General Secretariat
SENESCYT	Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
SIACAP	Central American and Panamanian Academic Accreditation System
SIACES	Ibero-American System for Quality Assurance
SICAUS	Central American System of University-Society Relationship
SICEVAES	Central American System for the Evaluation and Harmonisation of Higher Education
SIESCA	System for the Internationalisation of Central American Higher Education
SIIDCA	Central American Integrated Document Information System

SINEACE	National System for Assessment, Accreditation and Certification of Educational Quality (Peru)
SIRCIP	Central American and Caribbean Regional System for Research and Postgraduate Studies
SIREICU	Regional University Information and Communication System
SIREVE	Regional Student Life System
SULITEST	The Sustainability Literacy Test (United Nations)
SUNEDU	National Superintendence of Higher University Education (Peru)
THE	Times Higher Education
TNE	Transnational Education
UDELAR	University of the Republic (Uruguay)
UDUAL	Union of Latin American and Caribbean Universities
EU	European Union
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico
UCV	Central University of Venezuela
UE4SD	University Educators for Sustainable Development
UNAI	United Nations Academic Impact initiative
UNESCO	United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To understand the advances and opportunities in the construction of the EU-CELAC Higher Education Area (EU-CELAC HEA), we must bear in mind that it is a process that usually takes place in two dimensions. On the one hand, there is a discursive and proactive dimension, mainly developed in the different level meetings of CELAC, EU authorities or other organisations linked to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that, with voluntarism, try to promote the creation of a bi-regional and common higher education area based on the conviction of the potential benefits that all the parties involved would have. On the other hand, there is an executive dimension related to the real progress made by the establishment of institutional frameworks that allow the implementation of stakeholders' proposals and suggestions. In this second dimension, there are several restrictions for the advancement of the bi-regional space, but there are also significant opportunities for its development that must be identified.

CELAC is the main promoter of the EU-CELAC HEA, but lacks effective executive attributes that allow it to make mandatory decisions about its partners because it does not have a minimum institutional structure that has continuity outside the alternating presidencies. This has made it difficult to actively promote the resolutions adopted at meetings or summits, but it has managed to place the EU-CELAC HEA building process as a central issue on the bi-regional agenda and get different countries and institutions to promote it as well.

Although there is a clear asymmetry in the relationship between the EU and CELAC partners who want to build the bi-regional Higher Education Area, some windows of opportunity have been found to develop collaboration areas, despite the inequality of capacities evident from the fact that the European equivalent has a consolidated institutional configuration, with its own budget and capacity to design and execute public policies, as well as to make mandatory decisions about its members, while the trajectory of CELAC is still emerging. That is why the main advances and bi-regional initiatives have been carried out by countries or institutions that share CELAC's integration objectives.

Thus, for example, the most significant initiatives so far are those that involve Ibero-American countries, that is, the countries of the two regions that speak Spanish or Portuguese, and that are promoted by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Organisation of Ibero-American States (OEI). As international organisations, they both have a stronger institutional structure than CELAC.

The first challenge is to look for the complementarity of two university areas with very different levels of harmonisation and internal integration. On the one hand, there is the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the result of a long process of change in the higher education systems of the European Union countries and aimed at converging in

a unique model resulting from the so-called "Bologna Process". A system that has the institutional promotion and resources of the EU member countries and the European Commission itself, whose investment in its sustainability and progress is permanent. On the other hand, in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the university space is characterised by minimum levels of integration that depend entirely on societies in which universities and research institutes are quite diverse in terms of quality, training capacity and institutional development. Indeed, there is no Latin American and Caribbean system, but several national university systems, with very diverse educational formats and training itineraries.

The second challenge is to articulate the multiple initiatives that seek to lead or channel the process of building a HEA that includes the participation of Latin American, Caribbean and European countries. While it is true that they can be complementary, they might also generate a dynamic of competition for resources (especially if they are expected to be abundant) or for the direction of the process, despite not having any capacity to execute what is promoted. This situation, far from contributing to the advancement of a unique HEA, results in inconvenient effects, especially in those cases in which governments have the power to implement the legal and institutional changes that are necessary for its creation.

The third challenge is to expand the EU-CELAC HEA discussion to include the potential negative externalities of the process; the most important being the potential effect of exporting human talent from Latin American and Caribbean countries to Europe. So far, initiatives to build the common area have focused on the processes of mobility, accreditations and recognition of studies and degrees, the most complex part from an institutional point of view. Latin America and the Caribbean are also at a clear disadvantage here.

Regarding mobility among students from both regions, asymmetry is reflected in the greater interest of CELAC students in studying in the EU. The students who choose Latin America and the Caribbean as their destination are, above all, interested in improving the languages of the region or in Social Sciences and the interest is usually in the region as an object of study, as has been concluded from the analysis of the Erasmus+ programmes. On the bright side, it is worth mentioning the existence of scholarship programmes that promote exchange between the three sectors of the university community: students, teaching staff and managers. In fact, there are numerous and very heterogeneous initiatives: multilateral, bilateral, regional, bi-regional, general, LAC applicant-specific, etc. Whether this situation contributes to or hinders the creation of an EU-CELAC HEA will depend on how it is designed, what the mobility goal is and the type of coverage it requires. These experiences are valuable, even if it does not seem easy to articulate programmes that belong to different systems. Therefore, regarding EHEA, it would be easier if there was an institutional structure that by agreement and delegation of the states had a certain executive and financial capacity.

Promoting mobility among people across countries and higher education systems is also related to the recognition of studies and degrees. The goal may be to continue studying for the same degree, move to a higher degree, or earn a degree recognition for professional purposes. The difference between the EU and CELAC is that the former has harmonisation tools (qualification frameworks, quality assurance systems, EDS) and the latter lacks a common framework of reference. Hence, it is necessary to create accreditation systems that guarantee the quality of programmes and degrees, foster institutional trust and accelerate recognition procedures. In this sense, progress is recognised in the multiple initiatives of accreditation and quality assurance. However, this should not lead to excessive bureaucratisation that further complicates and does not differentiate between, for example, teaching in a finance school as a recognised professional, and practising in the field of health sciences, where the incorporation of an unqualified individual can have serious consequences for the integrity of people.

On the other hand, and here the suggestion would be to expand the focus, the aspect that involves research and knowledge transfer has been neglected, and the conditions of Latin America and the Caribbean can be a unique contribution to the framework of cooperative relationships with European universities and research centres. Thus, more investment and attention could be paid to programmes that value the particularity of, for example, tropical medicine, the effects of global warming on coral reefs, the Amazon or Antarctica. In these cases, in addition to ecosystems, Latin American and Caribbean universities have research centres and highly qualified researchers.

An exceptional circumstance has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which has given an accelerated boost to university education processes by telematic means. This has been a step forward in the internationalisation of HEIs, especially in terms of mobility, by substantially reducing its costs. However, it also places mobility and exchange as explicit goals of the EU-CELAC HEA construction. Although the digital revolution offers more possibilities for internationalisation to centres and people with fewer resources, it can also increase inequalities between those who only have the option of participating in an online mobility modality and those who can benefit from the multiple dimensions of face-to-face mobility.

Another important element that contributes to understanding the EU-CELAC HEA construction is the proliferation of networks and initiatives emerging from the society that weave and demonstrate the strong relationship between the higher education systems of the two regions, beyond the interaction of governments or government agencies. This type of collaboration can be implemented, despite the heterogeneous laws and regulations from Latin America and the Caribbean, through agreements that facilitate the harmonisation of academic requirements and promote exchanges, as is indeed happening.

In sum, the analysis of the advances shows that the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA offers more positive than negative externalities, so it is necessary to continue promoting it simultaneously and at different levels. At the macro level, in the convergence of

university systems in Latin America and the Caribbean; at the micro level, in the collaboration between laboratories, courses of studies, departments, colleges or universities from both regions. An advance at this lower level will lay the foundations for the reduction of mutual mistrust and uncertainties while showing the benefits of networking in the context of cooperation. This spirit is already present in the logic with which the Erasmus student exchange programme works, where the operational part of the system is mainly executed at the level of the university degrees from which the students come and is also in its origin, prior to the Bologna process.

Finally, the process of building the EU-CELAC HEA cannot be completed without the leadership of an integrating body to which all parties confer political and institutional legitimacy. It would be ideal to create a technical secretariat attached to the EU-LAC Foundation, as it is the only international body that has formal recognition from all countries in the two regions. In turn, this secretariat should promote the institutionalisation of relations to give continuity to actions and enable changes in university systems to converge toward integration.

OPPORTUNITIES AND ADVANCES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EU-CELAC HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Introduction

The construction of a Higher Education Area is one of the objectives of the relationship between the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union (EU). At the I EU-LAC Summit, held on 28-29 June 1999 in Rio de Janeiro, a specific mention of the advantages that university cooperation would have for the parties was already included in the final declaration.[3] It was at the Paris Ministerial Conference of the EU-LAC countries in 2000 - more than 20 years ago - that there was a clear talk of establishing cooperation mechanisms to promote a process of convergence that would lead to the construction of a common Higher Education Area. It highlighted as its main themes the exchange of students, researchers, teaching and administrative staff and the development of mechanisms that would ensure the recognition of the training received in other countries.

At the II EU-LAC Summit of Heads of State and Government in May 2002, the emphasis was again on promoting exchange, but this time the focus was on intra- or inter-regional mobility, and on the importance of higher education evaluation systems. Concerning the latter, it discussed the need to promote and favour a mutual knowledge of the national evaluation systems and to identify best practices that can create a model to implement effective processes that assess the quality of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation systems of the countries involved.[4]

In the following Summits and meetings, the willingness to integrate higher education systems is reiterated and even though other additional elements are pointed out, the emphasis is still on mobility and quality and assessments systems as key points of the process of building the EU-CELAC Higher Education Area (EU-CELAC HEA). During the Brussels Summit held on 10 and 11 June 2015, strategic decisions were taken that gave more dimension to the initial proposals that had been on the table for approximately 15 years. One of its policy documents, entitled "Action Plan", specifies ten areas of intervention: science, research, innovation and technology; sustainable

3 Declaration of Rio de Janeiro. In particular, item 63 refers to educational cooperation and items 65 and 66 to scientific and technological innovation and transfer as development elements and integration mechanisms.

For more information, see: https://intranet.eulacfoundation.org/es/content/i-cumbre-eu-lac-declaraci%C3%B3n-de-rio-rio-de-janeiro-28-29-de-junio-1999

4 On the institutional framework of the strategic partnership that makes possible the European, Latin American and Caribbean Area of Higher Education, Science and Technology, see Sánchez, F. and Hernández, R. (2017: 25-31). Available in electronic format at: https://eulacfoundation.org/es/bases-institucionales-y-normativas-para-la-construccion-del-espacio-europeo-latinoamericano-y

development, environment, climate change, biodiversity, energy; regional integration and interconnectivity to promote social integration and cohesion; migration; education and employment to foster social integration and cohesion; the world drug problem; gender issues; investments and entrepreneurship for sustainable development; higher education and public safety. As can be observed, three of the ten domains are directly related to education. In addition to this, science, research, innovation and technology have an independent scope of intervention, in which it is determined that the main goal is the development of a Knowledge Area of which all EU and LAC countries are part.[5]

Although the proposals in the previous documents are gradual and focused on mobility, knowledge exchange and quality systems, driven by a number of ad hoc organisations and initiatives, it has grown the idea of building a potential science, research and higher education area that integrates Latin America and the Caribbean and that is inspired and seeks to emulate the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) arising from the Bologna Process, which will be explained in the following section. These proposals have not considered that to analyse EHEA in comparison to the integration and regulation initiatives in the Higher Education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, the first thing that must be recognised is that the bi-regional relationship is unbalanced. Compared to a well-structured European model, with years of experience and a wealth of resources, the Latin American and Caribbean model is yet to be established, which, in the long run, can be a limitation, even though there are integration initiatives underway that deserve to be highlighted, as will be done throughout this study.

In this context, the EU-LAC Foundation has conducted a series of reports and events discussing the mechanisms from which to advance the creation of the EU-CELAC HEA, probably the largest is the one published in 2017 under the title "Institutional and regulatory foundations for the establishment of the European, Latin American and Caribbean Area for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation"[6] which establishes the structural starting point of the Latin American and Caribbean research and higher education institutions, in order to identify the constraints and difficulties that could be encountered in the convergence process. First, it sought to highlight empirically, and regardless of any voluntarism or a hypothetical "must be", the potentialities and challenges of the process of building a Latin American and Caribbean area that, in a second stage, could be integrated with EHEA in a large common area.

Six years later, this article is presented at the EU-CELAC Summit held on July 17 and 18, 2023 in the city of Brussels, aimed at offering an overview of the advances and opportunities in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA. It is based on the two main axes of the process identified in the documents of the Heads of State and Ministers' Summits and summarised very succinctly above, namely mobility and educational

5 For more information on the Action Plan, see: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23755/eu-celac-action-plan_es_corr.pdf.
On the political statement and Brussels declaration of the II EU-CELAC Summit, see: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/press/press-releases/2015/06/11/eu-celac-summit-brussels-declaration/

6 It can be found on the EU-LAC Foundation website at the following link: https://eulacfoundation.org/es/bases-institucionales-y-normativas-para-la-construccion-del-espacio-europeo-latinoamericano-y

quality and assessment systems. The purpose of the study is to identify advances and, above all, opportunities, in the processes in which there is interaction in the field of higher education and research at the intra and interregional level.

The following study starts with a review of what EHEA means and the possibilities of adopting a model with common features – in whole or in part – in Latin America and the Caribbean. After that, there is a chapter that deals with advances in quality systems, recognition and validation of higher education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, among which sub-regional integration initiatives stand out. It is highlighted that their operation supports mobility and contributes to the establishment of the EU-CELAC HEA.

The following chapter is about university mobility understood in a broad sense. It begins with a quantitative diagnosis and analysis of the international flows of students from the different countries of the two regions. The different scholarship systems of European and Latin American governments, and regional and multilateral organisations are then analysed in depth since it is an effective way of promoting mobility that contributes in a more open manner to the establishment of the EU-CELAC HEA.

Based on the conviction that one of the potential ways to advance the EU-CELAC HEA is research –a fundamental task of higher education institutions– a section devoted exclusively to this field has been included. In addition to pointing out the opportunities offered by the institutional framework that encourages and funds research, it advocates the need to expand the EU-CELAC HEA's approach, since research and transfer have been neglected, and the Latin American and Caribbean singular conditions can contribute to the framework of cooperative relationships with European universities and research centres. Thus, more investment and attention could be paid to programmes that value the particularity of, for example, tropical medicine, the effects of global warming on coral reefs, the Amazon or Antarctica. In such cases, in addition to ecosystems, universities in Latin America and the Caribbean have highly qualified researchers and research centres.

Finally, and before offering conclusions, two elements are included and analysed that serve as context and can be incorporated into the initiatives that are developed to build the EU-CELAC HEA. On the one hand, the 2030 Agenda and, on the other, an evaluation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning of university systems.

A warning must be made here regarding two elements that help understand EU-CELAC HEA's present and future. On the one hand, initiatives arising from civil society and aimed at strengthening the relationship between the two regions; on the other, the position of universities in the administrative and institutional framework of Latin American and Caribbean countries. There is no specific chapter devoted to them, as it differs from the object of this report, but they underlie various analyses, as explained below.

First, civil society's efforts are set aside from state agencies but have a clear intention to influence them to promote a large community of higher education. They are usually associations of chancellors and universities, in addition to networks of academics and actors close to the university world, who see the EU-CELAC HEA as a strengthening opportunity. In this regard, it should be mentioned the Montevideo Group University Association (AUGM), the Conference of Chancellors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) or the Permanent Academic Forum Latin America and the Caribbean - European Union (FAP ALC-EU), among others.

Secondly, concerning the institutional framework of Latin American and Caribbean universities, it should be noted that it has a clear commitment to the so-called "university autonomy", the idea that a university as corporation requires substantial independence as a necessary condition to perform its duties. It is a deeply rooted claim, and it is the result of the region's social mobilisation, whose reference is the reform initiated by the students' claim at University of San Carlos and Montserrat of Cordoba, Argentina, in 1918.

According to Marsiske Schulte, R. (2004), it is a process of a profound political outbreak because in the region politics and education have had an instrumental relationship, which implies that more often than not the university has been used for political purposes, as it is an important field of action for minority or secondary political groups or to show the discomfort of society through student unions. University autonomy implies that institutions have their own government, thanks to which they can legislate on matters within their competence, organise themselves as they see fit, as well as choose their authorities and the chancellor according to their own requirements. Regarding the academic side, they can appoint and remove its academic staff according to the agreed procedures, select students based on their criteria, confer degrees, develop curricula or issue certificates, among others. It also guarantees the freedom of the chair. In the financial aspect, it translates into the free disposal of its assets and the preparation and control of its own budget.

However, university autonomy can become an obstacle to the construction of an EU-CELAC HEA for two different reasons. On the one hand, the enormous power it gives to the authorities and the other actors involved in the decision-making process within universities reduces the incentives to collaborate in a process that will further reduce their power and force them to homogenise around criteria that are built for the entire region. It should be taken into account that a process of resistance and "moral economy" also occurred in certain European universities during the "Bologna Process". In this case, resistance was broken by the ability of States to regulate them. On the other hand, university autonomy is a guarantee included in the constitutions of almost all Latin American countries, so in cases where the description of autonomy is more developed, constitutional reforms may be required to allow the integration of university systems. For example, the largest public universities of Guatemala and Honduras, the University of San Carlos and the Autonomous University of Honduras,

have the exclusive capacity to recognise and authorise foreign degrees so that applicants can practise the profession for which they were trained during their courses of study[7].

In sum, this report will present challenges and evidence of the processes that could serve as support for the construction of a common higher education area between the two regions, which will also imply highlighting the difficulties in order to identify and amend them. It does not seek to provide a new diagnosis or prediction regarding the Educational Area's hypothetical potentialities, nor does it allude to the abundant literature that does. The positive aspects of a possible EU-CELAC HEA are well-known and accepted by most actors.

7 See Sánchez and Hernández (2017: 35-47)

THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA AS CONTEXT AND LEARNING SPACE FOR BI-REGIONAL INTEGRATION

1. What is the EHEA?

Before discussing whether it is feasible or desirable for Latin American and Caribbean a process similar to the one that unified the European university systems, it is worth remembering what it consists of. The so-called Bologna Process[8] articulated the creation of the EHEA, a common regulatory field whose main objective is the mobility of students and staff, as well as the academic recognition of studies carried out within the European Union. In addition to the merely educational criterion, the community goal of free movement of workers also played a role. Thus, the recognition of studies and professional training is one of the axes of labour mobility between the different EU countries. During this process, the higher education systems of all participating countries were restructured and organised into three cycles (undergraduate/bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies). Furthermore, the mutual recognition of qualifications and studies completed at other universities was guaranteed and a system of quality assurance for programmes and degrees was implemented.

But beyond all that, it should be considered that EHEA is a project that is part of a public policy of the European Union, a body whose decisions are mandatory for its members. This means institutional density, executive capacity, budget allocation and continuity over time. It should be highlighted that not only the European Commission but all the participating countries are involved, and it has a complex structure and potentialities that are summarised in the table at the end of this section, where it is also compared with the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean (see Table 1).

Moreover, EHEA becomes particularly relevant because it is at the junction between education, research and innovation, and employment (economy and society). As such, the consolidation of a European Research Area (ERA) is also sought, where research ranges from doctoral programmes – as privileged training for researchers – to innovation and transfer that are linked to the productive and technological system. EHEA's Erasmus+ and EEI's Horizon Europe are programmes aimed at promoting international exchanges and organising cooperation between countries in the face of the European Union's greatest challenge: employability.

8 All information regarding the process that shaped the current European higher education system can be seen at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/es/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/bologna-process

2. Is it possible to extend the European initiative to Latin America and the Caribbean?

To talk about bi-regional integration, it would be necessary to discuss the integration of education systems in the two regions. Given that EHEA has already been discussed, it would be reasonable to do the same for LAC. However, there is no similar educational integration process in the region, and it is difficult to replicate the European model because Latin American and Caribbean states lack a supra-state entity with regulatory capacities, a common political-institutional structure, budgetary capacity, and, most importantly, mandatory decision-making for all countries.

It is necessary to carry out an analysis that considers the diversity of sub-regional educational integration initiatives that bring together several countries and that are part of broader regional integration processes, such as MERCOSUR or the Pacific Alliance. But the limitation, also here, is that there is no institutional structure of an executive nature because integration schemes are not consolidated or developed in that direction.

As regards the major initiatives from OAS and CELAC, the same constraint appears again: they do not have competence at the governmental level on education matters and, hence, there is no effective government or decision-making action. In addition to this, with regard to CELAC, it is the only framework that includes Latin America and the Caribbean, and thus, it is more of a political space for convergence and coordination.

It is also necessary to consider other projects of international organisations, beyond the continent and the subcontinent. For instance, UNESCO has coverage to produce public policies which, however, need the ratification of governments. Therefore, its implementation capacity is also reduced.

On the other hand, there is the integration initiative of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), which includes the Ibero-American countries, but excludes most of the Caribbean countries and reduces their integration languages to Spanish and Portuguese. While it is the only Euro-Latin American institutional initiative, whose virtue is that it brings together most countries in Latin America and two Europeans, it is neither European nor Caribbean. Still, it can serve as a communication space. Furthermore, it can transfer some political will by responding to the mandate of the Ibero-American summits. However, its policies do not have a regulatory nature that binds its members either. In sum, it is difficult to design the Latin American Higher Education Area by following the European Area model because it lacks institutional structures with executive capacity.

If with the current political-institutional configuration, in which LAC lacks a centralised body that coordinates and leads the process, it is not possible to move forward in a space of regional integration so that LAC and the EU can work in tandem, other possibilities for cooperation between university spaces will have to be considered. When analysing

these alternative routes, it is assumed that one of the parties (the EU) can act on a unitary basis, bringing together the joint agenda of 27 countries[9], but at the same time, it should be remembered that each country has its own agenda. For example, there are scholarship policies at the state level.

One way and an opportunity to advance in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA is to take advantage of the spaces created by the different initiatives of the countries and organisations that share integration objectives with CELAC. The aim of which would be to lay the foundations of a model of university cooperation, research and transfer that can then be easily incorporated into a greater integration mechanism of Latin America and the Caribbean such as CELAC.

3. How can the Higher Education Area between the EU and LAC be developed?

One way to identify the advances and opportunities in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA is to highlight its limitations in order to reverse or redirect them. There are three major limitations: (1) the lack of institutional spaces for integration and executive capacity, not at the regional, but at the sub-regional level, since even the most solid projects, such as MERCOSUR, do not advance; (2) inequality between countries and within countries, between their own educational centres, which affects resources and trust; (3) the protection of university systems[10], labour markets and internal professionals, especially in the case of regulated professions.

In this context, one can preserve in the attempt to create a Latin American and Caribbean Higher Education Area by multiplying the efforts of international organisations whose proposals are not implemented at the national level. Then, when that Area becomes a reality, a symmetrical relationship with the EU can be established. Another option would be to build that Area as something more open from what there is, using three possible ways in the relationship with the EU: (1) relationship between sub-regional institutions and the EU, or some EU countries; (2) creation of integration spaces between LAC countries and the EU, further establishing bilateral relations (for example, national and multinational scholarship programmes referenced in the chapter on mobility); (3) individual incorporation of institutions and researchers into EU programmes (as will be seen in the Erasmus+ programmes or Horizon Europe).

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9 As regards EU, in the case of the Erasmus programme, there are 35 countries in total: the 33 countries of the programme (27 EU members + 6 associated countries, of which 3 are from the European Free Trade Association and 3 acceding/potential candidate countries) plus the United Kingdom and Switzerland that are not associated and that have special conditions regarding funding.

10 In almost all Latin American constitutions, university autonomy and the ability to self-govern universities are guaranteed. There are even cases, such as that of Guatemala, in which universities play an important role in the country's institutional framework. Here, the constitution regulates the form of government of San Carlos University and makes it a participant in decision-making processes and in the appointment of public officials. In summary, in many cases, it is possible that a constitutional reform would have to be made, which would make the process of building the EU-CELAC HEA even more difficult.

The former options are not exclusive, they can be implemented simultaneously. Even this second alternative which is more fragmentary, consistent with the atomisation that characterises the initiatives of the region, can coexist with the project of a large Higher Education Area for Latin America and the Caribbean. However, this proposal suggests that a shift in viewpoint may be required, one that is not conditioned by the European model and what has been done so far, but is more in line with the realities of the region. Thus, there would be room for a diversified strategy to advance in the construction of the Higher Education Area as a regional body with an additional critical mass resulting from the relationship between countries. Another aspect to keep in mind is that the integration goals differ: the European model has focused on the mobility of students and lecturers to create a European citizenship, while Latin American integration schemes seek to enable professional mobility, focusing more on the importance of qualification recognition.

As can be seen in Table 1, although in Latin America and the Caribbean there is no integrated higher education area like the one that operates in the EU, there is a strong network of organisations, countries and initiatives that work towards the internationalisation of the higher education system in a bi-regional cooperation framework. The mere implementation and operation of these initiatives are clear evidence of the interest of the different actors in bringing together the higher education centres of the two regions. From an institutional point of view, it would be ideal to coordinate the multiple mechanisms in order not to duplicate efforts and establish learning patterns that are then incorporated with the purpose of improving the processes or replicating them in the cases of successful initiatives. Many of them will be presented in the following chapters.

To conclude this section, it should be noted that the latest advances in Europe for the period 2021-2027 are a (1) a new Erasmus programme that incorporates digital transformation and professional training and (2) the implementation, since 2020, of the European Research Area (ERA), whose development framework for this period is Horizon Europe and through which research and innovation (R&I) increase their institutional and budgetary capacities.

Regarding Latin America and the Caribbean, efforts to build regional integration models and the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean of UNESCO's International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) should also be highlighted.[11]

These integration initiatives are developed at the sub-regional level and, even though they are incomplete and do not cover all the countries of Latin America and

11 See the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374532/PDF/374532qaa.pdf.multi.page=3 and UNESCO-IESALC (2019a).

the Caribbean, they do contribute to institutional development and the creation of a theoretical framework on what should be done. The problem is the lack of coordination or the limited capacity to implement measures that enable progress. It is also possible that the European model is conditioning the way convergence is presented and it may be time to adopt a different point of view.

Table 1. Structure and potentialities of EHEA compared to the Latin American and Caribbean situation

EHEA		**LAC**	
EHEA as an EU public policy with executive capacity		**There is no parastatal organisation with executive capacity in LAC**	**Systems between the region's countries**
Institutional structure	Project framework Decision levels Defined competence Budget allocation	There is no common institutional structure	Atomisation of projects and actions Regional and educational integration: • Mercosur • Pacific Alliance • Central America • Alliances between universities Interregional programmes and initiatives: • EIC
Common frameworks that ensure recognition and mobility	Quality Assurance: • EQAVET • ENQA • EQAR	Quality systems and recognition projects	Quality systems and harmonisation projects: • SIACES • ORACLE • RIACES • DIES • CEAI • ARCU-SUR • HICA • SICEAVES • CCA (second level agency) • MCESCA (Qualifications Framework)
	Degree harmonisation • EQF • EDS		
	Studies • ECTS		Proyectos de reconocimiento (no se consolidan) • RecoLATIN • Recognition Matters • EQUAM-LA
	Degrees • EDS		
European Union Programmes	Erasmus + • Credit Mobility • Erasmus Mundus Horizon Europe • MSCA	Sub-regional mobility programmes: atomisation and dispersion	Institutional Multilateral National

Source: own elaboration based on the sources cited in the study.

SYSTEMS FOR THE RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

1. Introduction

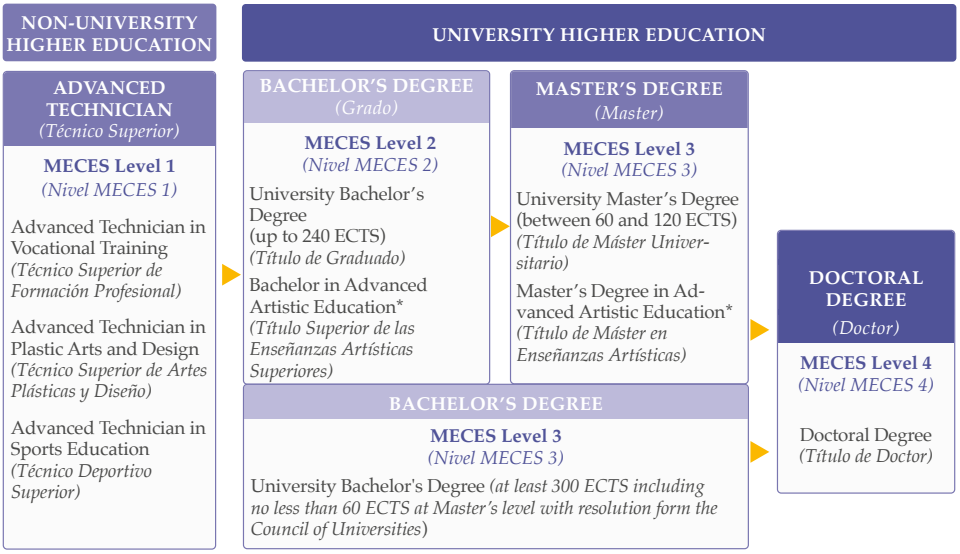
International mobility in higher education, EU-CELAC EHEA's key objective, is linked to the recognition of the completion of studies, both by the institution of origin and by the institution of destination and, ultimately, by the institutions that regulate higher education in the different countries. This recognition, in turn, requires systems that ensure the quality of studies, degrees and institutions. In relation to this, this section will describe the agencies and organisations that, at different levels, aim to harmonise degrees, establish quality evaluation mechanisms and improve information systems as a preliminary step to develop a recognition and validation system that, among other things, guarantees exchanges and mobility.

With regard to the recognition of degrees, it also applies the existence of the same system that guarantees quality and transparency, both at the degree and institutional level, but two purposes must be differentiated: (1) the one which affects the continuity of studies; and (2) the one which impacts on employment. It should be highlighted that the second point goes beyond the analysis of educational systems, as it is also related to immigration policies –especially in EU countries– and attracting qualified human resources.

In the first case, EHEA recognises three cycles or levels of studies – bachelor's, master's and doctoral – based on the qualifications that, in turn, are linked to an ECTS credit range as can be seen from Spain's example in Figure 1. In turn, each national system establishes a qualification framework that classifies the different higher education qualifications and relates them to the European context, according to the common framework of reference (European Qualification Framework, EQF). The European Diploma Supplement (EDS) provides this information for each specific degree, providing transparency and facilitating comparability at the international level.

As in Latin America and the Caribbean there is no common framework of reference that can be applied to degrees to continue studies and even though these three levels are present in most countries in the region, when accessing a degree of a higher cycle in other countries it is common for each receiving institution to individually assess the records of the courses taken and the skills and abilities; except in the case of bilateral

Figure 1. Information on the National System of Higher Education that appears in item 8 of the EDS model that is issued in Spain



* Advanced Artistic Education is non-university education within the Spanish Higher Education System.

Source: Royal Decree 22/2015 of 23 January which establishes the requirements for issuing the European Diploma Supplement to the degrees regulated by Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October, which determined the regulation of official university studies and amended the Royal Decree 1027/2011 of 15 July, creating the Spanish Higher Education Qualifications Framework.

agreements between countries or institutions.[12] This is something that has also been done in EU countries and institutions as a result of the applications from LAC students who wanted to continue their studies whether in the same cycle or in a higher cycle or to qualify for scholarships. Although the recognition is not always automatic, it is not a process that lasts over time, since the records are individually assessed and with a specific academic objective. For example, in the case of Spain, universities have established procedures to evaluate the record of students graduating from non-EU education systems and provide them with access to master's degrees. When it comes to continuing studies, if they have not yet obtained the degree, the recognition and credit transfer commissions of specific degrees may decide to transfer the records. In the case of scholarships, as will be seen in the corresponding chapter, the institutions

12 In Sánchez and Hernández (2017: 201-209) the difficulties in the recognition of degrees, the diversity of regulations and the lack of common criteria that lead to the establishment of bilateral or small groups of countries' agreements are analysed. In this situation, UNESCO's promotion of the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean stands out, as well as the agreement to review it at the Meeting of Representatives of Governments and Universities of 18 Latin American and Caribbean countries (Brasilia 2015). In addition to this, IESALC's initiative to create a database on bilateral, multilateral or inter-institutional cooperation is also mentioned. The importance of strengthening higher education and research databases and statistics and of making them open to foster collaboration between governments and institutions is present in the 2018-2028 Action Plan of the III Regional Conference on Higher Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO-IESALC 2018).

responsible for the programmes also evaluate records as part of the verification of requirements for access to grants. To facilitate this task of evaluating the credentials of foreign students for access to higher education, there is a "European Manual of Recognition for Higher Education Institutions" (Nuffic 2020) that translates the principles of the Lisbon Convention (CRL) for fair recognition.[13] Apart from providing a set of practical guidelines, it also serves as an improvement tool by gathering the best practices and offering them through examples.[14]

On the one hand, these practices demonstrate the lack of a superstructure that automates these procedures, but on the other, they are contributing or can contribute to the construction of a shared area by means of more agile procedures than that of the homologations of degrees before the ministry with competence in higher education, which further leads to the second case, in which the recognition of degrees is intended to access employment. However, there is no fast track for this, nor between Latin American countries. The biggest issue in Europe occurs when degrees affect regulated professions, whose regulations are applicable to the EU, the European Free Trade Association and Switzerland (with specific rules).[15] It should be added that there is no single access to the European university system, neither for the first case (partial recognition) nor for the second (degree recognition). Thus, for example, if the foreign degree has been recognised in an EU country, this does not imply that the profession can automatically be practised in another EU country unless the profession has been practised for a minimum of years in the country where it was recognised (in the case of medicine, for instance, there are three minimum years of professional practice in the European country where the degree was recognised).

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13 CRL or LRC (1997 and subsequent subsidiary texts) specifies the principles of equitable recognition of qualifications and study periods. The burden of proof of recognition is transferred to the target institution, which is the one that must demonstrate that a foreign qualification does not meet the requirements for recognition, that is, that there is a substantial difference between the foreign qualification and that of the receiving country. The concept of recognition is, compared to that of homologation, more inclusive, in the sense that it does not try to establish an equivalence between the contents of the curricula and incorporates the non-substantial differences of the qualification as something enriching.

14 The European Commission has funded the EAR HEI (European Area of Recognition – A Manual for the Higher Education Institutions) projects that have led to the European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions (Nuffic 2020). The first version is from 2012, and this report has worked with the third edition from 2020.

15 These are professions whose access or right to exercise is subject to having specific qualifications. In addition to holding a specific degree, it is required to have passed certain exams and/or have registered in a professional body to be able to exercise it. There have been several European directives as well as jurisprudence to strengthen the domestic market and promote the free movement of professionals. The latest directive (EU) 2005/36/EC, on the recognition of professional qualifications, determines three recognition systems within the EU/EFTA and Switzerland: automatic for harmonised professions under minimum training conditions: doctor, nurse responsible for general care, dental practitioner, veterinarian, midwife, pharmacist and architect; automatic on the basis of professional experience: crafts, trade and industry sectors; general system on the basis of mutual recognition of qualifications.
The trend is to simplify recognition and administrative procedures, with certain tools such as the European Professional Card (Directive 2013/55/EU amending 2005/36/EC) and to enable information systems that include the creation of alert mechanisms to protect patients and consumers from professionals suspended from functions or disqualified in a country (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/983, of 24 June 2015).
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/ES/legal-content/summary/system-for-the-recognition-of-professional-qualifications.html

In view of this situation, the analysis of accreditation and quality assessment mechanisms is the first step to evaluating the advances in the construction of a common higher education area. If studies are not comparable in quality and content, little can be done. For that reason, the following chapter will first discuss initiatives aimed at building interregional and regional accreditation systems as a quality guarantee that ensures correspondence between the qualifications granted by the degrees. Credit recognition projects will also be mentioned, beyond the practices indicated above that are managed by the higher education institutions themselves. This chapter closes with the presentation and analysis of a normative initiative: The Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, promoted by the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC).

2. Accreditation systems

There are state bodies or agencies responsible for accrediting quality at the national level in almost all countries, as well as others of a regional nature, as reflected in the study on "Institutional and regulatory foundations for the establishment of the European, Latin American and Caribbean Area of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation" of 2017.[16] These accreditations are a guarantee for citizens and for employing companies, but they also make institutions visible and facilitate internationalisation.

In addition, accreditation systems, especially those created at the international level, are aimed at laying down the conditions for the possibility of automatic recognition of studies and degrees. This section analyses those that bring together several countries, whether interregional or sub-regional.[17] First, the Ibero-American System for Quality Assurance (SIACES) is examined, within the Ibero-American Knowledge Area (EIC) which also includes the Ibero-American Registry of Accredited Higher Education Programmes and the ENQA-SIACES strategic link as part of the SIACES quality seals.

16 Regarding state agencies or bodies dependent on or independent of the government, as well as those that are regional and in charge of quality accreditation, see Sanchez and Hernández (2017: 55-103). This report highlights that Bolivia, Guatemala and Haiti are the only LAC countries that do not have an accreditation or quality assessment system for HEIs. As an advance, it should be highlighted that Bolivia has, since 2023, a National Secretariat for Assessment and Accreditation under the Executive Committee of the Bolivian University (CEUB) and for some degrees, there is ARCU-SUR. However, the Pluri-national Observatory of Educational Quality (OPCE) has not included higher education so far (before 2010 and since 2005 it was the Observatory of Educational Quality, OCE). See: https://ceub.edu.bo/ and https://opce.gob.bo/webopce/index.php/archivo/evaluaciones

In the case of Guatemala, there is an advance, as some universities or degrees are accredited through other agencies, such as Universidad del Valle, accredited for the period 2020-2025 by the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education of France (Hcéres for its acronym in French), or the degrees in Architecture and Graphic Design of the Universidad del Itsmo accredited by the Central American Agency for the Accreditation of Architecture and Engineering Programmes (ACAAI). There is no information available for Haiti.

17 For more information, see the "Matrix of objectives, strategies and initiatives for the construction of the EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education". Newsletter EU-LAC 05/2020. https://eulacfoundation.org/system/files/10_matriz-objetivos-estrategias-iniciativas.pdf EU-LAC Foundation (2020) as well as: https://eulacfoundation.org/es/education

Below there will be a review of other initiatives: Regional Observatory for the Quality of Equity in Higher Education (ORACLE); the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIACES); the Dialogues on Innovative Strategies in Higher Education (DIES) Programme; the Central American Higher Education Harmonisation and Innovation (HICA) project; the Council for International Assessment and Accreditation (CEAI) and the University Degree Regional Accreditation System (ARCU-SUR) linked to Mercosur's international mobility. None of these covers all LAC countries, nor is there the EU as such, but there are higher education institutions and agencies from some EU countries. In some cases, such as the CEAI, the European institutions are partners and not affiliated members.[18]

To conclude this section, the Central American case will be analysed, including the HICA project, as it is considered an example of how a system of higher education integration linked to regional integration has been developing for decades.

2.1. Ibero-American Quality Assurance System[19]

The EIC coordinates the actions of Ibero-American Cooperation related to higher education, science and innovation based on the mandates of the summits. Its working areas include ensuring and improving the quality of higher education as a necessary mechanism for the recognition of curricula and degrees. Also, for the promotion of academic mobility. Quality assurance requires collaboration between accreditation systems, as well as improving information systems. In this sense, transparency is key when it comes to building trust between institutions.

In addition to this, the "Convention on the Recognition of Periods of Study and Higher Education Degrees" (XXV Summit of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, November 2016) includes the creation of (1) a quality assurance system: "Ibero-American Quality Assurance System in Higher Education" (SIACES); (2) a register of programmes and institutions: "Ibero-American Registry of Accredited Higher Education Programmes and Institutions"; and (3) an information system: "Information System of Higher Education in Ibero-America".[20]

SIACES was born from the Declaration of Guatemala (2018), was launched in 2019 and brings together national quality agencies in higher education. The SIACES seals (as of the XXVII Summit of 2021) certify, at the regional level, the quality of the institutions

18 More information can be found at: https://ceai.website

19 For more information, visit: https://www.siaces.org

20 See the presentation by Mercedes Siles Molina, director of ANECA, at the Menéndez Pelayo International University summer course on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Europe and Latin America (5-7 September 2022). https://www.aneca.es/-/mercedes-siles-molina-presenta-el-estudio-sobre-el-aseguramiento-de-la-calidad-para-el-reconocimiento-de-periodos-de-estudio-y-t%C3%ADtulos-de-educaci%C3%B3n-superior-en-iberoam%C3%A9rica-
See also the Cartagena de Indias Declaration "Youth, Entrepreneurship and Education" (XXV Summit of 2016).
https://www.segib.org/wp-content/uploads/Declaracion-de-Cartagena-de-Indias-V.F-E.pdf (30.03.2023)

and programmes evaluated by the agencies that meet the requirement of "SIACES' best practices validation". This seal is the only instance of quality validation at the regional level. It aims to improve the role of national agencies while remaining consistent with each country's legislative framework. For this reason, these stamps do not accredit, that is the competence of each country, and they have no legal consequence so they can be granted to universities in any country of the Ibero-American region.

The last and sixth meeting of SIACES members was held on April 21 and 22, 2022 in Buenos Aires and highlighted the implementation of the processes of (1) Agencies' Good Practices Validation, (2) the Ibero-American Registry of Accredited Higher Education Programmes, (3) the SIACES Training School, (4) the SIACES Quality Seals, (5) the management of agreements with other multilateral quality organisations, such as INQAAHE and ENQA. These five actions are detailed below and have been taken from the minutes no. 5 of July 13, 2021[21] and no. 6 of April 21 and 22, 2022[22], as well as from the SIACES website.[23]

A) Validation of best practices. In the first call, 3 certificates were awarded to: ANECA, Spain; CNA, Colombia; and CONEAU, Argentina and a second call was agreed.

B) SIACES Registry, the Ibero-American Registry of Accredited Higher Education Programmes[24] which is accessed from the 13 national agencies that make up the system.

The 13 agencies belonging to 11 countries are: ANECA, Spain; AQUA, Andorra; A3ES, Portugal; CACES, Ecuador; CIEES and COPAES, Mexico; CNA, Chile; CNA, Colombia; CONEAU, Argentina; JAN, Cuba; SINEACE and SUNEDU, Peru; Higher Education Area from the Ministry of Education and Culture, Uruguay. In a 2022 report by ANECA, which is analysed below[25], there is also Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) whose agency is the Central American Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education. Thus, in the Registry there are a total of 18 countries in Ibero-America and 14 agencies as can be seen in Table 2.

21 For more information, see the document on the website: http://www.siaces.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Acta-N%C2%B0-5-SIACES-13-de-Julio-de-2021.pdf

22 For more information, refer to the document on the website: https://www.siaces.org/archivos/Acta6SIACES21-4-2022.pdf

23 For more information, visit the website: http://www.siaces.org last visit: 23/04/2023.

24 For more information, visit the website: https://www.siaces.org/registro-de-programas-acreditados/

25 In this regard, see the report "Quality Assurance Systems for the recognition of periods of study and degrees in Higher Education in Ibero-America. Context study in the European Union and in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States", published by ANECA, SEGIB (2022).

Table 2. National Agencies that constitute the SIACES Registry

Ibero-American Registry of Accredited Higher Education Programmes*			
COUNTRY	**AGENCY**	**DESCRIPTION**	**WEB**
Andorra	AQUA Agència de Qualitat de l' Ensenyament Superior d'Andorra	An institution governed by public law aimed at guaranteeing the quality of higher education in Andorra.	https://www.aqua.ad/
Argentina	CONEAU: National Commission for University Quality Assessment and Accreditation	Body responsible for the assessment and quality assurance of institutions and programmes. External assessment.	https://www.coneau.gob.ar/coneau/
Central America: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama	CCA: Central American Higher Education Accreditation Council	Second level accreditation agency. It gives international validity to the accreditation of the quality of Higher Education that is carried out in the different countries of the Central American region.	http://ccacreditacion.org/miembros-del-cca/
Chile	CNA: National Accreditation Commission	A public and autonomous body, it verifies and promotes the quality of institutions and programmes.	https://www.cnachile.cl/Paginas/Inicio.aspx
Colombia	CNA: National Accreditation Council	Advisory and coordination body in the accreditation of institutions and programmes. It is academic in nature.	https://www.cna.gov.co/portal/
Cuba	JAN: National Accreditation Board	Evaluation and accreditation of programmes and institutions.	https://www.ecured.cu/Junta_de_Acreditaci%C3%B3n_Nacional_de_la_Rep%C3%BAblica_de_Cuba
Ecuador	CACES: Higher Education Quality Assurance Council	Technical public body, with legal and independent status. Institutional and programme accreditation.	https://www.caces.gob.ec/
Spain	ANECA: National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency	An autonomous body of the General State Administration attached to the Ministry with competence in universities. It provides accreditation for the Spanish university system (institutions, programmes and lecturers).	https://www.aneca.es/

Ibero-American Registry of Accredited Higher Education Programmes*			
COUNTRY	**AGENCY**	**DESCRIPTION**	**WEB**
Mexico	CIEES: Inter-institutional Committees for the Assessment of Higher Education	Eight committees specialised in different areas of knowledge. They are made up of authorities, experts and academics from different higher education institutions. Institutional and programme accreditation.	https://www.ciees.edu.mx/
	COPAES: Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education	Non-profit civil association that recognises and supervises organisations that, in turn, accredit higher education programmes taught under any modality in Mexico. It is the only instance authorised by the Federal Government for this purpose.	https://www.copaes.org/index.html
Peru	SINEACE: National System for Assessment, Accreditation and Certification of Educational Quality	It accredits programmes and professional courses of study. It is voluntary. Related to continuous improvement, it is subsequent to the license granted by SUNEDU.	https://www.gob.pe/sineace
	SUNEDU: National Superintendence of University Higher Education	It accredits the institutional licensing that guarantees that universities comply to provide a quality educational service. It is compulsory.	https://www.gob.pe/sunedu
Portugal	A3ES: Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior	Private law institution, with legal status and recognised public utility. It is independent in the exercise of its powers, without prejudice to the guiding principles legally established by the State.	https://www.a3es.pt/

* https://www.siaces.org/registro-de-programas-acreditados/
Source: own elaboration based on the information of the different agencies mentioned in the table.

C) SIACES Training School. The activities are organised by the member agencies of the system and are of two types: those that constitute a shared space by the agencies themselves for the organisation of workshops and courses, among other activities ("Training activities of the SIACES agencies"), and those that are aimed at the Ibero-American Knowledge Area that SIACES validates as Good Practices in Training ("Training activities towards the EIC").[26]

D) SIACES Quality Seals. The procedure to obtain this seal in virtual learning is established. This seal "validates at the Ibero-American level the quality certificates of distance higher education programmes and systems, in non-school, non-face-to-face, semi-face-to-face, hybrid, open, online, e-learning or virtual modalities, developed by

26 For more information, visit the website: https://www.siaces.org/la-escuela/

SIACES member agencies that meet the requirement of Validation of Good Practices" (Annex I of the minutes of July 13, 2021). In the same minutes, it is stated that this complies with its "Approved Work Plan, contributing to the improvement of the quality of higher education in Latin America, as well as strengthening cooperation between national quality assessment and assurance and accreditation systems, with a regional seal that enables the quality of virtual learning to be accredited, in line with the Andorra Action Programme agreed at the XXVII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government held in 2021". The "General criteria for the evaluation of virtual education" were established at the second plenary session held in May 2019 in Salamanca (Annex II of the reference minutes). In sum, a procedure is established for the accreditation of virtual learning, not of programmes or institutions, developed by agencies that have obtained the validation of best practices, that is, the three mentioned in action 1), which has no legal implication, since it is always behind the national agencies.

E) Management of agreements with other multilateral quality organisations, such as INQAAHE and ENQA.

There is a memorandum of understanding between SIACES and ENQA[27] from April 21, 2022, in which they agree to reinforce the collaboration and exchange of experiences and information to ensure the quality of education in their regions based on the importance of internationalisation. The memorandum does not imply legal or economic obligations, is a declaration of friendly cooperation whose content may change or be amended and its duration is five years. On October 8, 2022, SIACES signed an agreement with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) by which SIACES is included in the network as a member.

Based on the analysis of the development of SIACES since its creation, it can be stated that this initiative contributes to the creation of the shared space that the EIC intends to be, as it brings together in a structure the quality evaluation agencies of different countries, while it aims to articulate some practices that promote collaboration between systems and improve the exchange of information, as is the case of the Ibero-American Registry of Accredited Higher Education Programmes. Something that was recommended in the study by Sánchez and Hernández (2017:102). Moreover, with the management of agreements with multilateral organisations such as INQAAHE and ENQA, it transcends the Ibero-American sphere. However, in comparison to the quality assurance systems that are implemented at the European Union level, in the latter, the political will to forge the common space laid the foundations for quality accreditation. In LAC, in turn, quality accreditation came first (Sánchez and Hernández 2017:101-102). In addition, SIACES' and SEGIB's efforts cannot go beyond reconciling the political will of countries that are, in fact, those with executive capacity.

27 For more information, the document can be consulted on the website: https://www.enqa.eu/news/enqa-siaces-agreement/
See also: https://www.siaces.org/sellodecalidadsiaces/

In relation to the advances and the importance of monitoring the implemented mechanisms, a comparative study should be mentioned, which was conducted in 2022[28] and that relates, from the EU-CELAC perspective, the quality assurance systems of higher education in SIACES member countries. This study is part of the strategy that has been developed from the agreements of the Ibero-American Summits and aims to compare the systems, harmonise them and generate mutual trust that allows progress in the recognition of periods of studies and degrees.

2.1.1. SIACES: recommendations and practices that hinder comparability between systems

The ANECA study (2022) analyses, based on a survey, the evaluation mechanisms of programmes and degrees in each country (see Table 2). These two axes particularly refer (1) to the regulated procedures that evaluate the training programmes in order to obtain approval as university degrees; and (2) to the processes that certify and accredit the quality of the degrees, including the improvement. In each axis, a set of questions is broken down to, based on the quantitative and descriptive results of the answers, identify the comparable elements that are classified according to whether they facilitate such comparability.

Below and within each axis are the proposals taken from this work that apply to the case study insofar as they can contribute to generating a theoretical base and best practices in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA.

A. Recommendations on the evaluation procedures of the training programmes to obtain approval as university degrees:

- Unifying the formats of the memory of the training curriculum would contribute to the recognition of degrees. However, in 50 % of the university systems surveyed, there is no common model and one reason alleged is the academic and curricular autonomy of universities.
- Identifying an educational system body as responsible for the procedures to establish the suitability of a new training programme facilitates processing and recognition by third parties. If there are several bodies, depending on the scope of degrees, there may be a lack of homogeneity. It is recommended that there is a lead agency or that those ultimately responsible for the education system can be clearly identified.
- Going beyond the university itself in the qualitative assessment processes of the programmes guarantees objectivity and ensures that there are no differences in compliance with the standards set in the country.
- Registering the programme once it reaches a degree status is necessary for transparency purposes. In almost all the systems surveyed, the registry is publicly

28 ANECA, SEGIB (2022)

accessible and the person responsible for it is the highest authority in the approval of degrees (ministry or equivalent).

- Periodically reviewing the incorporated degrees to maintain approval. In one-third of the systems, there is no periodic review process of the incorporated degrees or it is voluntary. This is considered an obstacle to quality assurance. The periodicity of the review should be based on educational levels and the length of study periods (for example, more reduced in master's than in bachelor's degrees).
- Tending towards the institutional evaluation of the centre or the university to avoid bureaucracy. It is also verified that in almost all systems there are mandatory evaluation processes of the already incorporated degrees as quality assurance and improvement; it is also noted that there are internal and external monitoring systems. Additionally, quality seals are recognised as further facilitators.
- Avoiding voluntary evaluations and the coexistence of different accrediting agencies, some official and others without recognition. This, in addition to generating confusion, hinders recognition by third countries.
- B. Regarding the evaluation processes to accredit/certify the quality and improvement of university degrees, some practices that hinder comparability would be noteworthy:
- As mentioned in the previous point, it is difficult to compare when there is no responsible body or when the competence to implement the evaluation protocol is not clear. In addition, it is recommended that this be a public body and as autonomous as possible.
- In an evaluation, it is the accomplishment of goals that should have an impact and not the teaching modality.
- Regarding internationalisation, mobility programmes, while significant, cannot be the only action considered. The international validity of the degree, the application of transnational quality criteria or the difficulty of hiring international teaching staff must be considered.

The study aims at the need to set fundamental elements such as the common minimums from which higher education institutions, in the use of their autonomy, establish criteria that allow comparability and mutual recognition. These fundamental elements would be a comprehensive vision that encompasses all missions (teaching, research transfer, internationalisation, etc.); diversification of institutional approaches, objectives and strategies as well as agents involved; peculiarities of each teaching modality (face-to-face, non-face-to-face, hybrid); regulation of student admission; material resources for learning; evaluation of learning outcomes; and teaching staff policy (ANECA 2022: 128).

In conclusion, based on the proposals by Sánchez and Hernández (2017), a systematisation is offered here, which helps advance towards greater transparency and improve the higher education quality accreditation systems in Latin America.

2.2. Other initiatives

SIACES, which has been analysed first, brings together a set of actions that promotes interregional links between quality accreditation systems within the Ibero-American Knowledge Area. The capacity to generate different structures to systematise information and maintain cooperative relationships is highlighted in this case. However, as has been mentioned before, the capacity for intervention in national systems is limited and it would be more based on the development of an incentive system. But there are more initiatives, as mentioned at the beginning of this section and it is reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Accreditation systems

Accreditation systems		Web
SIACES (SEGIB)	Ibero-American System for Quality Assurance	https://www.siaces.org/
ORACLE	Regional Observatory for the Quality of Equity in Higher Education	https://observatorio-oracle.org/es/home
RIACES	Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education	http://riaces.org/
DIES Programme (DAAD)	Dialogues on innovative strategies in Higher Education	https://www.daad.de/en/information-services-for-higher-education-institutions/further-information-on-daad-programmes/higher-education-management-dies/
HICA (CSUCA)	Central American Higher Education Harmonisation and Innovation Project Co-funded by Erasmus+	http://hica.csuca.org/
CEAI (UDUAL)	Council for International Assessment and Accreditation	https://www.udual.org/principal/ceai-consejo-de-evaluacion-y-acreditacion-internacional/
ARCU-SUR (MERCOSUR)	Regional Accreditation System for University Degrees	http://arcusur.org/arcusur_v2/
SICEVAES (CSUCA)	Central American System of Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation	https://sicevaes.csuca.org/

Source: own elaboration based on the information of the different agencies mentioned in the table.

ORACLE[29]

Project funded by the Erasmus+ programme in which 35 universities from 15 countries in Latin America and 5 from Europe participate. Unlike the other systems or tools, it does not deal with institutional or training programme quality, but focuses its analysis on the people who make up the three levels: students, administration and services and teaching staff to improve the quality of equity.

29 For more information, refer to the website: https://observatorio-oracle.org/es/home

RIACES[30]

The network is made up of 39 regional and international bodies and public or private accrediting agencies, present in 18 countries in Central America, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe.[31] It promotes the accreditation and certification of higher education quality. It is an independent, non-profit organisation.

In July 2021, it launched with OEI, and thanks to the General Secretariat's initiative, the Kalos Virtual Ibero-America (KVI) seal, the first one aimed at accrediting the quality of Ibero-American degrees taught online. OEI had begun this process in 2020, given the evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated the consolidation of this higher education modality. The OEI had already confirmed an increase in enrolment in distance higher education since the 2010s and assumed the interest of people in this modality, who, for work reasons, among others, cannot attend in person. Moreover, it facilitates lifelong learning, which also increases productivity. OEI reconciled the participation of different quality agencies in the Ibero-American region to develop an Ibero-American Guide for the Evaluation of the Quality of Distance Education (28/05/2020), in addition to a procedure and evaluation criteria.[32]

The OEI also includes quality as the support of trust between institutions and, as such, a strategic line to promote mobility and internationalisation in its 2030 University Ibero-America project.[33]

DIES[34]

Dialogues on innovative strategies in Higher Education. It is a German initiative of the DAAD that seeks to improve quality through cooperation in university management.

HICA[35]

It is one of the 76 Erasmus+ Capacity Building Projects (CBHE) for Latin America that is part of the cooperation between the region and the EU through this programme for the period 2014-2020. Its objective is to contribute to the harmonisation of higher education in Central America by creating a framework of regional qualifications and defining the learning outcomes in the degree and the credits in each higher education cycle.

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30 For more information, visit: http://riaces.org/

31 Information about its members can be found at the following link http://riaces.org/miembros-mapa-interactivo/

32 There are eleven quality agencies and associations of Ibero-American distance universities attached to the seal: AIESAD, ACESAD, Caled, the Madri+d Foundation, the Directorate of Evaluation and Accreditation of the Andalusian Knowledge Agency, ACSUCYL, CONAIC, ACCECISO, CACEI, ANEAES and CONAED. More information can be found on the website: https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/sello-kalos-virtual-iberoamerica/el-sello-kalos-virtual-iberoamerica and in the Ibero-American Guide for the Evaluation of the Quality of Distance Education (28/05/2020), available at the following link: https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/publicaciones/guia-iberoamericana-de-evaluacion-de-la-calidad-educacion-a-distancia

33 For more information, see the website: https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/universidad-iberoamerica-2030/calidad

34 Further information can be found at: https://www.daad.de/en/information-services-for-higher-education-institutions/further-information-on-daad-programmes/higher-education-management-dies/

35 For more information, refer to the website: http://hica.csuca.org/

CEAI[36]

It is a sub-regional initiative. It covers higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean and is an independent evaluation body, made up of representatives of Higher Education institutions of UDUAL (Union of Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean[37]). In its presentation, it states that "it conducts itself with unrestricted respect to the national evaluation and accreditation processes".

ARCU-SUR[38]

It is the Mercosur regional accreditation system that since 2006 has accredited MARCA's degrees (for more information see exchange systems) and this accreditation is a necessary condition for them to be part of the Mercosur mobility system.

The situation described allows us to anticipate some partial conclusions. So far, all international projects and accreditation systems have mainly an advisory role. The system of incentives for institutions to meet quality requirements or evaluate their degrees is not clear. Unlike all of them, degree accreditation by ARCU-SUR does have consequences, as it is a necessary condition to participate in international mobility. It may be due to the fact that ARCU-SUR results from the agreement between the ministries of education of Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. This is emphasised because, as will be seen for the rest of the cases, articulating a project does not lead to its implementation if (1) there is no organisation with the capacity to govern or (2) there is no capacity to influence decision-makers. Arbitrating consensus for concrete actions between the participating nations or bodies has consequences: on the one hand, the organisations and institutions involved in the construction of an EU-CELAC HEA must duplicate their efforts to develop initiatives that lack a regulatory framework; on the other hand, the commitment of the states must be renewed, and this may depend on changing governments. Consequently, budgeting projects and providing continuity to actions becomes more challenging.

Finally, to close this section on higher education accreditation systems, a study of a Central American proposal that is currently being worked on, will be presented. The aim is to show the difficulties and possibilities of a regional accreditation process that is part of a regional integration system, the Central American Integration System (SICA)[39], made up of Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, small countries, geographically close and with a historical trajectory of cooperation. The SICA is a global, political, sociocultural, economic and environmental project that addresses common challenges to improve the well-being of the population and to have more international presence. Furthermore, each country decides on the speed of its participation in the process.

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36 For more information, visit the website: https://www.udual.org/principal/ceai-consejo-de-evaluacion-y-acreditacion-internacional/

37 Established in 1949, it brings together 22 Latin American countries and has among its objectives the promotion of mobility, credit recognition and transfer, evaluation processes and quality assurance. It is supported by UNESCO as stated in the information available at: https://www.udual.org/principal/

38 For a description of the system, see the website: http://arcusur.org/arcusur_v2/

39 Further information about the programme can be found at: https://www.sica.int/

Without intending to exhaust the topic, the educational structures of regional integration are detailed below (Table 4) and those that are of interest for this chapter will be analysed. However, throughout the report, more references to SICA will be found, for example, in the chapter on international mobility.

2. 3. Central America: higher education and regional integration

Central America has considered higher education an instrument for regional integration since the late 1940s when the Central American University Confederation and the Central American Higher University Council (CSUCA) were created in 1948 during the I Central American University Congress (San Salvador). During the 1960s, it promoted a Plan for the Regional Integration of Central American Higher Education (PIRESC) that established the need to promote studies and institutes in strategic areas for the region. It also contemplates the drafting of agreements for the recognition of studies and teaching staff exchange programmes, among other measures. In the mid-70s and until the early 90s there is a crisis of the system due to armed conflicts in the region.

The second stage of the CSUCA began in 1995, when the perspective of regional integration in the field of higher education was resumed with the approval of PIRESC II. This second plan includes the creation and development of the Regional University Systems, some of which are the origin of the current regional educational integration bodies described in the V PIRESC, approved in November 2021 (see Table 4).

Table 4. Regional educational integration structures in Central America and the Dominican Republic

Educational integration structures		Web
CCA	Central American Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education	http://ccacreditacion.org/
CSUCA	Higher Council of Central American Universities	https://hica.csuca.org/
The Middle American Programme of Academic Exchange ANUIES-CSUCA[40]		
SEDUCA	Central American University Publishing System	https://seduca.csuca.org/
SICAUS	Central American System of University-Society Relations	

40 Karla Marmolejo and Jorge Dettmer. "The Middle American Programme of Academic Exchange ANUIES-CSUCA". Higher Education Magazine Vol. XXXV (1), No. 137, January-March 2006, pp. 25-39. ISSN: 0185-2760. They evaluate the impact of the Programme during the period 1996-2003. It was created with the PIRESC II as the Mexican-Central American Academic Exchange Programme and the latest information is a call for cooperation projects in 2010. https://embamex.sre.gob.mx/nicaragua/images/stories/Convocatorias/20100712conv.pdf

Educational integration structures		Web
SICEAVES[41]	Central American System for the Evaluation and Harmonisation of Higher Education	https://sicevaes.csuca.org/
SIESCA	System for the Internationalisation of Central American Higher Education	
SIIDCA	Central American Integrated Document Information System	https://siesca.uned.ac.cr/
SIRCIP	Central American and Caribbean Regional System in Research and Postgraduate Studies	https://siidca.csuca.org/
SIREICU[42]	Sistema Regional de Información y Comunicación Universitaria	https://vinv.ucr.ac.cr/es/tags/sircip
SIREVE	Sistema Regional de Vida Estudiantil	https://sireve.csuca.org/

Source: Own elaboration based on the information of the different agencies mentioned in the table..

In this plan V, the third and fifth programmes respectively focused on quality and internationalisation, which are fundamental in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA. As regards the latter, international mobility is an objective of the fourth programme on student life.

The two large axes of the model are discussed below: first, the major educational integration structures in Central America and second, the Central American Higher Education Qualifications Framework (MCESCA).

2.3.1. Educational Integration Structures

The main body is the Central American Higher University Council, CSUCA, which includes 19 public universities from the eight countries that make up SICA. Its goal is regional integration and strengthening higher education in the region, for which it has several systems and programmes. For this section, SICEAVES, with competence in evaluation and harmonisation; and SIESCA, whose objective is internationalisation, and which includes a mobility programme, are taken as references.

SICEVAES

The Central American System for the Evaluation and Harmonisation of Higher Education promotes quality accreditation among CSUCA member universities, as well as the harmonisation of the higher education systems of Central America and the Dominican Republic. It has a Regional Coordination Committee, where universities

41 Current development: Central American Council for the Quality of Higher Education.

42 It begins its operations in June 2021. It doesn't seem to have its own website. For more information: https://redcomunica.csuca.org/index.php/consejo-superior-universitario-centroamericano-csuca/transferencia-de-presidencia-sireicu/ (Accessed: 19/06/2023)

are represented by the vice-rectorates with teaching competence, and which has three technical teams made up of lecturers, academic officials and technicians.

The aim of strengthening harmonisation processes is linked to the creation of a common higher education area where international exchange and collaboration take place within the framework of integration. This is included in programme 3 of the V PIRESC (2021) on "Innovation, Regional Harmonisation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education"[43] One of the lines of action directly linked to this objective is advancing the development of the Qualification Framework for Central American Higher Education (MCESCA), which will be analysed below. In the same programme, objective 4 is aimed at improving internal quality management and strengthening external assessment and accreditation. To this end, promoting information automation and aligning the region's quality evaluation and accreditation organisations with the Central American Accreditation Council (CCA) are identified as courses of action for this objective.[44]

This Council, created in 2003 by the seven countries of Central America, is a second-level agency that gives international validity to the quality accreditation carried out in the different countries of the region. Its partners are public and private universities, ministries with competence in education, as well as the presidents of associations and professional societies. Central American accreditation agencies are also members of this council, some national and two regional: ACAP (Central American Agency for Postgraduate Accreditation) and SIACAP (Academic Accreditation System of Central America and Panama). One from Mexico: COPAES (Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education) and two from European countries: ANECA, Spain and HCERES, France. The CCA has a strategic plan for 2020-2025 with five strategic axes: strategic partners, organisational efficiency, finance, continuous improvement and governance.

The Central American quality assessment and assurance system, as an instrument of harmonisation, is organised not only within the region, but also in relation to partners in the continent and Europe. It is an initiative that is of interest to this study due to its institutional development and the creation of the MCESCA which, as will be seen, has similarities with the European framework.

SIESCA

The System of Internationalisation of Central American Higher Education (2011) aims to institutionalise internationalisation. It is considered an instrument to promote the quality of universities and focuses on training graduates in international skills and promoting the participation of researchers in the scientific community beyond the regional level. With those activities, as well as different forms of university cooperation, CSUCA aims to enhance its visibility among universities outside their borders.

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43 The programme description can be found on the website: https://csuca.org/es/download/programa-3-innovacion-armonizacion-regional-y-aseguramiento-de-la-calidad-de-la-educacion-superior/?wpdmdl=3331&refresh=6425f6738ea441680209523
Document dated February 2, 2022.

44 The programme's description can be found on the website: http://ccacreditacion.org/

Regarding mobility, SIESCA has a permanent programme that was approved in 2013 for lecturers, researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, and academic and administrative managers in order to contribute to regional identity. Concerning students, the planned activities range from enrolment in regular courses to research internships, professional internships and participation in congresses and other activities. The procedure is based on the signing of a Regional Framework Agreement and specific Inter-university Agreements between the institutions involved in mobility where the academic and financial responsibilities of those institutions, the objective and schedule of the activity for which mobility, as well as any other aspect necessary to achieve management effectiveness is established.

Even though the programme is mentioned in this section, it will be later discussed in the chapter concerning international mobility, as the last update of the webpage where this call appears is from 2019 and no more information has been found, neither of calls nor of mobility allocation. There is no model framework agreement either. There is also a note mentioning that the programme is closed.[45]

However, the V PIRESC (2021) will continue to have an impact on student mobility. Thus, programme 5, "Regionalisation and internationalisation of higher education"[46]includes among its strategic objectives the promotion of the development of a common regional area for programme and project exchange, and for the promotion of student, lecturers and administrative and service staff mobility. Likewise, programme 4, "Student Life, Equity and Inclusion" provides international student mobility strategies, both inside and outside the confederation. Moreover, this 2021 document refers to the CA8 Permanent University Mobility Programme, for which there are no recent calls. The ANUIES-CSUCA Middle American Academic Exchange Programme does not appear to be active either.

The latter reflects the difficulties of materialising or giving continuity to certain initiatives that, even as part of a larger set that has been consolidated over time, disappear and it is not easy to find an explanation. Central America is a good example because, as mentioned earlier, it has a global integration system, various specific structures for each sector and programmes –the PIRECs– that have continuity. That is why it can be expected that, as we have just seen in the case of international mobility, the fact that strategies are kept on paper suggests that actions must be carried out again.

The following section will discuss MCESCA, in relation to the harmonisation of the qualifications and the recognition of titles and studies that promote international mobility, both within and outside the region.

45 The description of the programme can be found on the website: https://www.sica.int/iniciativas/movilidad

46 The description of the programme can be found on the website: https://csuca.org/es/download/programa-5-regionalizacion-e-internacionalizacion-de-la-educacion-superior/?wpdmdl=3333&refresh=6425f76e58de11680209774

2.3.2. Central American Higher Education Qualification Framework: MCESCA

In 2009, CSUCA approved the harmonisation of higher education to facilitate recognition and mobility, both at the educational and professional level, in the face of an unfavourable scenario, with different interpretations of degrees and qualifications. The new framework seeks to promote curricular renewal and academic harmonisation based on defining a common regional reference and greater transparency in university degrees in the region. The significant twist is that a university degree is defined by learning outcomes, rather than by entry requirements, programme duration, number of credits, and graduation requirements. The framework is proposed for public and private universities in the region (both types of universities have participated in the project), and it also aims to be a reference tool for quality accreditation agencies.

The process is carried out in two stages: the first with the Alfa PUENTES Project and the second with HICA[47] (which was mentioned above). In both projects there is a collaboration with European partners: the European University Association coordinated the project in the first part, while the second was developed within the framework of the Erasmus + Programme of the European Commission.

Concerning the credit system and the duration of the programmes, it should be noted that, as the curricula are not adapted to the qualifications framework, the proposals attempt to serve as a reference, to encompass all cases and not to contravene legal provisions. This is because in some cases the regulation is general whereas in others, it depends on universities.

Definition of academic credit: credits are defined based on the work a student needs to achieve learning outcomes. Since curricular innovations are not made within this qualification framework (which is based, as has been said, on learning outcomes), credits cannot be assigned, therefore, the reference proposal is formulated based on: 1) the real situation, at that time, of the degrees and programmes; 2) the value of the Central American credit; 3) it excludes the degree in Medicine and Surgery.

Thus, the regulations for the credit system vary by country and are defined with the measure agreed by the CSUCA to promote mobility in the region: "It is the unit of measure of the intensity of the student's work (academic load) that is equal to 45 hours for an academic period (academic), applied to an activity that has been facilitated, supervised, evaluated and approved by the lecturer, which can include face-to-face hours (theory, practice, laboratory, fieldwork interactivity), blended hours (bimodal work), independent work and research hours of the student"[48] (see table 5).

47 See the project's webpage with the presentation of the results: http://hica.csuca.org/

48 See the document of the Central American Higher University Council. Item tenth of the LXXXVIII Ordinary Meeting's minutes, held in San Salvador from September 24 to September 25, 2009, p. 44, available at https://repositorio.csuca.org/14/

Table 5. Credit and time proposal by degree levels

Academic degree	Credit proposal	Time proposal (years)
Advanced Technician	60 – 100	2-3
Bachelor's (Bachillerato)	120 – 144	3-4
Bachelor's (Licenciatura)	150 – 200	4-6
Master's:	50 – 75 above Bachelor's Degree (Bachillerato or Licenciatura)	1-2
Doctoral	90 – 142 above Bachelor's Degree (Licenciatura)	3-4
	50 – 70 above Master's Degree	

Source: own elaboration from CSUCA 2018a: 44-46.

In comparison to EHEA, the credit measure varies, since in this one ECTS credit represents between 25 and 30 hours of student's work, being 60 ECTS credits the whole of an academic year.

This 2018[49] document also proposes a supplement to the diploma containing the learning outcomes of the corresponding level which would be common to all CSUCA member universities: "Diploma Supplementary Document for Recognition and Matching at CSUCA Member Universities" (CSUCA: 2018b, 47). It would be like the EDS (European Diploma Supplement), although the model presented does not include the academic certification of all courses, the recognitions and transfers, or other data that may be relevant to the curriculum, such as awards.

After analysing the initiatives to create accreditation systems that allow information sharing and implement mechanisms that guarantee quality, the Central American case was presented as it has (1) a long history of conceiving higher education as a regional integration mechanism, (2) a complex institutional structure, where different university integration systems exist and (3) a qualifications framework developed with the aim of harmonising degrees. In all these cases, it would be the actions and organisations that create the previous conditions to facilitate the recognition of credits and degrees. This recognition would theoretically facilitate regional and interregional mobility, as it occurs in EHEA.

49 CSUCA (2018a). Central American Higher Education Qualification Framework (MCESCA). Expected learning outcomes for higher university technician, bachelor's (bachillerato universitario), licenciatura, master's and doctoral levels. It includes a guide to implementing the MCESCA in the curriculum of university degrees and the programmes which participate in the pilot plans for the implementation and validation of this Framework.

3. Credit recognition initiatives[50]

Regarding credit recognition initiatives, they are minority and less ambitious[51]. In fact, they are organised as networks that are usually associated with a project, as shown below. It should be emphasised, however, that these initiatives are fundamental to the construction of the bi-regional area, as credit recognition is a necessary mechanism for the continuation of studies and mobility processes.

- RecoLATIN - Credential Evaluation Centres and Recognition Procedures in *Latin American Countries*[52] is a project that focuses on partners improving their skills as evaluators in the processes of validation and recognition of qualifications within the field of higher education in Latin America and Europe. Its purpose is to increase these recognitions to facilitate mobility between the two regions. To this end, they create tools and share experiences approved by the ENIC-NARIC network.[53] The model on which this project is based is the Bologna process, the origin of the EHEA.[54]
- It is a 3-year project, co-financed by Erasmus+, and which ended in 2019. Its results consisted of three national reports on the education systems of Mexico, Panama and Uruguay and three reports on transnational education (TNE) in those same countries.
- The *Recognition Matters*[55] Project, also funded by the European Commission with €648,228, is developed within the Erasmus+ framework and aims to promote and facilitate the exchange of students between Europe and Latin America. To this end, it is proposed to remove the hurdle of the academic recognition process. There are five European and five Latin American partners in a 4-year project that ended in October 2021.
- EQUAM-LA *Enhancing quality management & recognition in Latin American universities to underpin the Latin American Higher Education Space*[56] is another Erasmus+ project. It is coordinated by the University of Murcia to develop and connect higher education quality assurance systems with standards similar to those in Europe. The aim is to advance the recognition of degrees and of cross-border credits with the main goal of contributing to the construction of a Latin American area for higher education. It is a consortium of 21 institutions, universities, and quality agencies from different countries.[57] It ends in June 2023.

50 See: EU-LAC (2020).

51 In Sánchez and Hernández (2017: 206-207), the Andrés Bello Agreement was pointed out as a model to follow. Although it is not for primary and secondary studies, it offers equivalence tables (updated in 2021); reference was also made to Mercosur's recognitions for continuing studies and teaching and research.

52 More information can be found on the website: https://www.recolatin.eu/es/

53 For more information visit the website: https://www.enic-naric.net. As mentioned before, there is no LAC country in this network.

54 It is also based on the experience of several European projects: RecoNow – Knowledge of recognition procedures in ENPI South countries; Bridge – Best Recognition Instruments for the Dialogue between Global Experts – Erasmus Mundus Action 3 Programme; InterHED – The Internationalisation of Higher Education – Erasmus Mundus Action 3 Programme.

55 For more information, visit the website: http://rec-mat.up.pt/

56 For more information, visit the website: https://equamla.org/

57 For more information, visit the website: https://equamla.org/es/consorcio/

Table 6. Credit recognition initiatives

Credit recognition initiatives		Web
RecoLATIN	Credential Evaluation Centres and Recognition Procedures in Latin American Countries Co-funded by Erasmus+	https://www.recolatin.eu/es/
Rec-Mat	Project Recognition Matters Erasmus+	http://rec-mat.up.pt/
EQUAM-LA	Enhancing quality management & recognition in Latin American universities to underpin the Latin American Higher Education Space Erasmus+	https://equamla.org/

Source: own elaboration based on the information from the different systems mentioned in the table.

The results of these projects can contribute to creating a body of evidence and reflections on the difficulties in the recognition of studies. It is also important to simplify procedures between higher education systems in both regions if it is intended to enhance international mobility. Hence, as with other initiatives described above, its ability to influence state decision-makers is questionable. Indeed, in the case of Recognition Matters, actions are planned to raise awareness of the benefits of international mobility among teachers themselves – rather than actors with executive powers at government level – and in the case of the first two projects, it is clearly a planned action to run courses for this purpose together with other training. This is because in many cases the degree of autonomy of higher education institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean makes most academic decisions, including those concerning mobility depend on university managers rather than the government.

However, their greatest weakness is that they lack continuity over time. Thus, even if the value of these initiatives is recognised, there is a risk that they will end too soon. To avoid this, the projects can be of interest especially if they are linked to institutional developments or used by international organisations that can exert more influence on decision-makers.

In this line, it is worth highlighting the role of UNESCO and specifically IESALC, as a promoter of public policies in the field of higher education. The New Regional Recognition Convention (NCRALC)[58] is an instrument in the advance towards the construction of a common higher education area in Latin America and is also open to other UNESCO member states from other regions of the world.[59] The New Convention is complemented by the World Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications relating to Higher Education[60] (in force since 5 March 2023), which aims to contribute to the cohesion between different UNESCO regional conventions.

58 The UNESCO-IESALC document (2019a) is available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374532

59 See: UNESCO-IESALC (2019a: art. V.1.1. b).

60 The UNESCO document (2020) is available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373602/PDF/373602eng.pdf.multi.page=31

4. New Regional Convention for the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean

The new agreement promoted by the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) aims to harmonise national recognition criteria and procedures to provide transparency and streamline bureaucratic procedures. These recognitions are based on qualifications and are directed towards the academic or professional field (a distinction is made here between regulated professions). The purpose is (1) to facilitate the mobility of people, as well as the production and exchange of knowledge and research between countries; (2) to increase internationalisation; (3) to promote regional integration.

The convention was adopted by 23 countries in July 2019 and entered into force on October 23, 2022, with the ratification of Cuba, Grenada, Peru and Uruguay.[61] The antecedent is the 1974 convention (part of the so-called "first generation agreements") that was revised in 2015 and which is recognised to have had little success not only due to the lack of trust but also due to the diversity of legislative and legal systems (Sánchez and Hernández, 2017). Added to this are the changes in a university system in which the number of students has increased, which is characterised by internationalisation and in which the educational offer has diversified with the emergence of numerous private institutions. Furthermore, online learning took centre stage, especially after the COVID-19 crisis.

The new convention, among other advances compared to the one from 1974, defines "recognition" as a process and extends its scope to "qualifications", that is, to acquired knowledge and skills. The convention provides transparency mechanisms to strengthen trust between systems, such as providing information on education, quality assurance and procedures; and guarantees the rights of applicants.[62]

So far, the convention has been ratified by the four countries mentioned above and by the Holy See.[63] They are countries that have agreed to establish a biennial plan (2023-2024), create a network of national recognition structures, draft a guide to implement and promote academic recognitions and study the feasibility of the Diploma Supplement.[64]

The director of IESALC, Francesc Pedró, was not surprised that the Vatican was the first non-Latin American country to sign it, given the interests of the Catholic Church in all

61 Article V.2 of the Convention states that it will enter into force one month after the date on which at least four UNESCO Member States of the Latin America and Caribbean region have ratified it.

62 The UNESCO-IESALC document (2023a) "The New Regional Convention for the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Latin America and the Caribbean (2019). A comparative approach to recognition processes in the region". Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385069_spa

63 See: MacGregor, Karen (2023).

64 The UNESCO-IESALC (2023b) document. "First meeting held on April 13 and 14, 2023", can be found at: https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/2023/04/15/primera-reunion-del-nuevo-convenio-regional-de-la-unesco-pone-en-marcha-el-reconocimiento-de-titulos-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe/ (Accessed: 09/05/2023)

countries as a "multinational of education"[65]. In the same interview, he regretted that Argentina, the country where the agreement was approved in 2019, had not ratified it. These comments, together with the fact that a convention adopted by 23 countries does not enter into force until three years later when four ratify it, result in the difficulty of translating international agreements into national regulations and, perhaps, in the lack of political will to materialise them. It remains the question of what the interests and the incentives to change the situation are.

Regarding the processes of recognition of higher education in the different countries, UNESCO has a 2023 study in which it compares the systems of Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Grenada, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela[66] and provides information on its website about all the countries in the region.[67]

Finally, linking it with the role of IESALC-UNESCO in the LAC region, and with the interest in incorporating projects into institutional frameworks for projection and continuity, the new ANECA project, presented on November 17, 2022, should be mentioned.[68] Included in AECID's Interconnect plan and with the participation of IESALC, it aims to design programming related to technical training and teacher innovation in the higher knowledge area of Latin America and the Caribbean. The project is based on the dialogue and experience of more than 20 years with institutions and programmes in Latin America and is embedded in a network to manage change in higher education as well as to strengthen trust. There are eleven activities that will be developed throughout 2023 under the title ANECA-LAB Quality that unites us[69] and that reflect the commitment of ANECA and AECID to the development of a European Higher Education Area and the Ibero-American Knowledge Area.[70]

5. Some conclusions

This chapter began highlighting the importance of quality assessment and accreditation systems for study programmes and degrees as a precondition for their recognition by other higher education institutions. It was highlighted that, in this regard, they are a mechanism of transparency before the different educational and social agents and that it also promotes trust between them. The aim is to promote cooperation in education and research, as well as international mobility in societies that strive to eliminate

65 For more information, see: https://www.infobae.com/educacion/2023/02/24/el-plan-de-unesco-para-simplificar-la-acreditacion-de-titulos-en-america-latina/ (Accessed: 24/02/2023)

66 See: UNESCO-IESALC (2023a).

67 For more information, see the website: https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/reconocimiento/

68 https://www.aneca.es/-/alianza-por-la-calidad-del-conocimiento-en-am%C3%A9rica-latina-y-caribe (Accessed: 14/04/2023)

69 For more information, the full report can be found on the website: https://www.aneca.es/documents/20123/49576/LABCalidad_Informe.pdf/596d0286-1865-5806-dcdd-ce3c9a74f6af?t=1671022525558

70 Mercedes Siles Molina, director of ANECA (Spanish Accreditation Agency), and Antón Leis García, Director of AECID (Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development), spoke in this regard. Watch: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLar-vZdlgTgspHHdI5dnoXhUaMJG_Nh_F

borders for science and knowledge, while also favouring labour flows. The ultimate goal is the construction of a UE-CELAC Higher Education Area.

Once the accreditation systems have been analysed, the ability to generate structures to classify information and establish cooperative relationships between educational agencies or institutions is verified. In contrast, recognition projects have a shorter history due to their temporality and lack of continuity. In both cases, the impact on government decision-makers and advances towards the construction of an EU-CELAC HEA cannot be assessed. This is because, unlike the EHEA, where the implementation of quality assurance systems has been a consequence of the creation of the common area itself, in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, quality accreditation is ahead. These are very theoretical approaches and the analyses are actually meta-analyses, as is the case with the ANECA study (2022) on the mechanisms of evaluation of programmes and qualifications that exist in each country of the SIACES system. The case of Central America and the Dominican Republic is presented as a model, as the countries that are part of SICA have a long history in regional integration of which educational integration is part; they have developed a complex institutional structure of higher education and have a qualification framework to harmonise qualifications. Finally, IESALC's effort to promote a New Regional Convention for the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean that replaces that of 1974 is emphasised. The New Convention was adopted by 23 countries in 2019 and had not entered into force until 2022 when four countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region ratified it.

These conclusions do not question the importance of these harmonisation, accreditation and recognition projects as part of the internationalisation strategy for today's society. Less so for the construction of an EU-CELAC HEA. On the contrary, the contribution of UNESCO and the international organisations involved in the creation of a normative and procedural corpus leading to its realisation is recognised, even advocated. However, it seems necessary to reflect on whether it is appropriate to adopt the EU model as a framework for implementing policies in the region and whether it would not be worthwhile to reflect on the fact that perhaps the EU-CELAC HEA is already being built on research projects, mobility programmes between institutions, transfers and partial recognition, etc. It is true that striving for a common framework would save effort and ensure consolidation of actions over time. But while this is happening, it may be necessary to look at what this situation brings and build networks or promote access to existing programmes by overcoming bureaucratic obstacles.

STUDENT MOBILITY TRENDS FROM CELAC AND EU COUNTRIES

1. Introduction

All the initiatives examined in the previous chapter in relation to quality assurance systems and the harmonisation of studies, degrees and recognition aim to lay the foundations for facilitating mobility. Promoting the flow of people and knowledge contributes to establishing educational and research cooperation networks, which are fundamental for innovation and sustainable development in countries. At the individual level, it provides cross-sectional skills, such as knowledge of languages and other cultures, and it also increases employability.[71]

Mobility is part of the internationalisation strategy of HEIs, the necessity of which is justified on the one hand by a worldwide scenario of globalisation, multiculturalism and high competitiveness, and on the other hand because it is intended to be the cause and effect of regional integration. In this sense, it would contribute to economic and social development, to raising the prestige of HEIs and to creating a certain type of citizenship that is more regional (Latin American), more interregional (Ibero-American) or more global (Euro-Latin American and Caribbean), with common values. But beyond that, mobility is seen above all as the most effective mechanism for creating common spaces for higher education and research, both regionally and bi-regionally. The impetus to be given to LAC is also justified by the low participation of students in international mobility.[72]

With the COVID-19 crisis, the importance of internationalising knowledge and research has become clear, for just as there are no borders to epidemics or other global challenges such as climate change, there must no longer be borders to sharing the resources with which to confront them. The OEI highlights that the true metamorphosis of Ibero-American universities is not so much due to the very nature of the changes as to the speed with which they have had to make them.[73] In a digital transformation scenario favoured by the pandemic, online higher education seems to have consolidated and

71 For example, as mentioned in the document "European Commission (2020b). Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility. Handbook for Participating Organisations", unemployment rates among participants in the Erasmus programme, five years after graduation, are 23% lower. The full document is available on the website: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/handbook-erasmus-icm_feb2020_en.pdf

72 This is less than 1% according to the OEI. UNESCO (2022) places it at 0.8% compared to 2.6% worldwide. The full document is available on the following website: https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/2023/04/15/primera-reunion-del-nuevo-convenio-regional-de-la-unesco-pone-en-marcha-el-reconocimiento-de-titulos-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe/

73 The OEI document (2022) "2022 Diagnostic Report on post-COVID-19 higher education and science in Ibero-America. Prospects and challenges for the future" can be found at the following link: http://cafscioteca.azurewebsites.net/handle/123456789/1924

with it virtual mobility.[74] It should be added that other models are gaining importance, such as cross-border higher education, which makes it possible to obtain degrees at foreign institutions without leaving the country of origin.[75]

The following section describes some trends in mobility to and from the countries of the two study regions. To this end, the 10 most important countries of origin and destination are analysed for each of the states belonging to CELAC and the EU. The goal is to look for potentialities and/or weaknesses in the process of building the EU-CELAC HEA based on the observation of the links generated by mobility, either between the two regions or between them and other regions of the world. Identifying mobility flows is a fundamental task that will make it possible to create better incentive systems in public policies that seek to promote university exchanges between the two regions.

The information comes from the UNESCO[76] statistics system and provides a map of student exchanges between the different university systems, which can be seen in detail in the tables in Annexes 1 and 2 for the CELAC countries and for the EU countries at the end of the text. A warning should be made regarding the distortions that the UNESCO statistical system could have caused by considering all foreign students of a country as mobility students, which does not allow to exclude permanent residents, even if they do not have the nationality of a state and are not involved in student mobility in the strict sense. A clear example would be Venezuelan students who appear in the statistics as a relevant group in several Latin American countries or in Spain, places which coincide with the migratory destination of the Venezuelan diaspora. In the case of Europe, something similar would happen, for example, with students from Iran, Syria or Turkey.

2. Mobility flows of university students in CELAC and EU countries

The mobility of students, faculty and administration staff is one of the core objectives of the EU-CELAC HEA and therefore it is essential to ask the following questions: What are the international mobility flows of higher education students? Is there a balance between the two regions under study? What factors influence the choice of destination? By answering these questions, it will be possible to identify the advances in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA as well as the opportunities offered by the flows that exist today to develop strategies that promote mobility between the two regions and the countries that are part of them.

74 See, for example, the alliance between OEI and AIESAD explained in the document attached to this link: https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/noticias/nuevo-impulso-al-fortalecimiento-de-la-educacion-superior-a-distancia-en-iberoamerica-gracias-a-la-alianza-entre-la-oei-y-aiesad (OEI 2021b).
Another case is the creation of the Kalos Virtual Iberoamerica seal mentioned above.

75 Between 2017 and 2018, about 700,000 international students were enrolled in this type of higher education in the United Kingdom, not including those from the European Union. In this regard, the UNESCO-IESALC (2023a) document can be consulted. "The New Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Latin America and the Caribbean (2019). A comparative approach to recognition processes in the region". P. 9

76 The information comes from UNESCO's "Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students", available at the following link: http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/higher-education

A first approximation to the data in Table 7 shows a barren panorama if one wants to start from the current state of student mobility as the basis of EU-CELAC HEA, because the countries of Latin America are not among the priority destinations of European university students, as they prefer to travel to the countries of the EU itself or to other regions of the world that are not CELAC countries.

Table 7. Countries of origin and destination of exchange students from EU-CELAC countries

Where CELAC students go	Where do the students who go to CELAC countries come from?	Where do the students who go to EU countries come from?	Where EU students go
34) USA (30) France (29) Canada **(28) Germany** **(24) Spain** (23) UK (19) Brazil (18) Argentina (14) Cuba (14) Chile (12) Trinidad and Tobago **(11) Italy** (9) Australia (6) Panama (5) Honduras (5) Ecuador (4) St. Lucia (4) Guatemala (4) El Salvador (4) Colombia (3) Turkey (3) Morocco (3) Costa Rica (2) Serbia (2) Russia **(2) Ireland** (2) UAE (2) South Korea **(2) Belgium** (2) Saudi Arabia (1) Ukraine (1) Thailand (1) Switzerland **(1) Portugal** (1) New Zealand (1) Malaysia (1) Jordan (1) India (1) Georgia (1) Austria	(10) Colombia (9) USA (9) Venezuela (8) Peru (6) Mexico (5) Bolivia (5) Ecuador **(5) Spain** (5) Nicaragua (4) Argentina (4) El Salvador (4) Guatemala (4) Jamaica (4) Panama (3) Brazil (3) Chile (3) Cuba (3) Haiti (3) Honduras (2) Angola (2) Antigua and Barbuda (2) Canada (2) Grenada **(2) Italy** (2) Nigeria (2) Paraguay (2) Dominican R. (2) St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1) Bahamas (1) Barbados (1) Chad (1) Congo (1) Costa Rica (1) Dominica (1) Ghana (1) Guinea-Bisseau (1) Guyana (1) India (1) Japan (1) Namibia (1) Palestine (1) St. Lucia (1) South Africa (1) Uruguay	(20) Germany (18) India (16) China (15) Italy (13) Russia (11) Ukraine (9) France (8) Turkey (8) Iran (7) Spain (6) Pakistan (6) Greece (5) Bangladesh (5) Nigeria (5) Sweden (5) UK. (4) Hungary (4) Morocco (4) USA. (3) Belarus (3) Bosnia/Herzegovina (3) Slovakia (3) Finland (3) Kazakhstan. (3) Norway (3) Poland (3) Romania, (2) Albania (2) Austria (2) Azerbaijan (2) Bulgaria (2) Cameroon (2) Cyprus (2) Israel (2) Jordan (2) North Macedonia (2) Nepal (2) Syria (2) Tunisia (2) Vietnam (1) Angola (1) Saudi Arabia (1) Algeria (1) Belgium **(1) Brazil** (1) Cabo Verde (1) Canada **(1) Chile**	(27) UK (26) Germany (24) USA (22) France ((20) Denmark (15) Switzerland (15) Austria (13) Italy (13) Spain (10) Australia (7) Sweden (6) Hungary (5) Turkey (5) Romania (5) Poland (4) Russia (4) Latvia (4) Canada (3) Czech R. (3) Portugal (3) Norway (3) Finland (3) Slovak Republic (3) UAE (3) Canada (3) Bulgaria (3) Belgium (2) Ukraine (2) Estonia (1) Moldova (1) Luxembourg (1) Liechtenstein (1) Japan (1) Ireland (1) Greece (1) Slovenia **(1) Ecuador** (1) Croatia (1) Cyprus **(1) Brazil** (1) Bosnia/Herzegovina **(1) Argentina**

Where CELAC students go	Where do the students who go to CELAC countries come from?	Where do the students who go to EU countries come from?	Where EU students go
		(1) Colombia (1) Congo (1) Ivory Coast (1) Croatia **(1) Ecuador** (1) Slovenia (1) Georgia (1) Gibraltar (1) Guinea-Bissau (1) Lebanon (1) Libya (1) Malaysia **(1) Mexico** (1) Moldova (1) Montenegro (1) Mozambique (1) The Netherlands **(1) Peru** (1) Portugal (1) Czech R. **(1) S. Tome and Principe** (1) Senegal (1) Serbia (1) Sri Lanka (1) Switzerland (1) Uzbekistan **(1) Venezuela**	

Source: UNESCO (http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow#slideoutmenu) accessed May 2023.

1. For the calculation, only the first 10 countries of origin or destination of mobility to each EU or CELAC country were considered.
2. The number in the parenthesis indicates how often a country is repeated as a country of origin or destination, without taking any ranking into account.

Looking at the origin of mobility students at EU universities, the impact of the Erasmus programme becomes evident, as much of the mobility takes place between European countries, with Italy and Spain standing out as recipients and senders of students.

The most common destinations for EU students outside their region are the United States and the United Kingdom, countries that not only have a prestigious university system but also teach in English. A language that can be learned in almost all countries of the world and that is also appreciated in the labour market. Pursuing higher education in the institutions of those countries makes a person more competitive at a professional level, which undoubtedly constitutes an incentive to select the mobility destination.

Looking in detail at the countries of origin of foreign students in the EU Member States, some trends can be identified:

- The existence of large migrant communities established in a certain place encourages the selection of that country as a destination for studies.
- A widespread increase in students from China and India.

- A strong presence of students from the peripheral areas of the EU: North Africa, Minor and Central Asia and Eastern European countries.
- Countries with a colonial past receive students from the areas where they had a presence.

Although the interest in studying in Europe is greater in CELAC countries than inversely, it focuses on three countries: France, Germany and Spain, in this order and considering the number of CELAC countries from which their students come. That is, it is not a bi-regional process in the strict sense, but a bilateral process between countries or sub-regions. Thus, for example, students from the Caribbean area have English-speaking countries as their preferred destination, while Spain is in high demand due to obvious linguistic reasons, a factor that also partly explains the cases of France or Germany, as will be seen later.

Reinforcing the argument of language as a factor of mobility, it can be seen that there is an evident flow of exchange between Brazil and Portugal, something that also influences the presence of students from Portuguese-speaking African countries in Portugal or students from Angola in Brazil.

The importance of language is reflected in the fact that countries with minority languages such as the Netherlands, Belgium (the Flemish side) or Poland have improved and diversified the recruitment of foreign students by offering complete courses and programmes in English. Moreover, Poland, within its strategy to attract Erasmus students, even offers courses in languages such as Spanish.

Thus, conversely, mobility is lower in other countries such as the Nordic countries, despite the good quality of their education systems. Undoubtedly, language is a major constraint, but the greater cultural difference or the high cost of living in their cities and, in some cases, university fees can also be an obstacle.

In addition to language, proximity between countries and regions is another factor that best explains the choice of destination for mobility students. In the case of Europe, a large part of international mobility is carried out thanks to the Erasmus programme, but the possibility of studying in centres in other countries that are in fact not far from the place of origin also plays a role. This phenomenon has a greater incidence, above all, between countries in which both factors converge, such as Germany, Luxembourg, Austria and Switzerland, or between France, Belgium and Luxembourg, or between Greece and Cyprus. The linguistic and geographical proximity can also be attributed to the existing mobility between the Balkan countries. Thus, one could say that the common languages create a kind of sub-region within the EHEA that allows people who want to pursue a university degree to choose between a wider range of studies or prestigious university centres, among other things.

The importance of both variables and how they influence the choice of destination must be taken into account to avoid it being a limitation in the construction of the

EU-CELAC HEA since there may be other elements that encourage this process, and it would be convenient to increase its value. This is evident in Latin America, where proximity and the common language also play a role, but where, for example, prestige or the higher quality of the universities carry particular weight. This would explain the fact that Argentina is a regional centre of attraction.

In other cases, geographic proximity is not a reason for mobility between countries. For example, the Dominican Republic is not a destination for students in Haiti, despite sharing the territory of the island and the crisis in which the latter country finds itself. Nor is it a destination of university interest for other Caribbean countries, while Cuba, despite the distance and restrictions of its economy, is a centre of attraction for students from all over the Caribbean. The Cuban university system not only attracts students from its region, but also students from Africa, a region with which Cuba has historically maintained close relations. One possible explanation for the difference between the two countries could be the prestige of the Cuban education system, which is not limited to training, but to the development of a L&D system due to the needs arising from the country's geopolitical context.

Outside the EU-CELAC area, other cases can be taken into account in which student mobility occurs between very distant countries, such as between Suriname and India. This peculiarity is explained by the migration flows and the origin of the countries' population, as a large part of Suriname's population comes from India, resulting in 23 % of the inhabitants belonging to the Hindu religion.

Along the same lines, the presence of Ecuadorian students in Ukraine was very high before the war and is related to various factors, such as the existence of companies dedicated to promoting the destination, the administrative opportunities offered by Ukrainian universities, or the possibility of studying abroad at low cost.[77] On the other hand, it was also demonstrated that there was a migration network that used university studies in Ukraine as a way to later enter the EU.

Another factor for mobility between Latin American countries is higher education institutions that are established with a regional purpose. This is the case of the University of the West Indies, linked to the *Eastern Caribbean Currency Union*. It is funded by 15 countries where it has facilities, but its main locations are Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, in addition to a distance learning system.[78] Another example is the Zamorano[79] Pan American Agricultural School, a specialised university of great regional prestige that explains much of the mobility to Honduras (see Annex 1) by students from other countries, despite the fact that it is a country that does not have a very solid university system. The last example would be the institutions of

77 For more details on this phenomenon, visit: https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/politica/para-autoridades-hay-cifras-inusuales-de-ecuatorianos-en-ucrania-el-conflicto-militar-en-ese-pais-ha-permitido-develar-esa-realidad-nota/

78 For more information about the University of the West Indies, go to its website: https://www.uwi.edu/campuses.php

79 For more information, visit the website: https://www.zamorano.edu

the FLACSO system, which has branches in several Latin American countries where it offers graduate programmes, the largest being in Ecuador, Argentina and Mexico.

Finally, as an emerging trend, it should be mentioned that in both regions there is a greater presence of university destinations in the Persian Gulf countries that are developing new higher education systems. Here, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and South Korea stand out, the latter having a powerful scholarship system The Global Korea Scholarship (GKS).

In sum, in relation to international mobility flows, there is an asymmetry both within each region and between the two, with greater mobility between EU countries, on the one hand, and CELAC countries towards the EU, on the other. As factors influencing the choice of destination, English's primacy for all international students is generally highlighted and, in the case of the EU, sharing language domains and geographic proximity. This is something to consider when thinking about an EU-CELAC HEA, as well as the fact that in Latin America and the Caribbean, the quality of universities, the initiatives developed with a regional focus, or some very specific ones that add value through their specificity, are particularly important. Attention should also be paid to other factors of attraction, such as the price of university studies, the limitation of places applied in some countries to access certain courses of study, such as medicine, or the possibility of opting for more specialisations than in the countries of origin.

The analysis of the mobility programmes and the scholarship offers presented below in a complementary manner, aims to contribute to the diagnosis of the current situation, assuming the limitations of this report in the face of a reality that, as will be seen, is excessively complex. There is no doubt that the existence of a broad and sustained scholarship system fosters mobility. But this cannot depend only on funding, however necessary it may be to enable people with less economic resources and with academic merits to access mobility programmes. In this sense, as a sign of commitment to building a common higher education area with CELAC countries, the EU could become more involved by diversifying funding for scholarships for Latin American and Caribbean students. At the time of writing this report, almost all funding is channelled through Erasmus mobility programmes or scholarships for participation as students in Erasmus Mundus Masters programmes, as highlighted in a later section of this study which discusses those programmes. It should be noted that there are flows of mobility in international university circuits that do not rely on scholarships, such as students from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States or students from China to Europe. In both cases, these are mobility circuits that have been consolidated as a result of the attractiveness of the quality and prestige of the universities in the destination countries.

3. Analysis of mobility measures and scholarship offers

This section presents a study on the programmes that channel mobility flows in the region and that promote the development of a common area where there are a series of

conditions that facilitate mobility and exchange. Academic mobility can be established at three levels: undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral, which would also include research; and applies to the three sectors of staff that form the HEIs: students, teaching-research professionals and administration and services staff.

This section has gathered and analysed the scholarships or exchange offers through which students from Latin America and the Caribbean could study in other countries in the region or in the EU, as well as the initiatives that promote both types of mobility. Although most of them are not strictly aimed at the construction of the EU-CELAC university and research area, they are considered insofar as they can be a means to foster the mobility of students, lecturers, and administration and service staff, and, consequently, contribute to creating links of university cooperation that become the basis of a future and more integrated higher education area.

For the analysis of the context of these programmes, the initiatives referred to in the "Matrix of Objectives and Strategic Lines for the Construction of the EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education" of the EU-LAC Foundation (2020) will be taken as a starting point, as well as others from which students from the CELAC and EU countries can benefit. In addition to this, the information and study of the scholarships is structured following the UNESCO-IESALC classification (2019b) from the report on mobility in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean[80] which establishes four programme modalities: institutional, bilateral, multilateral and national. A separate section includes EU programmes, Erasmus+ for credit mobility, Erasmus Mundus for joint master's degrees, and MSCAs: core programmes in the EU's model of university and research relations with the other regions of the world and, therefore, with Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the absence of a common programme in the CELAC countries similar to the EU Erasmus+ programme, Annex 3 lists international scholarship programmes from governments and universities organised by country and for the two spheres, the EU sphere and the CELAC sphere. Both in the information collected here and in the previous paragraph, which is developed in subsections 3.1 and 3.3 of this same section, it has been necessary to limit under the general criterion of offering the most current or latest data available, according to each case and highlighting it at all times. The website for each programme serves as a reference point where information is expanded and updated. It should be emphasised that due to the dispersion of initiatives and the diversity of material (conditions, allocation, candidate profiles, etc.), this collection has represented enormous work, which may not be consistent with outcomes that one would desire to be more accurate, complete, and conclusive.

However, assuming that the issue is not exhausted here, it is considered a fundamental part of the analysis as it demonstrates that this atomised offer does not seem so much

80 The UNESCO-IESALC document (2019b). "Mobility in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean: challenges and opportunities of a renewed Agreement for the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas" can be consulted at the following link: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372629.locale=es

to reflect a plurality of possibilities, but rather a dispersion of initiatives. The question is whether this situation contributes to the creation of a common area or whether it demonstrates how difficult it is to create it. The answer is neither unique nor simple: interpreting this as something positive depends in some way on where one wants to go and on the ability to make the most of what there is, since it constitutes the seeds and opportunities to create networks that will have a multiplier effect on the internationalisation processes of higher education institutions.

3.1. Institutional Programmes

According to UNESCO-IESALC (2019b), HEIs that develop their own scholarship and mobility initiatives tend to have little funding: 38% do not offer any financial aid and 43% offer partial scholarships, so they are often rather spaces that facilitate student mobility by simplifying, for example, administrative procedures or credit recognition. They are initiatives characterised by a lack of planning and structures that make them sustainable, sometimes marginal to the set of policies developed by the institutions themselves. Their significance lies in the fact that they constitute an effort of cooperation and networking among higher education institutions that goes beyond individual initiatives.

For the purposes of this report, the most relevant programmes of this subgroup are: ESCALA-AUGM, CRISCOS-Mobility Programme, PIU-CINDA, Network of Macro-universities of Latin America and the Caribbean, PAME-UDUAL and ECESELI.

3.1.1. ESCALA-AUGM[81]

The "Expanded Latin American Common Academic Area" is an initiative of the "Montevideo Group University Association" that has been operating since 1998. Its goal is to contribute to the creation of a common regional academic area and is made up of a network of 41 autonomous public universities from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. Among other activities, it promotes the mobility of undergraduate students between the universities of the AUGM and has mobility programmes for teaching staff, postgraduates and administrative managers.

The mobility programmes and their features are:

Teaching ESCALA for lecturers and researchers:
- Length of stay: minimum, five days; maximum, 15 days.
- Funding: home university, travel expenses; host university, accommodation and living expenses.

81 For more information, visit the website: http://grupomontevideo.org/

It is a programme of relatively short stays that do not allow for the development of an extensive teaching or research activity at the host university but can be used to teach short and focused courses, participate in dissemination and extension activities, or in planning meetings for longer-term joint teaching or research activities within or outside the network.

ESCALA for undergraduate students: mobility between students of the participating universities:

- Length of stay: one semester.
- Funding: home university, travel expenses; host university, accommodation and living expenses
- Recognition at the origin of the studies completed at the destination and formalised in an academic agreement.
- Requirements: passed at least 40 % of the curriculum, being under 30 years old and not holding a teaching position.

A total of 218 people selected for 2023 accessed places offered in 35 universities (13 Argentine, three Bolivian, 12 Brazilian, three Chilean, three Paraguayan and one Uruguayan).

This programme is similar to the EU Erasmus system in the recognition in the university of origin of the studies completed in another university centre that is part of the programme, as well as in the prior implementation of an academic agreement, formalised and authorised by both parties, which serves as a support for subsequent recognition. This is an initiative that, due to its qualities, could be appropriate to have mobility agreements with EU universities, although currently, it has the limitation of funding.

ESCALA for postgraduate students: mobility of regular master's and doctoral students.

- Length of stay: Minimum 15 days maximum, one semester.
- Funding: home university, travel expenses; host university, accommodation and living expenses.
- Requirements: have passed at least 30 % of the academic curriculum (courses or credits); language.

In 2023, 57 participants were chosen for this programme. Unlike the EU model, which focuses on the development of research programmes, this model consists of face-to-face courses. As a result, its teaching approach is like that of the participating doctoral programmes. Hence, like the scholarship system for undergraduate students, it is an institutional base that, if properly funded, can operate as a parallel for EHEA institutions to collaborate with those of the Group.

ESCALA for Managers and Administrators: mobility and exchange of directors, managers and administrators.

- Duration: minimum, one week; maximum, 15 days.
- Funding: home university, travel expenses; host university, accommodation and living expenses.

It should be highlighted as a value that the Montevideo Group has administration and service staff in its exchange programmes since the management systems are very different. Thus, if the aim is to create mechanisms of trust there must be an exchange between the people in charge of the administration.

3.1.2. Mobility programmes-CRISCOS[82]

These programmes depend on the Council of Rectors for the Integration of the Central West Sub-region of South America which is made up of a network of six universities from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru, aimed at integrating the people of the sub-region.

It is a sub-regional cooperation mechanism that since 1998 has had a Student Mobility Programme and an Administrative Academic Mobility Programme.

The 2023 Student Mobility programme has the following features:

- Length of stay: one semester.
- Funding: home university, travel expenses; host university, accommodation and living expenses; waiver of tuition fees at the destination university (at-origin tuition payment).
- Recognition at origin of studies completed at the destination, and formalised in an academic agreement.
- Requirements: grade point average of 60 % and having passed the second course.

In the same year, an Administrative Academic Mobility programme was offered, as well, but there were not many details available apart from the fact that accommodation and food expenses were funded. Even though it is a small network, it has created mechanisms that would increase the possibility of joining broader bi-regional networks.

3.1.3. PIU-CINDA[83]

This university exchange programme is intended for undergraduate and graduate students, academics and managers of the universities that are part of the CINDA network (Interuniversity Development Centre), a cooperation mechanism that includes universities in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Spain, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

82 For more information, visit the website: http://criscos.unju.edu.ar/index.php
83 More information can be found on the website: https://cinda.cl/movilidad/piu/

Unlike the mobility systems described above, it has universities in both regions and offers participating students the exemption from the payment of academic rights. The rest of the expenses are not funded by the programme unless the universities of origin or destination have the initiative to cover them.

The offer, taken together, is very extensive because each university offers courses in which it can receive students or lecturers from other universities and has a search engine for this purpose on its website.[84]

One of the potential limitations of this exchange model is that not all the courses of a degree are offered. It focuses only on certain courses in which an exchange can be made. This may discourage participation by failing to ensure that participants complete what applies to their home university during the mobility course.

3.1.4. Network of Macro-universities in Latin America and the Caribbean[85]

The Network of Macro-universities in Latin America and the Caribbean is made up of 37 public universities from 20 countries.[86] It was created at the initiative of UNAM, the Central University of Venezuela (UCV) and with the support of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC-UNESCO) to promote cooperation and university mobility from the recognition of the common cultural heritage and to support research on social and economic issues in the region.

Although one of its main initiatives is to promote university mobility, it does not appear to be active, as only the results of the IX Call published in February 2018 (111 people were awarded scholarships) and the 2019 call (40 people were awarded scholarships) have been found. There is no information on previous or future calls or access to the bases of the calls, although the results of the 2019 call indicate that the selected students could carry out the mobility with the exemption of tuition fees.

3.1.5. PAME-UDUAL[87]

UDUAL (Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean) is another network of higher education institutions in the region. It is the largest, oldest and most consolidated in the region, according to its own presentation.[88] It was founded in 1949, during the First Latin American University Congress held at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala.

84 See: https://piu.cinda.cl

85 For more information, visit the website: http://www.redmacro.unam.mx/

86 For more information on the universities included in this network, go to the following website: http://www.redmacro.unam.mx/universidades.html

87 For more information, go to the website: https://www.udual.org/principal/

88 For more information, see the document on the website: https://www.udual.org/principal/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Folleto-UDUAL.pdf

It is endorsed by UNESCO as an advisory and consulting body and brings together more than 200 public and private higher education institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It is aimed at promoting university cooperation and Latin American integration through the internationalisation of higher education, the improvement of educational quality, the dissemination of knowledge and the defence of university autonomy.

It has two mobility programmes that are part of its strategic projects, namely:

The first one is the PAME[89] project, an academic mobility or student exchange programme between higher education institutions for students, teaching staff and administrators of affiliated universities. This programme is implemented as a result of the creation of Mobility Networks that promote exchanges with the following features:

- One year of duration.
- 50 % of credits approved at the origin.
- Face-to-face modality (between Latin American countries) and virtual modality (Latin American countries and Spain).
- The application is made by the candidate's home university ("the PAME contact").

This is a programme that is jointly funded by the origin and destination universities plus the contribution of the people who participate in it.[90] The distribution of expenses is as follows:

- Destination university: it covers tuition costs (virtual modality); tuition plus accommodation and living expenses (extensive face-to-face mobility) and only tuition plus advice (partial face-to-face modality).
- The home university funds travel expenses.
- The scholarship holder assumes the cost of the visa, health care insurance and any other expenses that are generated and not covered by the university of origin and the university of destination.

According to the results of most recent calls, the UDUAL exchange programme has the highest potential in the region and could serve as an opposing party to EHEA universities since it covers a greater number of countries. Furthermore, it has hybrid, virtual, and face-to-face training programmes, which expand exchange opportunities, although the usage of non-face-to-face systems between Latin America and the Caribbean has the disadvantage of time difference between countries.

116 universities from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay participated in the 2022-2023 call. Between January and June 2023, the participating

89 https://pame.udual.org/

90 Data taken from the UDELAR-Uruguay page https://udelar.edu.uy/internacionales/pame/ (31.03.2023)

universities offered the following number of programmes: 2,551 face-to-face, 1,178 virtual and 25 hybrid programmes.

Although the number of participants in the 2023-2024 call is a little lower, it is still high and diverse. The 93 participating universities come from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. One of the particularities of this call, and which shows the vitality of the network, is that the terms of the programmes were modified so that in the face-to-face modality two criteria were included, which resulted in the offer of 2001 partial face-to-face programmes and 691 extended face-to-face programmes. Only 11 universities with 76 programmes participated in the hybrid model.

The most interesting thing about that year's call is the division of the virtual education programmes into 4 modalities which are:

- COIL.[91] With 13 participating HEIs from seven countries: Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru.
- Mirror lessons. With 19 participating HEIs from 10 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru.
- Virtual with credits. Where 1967 places were offered by 33 universities from 12 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Spain.
- Virtual without credits. With 356 places offered by nine universities from five countries: Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru.

The other major initiative of this network is the Common Area for Online Higher Education (ECESELI-UDUAL).

3.1.6. ECESELI-UDUAL[92]

ECESELI was created in 2013 by UDUAL, Grupo Coimbra, Virtual Educa and the OAS, at the University of Panama, with the aim of developing a common area for virtual educational offerings through technological platforms. It should be emphasised that this is a bi-regional initiative, as it is made up of networks from the two continents.

The educational offer is neither generalistic nor linked to specific careers; it is rather thematic and mainly focused on digital technologies, the equal rights agenda, biodiversity, climate change, professional development of government activity, demographic dynamics, education, technology environment and information society, and safety and sustainability.

91 'Collaborative Online International Learning' is a methodology for intercultural and collaborative learning in which students and teaching staff from different countries participate. It is part of what has been called "home internationalisation."

92 https://eceseli.udual.org/

The formats in which studies are offered are master's degrees, graduate, doctoral, MOOC courses and webinars on topics such as the impact of universities on the economy, health and education derived from COVID-19.

3.2. Bilateral programmes

There are also bilateral mobility programmes between countries, although none of them are in force, since 2017 they have become part of the PILA programme described in the Multilateral Programmes section. However, for information purposes, they have been included below:

- MACA: Colombia-Argentina Academic Mobility.
- JIMA: Mexico-Argentina Youth Exchange Programme.
- MAGMA: Mobility of Academics and Managers between Argentine and Mexican Universities.
- BRAMEX: Brazil-Mexico mobility for undergraduate students from all areas, between institutions associated with ANUIES and the Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities (GCUB). There is no information on whether it is in effect or whether there is a current call.[93]

3.3. Multilateral Programmes

Except for PILA, which has special features, programmes associated with regional integration schemes are grouped in this section. Although these are heterogeneous programmes, they are perhaps the most relevant for this study, as they are supported by integration systems that could be opposing parties to the EU. Furthermore, it should be stressed that, while it is not a model that incorporates all CELAC countries, it is worth considering since it provides strong experiences that, if expanded to other sub-regions, would contribute to the creation of the EU-CELAC HEA.

3.3.1. PILA[94]

The Latin American Academic Exchange Programme, PILA, was born in 2017 as a result of an academic exchange agreement for undergraduate and graduate students, teaching staff and managers from Mexico, Colombia and Argentina. It is signed by the Colombian Association of Universities (ASCUN), the National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education (ANUIES, Mexico) and the National Interuniversity Council (CIN, Argentina) in order to create a strategic alliance of

93 For more information, refer to the website: http://www.anuies.mx/programas-y-proyectos/cooperacion-academica-nacional-e-internacional/cooperacion-academica-internacional/programa-intercambio-brasil-mexico-bramex

94 For more information, refer to the website: https://www.programapila.lat/

internationalisation and cooperation based on the bilateral exchange programmes that existed between these institutions. Thus, it replaces the bilateral programmes: MACA, JIMA and MAGMA described in the previous section.

In August 2020, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, PILA Virtual was born as a new form of participation that seeks to create an alternative to classroom attendance. It is an expanding programme which in March 2021 incorporated the associations of universities and councils of rectors from Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay. It is currently a consortium of 9 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean and 255 educational institutions.

From the PILA2-2023 face-to-face call[95], it can be highlighted that the conditions for students who participate in the programme are:

- Duration: 1 academic semester.
- Precondition: having passed at least 20 % of the courses of the degree.
- Destination university: exemption from tuition costs and provides accommodation and living expenses.
- Recognition at the university of origin of the studies completed at the destination university.

For academics and researchers, they can stay between 15 and 30 days and managers can also access mobility with stays between 7 and 15 days.

3.3.2 MARCA-MERCOSUR[96]

It is the Regional Academic Mobility Programme between MERCOSUR Member and Associated States represented in the Higher Education Area Commission (CAES) of the MERCOSUR Education Sector that offers mobility for undergraduate degree courses accredited by the Mercosur Regional Accreditation System (ARCU-SUR[97], since 2006). Like most other mobility systems, it is open to students, teaching staff, researchers and coordinators.

The ARCU-SUR system is made up of the National Accreditation Agencies that are part of the RANA Network (Network of National Accreditation Agencies), which are as follows: CONEAU (Argentina), CNACU (Bolivia), INEP (Brazil), CNA-Chile, CNA-Colombia, CACES (Ecuador), ANEAES (Paraguay), Ad-Hoc Commission on Accreditation-Ministry of Education and Culture (Uruguay).

The degrees that are included within the mobility scheme are: Agronomy, Architecture, Nursing, Engineering, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Geology and

95 For more information, see the document available on the website: https://www.programapila.lat/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Convocatoria-PILA-presencial-2023-2_final_SSG.pdf

96 For more information, see the website: https://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/index.html

97 Further information can be found at: http://arcusur.org/arcusur_v2/

Economics; but only Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay have accredited degree courses according to the above-mentioned conditions.

In addition to having accreditations that offer guarantees to participating universities and students, its structure and operation is quite similar to that of the Erasmus system of the EHEA, so it would be a programme that could be easily incorporated into a potential EU-CELAC HEA. There is one institutional coordinator per university and one academic coordinator for each accredited degree who are in contact with the Focal Point of their country. The focal point of each country is determined by the national body responsible for higher education and all are coordinated by the Management Unit that is designated by consensus for two years and alternates between the countries participating in MARCA. This institutional structure is important because government agencies are involved.

Regarding the operation, accredited university degree courses create networks through partnership projects for each call and the studies taken at the host university are recognised at the home university.

Initially, mobility was only for students and, later, it was opened to teaching staff. The mobility scheme began in 2006 with a pilot programme for the degree in agronomy that was later extended to the degrees that were accredited in the different disciplines. Thus, under this scheme, there have been regular calls from 2008 to 2014.

Since 2011, mobility for teaching staff has also been opened under the modality of teaching projects. Although this scheme restricts mobility, it offers at the same time greater guarantees of proper functioning and involvement of participants. Thus, for example, in the first call, the teaching projects approved for the 2011-2012 biennium were four in the areas of Agronomy, Architecture, Electrical Engineering and Chemical Engineering and had the participation of 15 universities from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.[98]

Since 2015 the programme has been structured in networks that constitute the degrees accredited by ARCUSUR. That is, the degrees present their multilateral association projects under specific objectives agreed by the network and it is within this framework that the mobilities take place.

The XII call[99] corresponding to the year 2022-2024 demonstrates the success of the MARCA-MERCOSUR programme as the exchange schemes are associated with the existence of an organisation capable of making executive decisions that commit the countries. These would be some of the programme's achievements:

98 For more information, see the document available at: https://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/docs/Movilidad_Docente_MARCA_2011-2012.pdf

99 For more information, refer to the website: https://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/XII_convocatoria.html

- Countries with ARCUSUR-accredited degrees: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay.
- Approved 12 three-year multilateral academic partnership projects: 2022-2024. Each multilateral project requires the participation of at least three countries.
- 119 degree courses from the above-mentioned countries participate.
- This multilateral project framework involves the mobility of students, professors and coordinators.

Funding covers the costs of transportation (round trip), travel insurance, living expenses and accommodation. As for students, the country of origin covers the first two and the country of destination covers living expenses and accommodation. As regards lecturers and coordinators, all expenses are covered by the country of origin.

Another benefit of the MARCA-MERCOSUR programme is that it has a government funding system, with clearly identified sources of resources by country, although as can be seen in Table 8, scholarships are rather scarce. Funding comes from:

- Argentina: Ministry of Education through the Higher Education Internationalisation and International Cooperation Programme under the Secretariat of University Policies.
- Brazil: Secretaria de Educação Superior do Ministério da Educação do Brasil
- Paraguay: HEIs and the National Scholarship Programme "Don Carlos Antonio Lopez" (BECAL).
- Uruguay: University of the Republic.
- Colombia: HEIs

Table 8. MARCA scholarships. XII Call 2022-2024*

Country	By Year and Accredited Degree	
	Student	Lecturers
Argentina	1 mobility Semester duration	1 lecturer or coordinator Maximum duration 15 days
Brazil	1 inbound + 1 outbound Duration: 5 months	1 lecturer or coordinator Maximum duration (days)
Paraguay**	National University of Asuncion 6 nationals + 6 foreigners Semester duration	National University of Asuncion 4 lecturers and 1 coordinator.
	National University of Itapúa: 6 nationals + 6 foreigners Semester duration	National University of Itapúa: 4 lecturers and 2 coordinators.
Uruguay	1-3 nationals + 1-3 foreigners Semester duration	1-2 lecturers: Maximum duration (days) 1 coordinator: Maximum Duration (days)
Colombia	Not specified	Not specified

*The total number of accredited courses has been 519.[100]
** It presents approximate data because it depends on budget availability.
Source: own elaboration based on the data of the programme itself.

It should be highlighted that in the selected projects there is a clear bias, as they belong to the courses of agronomy, architecture, nursing, engineering (electronic, civil,

100 Not all accreditations are valid, but includes all the information for each university that has at some point obtained accreditation. For more information, refer to the website: http://www.arcusur.org/arcusur_v2/index.php/carreras-acreditadas

mechanical), medicine, dentistry and veterinary, which are the degrees accredited by ARCU-SUR. There are no experimental sciences, no social sciences, no humanities degree courses. Of a total of 1,168 students who mobilised between 2015 and 2022 (in 2020 there was no exchange due to the COVID-19 pandemic), the distribution by courses was as follows: Agronomy (322), Architecture and Urbanism (241), Nursing (46), Civil Eng. (80), Electronics Eng. (43), Industrial Eng. (39), Mechanical Eng. (81), Chemistry / Food Eng. (105), Medicine (84), Dentistry (57) and Veterinary (81).

Annex 4 shows the mobility flows of the students participating in the MARCA programme. Argentina stands out as the country whose students move the most towards other countries of the programme, with a total of 488 in the seven years for which data are offered. Brazil follows, more than 100 students apart. It must be emphasised that, of the smaller countries that make up MERCOSUR, Bolivia is the one that mobilises the most students (194), which shows a clear interest of both students and institutions in the country to promote exchange programmes. This reality contrasts with the case of Uruguay, which has only 61 participants. While it is true that it is a small country, it has a solid and internationalised university system. Proof of this is that the University of the Republic participates in 27 projects funded by the European Commission, while the University of Buenos Aires participates in 24. To conclude with the analysis of student mobility in this programme, it is striking that there is little interest in mobility within the region among students from Chile and the non-participation of students from Venezuela.

Table 9 presents the data related to "outbound lecturers", that is, lecturers who go to a country other than their university to carry out teaching tasks. In the seven years for which there are data, only 153 lecturers have travelled to another MERCOSUR country, 62 % of them from Argentina. Teaching staff information shows that the participation of Colombian and Chilean institutions in this programme is marginal, while that of Venezuela is non-existent. There are two facts that are worth highlighting: compared to the high number of Bolivian students who mobilise, the number of lecturers is lower, which could be explained by a lower consolidation of their professional careers. In contrast, the participation of lecturers in Uruguay increases, despite the low interest of their students in exchange programmes.

Table 9. Outbound lecturers in the context of the MARCA programme

Years	Argentina	Bolivia	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Paraguay	Uruguay	Venezuela	Total
2015	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	4
2016	38	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	40
2017	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
2018	9	3	7	0	0	1	0	0	20
2019	7		11	0	0	2	2	0	22
2021	9	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	11
2022	10	4	12	0	2	1	6	0	35
Total	**95**	**8**	**32**	**0**	**2**	**4**	**12**	**0**	**153**

Source: MARCA programme database (https://programamarca.siu.edu.ar)

The MARCA programme and SEGIB have instituted the MARCA & SEGIB[101] award since 2020, to strengthen university cooperation and internationalisation, which participating universities can opt for. There have been two editions (2021 and 2023).

3.3.3. Pacific Alliance Student and Academic Mobility Platform[102]

This platform, created in 2012, aims to contribute to academic integration in Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. It is an integration system that gained a lot of initial traction – there have been four meetings of Higher Education Institutions, one in each country – but because it was a proposal that emerged with a clear political intention, its ups and downs have been heavily influenced by the ideological affinity of the governments that constitute it. The differences between the presidents of the different countries have practically paralysed this integration scheme, however, scholarships continue to be called.

Mobility is mainly for students who can spend a semester at Higher Education Institutions in the partner countries. Eligible fields are more related to the objectives of this initiative, which is focused on trade and other economic aspects, such as business, finance, international trade, public administration, political science, tourism, economics, international relations, environment and climate change, innovation, science and technology, engineering. This shows a clear difference in the areas with which the MERCOSUR mobility scheme works, an integration initiative to which the Pacific Alliance tried to offer itself as an alternative at the time.

In the call for the second semester of 2023 (XIV Call), up to 400 scholarships (100 per country) were announced for technical and technological studies, undergraduate and doctoral studies and for the stay of guest researchers and lecturers. Specifically, the eligible areas in this call are specifications of the topics listed above: 1. Public Administration; 2. Political Science; 3. International Trade; 4. Economy; 5. Finance; 6. Engineering; 7. Innovation, Science and Technology; 8. Environment and Climate Change; 9. International Business and Relations; 10. Tourism (Gastronomy and other related areas). The participating institutions are public and private universities of the member countries distributed as follows: Chile 43; Colombia 72; Mexico 260 and Peru 53.[103]

Funding and coverage depend on each country and funds are not always enough to cover 100 % of the scholarships offered, which tacitly reduces them. The funds provided by the countries are intended to finance monthly living expenses during the mobility (which varies according to the country and is higher for doctoral students, researchers and guest lecturers), travel expenses (national and international transport) and health insurance. In addition to this, it offers exception from tuition costs.

101 For more information, see the website: https://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/noticia_premio.html

102 For more information, see the website: https://becas.alianzapacifico.net/

103 See the full list in the document available on the following website: https://becas.alianzapacifico.net/ListadodeIES.pdf

Doctoral students, lecturers, and researchers can participate in the Pacific Alliance programme for short stays ranging from three weeks to six months and have the possibility of participating several times in the programme provided that the use of the scholarships is in a country different from the first.

Undergraduate conditions are more stringent than those of the EHEA Erasmus programme (in fact, the only coincidence is the recognition of the courses taken at destination):

- Having approved the 50 % of the degree course in the institution of origin (if they are professional modality studies, the 50 % or the fifth cycle of studies).
- Having an average mark (for each country the scale is different: 5 for Chile, 4 for Colombia, 8.5 for Mexico and "Upper Third" in Peru).
- Having completed at least four courses.
- Recognition at the university of origin of the courses taken at destination.
- The scholarship can be awarded only once.

The Pacific Alliance once had international political support from the countries that saw in it the possibility of increasing commercial ties with the countries that integrated it while seeking to strengthen them as they opted for an open economy model, rather than protectionist systems. This support was also transferred to mobility programmes, so the Government of Hungary offered eight scholarships in the 6th call 2023-2024, two for each member country. Depending on the countries, the call indicates different fields of studies, and the scholarships are open for bachelor's, master's, doctoral or non-graduate programmes (preparation and specialisation courses). The Canadian government also offered scholarships, but there was only a second call in 2020. No programme details were made available, and it might have been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[104]

3.3.4. Regional Academic Mobility Programme-SICA[105]

Like MERCOSUR, the Central American Integration System (SICA) has also developed mobility programmes to strengthen integration between higher education systems in its area of influence. However, as has happened with other integration initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean, tensions and differences between governments have weakened it to almost complete inaction.

The Regional Academic Mobility Programme of the SICA's General Secretariat, as well as contributing to the Central American integration process based on the promotion of student mobility in the region, is also designed as a mechanism to reduce asymmetries in scientific-technical knowledge.

104 For more information, see the website: https://alianzapacifico.net/a-los-postulantes-del-programa-de-becas-del-gobierno-de-canada-y-la-alianza-del-pacifico/

105 For more information, refer to the website: https://www.sica.int/iniciativas/movilidad

The mobility programme is part of SICA's Regional Integration Training Plan that is funded by the Spanish Cooperation Agency for Development's Spain-SICA fund.[106]It is the most restricted of those that are attached to integration systems because the scholarships are awarded for research projects whose topic is the Central American integration process. The first edition was aimed at students who did their undergraduate and postgraduate theses; in the second edition (2017), it was extended to academic (between 2 and 4 months) and scientific (between 4 and 8 months) mobility. The programme is currently closed.[107]

3.3.5. PIMA-OEI's Andalusia[108]

In the field of exchange programmes that promote Ibero-America as an educational space, OEI's actions stand out, which has among its members countries from America and from the Iberian Peninsula in Europe. One of its initiatives is the Academic Exchange and Mobility Programme (PIMA), which was created by OEI in 2000 and which, since 2005, has been supported by the public universities of the Spanish Autonomous Community of Andalusia. It is a programme that has two mobility axes: Spain-America and America-America and, from 2000 to 2019-2020, the mobilities have been 2,270.[109]

PIMA also aims to strengthen university cooperation and promote the Ibero-American dimension of higher education, through multilateral undergraduate student exchange projects in the region. This intends to contribute to the creation of a common Ibero-American area of knowledge and regional integration.

The programme is structured in networks of higher education institutions from at least three countries, which enter into special agreements to carry out mobility in specific thematic areas. The recognition of the completed studies is guaranteed as a result of the study contract which formalises the commitment. It provides financial support that aims to compensate for living outside the usual residence and is intended for stays and transfers. They are compatible with other national scholarships or loans and students do not pay tuition at the university.

As regards funding, OEI obtains it through mechanisms for accepting resources that use funds from public and private institutions. One of the ways in which the OEI can access these resources is by giving priority, in the project selection procedures, to the institutions that sponsor the programme. Andalusian universities coordinate projects with OEI, participate in their selection and development, and provide aid for student mobility, whether inbound or outbound. The OEI finances with 92,000 euros the scholarships it manages for students who travel between universities in Latin America.

106 For more information, see the websites: http://www.aecid.sv/quienes-somos/que-hacemos/od7/programa-de-cooperacion-regional-con-centroamerica/ and https://www.sica.int/fes/ . The latest news is from 2018.

107 For more information, see the website: https://www.sica.int/iniciativas/movilidad

108 For more information, visit the website: https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/programa-de-intercambio-y-movilidad-academica/presentacion

109 See the editions of the Evaluation Reports of 2018 and 2019-2020 in OEI (2021a). Exchange and Academic Mobility Programme (PIMA): https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/publicaciones/programa-de-intercambio-y-movilidad-academica-pima-informe-de-evaluacion-ediciones-2018-y-2019-2020

During the 2022-2023 call, the PIMA-Andalusia programme approved 22 networked academic mobility projects presented by the 9 Andalusian public universities and awarded 212 mobility scholarships to undergraduate students for stays with a maximum duration of one academic semester. The previous academic requirement they had to meet was to have passed 50 % of the degree course.

In addition to this, public universities must be included in the composition of the networks and priority is given to those belonging to the following countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, and Venezuela. It is a growing network that expects the progressive integration of a greater number of Ibero-American universities.

3.3.6. Paulo Freire Programme to boost the academic mobility of university students in the area of Education in Ibero-America [110]

Another Ibero-American mobility project sponsored by OEI is the one carried out by the Pablo Freire Technical Unit (UTPF). This is an action aimed at students and lecturers to carry out their doctoral thesis in a region other than the one in which they have been trained or teach. It is part of the OEI's Ibero-American University 2030 strategy (approved on December 1, 2020) in which 23 countries participated.[111] More than 700 scholarships have been awarded for the 2017-2019 call and during the 2022-2023 cycle, calls are reopened, after updating the operation of the Programme, which is now called Paulo Freire+.[112]

3.3.7. Campus Ibero-America[113]

The Campus Ibero-America is the regional framework for academic mobility within the Ibero-American Knowledge Area led by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB). It brings together policies, instruments and agents to coordinate Ibero-American cooperation based on the mandates of the Summits of Heads of State and Government of Ibero-America. In addition to SEGIB, it is made up of OEI and the Ibero-American University Council.

The Campus Ibero-America was born in 2014, following the XXIV Summit, to promote the mobility of studies (undergraduate and postgraduate), teaching and research and labour practices between public and private institutions of the 22 Ibero-American countries and is structured in three pillars which are:

110 For more information, see the website: https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/programa-paulo-freire/convocatoria-paulo-freire-jaime-torres-bodet

111 For more information about the programme and its members, see the website: https://paulofreire.oei.es/es/countries.html

112 For more information on the programme, see the website: https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/programa-paulo-freire-2/presentacion

113 For more information on the SEGIB programme, see the website: https://www.campusiberoamerica.net/

- Ibero-American Alliance for Mobility: It is aimed at securing resources for exchanges through the public sector-private sector association.
- Ibero-American Mobility System: it seeks to be a meeting area for mobility programmes that share common rules.
- Ibero-American Mobility Platform: it is the website for information, coordination and exchange management.

Taking May 2023 as the reference date, it could be said that, until that moment, the platform was mainly aimed at facilitating the incorporation of initiatives, since it does not develop its own initiatives but is a kind of mobility repository. The campus is organised as a network to which 58 organisations from 18 countries representing more than 800 universities and institutions have adhered and includes an offer of more than 20,000 mobilities. The materialisation of this network is the common platform[114] that tries to unify mobility processes and proposals, as well as provide information to improve coordination and help plan all the actions involved in mobility.

In sum, the Campus itself is a tool that helps gather and develop initiatives that contribute to the creation of a common area. In fact, as a virtual space, it is already a well-structured common area that offers countries the possibility of sharing data and becoming visible. The problem is that there are countries that do not seem to update the information. Thus, the data offered by the mobility platform, as of 15/05/2023, are the following[115] (see Table 10):

Table 10. Summary of available programmes at Campus Ibero-America

	Total	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Research/Teaching
Mobility programmes	1.332	398	643	523
Mobilities	79.785			
Institutions	65			
Countries	22			

Source: own elaboration from https://www.campusiberoamerica.net/campus-en-cifras. Data since 2017 updated on 23/06/2023.

3.4. National programmes

In this section, the programmes which have state funding from the government or public agencies have been grouped. Due to the large number of existing programmes, they are grouped in Annex 3 where the international scholarship programmes of European governments, universities and other organisations are listed by country.[116]

114 See: www.campusiberoamerica.net

115 For more quantitative information about the programme, see the website: https://www.campusiberoamerica.net/es/campus-en-cifras

116 For example, in Spain, there are private institutions such as Banco Santander and the Ibero-American University Association for Postgraduate Studies, which is international and non-profit (also referred to, if applicable, in the appropriate call(s) in the LAC area).

These scholarships can be for complete bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies at the destination university. In some cases, it is specified that they are for students coming from CELAC, which is further described in the table. However, these are usually scholarships for students from anywhere in the world and for the study of any field of knowledge, as can be seen in the terms of the call that have been included in the cases in which these are available.

Similarly, information on international mobility scholarships offered by the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean or by the association of universities, institutions or multilateral organisations is included (Annex 3). They are mainly scholarships for nationals or residents of Ibero-American countries. The Organisation of American States (OAS) scholarships, in which there is no participation from any European country, have also been listed here. The OAS has the particularity of including a special scholarship programme for English-speaking Caribbean member states that, in general, have a deficit of presence in the rest of the programmes analysed. It should be assumed that international mobility in these islands is linked to the countries of their language scope. Thus, France has an important initiative regarding them that it develops from Campus France, more specifically with the project "Language exchanges and innovative learning through mobility" (ELAN in French)[117] funded by the EU Interreg programme (2.2 million euros of the three that the project has). As regards UNESCO-IESALC (2019), it differentiates two large groups in the Caribbean: (1) Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, in which the analysis of their mobilit y flows is included with the other countries of Latin America; (2) other countries of different linguistic affiliation (English and Dutch) and which, by size, have a lower development of their own higher education system, which encourages regional education initiatives such as the University of the West Indies.

4. How to improve mobility between the two regions? Anticipation of some proposals

Given the evidence, the first conclusion would be that it is necessary to increase exchange flows, but only if they are bidirectional since an EU-CELAC HEA in which students, researchers and managers from Europe do not stay in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean seems questionable. Furthermore, as the figures demonstrate, there will always be a high proportion of students from the regions themselves due to geographical proximity and neighbourhood. In this sense, it becomes more complex to present arguments in favour of promoting exchanges with Latin America to governments and university systems that have greater demand from other regions, as this generates joint interests.

In this context, the implementation of a widespread model of student and staff exchange between the two regions like the one offered by the EU Erasmus+ Programme

117 For more information about the programme, see the website: https://www.campusfrance.org/es/projet-europeen-interreg-elan-mobilite-caraibes

seems unrealistic. Even limiting it to CELAC, it would be necessary to start from very diverse institutional structures, regulations and programmes, as reflected in Sánchez and Hernández (2017). The creation of mechanisms that generate trust in the assurance of quality standards would be very necessary for this context but, additionally, funding would have to be obtained, especially if the coverages are intended to be greater than those of the EU Erasmus+ programme, rather low as they are aimed at financing part of the travel costs and additional expenses of living in another country. Moreover, CELAC lacks executive capacity. There is no institution in which countries are recognised that could manage a programme of this magnitude and coordinate the diversity of higher education systems.[118]

Therefore, if the aim is to improve the mobility of the three academic levels, work should be done on an institutional framework and on enough incentives so that mobility is initially materialised through bilateral agreements between the same degree of two university institutions recognised as valid representatives. At this level, the management of agreements is more efficient, so it is expected that it will be a more successful initiative to which centres and universities will be added, increasing the foundations of a future common area.

A good way to understand the mechanisms that increase the mobility of students from Latin America and the Caribbean to Europe is to observe what happens with France and Germany, two academic destinations chosen by people from a greater number of CELAC countries. In both cases, there are at least five elements in common, which are not exclusive to the relationship of these countries with CELAC but are part of their international relations and soft power strategy. They are:

- The good reputation of its public university systems.
- Having schools in various parts of the world.
- Having scholarship systems and public and/or fiscal aid for students.
- The low tuition costs and fees of their public universities.
- Their language and culture dissemination systems.

These two countries managed to overcome the language limitation – a factor that was always indicated as restrictive – as a result of having a permanent institutional network for the dissemination of their language and culture. As can be seen in Table 11 there are French and German schools in almost every country in Latin America where they generally attract local elites by their reputation. In the case of the Caribbean, the network of schools is reduced due to the small population of the islands, which would be reflected in a clear lack of students who could make the operation of schools possible. As for the French government, it has a solid system of non-face-to-face and distance education that serves national students from areas where there are no schools. Furthermore, they are educational centres in which the parents of students must pay

118 See the differences between countries in Sanchez and Hernandez (2017).

relatively high costs, which suggests that they are families with enough resources to cover the student mobility of their children in those countries.

Table 11. French and German schools in Latin America

Country	German schools	French schools (AEFE)
Argentina	2	2
Bolivia	2	2
Brazil	2	4
Chile	3	5
Colombia	4	5
Costa Rica	1	1
Cuba	0	1
Ecuador	4	2
El Salvador	1	1
Guatemala	1	1
Honduras	0	1
Mexico	3	5
Nicaragua	1	1
Panama	0	1
Paraguay	1	1
Peru	1	2
Dominican Republic	0	2
Uruguay	1	1
Venezuela	2	1

Sources: https://alemaniaparati.diplo.de/mxdz-es/aktuelles/colegiosalemaneslista/1085822 y https://www.aefe.fr/reseau-scolaire-mondial/rechercher-un-etablissement

The "French Alliance" instrument for the dissemination of the French language and culture has the largest and oldest network of schools in Latin America: 140,000 students learn French in 250 French Alliances. This cultural network is reinforced by the presence of 6 French Institutes in Latin America and the Caribbean and two Maisons de France (Houses of France). This activity is supplemented by the 36 French schools spread over practically all the region's countries, making France a true nursery of biculturalism.[119]

In addition to the Auslandsschulen or Deutsche Auslandsschulen present in Latin America (see Table 11), Germany runs the Goethe-Institut, a public institution whose mission is to foster, disseminate and promote knowledge of the German language and

119 The details derive from the official information of the French government taken from this website: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/es/fichas-de-paises/america/america-latina/

its culture while fostering foreign relations between Germany and the countries where it is based. In Latin America, there are 24 centres distributed in 13 countries.[120]

If scholarship systems are created by the EU or other funding bodies to build the EU-CELAC HEA, these could be more efficient if they consider that the destinations are in both regions, establishing quotas by country to diversify not only the destination but also the origin of the students. This would ensure that mobility occurs in different countries. In theory. However, there are limitations to student mobility to Latin America and the Caribbean such as insecurity or transport difficulties in the large capitals of Latin American countries, and we must be very aware that, if that reality does not change, it will be very difficult for mobility to increase.

Another interesting aspect concerning mobility proposals is that they focus mainly on teaching and little attention is paid to mobility for research and transfer. Consequently, there should be mechanisms that enhance the capacities of specific centres that may be of interest to researchers from CELAC or the EU, rather than from countries as a whole. Thus, for example, the Zamorano Pan-American Agricultural School is a centre that would be of enormous interest to researchers working on the processes of adaptation of agriculture to rising temperatures, even though the Honduran university system is not of optimal quality and, therefore, is overall unattractive. Another example can be the biology centres of areas such as the coral reefs of the Caribbean, the Galapagos Islands or the Amazon. Unique places where, for obvious reasons, the research done there is leading, even if the rest of the educational centres in the countries are not of quality.

To conclude this section, it should be considered that mobility policies are a strong incentive for the migration of talented people for whom the destination countries offer better working and living conditions. This becomes more important in contexts such as the current one, where the EU has a high demand for qualified human resources while living conditions have worsened in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. In this regard, compulsory return policies that aim to curb the so-called "brain drain" only function with scholarship students for whom this requirement is a required condition imposed by the funding institution.

The following section will offer an analysis of the European Union programmes so as to have a comparative view to the institutional and multilateral initiatives previously presented and to delineate other proposals for the future construction of the EU-CELAC HEA.

5. European Union Programmes

The EU programmes Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Project, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) promote internationalisation within the EHEA at bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels.

120 For more information about the Goethe-Institut and its regional presence, visit its official website: https://www.goethe.de/de/uun.html

The programmes are open to the participation of third countries and, in the case of Erasmus Mundus and MSCA, they are also available for students and researchers of any nationality, even if their HEI does not participate in the programme. It should also be highlighted that Latin America and the Caribbean are part of the group of non-associated third countries.

This section provides information about the Erasmus 2014-2020 programme (period 2014-2019) and presents the actions and programmes of the European Union, connected to the European Higher Education Area for the period 2021-2027, which are relevant to this study. Based on this information, it is possible to think of an open EU-CELAC Higher Education Area, built from the collaboration between universities and organisations in training programmes and research projects. This section will close with a summary of what the construction of the EHEA implies as a model whose transfer to Latin America and the Caribbean, under current conditions, seems difficult, unless participating countries commit to offering greater financing, legal certainty, study quality and institutional strength. Moreover, it would be important to create an institutional structure that, by delegation of the states, would have executive and financial capacity, since it would facilitate the work of the various international actors, including the EU-LAC Foundation, whose strength, among others, is to have the 33 states of LAC, the 27 of the EU and the EU itself as members.[121]

At the time of writing this report, the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme is in force with a budget of €26.2 billion for the entire period (almost doubling the previous period of €14.7 billion). Even though the design of the programme was carried out after the political authorities had proposed the idea of a bi-regional university area, the presence of Latin America and the Caribbean as a region that is incorporated into European programmes remains weak. For example, the absence of NARIC and SALTO, whose importance is explained below in the sense that they are structures that already exist, should not be invented but only used.

The National Centres for Academic Recognition (NARIC) are among the institutions that help the European Commission and the Executive Agency implement the Erasmus programme in non-associated countries. Their work consists of informing and advising on the recognition of degrees from 55 countries, which is fundamental for the entry of non-EU students into EU universities. However, there is no degree from the LAC countries.[122] Nor are the countries of the region among the SALTO resource centres[123], which are responsible for advice and training, among other actions, to launch the Erasmus+ Action programmes.

121 For more information see: https://eulacfoundation.org/es

122 For more information on the ENIC-NARIC Networks programme, see the website https://www.enic-naric.net/

123 The three SALTO regional centres are: SALTO SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE, SALTO EASTERN EUROPE and CAUCASUS and SALTO EUROMED. They foster strategic and innovative cooperation between stakeholders from programme countries and Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps partner countries by promoting cooperation and solidarity in the youth field. This conditions the fact that they are not partner countries.

As mentioned at the beginning, Latin America and the Caribbean are part of the group of third non-associated countries that may participate in Erasmus under certain conditions, for justified cases in the interest of the EU (art. 20 of the Regulation).[124] A clear example of this is the Erasmus Mundus programmes explained below.

In the design of this new programme for the current period, the Jean Monet actions were modified to focus more on professionalisation and the link between universities and society. One of the consequences of this change has been the disappearance of a programme that allowed the creation of academic networks, also between the EU and LAC and, above all, it promoted the two-way mobility of managers and researchers while creating institutional bonds. This decision has suppressed a cooperation tool and, hence, has generated a setback in the conditions that contribute to the creation of the EU-CELAC HEA.

At the end of this section, a table summarising the EU-LAC Cooperation through Erasmus+ from 2014 to 2022 will be presented (Table 15). It has been prepared by using three European Commission reports; two of them support the analysis that is made below[125] and a third one, published right after finishing writing this study.[126] Even though the third report covers the same period as the previous two, the differentiating data have been kept so that an estimate of the programme's progress can be formed.

5.1. Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Project[127]

Since 2015, European HEIs have been able to establish mobility agreements with partners around the world through the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM) project. It is a two-way mobility for students (periods range from 3 to 12 months), researchers and staff, that is formalised through the signing of bilateral agreements between the institutions of the programme – which apply on behalf of their partners – and those of non-EHEA countries. Since 2018, it has also incorporated internships.

In the context of this programme, cooperation between the EU and Latin America can be measured by analysing the data[128] from the period 2014-2020. It can be anticipated

124 The European Commission document (2022b) Erasmus+. 2023 Programme Guide (version 23/11/2022) can be found on the website: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-11/Erasmus%2BProgramme%20Guide2023_es.pdf

125 European Commission 2020a and 2021a.

126 European Commission (2023). Cooperation between the EU and Latin America through Erasmus +: opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean. https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/es/document/eu-lac-cooperation-through-erasmus (published on 05/07/2023)

127 For more information on the programme, see the website: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/es

128 The data are for the years 2014-2019 for Latin America and include 2020 for the Caribbean. The reference documents are: European Commission (2020a) "Cooperation between the EU and Latin America through Erasmus+. Opportunities for Latin America" available on the website: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/latinamerica-regional-erasmusplus-2019_es.pdf

And the European Commission document (2021a) "Erasmus+ for higher education in the Caribbean" available at the following link: https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/factsheets/america-caribbean/caribbean_erasmusplus_2020_es.pdf

that they show improved levels of interregional cooperation, as Latin America is one of the beneficiary regions that has, as an external partner, lower exchange flows with the EU. In this period, the budget for Latin America has been almost 5% of the funding for this type of mobility for all participating regions and, of the percentage that goes to the region, 12% corresponds to the Caribbean sub-region.

There have been 1,635 bilateral partnership projects that have allowed the mobility of 9,058 students, researchers and staff distributed as follows: 5,463 mobilities from Latin America to the EU and 3,595 from the EU to Latin America, that is, a ratio of 1.51 students in favour of exchange from Latin America even though there are more incentives and resources for the mobility of European students. This evidence confirms the trend noted in the section on student exchange flows; namely, a reduced interest among European students in studying in Latin America. In addition to this, mobility focuses, above all, on people interested in language learning or in Social Sciences. Undoubtedly, among the challenges to consolidating the Common Area between the two regions is to increase the interest of European students in the region, so as to balance the exchange flow and diversify the areas of study in Latin America.

The performance data of the Erasmus programme in the Caribbean sub-region is relatively similar to that of the rest of the continent. The 288 selected projects with participation from the Caribbean have allowed the mobility of 1,667 students and staff. The directionality of the flow is 1,007 mobilities from the Caribbean to the EU and 660 from the EU to the Caribbean, that is, a ratio of 1.65 students in favour of exchange from the islands, despite the fact that European students have more incentives and resources for mobility. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that projects are highly concentrated, with 41% concentrated in the Dominican Republic, 17% in Haiti, and 13% in Jamaica. Haiti deserves special mention, as it is a country of preferential cooperation, especially from French-speaking countries, whose economic, political and social conditions determine the flow of mobility which is, mainly, unidirectional towards Europe.

When observing the disaggregation by countries offered by the reports of the European Commission (Country Factsheets[129]), certain mismatches are noticed with the aggregated data shown by other reports from the same source and which have been presented before, a difference that may be due to the period of time for which the data are collected or to the inclusion or not of different programmes of the Erasmus ecosystem that are not always detailed. The relevance of the information in Table 12 is that it clearly shows the mobility patterns of the EU countries with the CELAC countries discussed above. Unfortunately, the number of university lecturers participating in mobility programmes cannot be identified because the European Commission presents the aggregated data by mixing students with the "staff", a category with mostly

129 To see the details of the information used in the tables, refer to the data offered by the European Commission at the following link: https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20210927084220/https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en#annualnac2017

university lecturers, although it could also include administrative staff. However, there is no indication to determine the percentage of participation of each of the three sectors.

Table 12. International Credit Mobility (2015-2020)

Country	Received proposals with LAC participation	Selected projects with LAC participation	Students and staff heading to Europe	Students and staff heading to LAC
Argentina	838	426	812	558
Bolivia	143	99	226	149
Brazil	1377	714	1401	907
Caribbean	377	288	1007	660
Chile	648	339	774	602
Colombia	759	405	770	494
Costa Rica	176	107	159	126
Cuba	385	210	392	277
Ecuador	284	171	256	165
El Salvador	103	69	166	95
Guatemala	114	76	253	129
Honduras	100	74	141	74
Mexico	882	463	734	566
Nicaragua	85	46	122	72
Panama	61	35	35	24
Paraguay	137	78	158	80
Peru	451	243	318	215
Uruguay	212	106	200	127
Venezuela	32	16	21	4

Source: own elaboration based on the Country Factsheets of the European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en#annualnac2017

5.2. Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (EMJMD)[130]

In the structure of the Erasmus 2021-2027 programme, the Erasmus Mundus action is a programme of excellence that is part of "Key Action 2: Cooperation between Organisations and Institutions"[131] and its aim is "to promote excellence and worldwide internationalisation of higher education institutions through study programmes – at

130 This programme includes two lots: Lot 1. Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters; and Lot 2. Erasmus Mundus design measures.

131 For more information on the programme, European Commission (2022b). Erasmus + Programme Guide. https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-11/Erasmus%2BProgramme%20Guide2023_es.pdf

the master's level – taught and jointly recognised by higher education institutions established in Europe and open to institutions from other countries of the world".[132]

Within the Erasmus Mundus scope, the joint master's degrees are transnational, integrated and high-level study programmes and, as programmes of excellence, they should contribute to the integration and internationalisation of the European Higher Education Area. Their uniqueness lies in the excellence and high degree of collaboration among the participating institutions, which provides a framework structure for the relationship with LAC universities that is materialised in the official joint degrees, despite the programme's limitations regarding the activities that non-European universities can develop within the framework of the consortia.

The master's degrees should be offered by at least three higher education institutions from three different countries – two of which must be members of the EU or third countries associated with the programme – that form a consortium in which other organisations, educational or not, with interest in the areas of studies or related professional fields, can become partners. These master's programmes lead to a joint degree, multiple degrees, or a combination of both, which must, in any event, be recognised by the higher education degree systems of the countries to which the institutions that issue them belong. This is embodied in the Joint Diploma Supplement, which should contain all programme content.

Erasmus Mundus joint master's degrees have a duration of one and two years (60, 90 or 120 ECTS credits) and award full scholarships to study in at least two European countries to the best master's students from around the world "who have obtained a first degree in higher education or demonstrate an equivalent level of learning, recognised according to national legislation and practices in the countries or institutions issuing the degrees"[133]. These scholarships are funded by the EU and cover tuition fees for the universities that are part of the consortium, as well as accommodation, transport and living expenses. The application is made directly by the students, it is not necessary for the university of origin to be part of the consortium (which implies being full members, and also granting the degree) or for it to be associated (which implies participating but not granting the degree).

The initiative has a limited, although relevant, impact, as these are networks of excellence that require a high level of funding and the demands on educational institutions are very high. Data for the period 2014-2019[134] show that 1,765 scholarships were awarded to students from Latin America who were pursuing joint Erasmus Mundus master's degrees. It must be taken into account that these programmes are studied, for the most part, alongside scholarships, which are highly competitive.

132 For further details, see: European Commission (2022b: 17).

133 It should be stressed that no procedure for degree recognition is required within the guide created by the EU. Erasmus Guide 2023 (2022b: 287).

134 European Commission (2020a).

In 2018 and 2019, Brazil and Mexico were the countries that received the most Erasmus Mundus scholarships worldwide: 116 and 91, respectively, and the other countries in the region received a total of only 525 scholarships. In turn, with 57 persons, the number of scholarship holders from the Caribbean area was quite small. For more details on the participation of students from Latin America and the Caribbean during the period between 2014 and 2020, see Table 13, which also includes for comparative purposes the percentage of scholarships for Erasmus Mundus master's degrees received by Latin American students within the total number of scholarships –11,816 – offered for all countries in the world.

Table 13. Scholarship holders by country of origin (2014-2020)

Country	Total	Scholarships general budget	Additional regional funding scholarships	Percentage of scholarships out of the overall total of 11,816 scholarships
Argentina	138	92	46	1,2
Bolivia	46	18	28	0,4
Brazil	675	525	150	5,7
Caribbean	57	48	9	0,5
Chile	53	37	16	0,4
Colombia	340	239	101	2,9
Costa Rica	56	40	16	0,5
Cuba	33	21	12	0,3
Ecuador	97	70	27	0,8
El Salvador	20	11	9	0,2
Guatemala	78	32	46	0,7
Honduras	35	11	24	0,3
Mexico	505	386	119	4,3
Nicaragua	31	9	22	0,3
Panama	6	5	1	0,1
Paraguay	19	10	9	0,2
Peru	79	51	28	0,7
Uruguay	20	14	6	0,2
Venezuela	46	29	17	0,4
Total Lac	**2334**	**1648**	**686**	**19,8**

Source: own elaboration based on the European Commission's Country Factsheets
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en#annualnac2017

Regarding the participation of educational institutions in the programmes, between 2014 and 2019, it is still quite small if we consider the number of countries in the region and the multiplicity of educational universities in each of them. As in the other projects of the Erasmus ecosystem, it can be verified that Brazil, Mexico or Argentina are the countries that participate in the largest number of initiatives, although their

participation is not always as full partners, which is the form of incorporation of universities that facilitates the real integration of institutions in joint degrees (see Table 14). One aspect that can be explored is the disparity between the large participation of Chilean and Uruguayan universities and the limited number of students from those countries who participate in these programmes as compared to other countries, as shown in Table 13.

Table 14. Participation of LAC countries in Erasmus Mundus (MEM) Joint Master's Degrees (2014-2020)

Country	Received proposals with LAC participation	Selected M-EM with LAC participation	M-EM as full partners	M-EM as associates
Argentina	53	32	3	34
Bolivia	5	4	0	4
Brazil	192	99	9	81
Caribbean	7	5	0	5
Chile	70	39	4	36
Colombia	46	22	2	22
Costa Rica	8	3	0	3
Cuba	13	8	0	10
Ecuador	20	16	1	13
El Salvador	1	1	0	1
Guatemala	1	1	0	1
Honduras	2	0	0	0
Mexico	65	33	6	29
Nicaragua	2	2	0	2
Panama	1	1	0	1
Paraguay	0	0	0	0
Peru	17	6	0	6
Uruguay	15	7	0	8
Venezuela	4	2	0	3

Source: own elaboration based on the European Commission's Country Factsheets https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en#annualnac2017

Regarding the participation of educational institutions in the programmes, between 2014 and 2019, it is still quite small if we consider the number of countries in the region and the multiplicity of educational universities in each of them. Only 13 different universities from Latin America participated as host partners and 5 from the Caribbean participated in some way within the programmes. These are universities such as the University of the Republic of Uruguay or the UNAM, which also concentrate participation by integrating into several projects. Latin American organisations of all kinds participated in 89 of the 204 Erasmus Mundus programmes.

5.3. Other Erasmus related programmes

In addition to the mobility or Erasmus Mundus Masters programmes, there are other projects that are part of the action, such as the "Erasmus+ Capacity Building Projects" (CBHE), which aim to modernise higher education institutions, develop new curricula, improve governance, create relationships between higher education institutions and businesses, and cooperate with national authorities for higher education reforms. Thus, the objectives of this project model are similar to the previous ALFA programmes.[135]

Undoubtedly, this is a field of Erasmus+ action in which European and university centres in Latin America and the Caribbean could participate as part of the consortia, with the added benefit that they serve precisely to create quality and strengthen institutionalisation, i.e., one of the challenges faced by various Latin American and Caribbean universities. The duration of those is typically 2-3 years. Between 2014 and 2019, 14% of the budget was allocated to projects in the region. In that period there were 76 projects on the Latin American mainland and nine projects involving Caribbean countries.[136]

Jean Monet actions continue to have other lines of action, despite the change of criteria on networks mentioned in the introduction to this section. One of the axes of action of this programme is to promote studies on EU integration processes around the world. When assessing the implementation of these actions in Latin America and the Caribbean, we might see that they do not have the magnitude that one would expect if considering not only the number of American and Caribbean countries and universities, as mentioned above, but also the existing links between the two regions. Only 29 projects, out of 1,500 applications, were managed by institutions from continental Latin American countries for the reference period and are divided between nine chairs, three excellence modules, ten modules, three projects and three networks. The Caribbean has not participated in any way: it has not made proposals, projects, or joined in networks.

There is another programme aimed at developing capacities in the field of youth, promoting non-formal learning and volunteering through cooperation between organisations which are active in the empowerment of young people in different regions of the world. This initiative, which is not strictly university but is within the framework of the Erasmus+ Actions, included 154 projects with the participation of 462 organisations from Latin America.[137]

It is also worth mentioning the project "CAMINOS: Enhancing and Promoting Latin American Mobility"[138], although it ended in 2019. Developed within the Erasmus+ framework, it was co-funded by the European Union and coordinated by OBREAL.

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135 For more information about "Alfa Programmes", visit the website: https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/9088-alfa-programme-call-for-applications/es

136 European Commission (2020a). Caribbean data include 2020 (European Commission 2021a).

137 European Commission (2020a).

138 For more information about the programme, see the website: https://www.caminosproject.org/

This is an initiative that sought to develop a common model for managing the mobility of existing programmes, both bilateral and multilateral. The consortium consisted of 28 institutions from Latin America and Europe (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay, Spain, Italy, Portugal, France and Germany).[139] One of its results has been the creation of the document "Matrix of Institutional Processes and Good Practices. Guide for mobility management in higher education in Latin America".[140]

Table 15. Summary of EU-LAC cooperation through Erasmus+ (2014-2022)

EU-LAC cooperation through Erasmus+	Erasmus+ 2014-2020 (1)		Erasmus+ 2014-2020 Erasmus+ 2021-2027 (Data up to 2022)
	2014-2019 LA	2014-2020 C	2014-2022 LAC (2)
International Credit Mobility			
Bilateral partnership projects (3)	1.635	288	1.400*
• Mobility to the EU	5.463	1.007	9.254
• Mobility from the EU	3.595	660	5.953
Total mobility	9.058	1.667	15.207 12.652 (LA) + 2.555 (C)
ERASMUS MUNDUS Joint Masters			
Scholarship students	1.765	48	3.461
Students with additional scholarship (4)	525	9	
Participation of organisations	• 162 organisations have participated on 277 occasions (in 89 programmes out of a total of 204) • 13 universities as host partners	• 5 EMJMD with Caribbean participation • 5 partner organisations (none fully-fledged)	360 instances of participation: • 29 of them, from LA, as full partners • Organisations from 21 countries (17 LA and 4 C) have participated in 331 programmes as associate partners
Capacity Building for Higher Education			
Projects	76 (2015-2019)	–	110 (5 Caribbean focused)
Participation Instances	676	23	901
Jean Monet Activities			
Latin American projects	29 (out of a total of 1,500 applications)	–	50 LA (2,467 applications)
Chairs	9	–	17
Modules/Centres of Excellence	3	–	3
Modules	19	–	10
Projects	3	–	5
Networks	3	–	5

139 For more information on the programme, see the website: https://www.caminosproject.org/partners

140 Caminos (2019). Available in electronic format at: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/e7e2e3_9d7191e15c9841cd90d2e21053e2914e.pdf

Capacity building in the field of youth			
Projects with Latin American partners	154	–	–
Organisations	462	–	–
Capacity building for education and vocational training (since 2022)			
Projects	–	–	7 (1 in the Caribbean of digital culture)
Participation instances	–	–	25

(1) For Latin America, see: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/latinamerica-regional-erasmusplus-2019_es.pdf
For the Caribbean, see: https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/factsheets/america-caribbean/caribbean_erasmusplus_2020_es.pdf
(2) For Latin America and the Caribbean, see: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/es/document/eu-lac-cooperation-through-erasmus
(3) Institutions from Erasmus+ programme countries establish bilateral partnerships with LAC universities. In this framework, the mobilities of students and staff are establishe
(4) The additional scholarships are given to countries that the EU considers to be a priority.
*The reason why the 2014-2022 report shows fewer projects than in the 2014-2019 (LA) and 2014-2020 (C) period is unknown.
Own elaboration from the cited sources.

To summarise and to provide a complete and comparative overview of the engagement of the different countries in the Erasmus programmes, Table 16 presents the levels of participation of different countries in the abovementioned initiatives, with the highest numbers of participation listed in the upper rows. We can observe that the pattern of participation of countries is relatively homogeneous across the different programmes, but there are cases in which there is greater participation of the institutions and less of the lecturers and students, and vice versa.

Table 16. Country participation in the different Erasmus + programmes

Mobility Projects	Students and staff to Europe	Students and staff to LAC countries	MCEM with participation of LAC	MEM scholarship holders by country of origin
Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil
Mexico	Caribbean	Caribbean	Chile	Mexico
Argentina	Argentina	Chile	Mexico	Colombia
Colombia	Chile	Mexico	Argentina	Argentina
Chile	Colombia	Argentina	Colombia	Ecuador
Caribbean	Mexico	Colombia	Ecuador	Peru
Peru	Cuba	Cuba	Cuba	Guatemala
Cuba	Peru	Peru	Uruguay	Caribbean
Ecuador	Ecuador	Ecuador	Peru	Costa Rica
Costa Rica	Guatemala	Bolivia	Caribbean	Chile
Uruguay	Bolivia	Guatemala	Bolivia	Bolivia
Bolivia	Uruguay	Uruguay	Costa Rica	Venezuela

Paraguay	El Salvador	Costa Rica	Nicaragua	Honduras
Guatemala	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Venezuela	Cuba
Honduras	Paraguay	Paraguay	El Salvador	Nicaragua
El Salvador	Honduras	Honduras	Guatemala	El Salvador
Nicaragua	Nicaragua	Nicaragua	Panama	Uruguay
Panama	Panama	Panama	Honduras	Paraguay
Venezuela	Venezuela	Venezuela	Paraguay	Panama

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los Country Factsheets de la Comisión Europea
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en#annualnac2017

6. Some conclusions

This section started off with outlining the interest in analysing student flows and the offer of international mobility scholarships in and for LAC countries, due to the lack of an international programme or structure similar to Erasmus+. SEGIB's initiative to create an Ibero-American area is timely in terms of its approach. However, it lacks a programme to finance mobility, and its structures are composed of technological instruments. The initiatives are still scattered, they do not always perdure over time and, above all, are underfunded.

On the other hand, when comparing data from EU and CELAC countries, it seems that each country tends to follow an own path. In Europe, Germany, France and Spain are the countries with the highest number of scholarships, but each has its own programme which is embedded in their national internationalisation strategies. Apart from the latter, it draws the attention that Portugal, a European Ibero-American country, has not designed outreach initiatives with the region, except for exchange policies with Brazil, facilitated by linguistic proximity.

The analysis of the situation shows a lack of regional investment in mobility, atomisation of initiatives, inconsistency and dispersion of information (UNESCO-IESALC 2019). The result is duplication of efforts, lack of cooperation and inefficiency. In addition, there are initiatives that are not consolidated or that seem consolidated and then they disappear. Finally, the mechanisms to channel information either do not exist or are not updated.

All the programmes analysed repeat their objective of contributing to the construction of a common area for higher education by promoting mobility. They all offer scholarships to stay at institutions in other countries, except for Campus Ibero-America and ECESELI, which are platforms. As a summary, we present the data referring to the scholarships and aid for the mobility of undergraduate students of the ESCALA, CRISCOS, PIU, PAME, PILA, MARCA, Pacific Alliance and PIMA-Andalusia programmes, as they bear the greatest weight in terms of number, duration, and funding. Even if, as is evident in the previous individual analysis, they also contemplate the mobility of lecturers and managers and, in some cases, as is the case with ESCALA, the different mobilities are differentiated in their own programmes.

Some notable features common to these programmes:

- They establish some prerequisites referring to the reached percentage in the degree of origin: between 40 % and 50 %. 20 % just for PILA. Pacific Alliance and CRISCOS mobility programmes also require a minimum mark.
- Most have a duration of one academic semester, although the stay in MARCA and PAME can be for one year.
- They guarantee the recognition at the university of origin of the studies completed at the host university.
- The degree is awarded at the university of origin.
- In three programmes, mobility is limited to certain areas: Pacific Alliance, MARCA and PIMA-Andalusia; the latter two, in addition, must establish multilateral pre-projects; moreover, MARCA degrees must be accredited by ARCU-SUR.
- Exemption from tuition fees is provided. Sometimes it is specified that it is the tuition at the destination university. When this coverage is unspecified, it is also not mentioned that the student must assume it (as is the case with visa expenses, for example).
- Transfer and/or travel aid is included.
- Accommodation and living expenses are offered, which vary according to each case: from a monthly allowance (Pacific Alliance) to grants to compensate for expenses for living outside the usual residence that are not incompatible with other scholarships (PIMA-Andalusia).

As Erasmus+ is well known and is EHEA's student mobility programme par excellence, these international mobility initiatives resulting from the agreement between countries in the region are compared to it. In this comparison, there are coincidences in the recognition of the studies completed and in obtaining the degree at the university of origin. There is also an exemption from tuition costs at the destination university in almost all programmes. There are nuances in the prerequisites, which are less demanding in the Erasmus+ programme, since to participate in the programme it is sufficient to have passed at least 30 ECTS in the degree of origin (the equivalent of half a year); although in some cases the requirement is 60 ECTS and also extends to an average mark equivalent to a pass mark, the requirements are weaker.

The most significant differences, once again, have to do with institutional architecture, and with funding. The Erasmus programme depends on the European Commission and is within the EHEA which, as mentioned at the beginning, harmonises and integrates all procedures: from the quality assurance of the degrees to the signing of bilateral agreements between universities or the format of the academic agreement that supports the recognitions. However, it should be remembered that this was not originally the case, since the Erasmus programme precedes the creation of the EHEA.[141] This detail is interesting, as it demonstrates that it is not necessary to wait for all the –theoretical–conditions of possibility to be met to advance.

141 Erasmus originated from a decision by the Council of the European Economic Community in 1987 and initially 12 countries participated. Sánchez and Hernández (2017: 258).

But what is remarkable and what this initial situation highlights is the importance of political will. In the case of the Erasmus+ programme, the executive nature of the European Commission as the ultimate responsible for the programme and the management structure through the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACE) and the national agencies of the countries is essential. Thus, actions take place at various decision-making levels, and there is a layering process up to the degrees that, inside each university, make bilateral agreements that will support each academic agreement. The simplicity of the process lies in the fact that it is unique for all countries and each institution, and that each actor has its competence delimited.

It can be observed that the reference programmes try to create a similar structure in the participating countries. The differences would be between those programmes that (1) belong to a regional integration initiative, such as the Pacific Alliance and MARCA-MERCOSUR; (2) are the result of an association of universities, such as ESCALA and the Montevideo Group; or a network, such as PAME with respect to UDUAL; and (3) arise from exchange agreements between universities signed to host mobility, such as PILA and PIMA, even with the support of international organisations such as the OAS for PIMA. Furthermore, Pacific Alliance, MARCA and PIMA limit the areas in which mobility is developed, further requiring the last two, the prior constitution of projects. The Erasmus Programme does not limit the areas of knowledge in which mobility can develop.

This heterogeneous situation implies: (1) that the agreements and programmes are promoted, funded and implemented mainly by the institutions that make up the network[142]; the exception is MARCA-MERCOSUR which has greater government participation, both in the management of the programme and in funding, or PIMA for America that is funded by the OAS; (2) that the same countries can be part of different networks for which different regulations and procedures apply; (3) that the extension of these initiatives can be difficult to extrapolate to neighbouring countries because there are LAC countries that do not participate.

As anticipated at the beginning of this section, the problem is not that there are many initiatives, but that it is complex to articulate them because they belong to different systems and it seems unlikely that this will contribute to the creation of a common area, even at the regional level. The low presence of Central American countries is significant, and the example of the mobility programme in this region is illustrative, for which there is hardly any data, and which is not operating at the current moment. More so when we consider that it is part of an integration system, the SICA, which is quite complex in the development of numerous structures, as demonstrated in this work.

Another central issue to consider is what is the main objective of international mobility because it also affects priorities in financing and the fulfilment of basic requirements. In the case of the EU, the Erasmus programme has been a mechanism to promote

142 The work of Sánchez and Hernández (2017) already evidenced this situation (2017: 197-199). In the case of MARCA-MERCOSUR, there is greater participation of government structures, both in the management of the programme and in the financing.

European cohesion, which has primarily facilitated, from an academic point of view, the departure of students – especially undergraduate students – from their countries of origin, without taking into account both the economic difficulties of families and the gaps between destinations. Nor was it mandatory to have a good academic record, although the qualification would condition the possibility of accessing better destinations. Even the level of the language of the host university does not have to be high and can be "recommended", except in some degrees or for internships.

With regard to funding, the starting point is that students are already in university, and the grants are intended to contribute to travel expenses and the additional expenses of studying in another country. In fact, the programme establishes three groups of countries, depending on whether the cost of living is high, medium or low, to determine aid that, in turn, can be ordinary or extraordinary for students with fewer resources. In any case, they are compatible with other grants or scholarships, and here a delegation can be seen in the national or regional scholarship systems within the countries.[143]

In sum, the coverage is not total, and although the programme has allowed the participation of more than 10 million people since its creation, there are studies that indicate gaps between the student population as well as differences between destinations.[144] But, in any case, beyond the economic capacity of the participants, the families must provide the money in advance and the aid does not cover the expenses that arise. In fact, in Spain, for example, it is not known how much the monthly payment amounts to until you have the number of interns among whom the subsidy must be distributed. Not every month of mobility is subsidised either. Still, the current programme has almost doubled the budget to €26.2 billion.

In this context, the question would be not only how much money Latin American and Caribbean states are willing to contribute, but also what coverage they would offer to create a common area for similar mobility. Without leaving aside compensation mechanisms for vulnerable groups (by origin, gender, functional diversity, etc.), should coverage of all expenses be guaranteed for all participants, as seems to be the trend in the programmes analysed, or only for those who meet a series of requirements? Would the lack of capacity of many families to meet all expenses justify not implementing a programme with less coverage? These are just some of the questions that should be addressed if we want to propose a model of sustainable mobility over time that does not place the burden of financial responsibility on families, which limits the possibilities of students with fewer resources and would create a system where inequalities would increase.

143 For example, in Spain, Ministry grants are compatible with the money they receive for Erasmus. Banco Santander also offers scholarships for Erasmus students.

144 For more information on these differences, see the following news: https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/europa/2021-12-28/erasmus-dos-velocidad-programa-ue-desigualdad_3348913/ https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/europa/2021-12-29/erasmus-desigualdad-estudiantes-ue-becas_3348909/

PROGRAMMES THAT FOSTER COOPERATION IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

1. Introduction

Conceiving the construction of an EU-CELAC Common Area for Higher Education means including scientific cooperation. Science, technology and innovation represent an extension of university education that links it with society while projecting it. It would be the last phase of higher education as science and technology seek to anticipate and respond to societal needs. This does not mean that research depends only on higher education institutions, although initially, they are places of training and experimentation, as well as important recipients of both public and private aid.

Research investment is linked to the economic development of societies, which in turn, promotes it. In addition, it is part of a culture that considers such investment to be useful. Hence, the money allocated to research in a country's budget is an indicator of how important it is (Sánchez and Hernández, 2017: 213). However, it is a fact that countries with urgent problems affecting the coverage of basic population needs will not allocate budget items to science. Therefore, there is a need for cooperation in R&D&I as a contribution to the development of countries.

On the other hand, the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic make it clear, more than ever, that problems can end up affecting the entire population – even though impacts have degrees – and that solutions can depend on the sum of efforts, especially when time rushes.

At the European Union level, digital transformation and sustainable development are goals that define the research agenda. A research agenda influenced by the challenges the world already faces and with an anticipatory look at innovation. The common European research area is both the support and goal of this agenda to the extent it is still under construction. An analysis of the Horizon Europe 2021-2027 programme is presented below.

2. Horizon Europe 2021-2027

This study began by describing the significant fact that the development of the European Research Area obtained its own entity in relation to the EHEA in 2020, and,

more specifically, with Horizon Europe 2021-2027[145], the EU's development framework for research and innovation. The programme's budget is EUR 95.5 million, of which EUR 5.4 million comes from Next Generation EU funds in support of the ecological and digital recovery after COVID-19. An indicator of the relevance that the programme has acquired is the increase in funds: the first research framework programme (1984-1987) was allocated 3,271 million euros and if the previous Horizon 2020 is taken as a reference, the increase has been 30%. Thus, it can outright be said that the EU's commitment to research has been growing.

The budget is divided into three pillars: (1) scientific excellence, (2) global challenges and industrial competitiveness, (3) innovative Europe. The pillars are supported by a fourth horizontal programme "Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area", which supports the other three, helping EU member states develop innovation and research to build the common knowledge space.

The first pillar, scientific excellence, is funded by the European Research Council (ERC), with 16 billion euros of budget; the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)[146] for the training, mobility, and qualification of researchers with 6.6 billion euros; and research infrastructures with 2.4 billion. Within the MSCA programme, the Doctoral Networks have a European Commission allocation of 429.4 million euros in 2023 to support 149 doctoral programmes that are distributed as seen in Table 17.

Table 17. Participation in 2023 selected projects

Countries	Organisations	Participations (total)	Participations from third countries	LAC participations
62	1119	2322	304	7 organisations from 6 countries

Source: own elaboration from MSCA programme data.

To what extent would the MSCA programme contribute to the creation of a common area with LAC? It may do so as long as it incorporates academic and non-academic organisations from third countries. LAC organisations can participate as part of an international consortium, either as a beneficiary organisation of the project or as an associated body (see Table 18). In the first case, they hire, supervise and train at least one predoctoral researcher; in the second, they can offer stays to researchers under certain conditions. Regarding funding, organisations from low- and middle-income countries are likely to receive it; if the organisations are established in high-income countries, they will not have direct funding from Horizon Europe, but the project can pay for the stays of the pre-doctoral researchers they receive.

145 For more information about the programme, see the website: https://www.horizonteeuropa.es/que-es https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

146 For more information on the programme, see the website: https://www.horizonteeuropa.es/msca

Table 18. Types of participation of Latin American and Caribbean countries

Countries automatically eligible for funding	Countries without direct funding[147]
Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

Source: own elaboration based on MSCA programme data.

In addition, any predoctoral researcher, regardless of nationality, can obtain grants from the ERC and participate in the Doctoral Networks, as well as in the other programmes that are part of the MSCA. These include:

- Staff Exchanges (SE): for research, technical, administrative and management staff.
- Postdoctoral projects (Postdoctoral Fellowships – PF): for people who already have a doctoral degree.
- Programme co-funding (COFUND): focused on funding lines for research staff.

Among the channels and instruments of the Horizon Europe instruments that support researchers in accessing the programme are Euraxess[148] and the National Contact Points (NCPs).[149]

The second pillar, 'global challenges and industrial competitiveness', is the one with the highest allocation (53,516 million euros) and is intended to fund transnational consortia, thus guaranteeing the collaboration of researchers and organisations from different countries, unlike the first and third pillars, which follow the single beneficiary scheme. Although Horizon Europe funds projects and does not have a fixed distribution by country or region, it is a cooperation mechanism with these multilateral initiatives that promote research in areas such as biodiversity, health, climate protection, inclusive society, etc. In Latin America, Brazil and Mexico have complementary funding mechanisms.

Brazil has an agreement with the European Commission[150] that facilitates the participation of the country's institutions in Horizon Europe. The agreement is signed by three Brazilian agencies: National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), Funding Agency for Studies and Projects (FINEP) and National Council of Funding Agencies of Brazil (CONFAP). It is about improving cooperation in areas such as green and digital transitions, global health and innovation. This

147 The programme does not automatically fund partners from third countries that are classified as high-income economies. However, under certain conditions, such as outstanding competence, access to special geographical environments or certain research structures among others, they can receive funding.

148 See: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide/lac (link for Latin America and the Caribbean).

149 See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp

150 For more information on the programme, refer to the document:
https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/AA_EC_BRAZIL_EN.pdf

programme, which was renewed in November 2021, guarantees funding for successful candidates.

CONACYT's "Horizon Europe Gateway" programme is the mechanism established by Mexico to channel the participation in Horizon Europe of its national humanities, science, technology and innovation institutions, as well as scientific communities and networks of researchers. The priority areas are three: health, energy and human security, and define the type of participation modality. In the 2022-2024 call, modality 1 is for institutions that have their own resources and previous experiences with the EU and do not align with those areas or challenges; modality 2 is for institutions that have their own and complementary resources from CONACYT when participating in the calls framed in those priorities. CONACYT's co-funding in this case is limited to a maximum of eight projects of up to 125,000 euros each, for a maximum of two years. As regards the mobility of researchers, they can be funded at the national level.

A call for cooperation in R&I between the EU and LAC that should be highlighted is the one implemented between Horizon Europe, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and other countries of the BELLA network (Building the Europe Link to Latin America) or members of the RedCLARA (Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks) and that is aimed at reducing the digital divide. Collaboration involves promoting that this digital transformation is centred on people and contributes to the SDGs in terms of human values and sustainability, giving it an ethical dimension.

BELLA is an example of a multilateral project whose first phase ended in 2021 with the establishment of an infrastructure to link directly - without going through the US - Europe and four countries in Latin America: Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. This expanded the collaborative potential in science, education, technology and innovation[151] with a tenfold increase in data transfer. This project included two complementary actions: BELLA-S, referring to the establishment of the submarine cable, and BELLA-T, referring to RedCLARA's terrestrial fibre optic infrastructure. The second phase, BELLA II, was signed in December 2022 to extend it to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru; and subsequently, to Belize, Bolivia, Mexico, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The current project is planned for a period of 48 months and has been allocated 40 million euros, 25 of which are contributed by the EU and 15 million by Latin American academic networks that plan to add another 10 million in infrastructure.

As specific applications of the greater interconnection that BELLA allows between GEANT (research backbone networks in Europe) and RedCLARA, there is a significant data transfer and interconnectivity established between the terrestrial observatories of La Palma (Spain) and Atacama (Chile) and whose aim is the Cherenkov Telescope Array (CTA), the access to EU's Copernicus Earth Observation, supporting LAC countries

151 For more information, see Cardenas, L. E. and Seaton, C. (2021). BELLA 2030: digital alliance between Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. Proposal. RedCLARA. https://www.redclara.net/images/docs/BELLA2030-Alianza-Digital-ES.pdf

response to climate emergencies, or the Giant Latin American Observatory (LAGO), which uses advanced networks to transfer data and is an international astrophysics and astroparticle project with participation by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru.[152]

3. Ibero-American Programme on Science and Technology for Development

The Ibero-American Programme on Science and Technology for Development (CYTED)[153] was created in 1984 and since 1995 has been integrated into the cooperation programmes of the Ibero-American Summits of Heads of State and Government. Based on a framework agreement between the Ibero-American Community of Nations' member countries, the programme is a multilateral international initiative for scientific and technological cooperation that is horizontal and aims to contribute to the development of the region. Cooperation occurs between National Organisations on Science and Technology (ONCYT), Innovation Promotion Organisations, university research groups, R&D centres and companies in Latin America. Funding goes to strategic projects related to technological advances and innovation; the projects are transnational in nature and have a maximum duration of 3 years. Not only universities and R&D centres, but also companies can benefit from the projects, thus allowing for the creation of links between different actors involved.

The programme strengthens EU-LAC cooperation as its objectives are to foster the scientific and technological integration of the region; the transfer and exchange of human resources and knowledge through the participation of regional researchers in other programmes; and the promotion of the business sectors.

Regarding the members and structure: 21 countries participate and the ONCYT of each country is in charge of the programme and has a representative in the management bodies of CYTED. The General Assembly is the decision-making body. It appoints the president of the General Secretariat for 3 years and the heads of the Area Committees (technical management bodies) for 2 years (renewable). There are also several coordinators responsible for scientific and economic management, R&D&I actions, innovation and logistics, as well as communication and image. Finally, the headquarters of the General Secretariat is in Madrid.

According to the system's[154] indicators, 25,529 researchers and 983 companies from the 21 countries that comprise the system benefitted from it between 2005 and 2018. Regarding scientific production, 416 books and almost 6,000 scientific articles (works that allow an average of 3,000 citations per year) were published and more than 90,000 participants in courses and workshops were organised.

152 For more information, see: https://bella-programme.redclara.net/index.php/en/impact/use-cases
153 See https://www.cyted.org/es/cyted and https://www.segib.org/programa/cyted-programa-iberoamericano-de-ciencia-y-tecnologia-para-el-desarrollo/
154 For more information on the programme, see the website: https://www.cyted.org/es/content/indicadores

Table 19. CYTED Structure Summary

Countries	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.
Priority areas established by the General Assembly	Agri-food, Health, Industrial Development, Sustainable Development, ICTs, Science and Society, Energy and Business Incubator.
R&D Instruments	Strategic projects: • Funded with CYTED resources and by the countries themselves (each country funds the groups that participate in the projects in its country). • Each proposal must include a minimum of three countries and a maximum of two groups from the same country, with one group being able to participate in more than one proposal, (but only one coordination). • There may also be groups of associated countries that do not fund the call but must fund their participation (there cannot be more than two per proposal and they cannot coordinate).
	Thematic Networks: • Objective: knowledge exchange and cooperation as a working method. • Provide for mobility and exchange of research staff. • CYTED funding of a maximum of 30,000 euros per year for the mobility of the groups that make up the network, organisation of workshops, courses and publications.
Innovation instruments	Business-Academy Forums: • CYTED funding: maximum of 10 thousand euros, it includes tickets and accommodation for representatives of Ibero-American companies but excluding those of the host country (2015-2020).
	Iberoeka: • A quality certification for strategic innovation projects that meet certain requirements (including partner companies from at least two Ibero-American countries and being funded by national agencies) and that contribute to obtaining financing.
	Scholarships for entrepreneurs: • Co-funding for one-month stays for staff from technology-based companies to develop activities across Ibero-American science parks.

Source: own elaboration from CYTED data.

4. Other initiatives

There are other initiatives that focus on researcher mobility and that are included in the programmes analysed in Chapter II: Inter- and intra-regional mobility trends/ between Higher Education Institutions in CELAC and EU countries. In some cases, this mobility is specified as such and, at other times, it is masked in some way by the teaching, doctoral and postdoctoral mobility that, after all, is intended for staff who in the HEIs are devoted to research or are being trained to be part of the scientific community.

In the strictest sense, the Coimbra[155] Group, an international network of 48 European universities founded in 1987, offers scholarships for researchers from other geographical areas to spend between one and three months at one of the group's universities. The geographical areas are Latin America (LA), Sub-Saharan Africa (SA) and European Neighbourhood (EN). Despite not being an initiative exclusively focused on LAC, it is a space where the region is very present and has developed strong mobility ties throughout the time it has been operating. During 2022-2023, out of a total of 88 scholarships, 40 have been for LAC applicants.

Below are other initiatives and best practices (see Table 20) that are worth highlighting for their own value and because they can contribute to generating a necessary breeding ground for global projects to thrive, such as the EU-CELAC HEA. The challenge is figuring out how to take advantage of them and channel them to gain effectiveness so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Table 20. Research, Innovation and Transfer Initiatives and Best Practices

Initiatives	Website
SEGIB's Ibero-American Innovation Strategy	https://www.segib.org/?document=estrategia-iberoamericana-de-innovacion
IDB's Science and Technology Initiative	https://www.iadb.org/es/ciencia-y-tecnologia/iniciativa-ciencia-y-tecnologia
EU Euroclima Programme	https://www.euroclima.org/
OEI's Programme for the Strengthening of Science and Technology Systems (FORCYT)	https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/www-oei-int-forcyt/presentacion
EU-LAC Interest Group Platform	https://www.eucelac-platform.eu/
Resinfra Project	https://resinfra-eulac.eu/
UNESCO's Recommendation on Open Science	https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949_spa
ENRICH IN LAC Network	https://lac.enrichcentres.eu/
Latin American and Caribbean Network of National Contact Points (LAC NCP Network)	https://www.gub.uy/agencia-uruguaya-cooperacion-internacional/politicas-y-gestion/programas/red-latinoamericana-caribena-puntos-nacionales-contacto

Source: own elaboration based on the data of the programmes analysed in the table.

Not least, the EU-CELAC's Joint Initiative of Research and Innovation (JIRI), a coordination mechanism among governmental science and innovation authorities, places the strategic role of science at the centre of the common knowledge area, technology and innovation to face global challenges, something that was made clear by

155 For more information about the programme, see the website: https://www.coimbra-group.eu/

the COVID-19 pandemic. In its 2021-2023 Strategic Roadmap[156] for the implementation of the Brussels Declaration and the CELAC-EU's Action Plan on Science, Technology and Innovation, it sets out the four pillars for creating the common research area: the mobility of researchers, cooperation between research infrastructures, the joint search for solutions to global challenges, and innovation[157], - areas of cooperation to which some of the different actors and programmes mentioned above contribute in one way or another.[158]

5. Some conclusions

Cooperation in science, technology and innovation is a way of integration that contributes to the creation of an EU-CELAC common area, although it should be noted that when talking about the EU-CELAC Higher Education Area, the reference is mainly studies. This is evident in this report, for the drafting of which many actions and initiatives have been found regarding the establishment and evaluation of the quality of programmes and centres, harmonisation of degrees and promotion of mobility, but not so many in research.

However, as anticipated, this aspect draws attention because in the construction of an EU-CELAC HEA, science, technology and innovation are, to a large extent, developments in higher education that have an impact on improving people's living conditions and, hence, on social welfare. Cooperation is necessary, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, because the challenges are global. Furthermore, it supports the collaboration with Latin America and the Caribbean the fact that there are local experts and objects of scientific research in certain specific fields in the region that would add value in R&D&I, and contribute to establishing less asymmetric cooperation relationships. For example: biologists in the Galapagos, astronomers in Chile or experts in tropical medicine in the Caribbean; in addition to other environments such as the Antarctica or coral reefs in the Caribbean. In the same line of symbiotic cooperation, the performance would be higher if the funding were aimed at strengthening the scientific infrastructure, especially because it is a mechanism for institutionalisation.[159]

In line with the above, this section has analysed the Horizon Europe 2021-2027 and CYTED programmes because they are initiatives that cover the mobility of researchers, the development of research infrastructures, cooperation in the search for solutions to global challenges and innovation; the four pillars indicated in the 2021-2023 JIRI

156 See: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-07/eu-celac_strategic-roadmap-2021-2023.pdf

157 For more information, see the website: https://www.eucelac-platform.eu/

158 The Roadmap will be reviewed and updated at a Senior Officials Meeting (JIRI SOM) in November 2023. For more information on the JIRI, see: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/europe-world/international-cooperation/regional-dialogues-and-international-organisations/latin-america-and-caribbean_en

159 On the evolution followed by cooperation between the EU and CELAC from funding towards a co-funding scheme, as well as the importance of sharing resources and infrastructures, see Sánchez and Hernández (2017: 211-221).

roadmap. In addition, both programmes are linked to bodies with executive capacities, such as the European Commission in the first case, or to organisations consolidated over time and with a certain capacity to influence decision-makers, such as SEGIB. This expresses what has been repeated throughout this report regarding the importance of institutionalisation. Institutionalisation allows for the regularisation and, above all, the continuity of actions over time, assuming that projects have an expiration date and that the regular review and monitoring mechanisms must renew initiatives to transform and update the agenda.

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND THE 2030 AGENDA

1. Introduction

The construction of the EU-CELAC HEA involves assuming the challenges faced by HEIs as well as their responsibility to contribute to responding to them. In this sense, there is a situation that cannot be ignored, that of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and an agenda to whose development they must contribute: the 2030 Agenda that defines the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Throughout this report, the impact of COVID-19 on universities has been alluded to. According to the OEI (2022), it has meant accelerating the processes of change in which universities were already immersed, fundamentally the digital transition and, more specifically, virtual or hybrid teaching. A more detailed analysis of the same report by the OEI and UNESCO-IESALC (2022) shows how it has affected not only classroom attendance but also internationalisation, research and finance. Moreover, the impact has been different depending on the digital divide; the environment, not only regarding the country, but within the country; the economic situation of families; and the didactic resources of universities. At the individual level, emotional problems have increased due to the situation of social isolation, vulnerability and uncertainty.

Without intending to be exhaustive and by way of compilation, some consequences are highlighted. Regarding virtual education, there has been a technological development and a reinforcement of the structures that support it; a qualification of the teaching staff that provides it; and the possibility that people who cannot attend face-to-face classes or who cannot carry out international mobility, access both. On these same pages, it has also been questioned whether a new divide will emerge between people who can and cannot carry out face-to-face mobility. In terms of research, science and innovation, what is related to SARS-Cov-2 has been promoted in the scientific sectors, while health emergency has been promoted in the social sciences and humanities. On the contrary, other research not linked to the pandemic situation has been relegated. On the positive side, we should highlight the cooperation and the importance of adopting the open and collaborative science model. In the economic field, there was a reorientation of resources in HEIs to deal with the consequences of the pandemic and different measures were adopted to freeze student loans, defer payments, establish

discounts, etc. that have varied according to institutions and countries.[160] Lastly, the governance of HEIs was also affected as it had to respond to a situation that was not foreseen: from creating specialised crisis management teams from the staff themselves to implementing management practices so that procedures were not interrupted (UNESCO-IESALC 2022).

In 2022, face-to-face learning has returned, enrolment figures have stabilised and academic travel has resumed, so it does not seem that the impact of the crisis has essentially affected the system. However, this study affirms that the pandemic has been a turning point in two ways: by evidencing that certain problems will affect all the world and by highlighting the value of scientific and technological cooperation because, at the same time, the pandemic has also exposed the gaps. As will be seen below, HEIs are strategic actors in their relationship with society and as centres of scientific production and innovation capable of establishing the international networks that support collaboration.

Before the pandemic, in 2018, the III Regional Conference on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRES) prepared the CRES Action Plan 2018-2028[161], aimed at achieving the SDGs –especially the 4 "Quality Education"– in a region characterised by inequities and institutional crises. From a strategic standpoint, universities would respond to the SDGs, not just because they are interconnected, but because of LAC's high complexity. Nowadays, due to the COVID-19 crisis, it becomes even more important that higher education and science are the engines of an economy based on knowledge and innovation, focused on people and sustainability. At this point, the strategic contribution of HEIs in achieving the SDGs is linked as a matter of social responsibility.

2. The SDGs and the role of universities

The SDGs that make up the 2030 Agenda are a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that not only differ from these in number –17, instead of 8, with 169 specific targets and 230 global indicators–, but in that they become government action plans, although United Nations agencies continue to provide support.[162]

160 Measures ranged from redirecting resources to direct extraordinary allocations. In Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama and Uruguay the education budget was reduced; in Honduras and Peru it was maintained; in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador subsidies were implemented; and only in Argentina the budget was increased and subsidies given for basic education (OEI 2022). The EU has provided funds for recovery (Next Generation EU Plan: 750,000 million euros for all member states), part of which has gone to the Horizon Europe programme which, as we have seen, is the common framework for research and innovation. For more information: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/recovery-plan-europe_es

161 UNESCO-IESALC (2019c). CRES Action Plan 2018-2019. https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/PlandeAccionCRES2018-2028-Def.pdf

162 ODS: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/

Beyond the general consensus that the 2030 Agenda raises as a good strategy to achieve well-being and sustainability at the global level, Alcaraz and Alonso (2019: 11) have collected the weaknesses and criticisms it has received:

- It is not legally binding.
- There are no sanctioning mechanisms.
- It addresses symptoms, not structural causes.
- It gives a lot of prominence to the private sector.
- There are no solid measures against corruption and tax havens, nor against dictatorships and human rights violations.
- It suffers from technical enthusiasm (excessive hope in technological solutions).
- Environmental goals are not transformative enough.
- It does not address extremely important and urgent problems (for example, migratory movements).
- Despite the principles of mainstreaming and interrelationship (not leaving anyone behind), there may be countries that prioritise their particular interests.
- The principle of shared responsibility is questioned: there are countries that should take more responsibility for their contribution (for example, those that pollute the most).

These arguments are not discussed in this paper, although it seems more appropriate to take them into account insofar as they denote the limits that the organisation itself has, as well as the dependence on the will of the states for their achievement. It is something that has been insisted on concerning the lack of executive capacity of international and multilateral organisations to implement plans and actions that have been examined and that would contribute to the creation of the EU-CELAC HEA. Their ability to arbitrate consensus and transfer the objectives or programmes to the agenda of the different actors is not denied, but the difficulty and need to renew efforts that may be doomed to failure due to lack of continuity must be highlighted.

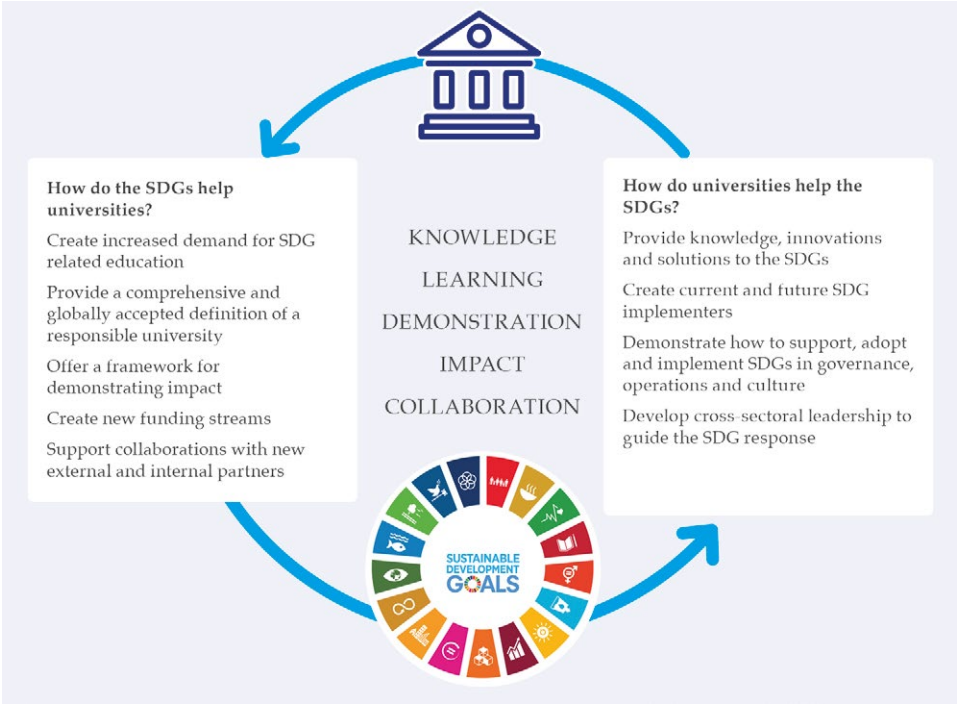
In relation to education, what is expected from universities? Through the document "Getting Started with the SDGs in Universities" (SDSN: 2017, 30)[163] the United Nations highlights that their participation in the 2030 Agenda must meet the following goals:

- Strengthening public engagement and participation in addressing the SDGs.
- Initiating and facilitating cross-sectoral dialogue and action for its implementation.
- Playing a leading role in policy design and the promotion of sustainable development.
- Demonstrating the importance of the university sector in the implementation of the SDGs.
- Demonstrating the commitment of the university sector.

At the same time, the SDGs also contribute to universities, as can be seen in Figure 2.

163 SDSN Australia/Pacific (2017). Getting started with the SDGs in Universities A guide for universities, higher education institutions and the academic sector. Melbourne, Melbourne, Sustainable Development. Spanish edition, Spanish Network for Sustainable Development (REDS /SDSN-Spain). https://reds-sdsn.es/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Guia-ODS-Universidades-1800301-WEB.pdf

Figure 2. Contributions between the SDGs and universities



Source: SDSN (2017:7))

However, according to the OEI (2022: 219), the role of HEIs is still poorly understood in achieving the SDGs, despite the importance they have as strategic actors, both in connecting with society and in articulating international cooperation. To the substantial functions of teaching, research and relationship with the environment, a fourth pillar is now added: governance. Governance is the management model that structures institutional proposals, their implementation and the evaluation of processes that affect the rest of the functions. The four functions are considered essential for HEIs to guide their work towards achieving the SDGs.

Within SDG 4, target 4.7, it is expected that, by 2030, students will have acquired through education the theoretical and practical skills to promote sustainable development in their lifestyle. As the SDGs are interdependent, this learning incorporates respect for human rights and gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, and the value of cultural diversity. Target 4.3 states that HEIs should ensure access for men and women to quality technical, professional and higher education, including university education. The question is, how do graduates acquire the capacities to ensure sustainable development? Do current models do this? What would the model be? So far, interventions have been aimed at redesigning curricula, greening campuses, and creating networks to promote behaviour change (OEI 2022: 222).

Creating new models that train graduates in the skills to be agents of change can be a role of HEIs. Not only do the SDGs integrate into the curriculum; but they do it cross-sectionally, as part of the ethical and conceptual principles of each profession, and also specifically. Lecturers should be trained in advance on how to connect their areas of knowledge to the SDGs. An example of this is the SDG Toolkit of the University College of Cork (Ireland), which has developed an interactive mapping tool to analyse whether and to what extent modules, courses and research comply with the SDGs. It also allows us to reflect on how to integrate the SDGs.[164] Other examples: the Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand) is mapping the curricula to analyse the content related to the SDGs; the EDINSOST project of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya[165] has defined the sustainability competence of the degrees that are part of the project and have prepared two diagnoses in sustainability competence of teaching staff and students (OEI 2022: 222-223). One of the most recent is the European Erasmus+ project "Master Studies in Sustainable Development and Management" (MASUDEM) on Sustainable Development Goals of the University led by the University of Bratislava (Slovakia) and in which the Pablo Olavide University (Spain) participates along with ten other universities. Its aim is to promote sustainable development and job creation in Indonesia and Thailand by improving the curricula and capacities of the teaching and administrative staff of the associated universities.[166]

These new models are based on the idea that research and university teaching operate jointly (in many LAC countries they work separately, OEI 2022: 225), so that innovations, the result of research, are incorporated into teaching. Innovations would affect the technologies, strategies and models for implementing the SDGs. There are projects undertaken by HEIs in collaboration with public-private bodies that are worth mentioning: marine biodiversity, new materials and construction techniques that are more respectful of the environment or projects on energy efficiency. Student participation should also be encouraged through scholarships and research training.

Table 21. Contribution of universities to the SDGs. Education and research

Education (Teaching):	Research:
• Education for sustainable development. • Empowering and mobilising youth. • Providing training to implement the SDGs. • Building student and professional capabilities from developing countries to address SDG-related challenges.	• Research on the SDGs. • Inter- and transdisciplinary research. • Innovation of sustainable development solutions. • Local and national implementation of SDG research. • Building capacities in developing countries so they can conduct and use SDGs research.

Source: own elaboration based on SDSN (2017).

164 For more information, see: https://www.ucc.ie/en/sdg-toolkit/

165 For more information, see: http://edinsost.site.ac.upc.edu/

166 The news is from May 30, 2023: https://www.upo.es/diario/ciencia/2023/05/francisco-oliva-da-la-bienvenida-al-grupo-de-trabajo-del-proyecto-masudem-para-el-desarrollo-de-los-ods/

Models should also consider the link between higher education and productive environments, something that is in process in LAC. The linkage goes beyond the university extension, in the sense that HEIs would have a social leadership role here, by offering neutral environments in which the different agents involved in the search for solutions to the problems of the community participate. Collaboration would be developed through three strategies: (1) promoting technology supply; (2) promoting regional development; (3) developing internal capacities. The academic staff themselves must embrace a transition from a curricular design that is more community-oriented and less labour-market-oriented. An example in this regard: OEI's Observatory of Science, Technology and Society (OCTs) has created the Ibero-American Forum of Linkage Indicators[167] as a specific space for linking universities and Public R&D Institutions with the environment, within the region.

In line with the above, as the university is one of the institutions with the greatest capacity for social transformation, it must assume more responsibility in the face of current challenges.[168] Universities have significant human capital, generate knowledge and innovation, are convergence centres of intellectual elites, train future generations, promote critical thinking and have the capacity to exercise social leadership. This capacity is based, on the one hand, on the fact that citizens trust HEIs and, on the other hand, on the fact that other sectors consider them neutral actors. Its role goes beyond teaching and research and means getting involved in the design of public policies.

Table 22. Contribution of universities to the SDGs. Social leadership and governance

Social leadership:	Governance:
• Public engagement: • Intersectoral dialogue and action. • Policy development and promotion of sustainable development. • Mobilisation of the university sector in the implementation of the SDGs. • Demonstrate university sector commitment.	• Actions following University Social Responsibility and Sustainable Campuses. • Align university governance structures and operational policies with the SDGs.

Source: own elaboration based on SDSN (2017).

Finally, in relation to governance, the management model is fundamental for HEIs to have an impact on the social, economic and political spheres, by aligning their results with the SDGs and according to the countries' needs. The new model must facilitate balanced decision-making: attentive to the institutional needs for continuous improvement, and sensitive to the problems of society and the environment (SDG 2022: 232). It should also be highlighted that HEIs are under increased pressure because society's expectations for their role in development have increased, while funding has

167 See: https://foro-vinc.ricyt.org/

168 Regarding this, Alcaraz and Alonso (2019) talk about the role of universities, in relation to the achievement of the SDGs, based on two principles: shared responsibility and subsidiarity. All actors are accountable, from governments at different levels to universities or trade unions, but accountability is commensurate with resources and capacities. However, although each SDG must be addressed by the most capable actors, management must be done in a shared way, through alliances.

been reduced. This may also be due to their involvement in the COVID-19 crisis. In the governance model, transparency and accountability are mechanisms that must be systematised because they support the necessary trust in the alliance with other institutions, public and private, which is also important for obtaining human resources and funding.

After defining the general framework on the role of universities in achieving the SDGs, two sections are included below; first, one on the implementation of the SDGs as a result of the alliance of several universities in the EU and LAC; and second, two experiences of LAC universities that seek to incorporate the 2030 Agenda into their operation.

3. SDGs and international networks

Taking up the work of Alcaraz and Alonso (2019) on the incorporation of the SDGs in universities, it is highlighted that partnerships at the international level comply with SDG 17 and are key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For this reason, as best practices that can contribute to the creation of the EU-CELAC HEA, the main international Higher Education networks that are developing initiatives manifestly committed to sustainable development are listed, as indicated by the reference work: International Association of Universities (IAU), United Nations Academic Impact Initiative (UNAI), European University Association, Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), Copernicus Alliance, Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi) and Universities at the forefront of the SDGs.

3.1. International Association of Universities (IAU)

The IAU was founded with the support of UNESCO in 1950. It is made up of 650 universities and associations from 240 countries. In addition to previous commitments to the United Nations Decade for Sustainable Development (2005-2015), it has a 2016-2020 Strategic Plan to meet the 2030 Agenda and has created a task force to carry it out (IAU Working Group on Higher Education for Sustainable Development - HESD[169]), as well as a cluster that brings together universities from five continents. The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has been appointed for SDG 3.[170]

3.2. United Nations Academic Impact Initiative (UNAI)

UNAI[171] is an international network created in 2010 that includes 1,300 institutions from more than 130 countries. To promote progress on each SDG, it has appointed 17

169 See: https://iau-aiu.net/HESD

170 For more information, see: https://www.uoc.edu/portal/en/ehealth-center/recerca-innovacio/ehc-mon/ODS3/index.html

171 See: https://www.un.org/es/academicimpact

higher institutions – one for each goal – to stand out in relation to the SDGs. These HEIs are called "hubs" or activity centres, are appointed for three renewable years and function as a reference centre for the SDG they represent. The hubs, among other functions, are repositories of best practices carried out anywhere in the world. The hubs for SDG 11 is Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.[172] It was chosen for its initiatives related to the creation of sustainable cities and communities. In addition to research groups on sustainability issues, this university implemented the green week.[173]

3.3. European University Association (EUA)

With more than 850-member institutions from 45 countries, the EUA is the largest network on the continent. Its role is essential in the definition of European and international policies in higher education, research and innovation. In relation to the SDGs, it organises its own actions and participates in academic and political spaces such as the SDG Multi-Stakeholder Platform of the European Commission.

It focuses especially on supporting the following SDGs:

- SDG 4. Quality education, especially from the European Forum for Enhanced Collaboration in Teaching project.
- SDG 10. Reducing inequalities, with emphasis on research and discussion on the integration of refugees into education.
- SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy, with a platform to facilitate the participation of European universities in EU programmes on energy and the environment (EUA Energy & Environment Platform).
- SDG 9. Innovation and infrastructure, with the promotion of open science.
- SDG 16. Peace, justice and solid institutions, with initiatives of good governance, transparency, etc.
- SDG 17. Alliances to achieve goals as the main objective of this association which promotes alliances with other actors besides universities.[174]

3.4. Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI)[175]

Created in 2012 at the initiative of various United Nations agencies and with the support of 300 universities, its goal is to harmonise education, research and sustainable policies. Member institutions make commitments related to the SDGs, such as integrating them into the different fields of study, promoting research and disseminating knowledge on

172 For more information, see: https://e-archivo.uc3m.es/handle/10016/23878#preview

173 For more information, see: https://www.uc3m.es/ss/Satellite/UC3MInstitucional/es/Detalle/Comunicacion_C/1371264590827/1371215537949/?d=Touch

174 For more information, see: https://eua.eu/

175 See: https://sdgs.un.org/HESI

sustainable development, creating green campuses and supporting sustainable local initiatives, or sharing information in international networks, among other activities.

It is the driving force behind the Sulitest tool (The Sustainability Literacy Test) which is a 30-question questionnaire in 8 languages (including Spanish) for students to test their knowledge on sustainable development. This tool is a collaborative project involving various United Nations agencies, NGOs and consulting firms.[176]

3.5. Copernicus Alliance[177]

It was created in 1993 with the support of the European University Association and is a network of universities for transformative learning and change towards sustainable education. CRUE and the University of the Basque Country are part of it.

The institutions that make up the network have signed the Copernicus Charta 2.0 (2011) to support their commitment to social and environmental issues (university social responsibility). To this end, it collaborates with NGOs, companies and public administrations.[178]

A remarkable initiative, funded by the European Commission and supported by the Copernicus Alliance, was the University Educators for Sustainable Development (UE4SD) project, in force from 2013 to 2016, with a budget of 600,000 euros. 55 universities from 33 countries participated in UE4SD to review the higher education curriculum and mainstream sustainable development.[179] Its specific objective was to provide the teaching staff with knowledge on this subject beyond their field of specialisation. The Autonomous University of Madrid, the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Girona participated in it.[180]

3.6. Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi)

An international network created in 1999 by the UNESCO Chairs programme, UNESCO, the United Nations University and the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya. It is managed by two partner networks: UNESCO and the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP) and has regional headquarters for Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and Europe. It is made up of 230 members from 80 countries.[181]

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176 For further details, see: https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/sustainability-literacy-test-sulitest-higher-education-sustainability-initiative-hesi

177 See: https://www.copernicus-alliance.org/

178 See: https://www.copernicus-alliance.org/copernicus-charta

179 See: https://copernicus-alliance.org/news-archive/37-new-eu-funded-project-university-educators-for-sustainable-development-ue4sd

180 For more information on the project and its results, see: https://ue4sd.glos.ac.uk/

181 For more information, see: https://www.guninetwork.org/

In addition to this, the *Times Higher Education* (THE), a consultancy specialising in higher education data, began in 2018 the development of a ranking to annually measure the impact of universities on compliance with the SDGs based on straightforward indicators (see Table 23). It was intended to increase participation and make calculations more manageable, so the recommendation is to take the data with caution.[182]

Table 23. Ranking of universities in relation to the SDGs

Number	University	Country
1	Western Sydney University	Australia
2	University of Manchester	United Kingdom
3	Queen's University	Canada
4	Universiti Sains Malaysia	Malaysia
5	University of Tasmania	Australia
6	Arizona State University (Tempe)	United States
7	University of Alberta	Canada
7	RMIT University	Australia
9	Aalborg University	Denmark
9	University of Victoria	Canada
9	Western University	Canada
12	University of Auckland	New Zealand
13	University of Glasgow	United Kingdom
14	Université Laval	Canada
14	University of Technology Sydney	Australia
14	Yonsei University (Seoul campus)	South Korea
17	Chulalongkorn University	Thailand
18	University of Exeter	United Kingdom
18	UNSW Sydney	Australia
20	University of Indonesia	Indonesia

Source: own elaboration based on information from the web:https://www.timeshighereducation.com/impactrankings#!/length/25/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/undefined

The universities at the forefront of commitment to the 2030 Agenda are primarily located in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom (see Table 23 for an example and, most importantly, the link to the website). From EHEA, the first one is Denmark (9th place) and the next one is the Italian University of Bologna (23rd place). The first

182 Alcaraz, A. and Alonso, p. (2019: 72). For more information, see the website: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/impactrankings

in Latin America is UNAM (32nd place), one of the cases discussed below. Neither the EU nor LAC are well placed according to this ranking.

4. UNAM and the University of Costa Rica: two examples of incorporating the 2030 Agenda in Latin America

In Mexico[183], the National Strategy for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda (2019) sets the roadmap to meet the SDGs. Previously, in 2017, the 2030 National Agenda Council had been created to coordinate actions, prioritising goals and establishing indicators. The National Strategy is intended to serve as a framework for action for the different sectors: social, public and private. With the HEIs, the dialogue is established through the ANUIES and the Scientific and Technological Consultative Forum (FCCyT), with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Mexico chapter (SDSN), co-chaired by the UNAM and Monterrey's Technological institution, and with CONACYT, among other organisations.

It is proposed that universities contribute to the development of a culture of sustainability through teaching and research, but also as spaces for public discussion. Therefore, the 2030 Agenda is seen as an opportunity for universities to commit to applying the knowledge they generate to contribute to the solution of socio-environmental problems, articulating cooperation with other actors and accessing new funding sources.

4.1. UNAM and the SDGs

The UNAM faces the dispersion of initiatives that exist inside the institution, as well as the significant challenge that macro-universities must become sustainable, and assumes the commitment to the SDGs. Therefore, the work analysed here (Solares Rojas 2021) is a summary of the actions and initiatives of UNAM over the years (see Table 24) and its contribution, from a theoretical point of view, is to include the cultural extension axis to the other four: teaching, research, social leadership and governance, mentioned in the previous section.

Table 24. UNAM actions related to sustainability

Year	Action
1991	University Programme of Environment created in 1991, transformed into the University Programme of Strategies for Sustainability which lasted until 2018
2013	Renewable Energy Institute
2014	National Sustainability Sciences Laboratory of the Institute of Ecology
2014	Centre for Complexity Sciences

183 The UNAM strategy is developed in: Solares Rojas, V.E. et al. (2021). The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals from UNAM. National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City. Available in electronic format at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357559735_La_Agenda_2030_y_los_Objetivos_de_Desarrollo_Sostenible_desde_la_UNAM

2015	Ecosystem and Sustainability Research Institute
2015	Postgraduate Degree in Sustainability Sciences
2018	University Coordination for Sustainability
2019	Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Source: own elaboration from Solares Rojas, V.E. et al. (2021).

It includes programmes and seminars that promote cooperative and transdisciplinary work and the creation of a website to inform and follow up on UNAM initiatives for each SDG.[184] The result is that the SDGs most worked on by UNAM agencies are: SDG 4, Education (56 % of total agencies) followed by SDGs 9 and 11 (44 % each); SDG 8, Labour and Economic Growth (39 %); SDG 3, Health (35 %) and SDG 16, Peace and justice (32 %) (Solares Rojas 2021: 19).

In addition, there are a series of training initiatives linked to sustainability for which the UNAM has created specific instances:

- In the coordination of Humanities: Bioethics University Programme (PUB); Human Rights University Programme (PUDH); Cultural Diversity and Interculturality University Programme (PUIC); Development Studies University Programme (CAN) and City Studies University Programme (PUEC).
- In the coordination of Scientific Research: University Programme for Climate Change Research (PINCC); University Food Programme (PUAL) and University Programme for Interdisciplinary Soil Studies (PUEIS).

There are also the following seminars, which are multidisciplinary coordinating and teaching structures: University Seminar on Studies on Society, Institutions and Resources (SUESIR); University Seminar on Society, Environment and Institutions (SUSMAI); University Seminar on Studies of Socio-Environmental Risks (SURSA); University Seminar on Geopatrimonial and Geoparks (SUGeo) and University Seminar on Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Administration and Comprehensive Training at the Upper Middle and Higher Levels at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (SUESA).

In relation to the axes of education, research and cultural extension:

- In education: 85.8 % of bachelor's degrees are linked to at least one SDG. Environmental Sciences, with 10 SDGs, followed by Territorial Development and Applied Geography (9) and Environmental Engineering (8). In bachelor's degrees, SDGs 1, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17 are the least represented (between 1 % and 2 %), while SDGs 8 and 11 are the most represented (19 % and 12 %, respectively).
  In postgraduate studies (specialisations, master's and doctoral), 70.31 % are linked to at least one SDG. The Postgraduate Degree in Sustainability Sciences is linked to 14 SDGs, 11 for Unique Specialisation Programmes in Law and Economics and followed by the Postgraduate Degrees in Management Sciences, Law and

184 The initiative's website can be found at: https://web.siia.unam.mx/ods-unam/index.php

Geography, with 9. SDG 17 has the lowest representation here (2%), while SDGs 8 and 9 have a representation of 12% and 13% respectively.
Regarding undergraduate and graduate theses: 27.34% are related to at least one SDG. SDG 4 was represented by 21% and SDG 3 and SDG 11 by 14%. The least represented SDGs, 1, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 17 with values between 1% and 2% for each.

- In research: according to the agreements signed by UNAM, the most represented is SDG 4 (27%), followed by SDG 8 (18%), and SDGs 16 and 9 with 14% and 11% respectively. The SDG with the least attention: 1, 2, 10, 12, 13 and 14 (1% each).
- In cultural extension: although no SDG incorporates this axis, it is justified because the 2030 Agenda recognises the value of cultural diversity and its contribution to sustainable development and the safeguarding of the world's cultural and natural heritage. From there, UNAM promotes the dissemination of science and cultural extension through the General Directorate of Science Dissemination (DGDC) and the Coordination of Cultural Dissemination (UNAM Culture), respectively. It has two science museums: Universum and Museum of Light, with permanent exhibitions (9 at least related to the SDGs) and travelling exhibitions. The UNAM Culture project promotes, through art, the critical spirit and builds bridges with science. It carries out at least 10 activities annually. It is worth highlighting that UNAM has TV, radio, editorial and magazine and that all media have addressed sustainability, especially issues related to climate change, biodiversity, the environment and health.

The project incorporates the student community as a key and active actor in sustainability and refers to initiatives that are not part of the 2030 Agenda but that contribute to the fulfilment of several SDGs. Thus, projects developed in colleges are mentioned, as is the fact that UNAM has participated in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings (THE), which internationally evaluates universities in relation to SDG compliance. In 2019, 450 universities participated and UNAM was among the 101-200 places; in 2020, 768 participated and UNAM was in 62nd place. The latest data is that it occupies the 32nd position (see the previous section).

Solares Rojas's work concludes by pointing out that at UNAM, all SDGs are addressed by teaching, research, cooperation, cultural extension or student initiatives. However, they need to be linked and do more, in general. The proposals are made so that at the institutional level, the principles of sustainability are recognised and more efficient use of material and human resources is promoted. At the academic level, sustainability must be promoted across disciplines, "transdisciplinary" work must be encouraged, networks must be established to produce better results, and SDG-related research must be expanded. The importance of a "cultural extension" as a local contribution of Mexican universities is insisted on because it means integrating sustainability in the arts and humanities. Arts and humanities that, in turn, promote reflection and discussion on the SDGs "from a multiplicity of forms of expression" (Solares Rojas 2021: 29).

Regarding the Latin American environment, the SDG actions that universities can promote are aimed at working in the field of education, strengthening the role of

public universities as a means to reduce inequality. This implies expanding enrolment, implementing decentralisation and supporting local universities; activities that would have an impact on SDGs 1, 4 and 10. Another action would be to improve scholarship programmes or food support in order to promote SDGs 2, 3 and 10.

It concludes with a clear commitment to making alliances and creativity so that universities in the region meet their goals of facing social challenges in the context of budget constraints, social inequality, violence and COVID-19 effects, also in response to the social recognition they have.

4.2. The University of Costa Rica and the SDGs[185]

According to the report by Jensen Pennington and Angulo Ugalde (2019), Costa Rica was the first country to sign in favour of the SDGs. It was signed by state institutions, local governments as well as private and civil society organisations. To implement the SDGs and follow up, it has created a governance structure that includes the different actors. Following that report, the University of Costa Rica assumes the statutory duty to contribute to the common good and has incorporated into its work the sustainable development goals before they were created, according to statements by its chancellor in the prologue. It anticipates that this document includes the work of the groups that make up the institution, from teaching, research and social action, in favour of the SDGs. In this regard, it is key to facilitate partnerships between the University of Costa Rica, the Central Government, local governments, public institutions, the private sector and civil society.

Literally, it is pointed out that the role of the University of Costa Rica in relation to the SDGs is:

1. Accessible and inclusive education with equity, quality and promoter of opportunities.
2. Contribution to the social, economic and environmental development of the Costa Rican territory.
3. A leading role in the fields of science, technology and innovation.
4. Supporting central and local governments for the implementation of mechanisms for SDGs action and monitoring.
5. Dissemination of the teamwork of the institution's different bodies, for the development of the 2030 agenda goals.

At the practical level, according to the specific SDG, laboratories, institutes and university research centres can be linked. For example, in the case of SDG 2 "End hunger,

185 ensen Pennington, H. and Angulo Ugalde, Y. (2019). Contributions of the University of Costa Rica to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals. University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica. Available in electronic format at: https://www.iau-hesd.net/sites/default/files/libro_desarrollo_sostenible.pdf

achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", the UCR strategy is aimed at increasing agricultural research and extension services, highlighting the work of agricultural and livestock research institutes and centres, as well as their projects.

For other SDGs, activities or procedures are included, such as in the case of SDG 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" for which Strategy I includes the "Vocational Fair" for high school students who must choose a course of study, the university admission process or measures to promote equity.

They also develop SDG-related studies. For example, with SDG 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", Strategy I "Create measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination..." includes institutional programmes, such as a Master's Degree in Women, or agreements with other institutions.

In other cases, cultural extension contributes to the creation of links between urban and rural areas linked to SDG 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", with actions such as the University of Costa Rica Museum being responsible for the dissemination of the "natural and cultural, tangible and intangible heritage of humanity, particularly of the Central American region for educational and entertainment purposes".

There is also room for networks, generally as frameworks for research projects; institutional policies, as they guarantee the adoption of measures and their implementation; or specific agreements between the University of Costa Rica and public institutions.

Finally, the UCR's strategy concerning the SDGs mainstreams the 2030 Agenda: even if there are actions and structures prior to its creation, the contribution is the viewpoint it adopts. Moreover, this facilitates evaluation and makes it possible to detect flaws.

It can be concluded that both the UNAM and the University of Costa Rica try to build on the strengths they already have, to advance in the achievement of the SDGs, assuming the four axes that were defined in the first section of this chapter: teaching, research, leadership and governance, although the UNAM provides a fifth axis of cultural extension.

5. Some conclusions

The analysis of the contribution of HEIs to the United Nations 2030 Agenda reveals that they are strategic partners of the UN in the implementation of the SDGs. Its role goes beyond teaching and research because society values and recognises its leadership, which adds the fourth pillar of governance as a management model linked to social responsibility. This role of HEIs makes more sense at the juncture that has resulted from

the pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2. The health emergency has been a turning point in revealing that there is no return to the process of globalisation. At this moment, it is difficult to think that the challenges facing the planet, whether they are new health or climate emergencies, will not end up affecting everyone. That is the reason why international collaboration is important.

HEIs have the capacity and have demonstrated this in the pandemic scenario, to make knowledge, research and innovation available to society. They also have the experience of working in networks that go beyond national or regional borders. Furthermore, they have the prestige of a certain neutrality among other actors.

To conclude this chapter, it should be mentioned as a conclusion that the 2030 Agenda, and its incorporation by the HEIs, has very positive implications in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA because it provides a framework for cross-sectional and collaborative action based on the 17 SDGs and the targets defined for each. As regards the EU-CELAC HEA, which, as has been argued in this work, should include research and innovation, it would increase the capacity of HEIs from an institutional framework that would provide resources and continuity over time.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this report, the advances and opportunities in the construction of an EU-CELAC Higher Education Area have been discussed. The name "EU-CELAC Higher Education Area", as a starting point, seems to place on the same level, the reality of two regions that present many differences. These do not have so much to do with the complexity of each country with respect to its neighbours in the same region but with the level of harmonisation of higher education systems. It has been suggested from the start, that the EU is a block of countries expressed in an international body, which has a consolidated institutional structure as well as executive and budgetary capacity; while CELAC is a dialogue mechanism that designates a set of countries grouped in it to express interests and reach consensus. These nations maintain their sovereignty completely and have higher education systems which are very different from each other in terms of regulation, requirements, programme design, duration, etc. CELAC does not project the creation of supranational institutions with mandatory decision-making capacity. This is something that was revealed in the 2017 study "Institutional and regulatory foundations for the establishment of the European, Latin American and Caribbean Area of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation" and that has not changed. Accepting this initial situation conditions the way in which the construction of the HEA is approached, as well as the analysis of the measures that can contribute to its development, in the sense that it will start from what it is, not from what it should be. Therefore, the proposal is aimed at taking stock of what already exists and can be considered a best practice, while there are or are not ideal conditions of possibility.

The ultimate goal of building an EU-CELAC HEA is to facilitate mobility and collaboration in a knowledge community that includes higher education and research. Promoting the flow of people and the exchange of knowledge contributes to establishing educational and research cooperation networks, which are fundamental for innovation and sustainable development in countries. Based on this approach, this work has been structured into four chapters devoted to quality recognition and assurance systems, international mobility trends, programmes that promote research cooperation and the 2030 Agenda. The first three are the basis for harmonising systems and are examined in comparison with the European Higher Education and Research Area, the fourth characterises the current situation and offers a framework for cross-sectional cooperation.

The recognition of the studies completed is the first step to making mobility possible and to harmonising degrees. While in the EU education levels are determined according to qualifications, there is a common framework of reference and the ECTS credit is the common unit of measurement, in LAC there is no similar common system. That is why the accreditation and evaluation systems of the quality of programmes and degrees have been analysed, as well as the credit recognition projects because they

are the necessary mechanisms to provide transparency and trust between educational institutions that lack common reference frameworks and whose degrees are not harmonised, or not even have the same unit of measurement. In addition to this, in the case of CELAC, quality assurance is ahead of the creation of the common area, unlike the EU; which makes it difficult to assess the material contribution to its construction. In relation to this, the importance of the New Regional Convention for the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean has been mentioned, which replaces the 1974 Convention. The contribution of UNESCO and other international organisations to the creation of normative and procedural corpus is thus recognised. At the same time, their lack of executive capacity, the consequent dependence on the will of the states to ratify these agreements, and the difficulty to materialise them, are evident.

Mobility is part of the internationalisation strategy of HEIs, is a sign of a globalised world, and, at the same time, can be the cause and effect of regional integration. The analysis of mobility trends reflects asymmetry between EU and CELAC flows, being greater towards the EU and other regions of the world, such as the US and Canada. Apart from English's primacy, sharing the same language or geographic proximity are factors that can favour the choice of destination, even though the prestige of universities also plays a significant role. Regarding mobility programmes and scholarship offers, it has been difficult to establish a classification because the number is very high and the features are very different. Faced with this complexity, which in the case of CELAC shows a lack of regional investment, atomisation of initiatives, inconsistency and dispersion of information, there is the Erasmus+ programme, which depends on the European Commission and is being developed in the EHEA. The EHEA harmonises and integrates all procedures: from quality assurance to the format of academic agreements that support each particular mobility. However, it should be remembered that the Erasmus programme is prior to the EHEA, which is interesting for this study in the sense that it shows that it is not necessary to wait for all the theoretical conditions of possibility to be given to move forward. Having said that, the executive aspect of the European Commission and the institutional frameworks, from community to national, that support Erasmus+, of which HEIs are part, is essential. It is a layering structure in which each actor has its competences well defined.

Another issue is funding and academic requirements to access mobility. Most Erasmus financial aid within Europe is complementary, to make up for the cost of living in another country and there are not many academic requirements; unlike CELAC programmes that offer more coverage and require more academic requirements. Despite the multiple types of financial aid, it should be highlighted that student mobility depends the most on the families' financial effort; a situation that biases the mobility of people as they depend on their socioeconomic situation and not on the student's merits. In this sense, it would be advisable for the EU to offer a greater number of scholarships focused on promoting the mobility of people who cannot access to it with their own resources, despite having excellent academic skills. This would undoubtedly be a clear sign of firm commitment to the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA.

The construction of an EU-CELAC Common Higher Education Area must include cooperation in science, technology and innovation because they are part of the contribution that HEIs make to society. The climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic urge international collaboration because not all countries have the same capacity to invest in research. This chapter has analysed the Horizon Europe programme and initiatives with and from Latin America and the Caribbean, without forgetting to mention the mobility of researchers. It is emphasised that in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA, there is less advance in research than in study programmes, as seen in the previous chapter. It has been highlighted as a specific value that the LAC region has unique natural areas for research and that there are highly specialised centres and prestigious researchers in them. The risk of exporting human talent to Europe has also been highlighted here. The proposals here are oriented towards the creation of networks that allow the mobility and training of researchers, the development and investment in research infrastructures and cooperation to face global challenges through innovation. As mentioned beforehand, institutionalisation provides continuity to processes and allows the agenda to be renewed.

The construction of the EU-CELAC HEA must consider HEIs' capacity to respond to social needs. The current situation is marked by the COVID-19 crisis and the 2030 Agenda that defines the SDGs. Reference has been made in different parts of this work to the incidence of the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic and the response of HEIs. It has been highlighted, in this sense, how COVID-19 marks a turning point by erasing the borders in its expansion and in the scientific collaboration to face it. It also shows the importance of higher education, the value of knowledge and innovation, as well as the commitment to sustainability. For all these reasons, HEIs are strategic actors in the implementation of the SDGs: for their relationship with society (leadership and governance) and as centres of education, scientific production and innovation, capable of establishing international networks that support collaboration. On the other hand, the 2030 Agenda has very positive implications in the construction of the EU-CELAC HEA because it provides a framework for cross-sectoral and collaborative action based on the 17 SDGs and the targets defined for each.

It is worth mentioning that one of the great gaps in this study is the analysis of the exchange of university lecturers between the two continents. Even though experience shows that the teaching flow is plentiful and continuous, no data record allows us to have trustworthy and comparative information. Even the Erasmus+ programme, which, due to its institutional nature and constant audits, has a very solid database, does not offer teaching mobility information separately.

To conclude and as a summary:

The starting point is that the relationship between EU-CELAC is asymmetrical: the EU has a structure that integrates the educational systems of the member countries,

a supranational institution with executive powers and budget; CELAC has different regional integration systems and educational standards that do not cover all countries.

In addition to the structural factors indicated, an important factor is the interests of the actors that intend to promote the EU-CELAC HEA. There is a proliferation of forums or networks that seek collaboration between the two regions' university institutions in order to improve their potential integration and compatibility; however, particular interests, sectoral goals, and the eagerness to lead a process that has a lot of potential from the standpoint of soft power have often prevailed. The material issues have also played a role, as it is presumed that the European Union will generously finance the process of building the Area, and there are many interested in being present when these hypothetical funds are distributed.

In this context, one can aspire to build the common area of education and maximum research, as a purpose to be achieved, or one can interpret that the EU-CELAC HEA has already begun socially on research projects, networks, mobility programmes between institutions, transfers and partial recognitions.

It must be acknowledged that aspiring to common frameworks would save efforts and duplicates and ensure the consolidation of actions over time, but while that occurs, perhaps we should value what this situation brings as something to hope for and, in the meantime, (1) try to articulate the initiatives that partially contribute to the objective; (2) promote networks; (3) promote access to existing programmes by removing bureaucratic barriers; (4) highlight the specific value that there is in CELAC.

Finally, the fact that all countries in both regions can belong to a common area of knowledge does not imply that they must have the same times or the same level of participation.

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WEBSITES

A3ES: Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (Portugal)
https://www.a3es.pt/

AECID: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo
https://www.aecid.es/

Fondo España-SICA (see also SICA)
http://www.aecid.sv/quienes-somos/que-hacemos/od7/programa-de-cooperacion-regional-con-centroamerica/

AEFE: Agence pour l'enseignement français à l'étranger
https://www.aefe.fr/

Alianza del Pacífico:
see PLATAFORMA de movilidad estudiantil y académica de la Alianza del Pacífico

ANECA: Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (España)
https://www.aneca.es/

AQUA: Agència de Qualitat de l' Ensenyament Superior d'Andorra
https://www.aqua.ad

ARCU-SUR: Sistema de Acreditación Regional de Carreras Universitarias
http://arcusur.org/arcusur_v2/

BELLA: Building the Europe Link to Latin America
BELLA II. Casos de uso
https://bella-programme.redclara.net/index.php/es/impact/use-cases

BRIDGE: Best Recognition Instruments for the Dialogue between Global Experts – Erasmus Mundus Action 3 Programme
https://www.cimea.it/EN/pagina-bridge

CACES: Consejo de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (Ecuador)
https://www.caces.gob.ec/

CAMINOS Project:
https://www.caminosproject.org/

Campus France:
https://www.campusfrance.org/es

Campus Ibero-America:
https://www.campusiberoamerica.net/

CCA: Consejo Centroamericano de Acreditación de la Educación Superior
http://ccacreditacion.org/

CEAI: Consejo de Evaluación y Acreditación Internacional
https://ceai.website/

CEUB: Comité Ejecutivo de la Universidad Boliviana
https://ceub.edu.bo/

CIEES: Comités Interinstitucionales para la Evaluación de la Educación Superior (México)
https://www.ciees.edu.mx/

CNA: Comisión Nacional de Acreditación (Chile)
https://www.cnachile.cl/Paginas/Inicio.aspx

CNA: Consejo Nacional de Acreditación (Colombia)
https://www.cna.gov.co/portal/

Coimbra Group:
https://www.coimbra-group.eu/

Colegio Alemán: Centro Alemán de Información para Latinoamérica
https://alemaniaparati.diplo.de/mxdz-es/aktuelles/colegiosalemaneslista/1085822

Comisión Europea: Proceso Bolonia y Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior
https://education.ec.europa.eu/es/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/bologna-process

CONEAU: Comisión Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación Universitaria (Argentina)
https://www.coneau.gob.ar/coneau/

COPAES: Consejo para la Acreditación de la Educación Superior (México)
https://www.copaes.org/index.html

Copernicus Alliance:
https://www.copernicus-alliance.org/

CRISCOS Mobility Programmes:
http://criscos.unju.edu.ar/index.php

CSUCA: Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano
https://hica.csuca.org/

CYTED: Programa Iberoamericano de Ciencia y Tecnología para el Desarrollo (SEGIB)
https://www.cyted.org/es/cyted
https://www.segib.org/programa/cyted-programa-iberoamericano-de-ciencia-y-tecnologia-para-el-desarrollo/

DAAD: German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst)
https://www.daad.de/de/

DEAP: Plan de Acción de Educación Digital (Digital Education Action Plan)
https://education.ec.europa.eu/es/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan

DIES: Diálogos sobre Estrategias Innovadoras en Educación Superior
https://www.daad.de/en/information-services-for-higher-education-institutions/further-information-on-daad-programmes/higher-education-management-dies/

ECESELI: Espacio Común de la Educación Superior en Línea
https://eceseli.udual.org/

EDINSOST Project : Educación e innovación social para la sostenibilidad (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya)
http://edinsost.site.ac.upc.edu/

ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
https://www.enqa.eu/

EQAVET: European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1536&langId=en

EQAR : European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
https://www.eqar.eu/

EQF: European Qualifications Framework
https://europa.eu/europass/es/herramientas-de-europass/el-marco-europeo-de-cualificaciones

EQUAM-LA: Enhancing quality management & recognition in Latin American universities to underpin the Latin American Higher Education Space
https://equamla.org/

ERASMUS+: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/es

ESCALA: Espacio Académico Común Ampliado Latinoamericano. Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo
http://grupomontevideo.org/

Escuela Agrícola Panamericana Zamorano:
https://www.zamorano.edu

Estrategia Iberoamericana de Innovación de la SEGIB:
https://www.segib.org/?document=estrategia-iberoamericana-de-innovacion

EU Directive 2013/55/EU:
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2013/55/oj

EU Legislation:
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/

EUA: European University Association
https://eua.eu/

EU-LAC: EU-LAC Foundation
https://eulacfoundation.org/en

EU-LAC Interest Group:
https://www.eucelac-platform.eu/

Erasmus+ Programme:
https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/es

Euraxess: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide/lac

Euroclima Programme:
https://www.euroclima.org/

Goethe-Institut: https://www.goethe.de/de/uun.html

GUNI: Global University Network for Innovation
https://www.guninetwork.org/

FORCYT: Programa para el Fortalecimiento de los Sistemas de Ciencia y Tecnología de la OEI
https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/www-oei-int-forcyt/presentacion

Foro Iberoamericano de Indicadores de Vinculación:
https://foro-vinc.ricyt.org/.

HESI: Higher Education Sustainability Initiative
https://sdgs.un.org/HESI

HICA: Harmonisation and Innovation in Central American Higher Education
http://hica.csuca.org/

Horizonte Europa:

https://www.horizonteeuropa.es/que-es
https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

IAU: International Association of Universities
Working Group on Higher Education for Sustainable Development - HESD
https://iau-aiu.net/HESD

IESALC: https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/

Iniciativa Ciencia y Tecnologia del BID:
https://www.iadb.org/es/ciencia-y-tecnologia/iniciativa-ciencia-y-tecnologia

InterHED – The Internationalisation of Higher Education
https://www.cimea.it/Upload/Documenti/4921_Flyer%20INTERHED_2014.pdf

JAN: Junta de Acreditación Nacional (Cuba)
https://www.ecured.cu/Junta_de_Acreditaci%C3%B3n_Nacional_de_la_Rep%C3%BAblica_de_Cuba

JIRI: Joint Initiative of Research and Innovation UE-CELAC
https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/europe-world/international-cooperation/regional-dialogues-and-international-organisations/latin-america-and-caribbean_en

KVI: Kalos Virtual Iberoamérica
https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/sello-kalos-virtual-iberoamerica/el-sello-kalos-virtual-iberoamerica

MARCA: Programa de Movilidad Académica Regional del MERCOSUR
https://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/index.html

MASUDEM: Proyecto europeo Erasmus+ “Master Studies in Sustainable Development and Management”

https://www.upo.es/diario/ciencia/2023/05/francisco-oliva-da-la-bienvenida-al-grupo-de-trabajo-del-proyecto-masudem-para-el-desarrollo-de-los-ods/

Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères (Francia)
https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/es/fichas-de-paises/america/america-latina/

MSCA: Acciones Marie Skłodowska-Curie
https://www.horizonteeuropa.es/msca

NARIC: National Academic Recognition Information Centres
https://www.enic-naric.net/

NCPs: National Contact Points for Horizon Europe
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp

Next Generation EU: Plan de recuperación para Europa
https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/recovery-plan-europe_es

OEI: Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos
https://oei.int/

Paulo Freire +:
https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/programa-paulo-freire-2/presentacion

Universidad Iberoamérica 2030:
https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/universidad-iberoamerica-2030/presentacion

OPCE: Observatorio Plurinacional de la Calidad Educativa (Bolivia)
https://opce.gob.bo/webopce/index.php/archivo/evaluaciones

ORACLE: Observatorio Regional para la Calidad de la Equidad en la Educación Superior
https://observatorio-oracle.org/es/home

Pacific Alliance student and academic mobility platform
https://becas.alianzapacifico.net/

PAME: Programa de movilidad académica de UDUAL
https://pame.udual.org/

PILA: Programa de Intercambio Académico Latinoamericano
https://www.programapila.lat/

PIMA-OEI: Programa de Intercambio y Movilidad Académica de la OEI
https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/programa-de-intercambio-y-movilidad-academica/presentacion

PIU-CINDA: Programa de Intercambio Universitario-CINDA
https://cinda.cl/movilidad/piu/

Rec-Mat: Recognition Matters
http://rec-mat.up.pt/

RecoLATIN: Centros de Evaluación de Credenciales y Procedimientos de Reconocimiento en países de Latinoamérica (Credential Evaluation Centres and Recognition Procedures in Latin American Countries)
https://www.recolatin.eu/es/

RecoNow: Knowledge of recognition procedures in ENPI South countries.
https://www.reconow.eu/en/index.aspx

Red de Macrouniversidades de América Latina y el Caribe
http://www.redmacro.unam.mx/

Red ENRICH IN LAC:
https://lac.enrichcentres.eu/

Red LAC NCP: Red Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Puntos Nacionales de Contacto
https://www.gub.uy/agencia-uruguaya-cooperacion-internacional/politicas-y-gestion/programas/red-latinoamericana-caribena-puntos-nacionales-contacto

Resinfra Project:
https://resinfra-eulac.eu/

RIACES: Red Iberoamericana para el Aseguramiento de la Calidad en la Educación Superior
http://riaces.org/

SEDUCA: Sistema Editorial Universitario Centroamericano
https://seduca.csuca.org

SEGIB: Secretaría General Iberoamericana
https://www.segib.org/

SDG Toolkit de la University College of Cork (Irlanda)
https://www.ucc.ie/en/sdg-toolkit/

SIACES: Sistema Iberoamericano de Aseguramiento de la calidad
https://www.siaces.org

SICA: Sistema de Integración Centroamericana
https://www.sica.int/

Fondo España-Sica (see also AECID):
https://www.sica.int/fes/

SICA Programme for regional academic mobility
https://www.sica.int/iniciativas/movilidad

SICEVAES: Sistema Centroamericano de Evaluación y Armonización de la Educación Superior
https://sicevaes.csuca.org/

SIESCA: Sistema de Internacionalización de la Educación Superior Centroamericana
https://siesca.uned.ac.cr/

SIIDCA: Sistema Integrado de Información Documental Centroamericano
https://siidca.csuca.org

SINEACE: Sistema Nacional de Evaluación, Acreditación y Certificación de la Calidad Educativa (Perú)
https://www.gob.pe/sineace

SIRCIP: Sistema Regional Centroamericano y del Caribe en Investigación y postgrado
https://vinv.ucr.ac.cr/es/tags/sircip

SIREVE: Sistema Regional de Vida Estudiantil
https://sireve.csuca.org/

SULITEST: The Sustainability Literacy Test
https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/sustainability-literacy-test-sulitest-higher-education-sustainability-initiative-hesi

SUNEDU: Superintendencia Nacional de Educación Superior Universitaria (Perú)
https://www.gob.pe/sunedu

THE: Times Higher Education
https://www.timeshighereducation.com/impactrankings

The University of the West Indies:
https://www.uwi.edu/campuses.php

UDUAL: Unión de Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe
https://www.udual.org/principal/

UDELAR: Universidad de la República (Uruguay) - PAME
https://udelar.edu.uy/internacionales/pame/

UDUAL: Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe
https://www.udual.org/principal

UE4SD: University Educators for Sustainable Development
https://ue4sd.glos.ac.uk/

UNAI: Iniciativa Impacto Académico de las Naciones Unidas
https://www.un.org/es/academicimpact

UNAM: UNAM and SDGs
https://web.siia.unam.mx/ods-unam/index.php

UNESCO: Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students
http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/higher-education

UNESCO Recomendation on Open Science:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949_spa

Universidad Iberoamérica 2030: see OEI

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid:
https://www.uc3m.es/ss/Satellite/UC3MInstitucional/es/Detalle/Comunicacion_C/1371264590827/1371215537949/?d=Touch

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya:
https://www.uoc.edu/portal/en/ehealth-center/recerca-innovacio/ehc-mon/ODS3/index.html

Annexes

Annex 1: Mobility of Latin American and Caribbean countries (counting the top 10 countries)

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Antigua and Barbuda	N/A	USA, Canada, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, UK, Italy, St. Lucia, France, Morocco and Georgia.	696	0,0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Argentina	Brazil, Peru. Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay, Venezuela, Chile, USA, Ecuador and Uruguay.	USA, Spain, Brazil, Germany, France, Australia, Italy, UK, Chile and Ecuador.	9.998	0,2	0,3	121.577	1,9
Bahamas	N/A	USA, Canada, UK, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, Australia, South Korea, Spain, France and Argentina.	4.364	0,1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Barbados	N/A (¿?)	Canada, USA, UK, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, Cuba, Germany, Spain, France and Ireland.	1.247	0,0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Belize	N/A	USA, Canada, Cuba, UK, Trinidad and Tobago, Honduras, Guatemala, Germany, Chile and Brazil.	894	0,0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bolivia	N/A	Argentina, USA, Brazil. Spain, Chile, Italy, Germany, France, USA and Canada.	20.845	0,3	N/A	N/A	N/A

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Brazil	Colombia, Angola, Peru, Japan, Paraguay, Bolivia, Guinea-Bissau, Argentina, Haiti and Venezuela.	Argentina, Portugal, USA, Australia, Canada, Germany, France, Spain, UK and Italy.	89.151	1,4	1,0	22.364	0,4
Colombia	Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, Argentina, Panama, Brazil, Chile, USA and Spain.	Argentina, Spain, USA, Australia, Germany, France, Chile, Ecuador, Canada and Brazil.	59.910	0,9	2,4	4.965	0,1
Costa Rica	Nicaragua, Colombia, Venezuela, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, Guatemala, Mexico, Spain and Panama.	USA, Spain, Germany, Argentina, France, Canada, UK, Panama, Brazil and Italy.	3.675	0,1	1,5	2.904	0,0
Cuba	South Africa, Congo, Angola, Colombia, Namibia, Ghana, Chad, Palestine, Haiti and Jamaica	Spain, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Germany, USA, France, Canada and Italy.	3.249	0,1	1,0	7.806	0,1
Chile	Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Haiti, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Mexico	Argentina, Spain, USA, Germany, Australia, UK, France, Brazil, Canada and Ecuador.	18.309	0,3	1,5	12.832	0,2
Dominica	N/A	USA, Cuba, Canada, Germany, St. Lucia, UK, Trinidad and Tobago, Italy, Spain and Argentina.	1.388	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Ecuador	Colombia, Venezuela, Spain, USA, Cuba, Peru, Italy, Chile, Argentina and Bolivia.	Spain, Argentina, USA, Chile, Germany, Canada, Ukraine, Colombia, France and Russia.	23.549	0,4	2,9	8.272	0,1
El Salvador	Honduras, Guatemala, USA, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru and Spain.	USA, Spain, Argentina, Canada, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, France, Costa Rica and Panama.	4.536	0,1	2,3	712	0,0
Granada	N/A	USA, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, Canada, UK, Germany, France, Spain, Serbia and Turkey.	535	0,0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Guatemala	El Salvador, USA, Honduras, Colombia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Cuba.	USA, Spain, Germany, Honduras, France, El Salvador, Argentina, Chile, Canada and UK	3.354	0,1	0,8	918	0,0
Guyana	N/A	USA, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, UK, Cuba, Brazil, France, India, Saudi Arabia and Germany.	1.276	0,0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Haiti	N/A	France, USA, Brazil, Chile, Canada, Cuba, Morocco, Italy, Belgium and Colombia.	11.522	0,2	N/A	N/A	N/A

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Honduras	Ecuador. Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, USA, Panama, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Mexico	USA, Spain, Argentina, Canada, Brazil, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Germany, France and Guatemala.	4.888	0,1	1,8	2.182	0,0
Jamaica	N/A	USA, Canada, UK, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, France, Germany, Brazil and Russia.	5.865	0,1	N/A	6.423	N/A
Mexico	USA, Canada	USA, Spain, Germany, Canada, France, UK, Argentina, Australia, Italy and Switzerland.	34.781	0,5	0,7	43.458	0,7
Nicaragua	N/A	Costa Rica, USA, Panama, Spain, Honduras, Germany, Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala and France.	3.664	0.1	N.D	N/A	N/A
Panama	Colombia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Jamaica, El Salvador, Peru, Dominican Republic, Spain, Italy and Ecuador.	USA, Spain, Colombia, Canada, UK, Chile, Germany, Honduras, El Salvador and France	3.489	0,1	2,2	4.850	0,1
Paraguay	N/A	Argentina, Brazil, USA, Spain, Germany, Chile, UK, France, Italy and Australia.	16.359	0,3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Peru	N/A	Argentina, USA, Spain, Chile, Brazil, Germany, France, Australia, UK and Canada.	35.379	0,6	N/A	N/A	N/A

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Dominican Republic	N/A	Spain, USA, France, Canada, UK, Panama, UAE, Germany, Chile and Brazil.	4.079	0,1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saint Kitts and Nevis	N/A	USA, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, UK, Turkey, St. Lucia, Germany, Jordan,	565	0,0	N/A	N/A	N/A
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	N/A	Trinidad and Tobago, USA, Cuba, UK, Canada, St. Lucia, Germany, Austria, France and Malaysia.	749	0,0	N/A	N/A	N/A
St. Lucia	India, Dominica, Nigeria, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, USA, Canada, Grenada and Jamaica.	USA, Trinidad and Tobago, Canada, UK, Cuba, France, Morocco, New Zealand, Italy and Brazil.	840	0,0	34,5	339	0.0
Suriname	N/A	UAE, Belgium, USA, Serbia, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, France, Canada, Brazil and Turkey.	1.014	0,0			
Trinidad and Tobago	Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Bahamas, Grenada, USA, Nigeria and Antigua and Barbuda	USA, UK, Canada, Ireland, Germany, France, Cuba, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and South Korea.	3.593	0,1	N/A	1.344	0,0

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Uruguay	N/A	Argentina, Brazil, Spain, USA, Germany, UK, Chile, France, Australia and Canada.	6183	0,1	3.654	0,1	2,1
Venezuela	N/A	Argentina, USA, Spain, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, Brazil, Germany and France.	31.707	0,5	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: UNESCO (http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow#slideoutmenu) accessed May 2023.

Annex 2: Mobility of European Union countries (counting the top 10 countries)

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Germany	China, India, Syria, Austria, Russia, Turkey, Italy, Iran, France, USA.	Austria, UK, Switzerland, USA, Turkey, France, Hungary, Denmark, Spain, Sweden.	123.512	1,9	3,8	368.717	5,8
Austria	Germany, Italy, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Hungary, Turkey, Serbia, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Iran	Germany, UK, Switzerland, USA, Turkey, Liechtenstein, France, Italy, Australia and Spain.	23.998	0,4	5.7	75.870	1,2
Belgium	France, the Netherlands, Cameroon, Italy, Morocco, China, Congo, Spain, Germany and India.	UK, Germany, France, USA, Canada, Switzerland, Spain. Luxembourg, Italy and Austria.	17.168	0,3	3,3	58.080	0,9
Bulgaria	Greece, UK, Germany, Ukraine, Turkey, North Macedonia, Italy, Serbia, India and Cyprus	Germany, UK, Turkey, Austria, France, Denmark, USA, Italy, Ukraine and Spain.	25.185	0,4	11,1	17.575	0,3
Cyprus	Greece, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Vietnam, Germany, UK.	Greece, UK, Germany, USA, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Hungary, Spain.	25.978	0,4	48,8	14.463	0,2
Croatia	Bosnia/Herzegovina, Germany, Gibraltar, Slovenia, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Serbia, USA.	Bosnia/Herzegovina, UK, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Italy. USA, Denmark, Serbia, Switzerland.	10.003	0,2	6,2	4.768	0,1
Denmark	Germany, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Poland, China, Slovakia, Italy, Hungary, Spain.	UK, USA, Germany, Norway, Sweden, UAE, France, Australia, Canada, Austria.	6.041	0,1	2,0	31.478	0,5

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Spain	France, Colombia, Ecuador, Italy, Mexico, China, Peru, Morocco, Chile, Venezuela.	UK, Germany, USA, France, Ecuador, Switzerland, Denmark, Italy, Argentina, Portugal.	46.994	0,7	2,2	82.269	1,3
Slovakia	Ukraine, Czech Republic, Serbia, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Russia, India and Spain.	Czech Republic, UK, Hungary, Denmark, Austria, Germany, USA, Australia, Poland, France.	30.901	0,5	22,3	14.254	0,2
Slovenia	Bosnia/Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Italy, Russia, Montenegro, Ukraine, Austria, India.	Austria, Germany, UK, Croatia, Italy, Switzerland, Serbia, France, Denmark.	3.288	0,1	4,3	5.974	0,1
Estonia	Finland, Russia, Nigeria, Ukraine, India, Bangladesh, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Iran.	UK, Germany, Finland, Russia, Denmark, Australia, USA, Sweden, Latvia, France.	3.524	0,1	7,8	5.520	0,1
Finland	Vietnam, Russia, China, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Germany, Pakistan, Iran, Sweden.	Sweden, UK, Estonia, Germany, USA, Denmark, Latvia, Norway, Romania, Japan.	10.946	0,2	3,7	23.591	0,4
France	Morocco, China, Algeria Senegal, Tunisia, Italy, Ivory Coast, India, Lebanon, Cameroon.	Canada, Belgium, UK, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, USA, Romania, Portugal, Italy.	108.654	1,7	4,0	252.444	4,0
Greece	Cyprus, Albania, Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Georgia, Syria, Jordan, Romania,	UK, Cyprus, Germany, Bulgaria, Turkey, USA, France, Italy, Romania, Switzerland.	40.395	0,6	5,0	22.429	0,4

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
Hungary	Germany, China, Romania, Serbia, Iran, Slovakia, Ukraine, Turkey, Jordan, Nigeria.	UK, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Slovakia, USA, Romania, France, Switzerland, Italy.	13.706	0,2	4,8	38.422	0,6
Ireland	India, China, USA, Canada, UK, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Nigeria.	UK, USA, Germany, Australia, Poland, Hungary, France, Bulgaria, Canada, Spain.	15.183	0,2	6,4	24.141	0,4
Italy	China, India, Iran, Turkey, Albania, Germany, France, Russia, Switzerland, Greece.	UK, Germany, Austria, France, Spain, Switzerland, USA, Romania, Australia, Denmark.	84.449	1,3	4,2	58.508	0,9
Latvia	India, Uzbekistan, Germany, Ukraine, Russia, Sweden, Finland, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.	UK, Germany, Denmark, Russia, USA, Estonia, France, Finland, Sweden, Austria.	5.025	0,1	6,3	10.148	0,2
Lithuania	Belarus, India, Ukraine, Germany, Israel, Sweden, China, Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan.	UK, Denmark, Germany, Poland, USA, Australia, Russia, France, Sweden, Latvia.	10.278	0,2	9,7	6.559	0,1
Luxembourg	France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, India, China, Greece, Iran, Spain, Portugal.	Germany, Belgium, France, Austria, UK, Switzerland, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Denmark.	12.709	0,2	170,7	3.602	0,1
Malta	India, UK, Italy, USA, Germany, Nigeria, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Libya.	UK, Italy, USA, Germany, Ireland, Hungary, Spain, Denmark, France, Slovakia.	1.211	0,0	7,1	2.414	0,0

Country	Where do students come from?	Where do students go?	No. of students abroad	% of total students abroad	Mobility rate	No. of students received	% of students received
The Netherlands	N/A	Belgium, UK, Germany, Turkey, UAE, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden.	19.285	0,3	2,1	124.876	2,0
Poland	Ukraine, Belarus, India, Germany, Norway, Turkey, China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Sweden.	UK, Germany, USA; Denmark, France, Austria, Ukraine, Switzerland, Australia, Spain.	26.495	0,4	1,9	62.091	1,0
Portugal	Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, France, Mozambique, Spain, Italy, S. Tome and Principe, China.	UK, Russia, Spain, France, Germany, USA, Brazil, Switzerland, Denmark, Czech Republic.	N.D.	N.D.	N.D.	N.D.	N.D.
Czech Republic	Slovakia, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, India, Germany, Belarus, China, Italy, UK.	Slovakia, UK, Germany, USA, Denmark, Poland, Austria, Australia, France, Switzerland.	12.195	0,2	3,8	47.768	0,8
Romania	Moldova, France, Israel, Italy, Germany, Morocco, Greece, Tunisia, Serbia, Hungary.	UK, Germany, Moldova, Hungary, France, Denmark, Spain, Austria, USA, Italy.	31.486	0,5	5,8	32.560	0,5
Sweden	China, India, Finland, Germany, Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Italy, Greece, Spain.	UK, USA, Denmark, Poland, Norway, Germany, Australia, UAE, Latvia, Finland.	15.092	15.092	0,2	31.935	0,5

Source: UNESCO (http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow#slideoutmenu) accessed May 2023.

Annex 3: Scholarship and Mobility Programmes

LAC Scholarships

Country	Scholarships	Level of studies which they apply to	Coverage
Argentina	LATAM scholarships for Latin American students in Buenos Aires (2021)	Postgraduate	Tuition fees
	MARCA (MERCOSUR)	Bachelor's, teaching staff, researchers and coordinators	Transportation, travel insurance, accommodation and living expenses
	ESCALA (Montevideo Group)	Bachelor's, postgraduate, teaching staff, managers and administrators	Accommodation, travel and living expenses.
Bolivia	MARCA (MERCOSUR)	Bachelor's, teaching staff, researchers and coordinators	Transportation, travel insurance, accommodation and living expenses
	ESCALA (Montevideo Group)	Bachelor's, postgraduate, teaching staff, managers and administrators	Accommodation, travel and living expenses
Brazil	Brazil PAEC OAS-GCUB Scholarships (2022) for national students of OAS member countries except Brazil 258 scholarships	Master's and Doctoral	Tuition fee, monthly allowance and a one-time payment of 1200 USD
	Ciência sem Fronteiras	Bachelor's and postgraduate (areas of technology and innovation – engineering)	https://www.gov.br/cnpq/pt-br/acesso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/ciencia-sem-fronteiras
	CAPES	Master's and Doctoral	https://www.gov.br/capes/pt-br/acesso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas
	CAPES - PAPRI	Doctoral students and PhDs, teaching staff and students	https://www.gov.br/capes/pt-br/acesso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/bolsas/bolsas-e-auxilios-internacionais/encontre-aqui/paises/multinacional/programa-de-apoio-ao-processo-de-internacionalizacao-de-instituicoes-de-ensino-e-de-pesquisa-brasileiras-papri
	Bachelor's postgraduate, teaching staff, managers and administrators	Grado, postgrado, docentes, gestores y administradores	Accommodation, travel and living expenses

Country	Scholarships	Level of studies which they apply to	Coverage
Brazil	*ANIDFES programme and mobility offer by Brazilian universities, both included in Campus Ibero-America, the links are broken and cannot be found		No information
Chile	Grants from the Chilean International Cooperation Agency for Development (AGCID) for master's studies for professionals who are nationals of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Panama, Dominican Republic (2019)	Master's	Fee, tuition and degree costs; monthly payment of $500,000 Chilean pesos; health insurance; $90,000 Chilean pesos for books and study material.
	AUIP. Living expense grant for foreign students of doctoral programmes of the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso 2023	Doctoral	Living expenses for 12 months
	Pacific Alliance Mobility Scholarships	Undergraduate, doctoral, guest university lecturers and researchers	Monthly allowance, health insurance and transportation
	ANID-OAS scholarships to study in Chile (2023) Recipients: nationals or residents of OAS member countries except Chile	Doctoral	Living expenses, tuition, medical insurance and 1200 USD for relocation costs.
	CONICYT manages the Chilean Researcher Mobility Portal. Currently, ANID.	Postgraduate and researchers	The scholarships listed below are on this portal: https://www.conicyt.cl/becas-conicyt/
	Postdoctoral Fellowship Abroad, Chile Fellowships. Call 2022	Postdoctoral	https://www.conicyt.cl/becas-conicyt/
	Fulbright ANID Equal Opportunity Doctoral Scholarship. Call 2022	Postgraduate	https://www.conicyt.cl/becas-conicyt/
	Chile ANID-DAAD Doctorate Fellowships. Call 2022	Postdoctoral	https://www.conicyt.cl/becas-conicyt/
	Chile Scholarships	Master's and Doctoral	https://www.conicyt.cl/becas-conicyt/
	Doctoral Scholarship Abroad, Chile Scholarships in Digital Transformation and Technological Revolution, 2020 Call	Doctoral	https://www.conicyt.cl/becas-conicyt/

Country	Scholarships	Level of studies which they apply to	Coverage
Colombia	Pacific Alliance Mobility Scholarships	Undergraduate, doctoral, guest university lecturers and researchers	Monthly allowances, health insurance and transportation
	COLCIENCIAS: Global Nexus Programme	International undergraduate research in STEM + A areas	Accommodation and living expenses, international round-trip tickets from Bogotá, medical insurance, internship costs and a 180-hour intensive foreign language advanced course. Up to 6 months. https://minciencias.gov.co/portafolio/mentalidad-cultura/vocacion/nexo-global
	Ministry of Education / ICETEX: bilateral international scholarship programme	The grants portal	https://web.icetex.gov.co/es/becas/becas-para-estudios-en-el-exterior/becas-vigentes
Costa Rica	SICA's Regional Academic Mobility Programme *Temporarily closed. Latest edition of which there is news: 2017	No information	No information
	Academic mobility and exchange programmes offered from universities *Information from Campus Ibero-America. Information from all universities has not been collected.	No information	No information
Cuba	PAME	Students, teaching staff and administrators	Accommodation, living expenses Tuition Transfer
	PIMA	Bachelor's	Tuition at destination university Compensatory economic aid with respect to the country of origin (living expenses and relocation)
	Network of Macro-universities in Latin America and the Caribbean *the last call is from 2018-2019	Sin información	Sin información
Ecuador	Prometheus (broken link and the latest news from the programme is from 2013) and "Other scholarship programmes", which leads to a SENESCYT webpage and has no content (it is a portal that leads to training courses for officials) are the programmes referenced in Campus Ibero-America	Sin información	Sin información

Country	Scholarships	Level of studies which they apply to	Coverage
El Salvador	PAME	Students, teaching staff and administrators	Accommodation, living expenses Tuition Transfer
	PIMA	Bachelor's	Tuition at destination university Compensatory economic aid with respect to the country of origin (living expenses and relocation)
	Network of Macro-universities in Latin America and the Caribbean *last call from 2018-2019	No information	No information
El Salvador	SICA's Regional Academic Mobility Programme Temporarily closed. Latest edition of which there is news: 2017	No information	No information
Guatemala	PAME	Students, teaching staff and administrators	Accommodation and living expenses Tuition fees Transfer
	PIMA	Bachelor's	Tuition at destination university Compensatory economic aid with respect to the country of origin (living expenses and relocation)
	Network of Macro-universities in Latin America and the Caribbean *the last call found is from 2018-2019	No information	No information
	SICA's Regional Academic Mobility Programme *Temporarily closed Latest edition of which there is news: 2017	No information	No information
Honduras	PAME	Students, teaching staff and administrators	Alojamiento manutención, matrícula, traslado
	PIMA	Bachelor's	Tuition fees at destination university Compensatory economic aid with respect to the country of origin (living expenses and relocation)

Country	Scholarships	Level of studies which they apply to	Coverage
Honduras	Network of Macro-universities in Latin America and the Caribbean *the last call found is from 2018-2019	No information	No information
	SICA's Regional Academic Mobility Programme *Temporarily closed. Last edition of which there is news: 2017	No information	No information
Mexico	Government of Mexico Excellence Scholarships for Foreigners 2022	Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral, Postdoctoral	$11,700.36 Mexican pesos per month ($570 USD) for mobilities at the bachelor's, specialisation and master's and master's research levels. $14,625.45/month (710 USD) in Mexican pesos for doctoral scholarships and doctoral and postdoctoral research stays, medical specialities and subspecialties Health insurance from the seventh month, visa expenses; enrolment in the educational institution and tuition fees (depending on the institution) and air tickets (depending on each case)
	Scholarships to study in Mexico for nationals or residents of OAS member countries except Mexico. In collaboration with: CONACY, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) and the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) Areas: Engineering, Science and Health	Postgraduate	Accommodation and food; health insurance, one-time payment of 1200 USD, possible discounts on total or partial tuition fees depending on the case.
	CONACYT	Postgraduate: master's, doctoral and postdoctoral	Living expenses and medical insurance (monthly payments depend on programmes)
	Scholarships from the Higher Education Under-secretariat *The link on Campus Ibero-America is broken	No information	No information
	Pacific Alliance Mobility Scholarships	Undergraduate, doctoral, guest university lecturers and researchers	Monthly payments, health insurance and transportation

Country	Scholarships	Level of studies which they apply to	Coverage
Mexico	AUIP. CUMex – AUIP (2023) Mobility Scholarship Programme Maximum of 66 scholarships for lecturers, researchers and postgraduate students (master's, doctoral and specialisation) from CUMex member universities and HEIs	Postgraduate	1,400 USD for international travel 1,600 USD living expenses (800 for full 15 calendar day periods)
Nicaragua	SICA's Regional Academic Mobility Programme *Temporarily closed. Latest edition of which there is news: 2017	No information	No information
Panama	PAME	Students, teaching staff and administrators	Accommodation and living expenses Tuition fees, Transfer
	PIMA	Bachelor's	Tuition fees at destination university Compensatory economic aid with respect to the country of origin (living expenses and transfer)
	Network of Macro-universities in Latin America and the Caribbean *the last call found is from 2018-2019	No information	No information
	SICA's Regional Academic Mobility Programme *Temporarily closed. Latest edition of which there is news: 2017	No information	No information
Paraguay	BECAL: "Don Carlos Antonio López" National Programme of Postgraduate Scholarships Abroad National and international mobility	Bachelor's, master's and doctoral	Approximate monthly payments: 1,650 USD bachelor's 2,000 USD master's and doctoral degree
	MARCA (MERCOSUR)	Bachelor's, teaching staff, researchers and coordinators	Transportation, travel insurance, accommodation and living expenses
	ESCALA (Montevideo Group)	Bachelor's, postgraduate, teaching staff, managers and administrators	Transfer, accommodation and living expenses
Peru	Pacific Alliance Mobility Scholarships	Undergraduate, doctoral, guest university lecturers and researchers	Monthly payments, health insurance and transportation

Country	Scholarships	Level of studies which they apply to	Coverage
Dominican Republic	Regional Academic Mobility Programme Scholarships for Central American undergraduate and graduate students between 20 and 35 years old who undertake their research work *The link on Campus Ibero-America is broken	No information	No information
Uruguay	ESCALA (Montevideo Group)	Bachelor's, postgraduate, teaching staff, managers and administrators	Relocation, accommodation and living expenses
	MARCA (MERCOSUR)	Bachelor's, teaching staff, researchers and coordinators	Transportation, travel insurance, accommodation and living expenses
Venezuela	MARCA (MERCOSUR)	Bachelor's, teaching staff, researchers and coordinators	Transportation, travel insurance, accommodation and living expenses

Source: own elaboration based on Campus Ibero-America and the websites of the scholarship programmes.

EU Scholarships

Country	Scholarships	Level of education which they apply to	Coverage
Germany	DAAD (2023). German Academic Exchange Service	Master's Doctoral	€934/month €1200/month
	DAAD Helmut Schmidt (2023) Helmut-Schmidt-Programme (Master's Scholarships for Public Policy and Good Governance - PPGG) • DAAD Scholarships for international students from various countries. In Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela	Master's	Tuition, €934/month, health insurance, travel funds, research grant, accommodation allowance, German course
Austria	Austrian Government Scholarships (2021)	Undergraduate, Master's, Postgraduate and Doctoral	€1050/month
Belgium	ARES Scholarships. Students from Bolivia, Ecuador, Cuba and Peru (2023) • Advanced Programmes • For continuing education (no living allowance)	Bachelor's and Master's Degrees	Living allowance (lump sum for 12 months), international travel expenses, tuition and insurance
	VLIR-USO (2020-2021) Students from Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua and Peru	Master's	Allowance, Accommodation, Insurance, International Travel and Tuition
Denmark	Government Scholarships of Denmark for Master's studies at the University of Southern Denmark (2020) *broken link, I could not check if there is a current call.	Master's and doctoral	Full tuition and grant of DKK 6090/month excluding taxes
	Technical University of Denmark (DTU) for non-EU resident Latino or Hispanic students (2021)	Master's	Tuition fees
	University of Copenhagen (2021-2022).	Postdoctoral Degree (PhD) in Climate Policy and Sustainability.	€4,900/month
	Aarhus University (2021).	Master's	

Country	Scholarships	Level of education which they apply to	Coverage
Spain	MAEC-AECID Scholarships for citizens of countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia 2023-2024 to study in different programmes: • Master's Programme: scholarships for face-to-face master's degrees in Spain aimed at public employees from Latin American countries (they must be included in the bilateral strategies of the Spanish Cooperation Master Plan). • Diplomatic School Programme: Interuniversity Master's Degree in Diplomacy and International Relations from the Diplomatic School of Spain. • Music Programme: Musical training excellence scholarships for Ibero-American citizens at the Reina Sofía School of Music in Madrid. • ASALE Programme: scholarships for a master's degree in hispanic lexicography and training collaboration stay at the headquarters of the Spanish Language Academies associated with the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE). • Scholarships for residencies at the Royal Academy of Spain in Rome for Spanish, EU and Ibero-American citizens	Master's	Various types of aid depending on the programme. They include monthly payments, tuition, health insurance and accidents. In the case of scholarships for Latin American citizens: Initial monthly allowance: €2,200-€2,400 Rest of monthly allowances: €1,000-1,200 Tuition grants: €1,200 - €5,000
	Carolina Foundation Scholarships for Postgraduate and International Studies (2023) For nationals from member countries of the Ibero-American Community of Nations. 613 scholarships, of which: 242 postgraduate 100 doctoral and short postdoctoral stays 36 teaching mobility 126 institutional studies 109 scholarship renewals	Postgraduate, doctoral programme and short postdoctoral stays, teaching mobility programme, scholarship programmes and institutional studies.	A percentage of tuition; airfare to and from Spain; health insurance. Some scholarships also provide accommodation and living expenses.
	AUIP. Academic Mobility Scholarship Programme between Institutions Associated with AUIP 2023 53 scholarships awarded in the first term (1/12/2022-30/06/2023)	Lecturers and researchers; postgraduate programme managers; postgraduate students	€1200 for airfare if it is between two Ibero-American countries €800 for airfare if it is between Spain and Portugal.

Country	Scholarships	Level of education which they apply to	Coverage
Spain	AUIP. Mobility Scholarships for the "AUIP Double Postgraduate Degrees" between Ibero-American universities 2023. Maximum of 10 scholarships for each double degree for students already enrolled in one of the master's degrees	Master's	€ 1,250 - airfare, round trip, from home university to destination university, €625/ month for accommodation and living expenses for a maximum of 6 months
	AUIP. Mobility Scholarships in Spain, between Andalusian and Ibero-American Universities (2023) 41 scholarships awarded in the first term (1/12/2022-30/06/2023)	Lecturers and researchers; postgraduate programme managers; postgraduate students	€1,400 - mobility between Andalusia-Latin America and vice versa €700 - mobility between Andalusia-Portugal and vice versa
	AUIP. Mobility scholarships for POSTDOCTORAL stays at Andalusian universities 2023. For lecturers and researchers from institutions belonging to the AUIPE	Postdoctoral (lecturers and researchers)	Up to €3,000 for transport, accommodation and living expenses
	AUIP. Scholarships for university master's degrees in different Spanish universities: Pablo Olavide de Sevilla, Rey Juan Carlos, Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga, Seville, UNIA (2023) Tuition fees must be deducted from the coverage unless otherwise specified	Master's	UPO: 10 scholarships up to €4,500
			RJC: 12 scholarships up to €5,100
			UAL: 10 scholarships up to €5000
			UCA: 25 tuition scholarships and €300/month for 10 months
			UCO: 10 scholarships for tuition and accommodation with living expenses in residence halls.
			UHU: 10 tuition scholarships + €1500 (single amount as a travel grant)
			UJA: 16 tuition scholarships plus a grant of €4,000 for international travel, accommodation and living expenses
			UJA: 16 tuition scholarships plus a grant of €4,000 for travel, accommodation and living expenses
			US: 10 scholarships up to €2,500
			UNIA: 8 tuition scholarships

Country	Scholarships	Level of education which they apply to	Coverage
Spain	AUIP. Doctoral scholarships for the Ibero-American Collaborative Programme for Doctoral Training and Joint Supervision in Economics, Business, Finance and Computing (UNIA) 2023	Doctoral	10 scholarships up to €7,500 for travel, accommodation, living and insurance expenses.
	Universidad de Jaén. Call for Talent Attraction Scholarship Programme for Bachelor's Studies - 2023/2024 (75 scholarships that are not only for Latin American nationals)	Bachelor's	Tuition, health insurance, €2,200 per year
	Universidad de Jaén. Call for Talent Attraction Scholarships Programme for Master's Studies - 2023/2024 (30 scholarships that are not only for Latin American nationals)	Master's	Tuition, health insurance and €3,000 per year for 20 scholarships.
	International Scholarships University of Salamanca – Banco Santander for mobility in bachelor's studies (2022-2023) 42 scholarships for nationals of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela	Bachelor's	Tuition; accommodation and living expenses at USAL university residences, in a double room; health care insurance
	• International scholarships for mobility in university master's studies at the University of Salamanca aimed at Latin American students (2023-2024) • 5 scholarships in partnership with the Carolina Foundation • Up to 35 scholarships for Latin American students (Banco Santander) • 10 scholarships for Colombian professionals (agreement between the Colombian Institute of Educational Credit and Technical Studies Abroad – ICETEX and the University of Salamanca)	Master's	Tuition (maximum 60 credits); medical insurance, accommodation and, in some modality, living expenses for USAL university residences in a double room

Country	Scholarships	Level of education which they apply to	Coverage
	University of Valencia. Luis Vives (2022-2023). 11 scholarships +. 9 renewal scholarships for nationals of Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru, among other priority cooperation countries	Master's It excludes official master's degrees that qualify for a regulated profession in Spain, Erasmus Mundus, international double degrees, interuniversity degrees and those that are online	Tuition and Degree; round-trip airfare; accommodation and living expenses at a residence hall; non-pharmaceutical and repatriation medical insurance; single grant of €400
Finland	University of Helsinki Scholarships for non-EU/EEA and non-Swiss students	Master's	Tuition and €5000, renewable the second year
France	Campus France: 41 scholarship programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean funded by the French government. 219 in total including those funded by the EU, international organisations, universities and private institutions https://campusbourses.campusfrance.org/#/catalog Campus France by country https://www.campusfrance.org/es/becas-estudiantes-extranjeros	Bachelor's, master's, doctoral and postdoctoral	https://campusbourses.campusfrance.org/#/catalog
	OECD internships in France, are mainly assigned to nationals of OECD member countries and the minimum duration is one month	Undergraduate, postgraduate or doctoral	€700/month
	Sciences Po University. 2023 Emile Boutmy Scholarships For non-European Union students.	Undergraduate and Master's	• Undergraduate: scholarships of: 14210, 9500, 6500 and 3900 per year during the three years of the programme • Master's: scholarship of €13,100 per year covering part of the tuition fees for the two years of the programme

Country	Scholarships	Level of education which they apply to	Coverage
Italy	MAECI Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (2022-2023)	Master's, doctoral and research	€900/month, tuition (not regional fees), health insurance.
	HELLO Undergraduate and Postgraduate Scholarships in Italy 2022 For nationals and foreigners. Call permanently open	Bachelor's and Postgraduate	Accommodation and non-detailed cash amount to pay for university
Italy	European University Institute (EUI) 2023 5-month scholarship	Bachelor's	€2,500/month €300/month for family allowance €200/month for each child. Medical coverage €1,200 round-trip airfare
	University of Calabria (2023) 150 scholarships for foreign students enrolled in the 10 International Master's Degrees, taught in English, and 90 scholarships for the 30 Master's Degrees, taught in Italian.	Master's	Tuition, accommodation and an allowance from €2,500 to €3,400.
Ireland	Government of Ireland Higher Education Authority (HEA) 2023 International Scholarship Programme (excluding EU/EEA, Switzerland and UK)	Bachelor's, master's and doctoral	Tuition and registration expenses; €10,000 annually
	College Trinity Dublin (2023) one-year funding programme for international students	Postgraduate	€ 2000 – 5000 for tuition
Netherlands	High-potential scholarships funded by Maastricht University (2023) 24 scholarships for non-EU/EEA international students	Master's	13-month Master's Degree: €12350 (living expenses); €700 health and liability insurance; €207 visa; tuition 25-month Master's Degree: €23,750 and other conditions, like the 13-month Master's Degree
	Netherlands Scholarship (2023-2024) funded by the Dutch government and Dutch universities for non-European Economic Area international students	Bachelor's or master's	€5000 only for one year
	HAN Scholarships. Han University For non-EU/EEA students	Bachelor's and master's	Bachelor's: €2,500 for the first semester; €2,500 for the second semester; Possible: €2,500 per year for the following 3 years Master: €5,000

Country	Scholarships	Level of education which they apply to	Coverage
Poland	UNESCO Poland Scholarship 2023. 30 6-month scholarships to go to AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow Students from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama and Peru among other countries outside the EU/EEA	Bachelor's and master's	1500 PLN (bachelor's degree) and 2200 PLN (master's degree) (for accommodation and living expenses) One-time allocation 1500 PLN (bachelor's degree) and 2200 PLN (master's degree) 1USD = 4.40 PLN, approx.) Unesco: airfare, health insurance and 120 USD (one-time allocation)
United Kingdom	Fully funded Chevening scholarships to study one-year master's degrees at UK Universities	Master's	https://www.chevening.org/scholarships/
	University of East Anglia Scholarships (2023) 5 scholarships	Master's	£19,800 to cover tuition
	British Council STEM Scholarship for Women (2023) Female students from different regions of the world and, in Latin America, from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru or Venezuela	Master's	tuition fees, living and travel expenses, visa and medical coverage fees.
	Queen Mary University of London DeepMind Scholarships (2023)	Master's	£2,250 tuition fee: living allowance of £15,480; an annual travel grants of £2,200 and a one-time equipment grant of 1,700
	University College London (2023) 40 scholarships for international students	Doctoral	£19,668 pounds sterling (annually revised for inflation) £1,200 for research The duration of the programme is three years. If the student does an integrated four-year doctoral programme, the scholarship is extended to the last year of study.
	Weidenfeld Hoffmann of the University of Oxford (2023) For underserved foreign students. Latin American countries which are included: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela	Master's	Tuition and £17,600 for expenses

Country	Scholarships	Level of education which they apply to	Coverage
United Kingdom	University of Nottingham (2022)	Research (postdoctoral)	Three years of funding up to £53,000; academic research expenses up to £75,000; childcare budget up to £15,000 Access to mentoring for the development of their professional capacity Possibility of obtaining an academic position based on performance
Sweden	Swedish Institute Scholarship for Global Professionals – SISGP (2023) 250 scholarships for international students from 41 eligible countries, including the following from Latin America: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru	Master's	SEK 11000 monthly SEK 15000 for travel
	Chalmers University of Technology. Adlerbert Scholarships (2023) 5 scholarships for international students among the eligible countries, the following from Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras. Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela	Master's	Tuition

Source: own elaboration from the websites of the scholarship programmes.

Institutional and Multilateral Mobility Programmes

Programme	Organisation	Last Call	Website
ESCALA	AUGM	2023	http://grupomontevideo.org/
Mobility Programme	CRYSTS	2023	http://criscos.unju.edu.ar/index.php
PIU	CINDA	2023	https://cinda.cl/movilidad/piu/
Network of Macro-universities in Latin America and the Caribbean	UNAM and UCV IESALC-UNESCO support	2018-2019	http://www.redmacro.unam.mx/
PAME	UDUAL	2023-2024	https://pame.udual.org/
ECESELI	UDUAL	2013 (start)	https://www.udual.org/principal/
PILA	ASCUN (Colombia), ANUIES (México) y CIN (Argentina)	2023	https://www.programapila.lat/
MARCA	MERCOSUR	2022-2024	https://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/index.html
Pacific Alliance Student Mobility Platform	Pacific Alliance	2023	https://becas.alianzapacifico.net/
PIMA-Andalusia	OEI	2022-2023	https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/programa-de-intercambio-y-movilidad-academica/presentacion
Regional Academic Mobility Programme	SICA	2017	https://www.sica.int/iniciativas/movilidad
Paulo Freire+ Programme	OEI	2020-2021	https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/programa-paulo-freire/convocatoria-paulo-freire-jaime-torres-bodet
Paulo Freire	OEI	2023	https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/programa-paulo-freire/convocatoria-paulo-freire-jaime-torres-bodet
Campus Ibero-America	EIC-SEGIB	2014 (start)	https://www.campusiberoamerica.net/

Source: own elaboration from the websites.

Multilateral mobility programmes. Information about current 2023 calls

Programme	Duration	Areas	Prerequisite	Coverage	No. of scholarships	No. universities	Area of mobility
Pacific Alliance	1 semester	Eligible areas are established (no humanities)	Passed 50% Minimal passing grade	Monthly expenses Travel Health insurance Tuition	400 (69% undergraduate students)	428	Chile Colombia Mexico Peru
ESCALA	1 semester		Passed 40% Under 30 No teaching positions	Transfer Accommodation and living expenses	218	35	Argentina Bolivia Brazil Chile Paraguay Uruguay
Mobility programmes-CRISCOS	1 semester		Passed 2nd course Average 60%	Transfer Accommodation Living expenses Tuition fees at destination			Argentina Bolivia Chile Ecuador, Paraguay Peru
MARCA	1 – 2 semesters	those from approved projects	Passed 40% Accredited degrees Network training (at least 3 countries)	Transport Travel Insurance Accommodation and living expenses		12 multilateral projects and 119 degrees	Argentina Bolivia Brazil Colombia Paraguay Uruguay
PILA	1 semester		Passed 20%	Accommodation, living expenses and tuition fees at the host university	196 outbound 302 inbound (2021)	94	Argentina Brazil Chile Colombia Cuba Mexico Nicaragua Uruguay * 2021 data

Programme	Duration	Areas	Prerequisite	Coverage	No. of scholarships	No. universities	Area of mobility
PIMA ANDALUSIA	1 semester	Areas determined by networks	Passed 50% Networks in at least 3 countries	Tuition at destination university Compensatory economic aid with respect to the country of origin (living expenses and transfer)	212	22 projects	9 public universities of Andalusia Universities in Latin America that are part of the projects
PAME	1 year		Passed 50%	Accommodation and living expenses Tuition fees Relocation		93	Argentina Bolivia Brazil Chile Colombia Costa Rica Ecuador El Salvador Mexico Nicaragua Panama Paraguay Peru Uruguay

Source: own elaboration from the websites of the mobility programmes.

OAS Scholarships

Organisation	Scholarships	Level of studies which they apply to	Coverage
OAS[186]	Scholarships to study in OAS countries for nationals or residents of OAS member countries	Bachelor's/undergraduate Postgraduate	Up to 10,000 USD per year for accommodation, living expenses, tuition, medical insurance, round-trip airfare, and purchase of academic materials
	Special Scholarships for the English-speaking Caribbean (SPECAF), established in 1983, awards scholarships for the last two years of undergraduate/bachelor's university studies to citizens and residents of the English-speaking Caribbean Member States and Suriname	To obtain a bachelor's degree	Up to 10,000 USD per year for accommodation, meals, tuition, medical insurance, round-trip airfare, and purchase of academic materials
	Scholarships for postgraduate studies and research 2023 Except medical areas and language learning	Postgraduate	Duration: 1/2 years. Up to 10,000 USD per year for accommodation, meals, tuition, medical insurance, round-trip airfare, and purchase of academic materials

Source: own elaboration from the OAS website http://www.oas.org/es/becas/

186 OAS member countries https://www.oas.org/en/scholarships/regularprogram/2021/2021-AcademicProgram%20Consortium%20info%20for%20applicants.pdf

Annex 4: Student mobility by country of origin and degree of the MARCA

Countries	Years	Agronomy	Architecture and Urban Planning	Nursing	Civil Eng.	Electronic Eng.	Industrial Eng.	Mechanical Eng.	Food Chemistry Eng.	Medicine	Dentistry	Veterinary medicine	Total
	2015	27	33	3	8	3	0	5	11	6	0	8	**104**
	2016	32	26	3	12	3	2	15	11	5	0	3	**109**
	2017	24	15	2	6	2	5	8	5	3	0	0	**70**
	2018	26	23	3	4	4	6	3	7	1	2	11	**90**
	2019	12	7	2	3	2	1	1	8	2	2	7	**47**
	2021	5	0	0	0	9	0	6	10	0	2	0	**32**
	2022	12	7	0	2	4	0	1	2	6	1	1	**36**
Argentina	**Total**	**138**	**111**	**13**	**35**	**27**	**14**	**39**	**54**	**23**	**7**	**30**	**488**
	2015	8	5	0	1	2	0	1	1	5	2	2	**27**
	2016	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	2	8	4	0	**21**
	2017	13	9	0	0	1	2	2	0	6	2	0	**35**
	2018	11	6	2	0	1	5	2	1	6	6	1	**36**
	2019	12	4	2	1	1	6	1	2	6	3	2	**40**
	2021	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	**15**
	2022	3	5	4	0	1	0	0	0	6	1	0	**20**
Bolivia	**Total**	**50**	**31**	**8**	**3**	**7**	**15**	**7**	**6**	**37**	**30**	**5**	**194**
	2015	19	16	3	4	0	0	3	5	0	0	2	**52**
	2016	7	6	3	12	1	2	10	8	0	0	3	**49**
	2017	35	17	2	8	2	5	11	6	0	0		**86**
	2018	29	21	5	7	0	0	3	4	4	1	17	**91**

Countries	Years	Agronomy	Architecture and Urban Planning	Nursing	Civil Eng.	Electronic Eng.	Industrial Eng.	Mechanical Eng.	Food Chemistry Eng.	Medicine	Dentistry	Veterinary medicine	Total
	2019	13	7	3	4	2	0	1	4	0	1	6	**41**
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
	2022	5	3	4	4	1	0	1	3	1	1	3	**26**
Brazil	**Total**	**108**	**70**	**20**	**39**	**6**	**7**	**30**	**30**	**5**	**3**	**31**	**346**
	2015	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
	2016	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**5**
	2017	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2018	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2019	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Chile	**Total**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**8**
	2018	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**2**
	2019	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	**3**
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2022	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	1	**11**
Colombia	**Total**	**0**	**1**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**3**	**0**	**2**	**16**
	2015	4	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	**15**
	2016	2	3	0	3	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	**13**
	2017	0	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	**8**
	2018	0	3	0	0	0	0	0		1	2	0	**6**

Countries	Years	Agronomy	Architecture and Urban Planning	Nursing	Civil Eng.	Electronic Eng.	Industrial Eng.	Mechanical Eng.	Food Chemistry Eng.	Medicine	Dentistry	Veterinary medicine	Total
	2019	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	**7**
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	**6**
Paraguay	**Total**	**6**	**21**	**0**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**4**	**10**	**5**	**0**	**55**
	2015	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	**9**
	2016	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	**4**
	2017	4	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	**8**
	2018	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	4	**17**
	2019	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	**7**
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	5	0	**5**
	2022	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	2	**11**
Uruguay	**Total**	**13**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**12**	**13**	**61**
	2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2018	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2019	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Venezuela	**Total**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Fuente: Base de datos programa MARCA (https://programamarca.siu.edu.ar)

This publication focuses on the progress that has been made in the construction of the "EU-CELAC Higher Education Area", as well as on the opportunities that lie ahead. It examines cooperative efforts made over recent years by a variety of institutions and government agencies, international and Ibero-American organisations, university associations, and academic networks. These efforts aim to advance the internationalisation, harmonisation, and comparability of Higher Education systems at bi-regional, regional, and sub-regional levels.

The study highlights advancements in key areas such as mobility, recognition of qualifications systems, and quality assurance, as well as programs that promote scientific cooperation. Furthermore, it sheds light on programs of interest initiated by (alliances of) universities to contribute to the 2030 Agenda, which offers a framework for cross-sectoral cooperation.

The reflections and questions presented by the authors suggest important contributions to the dialogue on the complexities and gaps, but also the strengths and potentials of this bi-regional process.

The International Foundation European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC Foundation) was established by the Heads of State and Government of the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in 2010. Its members are the countries of the EU and CELAC, as well as the EU itself. The Foundation serves as a tool for the EU-CELAC partnership, enriching intergovernmental dialogue through its activities. Its mission is to strengthen and promote the bi-regional strategic partnership, enhancing its visibility and encouraging active participation from respective civil societies.