

Bi-regional Relations



EU-LAC Foundation, Yuste Foundation

# The European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean relations within the framework of the Council of the EU Presidencies and the EU-CELAC and Ibero-American Summits

Summer Course Report 2023 - Yuste Campus



EU-LAC Foundation  
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Caribbean relations within the framework of the  
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The International European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean Foundation (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 include countries from the EU, CELAC, and the EU itself. The Foundation serves as a tool for the EU-CELAC partnership, and its activities support intergovernmental dialogue in line with the bi-regional Action Plan.

The EU-LAC Foundation has the mission of strengthening and promoting the bi-regional strategic partnership, enhancing its visibility, and encouraging the active participation of respective civil societies. Based on this mission, the Foundation was invited by the European and Ibero-American Academy Foundation of Yuste to co-organise the Summer Course "European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean Relations within the Framework of the EU Council Presidencies and the EU-CELAC and Ibero-American Summits" on 27-29 June 2023, at the Monastery of Yuste. The objective of this course was to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that should drive relations between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The publication can be accessed through the following link: <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/european-union-latin-america-and-caribbean-relations-within-framework-council-eu-presidencies-and>

Recorded videos of the five days of the Summer Course are available at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUYKRDOh1TAzGYed3zKrtHA>.

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# CAMPUS YUSTE 2023

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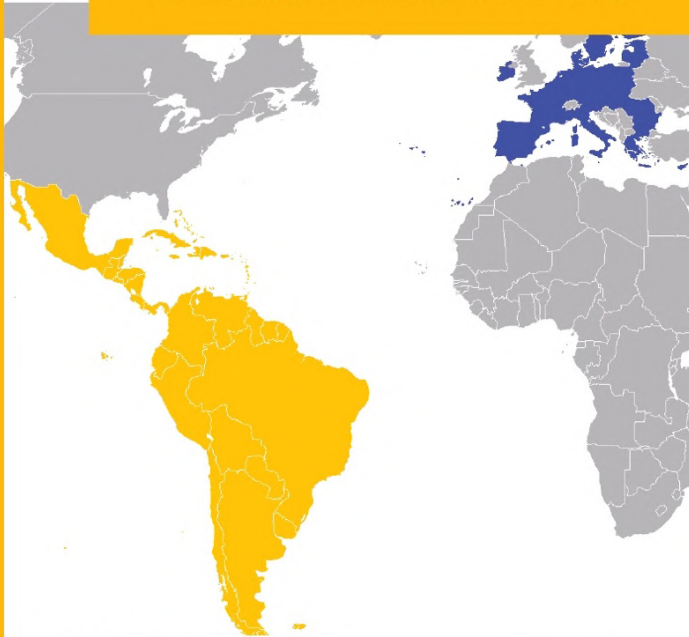
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## LAS RELACIONES UNIÓN EUROPEA, AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE EN EL MARCO DE LAS PRESIDENCIAS DEL CONSEJO DE LA U. E. Y LAS CUMBRES EU-CELAC E IBEROAMERICANAS

**Del 27 al 29 de junio**  
MONASTERIO DE SAN JERÓNIMO DE YUSTE



### ORGANIZAN



### PATROCINA

### COLABORAN



JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA



## PRESENTATION

The summer course "European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean Relations within the Framework of the EU Council Presidencies and the EU-CELAC and Ibero-American Summits" is the result of the close collaboration between the Yuste Foundation and the EU-LAC Foundation, with the collaboration of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Euroamerica Foundation, the University of Extremadura, and the Provincial Governments of Cáceres and Badajoz, along with the sponsorship of MAFESA. The event, held in a hybrid format, took place on June 27, 28, and 29 at the Monastery of San Jerónimo de Yuste, Extremadura.

The course was organised within the framework of Spain's Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the celebration of the EU-CELAC Summit in July 2023, after an 8-year absence of Summits in the bi-regional space. It was directed by Adrián Bonilla, Director of the EU-LAC Foundation, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, member of the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste and President of the Euroamerica Foundation, and María Salvadora Ortiz, member of the Board of Trustees of the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste. The secretariat and moderation were carried out by Lorena Chano Regaña, assistant professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Extremadura, Miguel Ángel Martín Ramos, responsible for European affairs and delegate in Brussels of the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste, and Diego Durán Cruz, programme manager for institutional partnerships at the EU-LAC Foundation.

The course had the participation, both in-person and online, of ca. 200 students from over 20 countries in Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Its goal was to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that should drive relations between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. In a context of profound global uncertainty marked by the climate crisis, new technological and digital challenges, and geopolitical events, especially the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing war, it is essential to consider the role and direction that relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union must assume to address, through multilateralism and cooperation, the multiple global challenges that are redefining the world landscape.

This course was carried out with the intention of sharing, exchanging, and debating the mechanisms and instruments necessary to emanate from the bi-regional relations to address these global challenges. It also aimed to tackle specific issues affecting each region: from the food, energy, and migration crisis caused by the war in Europe, to the increase in poverty and inequality following the Covid-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the rise of illiberal political trends that jeopardise democracy.

The co-organisers of the summer course, the EU-LAC Foundation and the Yuste Foundation, express their gratitude to the University of Extremadura, the Regional Government of Extremadura, the Euroamerica Foundation, and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB). They also extend their thanks to the distinguished speakers and commentators from both sides of the Atlantic for their valuable contributions to the successful development of the course. Likewise, appreciation is extended to the students for their interest, attendance, and active participation. Finally, recognition is expressed to María Alejandra Cáceres, Rosalía E. Pérez Lorenzo, Karla Daniela Fernández Galindo, and Agathe Lafond interns at the EU-LAC Foundation, for preparing and translating this report. Special thanks to Diego Durán Cruz, programme manager at the EU-LAC Foundation, Miguel Ángel Martín Ramos, responsible for European affairs at the Yuste Foundation, and José Luis Forte Zarcero, from the Documentation and Publications department of the Yuste Foundation, for their review and editing.

Enjoy the reading!

Adrián Bonilla  
**Executive Director**  
**EU-LAC Foundation**

Juan Carlos Moreno Piñero  
**Director**  
**European and Ibero-American Academy Yuste Foundation**

Diego Durán Cruz  
**Programme Manager**  
**EU-LAC Foundation**

Miguel Ángel Martín Ramos  
**Head of European Affairs and Delegate in Brussels**  
**European and Ibero-American Academy**

# FIRST DAY

Tuesday, June 27, 2023, 09:00 AM – 03:00 PM (CEST)

## INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND EXISTING PROGRAMMES IN EU-CELAC RELATIONS

### OPENING SESSION

EUROPEAN UNION,  
LATIN AMERICA,  
AND THE CARIBBEAN  
RELATIONS WITHIN  
THE FRAMEWORK OF  
THE EU COUNCIL  
PRESIDENCIES AND  
THE EU-CELAC AND  
IBERO-AMERICAN  
SUMMITS



ROSA BALSAS



MARÍA SALVADOR



LEIRE PAJÍN



ADRIÁN BONILLA



JACINTO RAMÓN MARTÍN

**Rosa Balas Torres** | Acting Director General of External Action. Regional Government of Extremadura. President of the Executive Committee of the Yuste Foundation

**Leire Pajín Iraola** | President of the EU-LAC Foundation

**María Salvadora Ortiz** | Yuste Foundation Board of Trustees. Co-director of the course

**José María Hernández García** | Mayor of Cuacos de Yuste, Extremadura

**Adrián Bonilla** | Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation. Co-director of the course

**Jacinto Ramón Martín Jiménez** | Vice Chancellor of Faculty at the University of Extremadura

During the opening session of "European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean Relations within the Framework of the EU Council Presidencies and the EU-CELAC and Ibero-American Summits," the group of speakers emphasised the crucial significance of Spain's rotating presidency in the Council of Europe for strengthening ties between both regions.

Rosa Balas Torres, President of the Executive Committee of the Yuste Foundation, highlighted the importance of prioritising the study of the bi-regional relationship, especially in the context of the EU-CELAC Summit, taking place for the first time in eight years. She emphasised the need to go beyond formalities and bring relevant issues to the table, as well as to resume political discussions in areas beyond trade.

Leire Pajín Iraola, President of the EU-LAC Foundation, underscored the priority of these spaces for research, knowledge, and exchange for the Foundation and the strengthening of relations between both regions. She noted that 2023 was crucial for relaunching EU-LAC political relations, emphasising the efforts made by the EU-LAC Foundation for the Summit in July. Pajín highlighted the importance of engaging in dialogue with civil society to gather significant contributions in key areas such as equitable energy and digital transition, social integration, and the development of effective tools for bi-regional cooperation.



Maria Salvadora Ortiz, Trustee of the Yuste Foundation and co-director of the course, emphasised the course's commitment to improving the social majority in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe. Ortiz thanked the commitment of students and especially the notable speakers, whose experience and knowledge will contribute significantly not only to the successful development of the course but also to strengthening and improving relations between both regions amidst a complex regional and global situation.

José María Hernández García, Mayor of Cuacos de Yuste, welcomed all participants to the municipality and the new summer course. The mayor highlighted the relevance of Spain's rotating presidency as an essential opportunity to strengthen relations between the EU and ALC and enhance existing bonds.

Adrián Bonilla, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation, emphasised the need to assess the expectations of EU-LAC relations now that the Spanish government assumes the Council presidency. Bonilla explained the course programme based on five thematic blocks: institutional mechanisms of the relations, the societal sphere including topics like inclusion, social cohesion, poverty, and inequality, private sector economic articulations framed within the business meeting of the Summit, and finally, the analysis of bi-regional relations in the new global order.

As the final speaker of the opening session, Jacinto Ramón Martín, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Extremadura, highlighted the moment of uncertainty in which this knowledge and opinion exchange on bi-regional relations is taking place. He urged students to find creative solutions to the challenges faced by both regions.

# INAUGURAL PRESENTATION

STRATEGIC  
ALLIANCE AND  
STRATEGIC  
AGREEMENTS  
EUROPEAN UNION,  
LATIN AMERICA,  
AND THE  
CARIBBEAN



**JAVIER NIÑO PÉREZ**

Director for the Americas at the European External Action Service (EEAS)



**ADRIÁN BONILLA**

Director of the EU-LAC Foundation

## INAUGURAL PRESENTATION:

**Javier Niño Pérez** | Director for the Americas at the European External Action Service (EEAS)

**Adrián Bonilla** | Director of the EU-LAC Foundation

The opening presentation of the course was given by Javier Niño Pérez, Director for the Americas at the European External Action Service, and Adrián Bonilla, Director of the EU-LAC Foundation. The objective of their presentations was to provide a global and bi-regional context for the European Union - Latin America and the Caribbean relations. Both speakers emphasised the last 8 years of the relationship, as well as the expectations and challenges to be addressed at the Summit.

Javier Niño Pérez took the first turn and pointed out that EU-LAC relations have been functioning on inertia in recent years. In response to this, efforts had recently increased to transition from a "historical relationship" to a "relationship by choice," and the bi-regional potential of the relationship in the long term had been acknowledged. The speaker highlighted that in recent years, both the EU High Representative and the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission have made official visits to CELAC member countries. This is a clear indicator that the EU's interest in strengthening relations with Latin America and the Caribbean is growing. Furthermore, the intention to improve relations is reflected in the publication of the new agenda for the EU-LAC relationship and the holding of the EU-CELAC Summit in Brussels.

The director continued by affirming that the current international order faces numerous challenges, including climate change, erosion of democracy, and the presence of powers hostile to democratic and sovereign order. The presence of China, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is necessary for the EU to coexist, compete, and even confront China. Whilst dialogue has always been the EU's primary approach, the contemporary threat to the democratic order cannot be ignored. It is crucial for both the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean to take a clear stance in favour of democracy. This will be a key point in the Summit's dialogue.

On the other hand, according to the speaker, some of the challenges shared between the two regions, as well as opportunities for cooperation, include the climate emergency, the technological revolution, and social integration. Beyond romanticising the relationship, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is the region in the world closest to the European Union (EU). LAC is also the main ally of the EU in the fight against poverty and humanitarian aid. Moreover, LAC is a region with characteristics that make it an essential player in the fight against climate change and energy transition. It is an environmental powerhouse, holding 50% of global biodiversity and producing 33% of renewable energies in the strategic supply worldwide.

Concluding on an optimistic note, Javier Niño Pérez stated that the potential within the bi-regional relations between LAC and the EU is immense. Shared complicity and values are the gateway to a very significant alliance that must be responsibly nurtured to transition towards a true strategic partnership.

Dr Adrián Bonilla took on the task of contextualising the current international scenario and providing considerations and reflections on the relationship. First, he emphasised the importance of summits domestically, as despite often labelling their declarations as empty words, they serve to the foundation of public policy. Whilst the implementation of declarations depends on the domestic mobilisation capacity of the states, the documents allow for enforceability. They are also an indicator of intergovernmental effectiveness.

Due to the academic context of the event, Dr Bonilla underscored the importance of questioning the concept of common values and interests commonly used to support the relationship between the EU and LAC. The difference and asymmetry between the societies and needs of both regions must be considered to truly identify common interests between both sides of the Atlantic, interests that can converge into actions and dialogues.

Another key point to consider is the difference in institutional density between both regions, mentioned the speaker. Whilst the EU is an international and supranational organisation with binding norms and agreements and a common foreign policy, CELAC is a mechanism of political consultation, not strictly an international organisation. Whilst CELAC materialises the idea of Latin America and the Caribbean as a region, its lack of institutionalisation complicates logistics in the relationship with other regions.

Regarding the absence of the Summit in the last 8 years, Dr Bonilla remembered that the period of summit absence had been alarming. However, the outbreak of the pandemic, despite generating various crises, also meant the renewal and strengthening of the relevance of the nation-state. Public policy is once again concentrated on the domestic front, manifesting in both regions. In LAC, state dependence intensified, whilst in the European Union, despite its integration model, decisions were also made at the national level. Dr Bonilla also wanted to highlight Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a global event in the military and political arena, showing a clear tension in the established international order after World War II. In the current scenario, there are three clear centres: the West, the East, and the Asia-Pacific; and a global periphery.

Dr Bonilla concluded his intervention by pointing out that, in this new context—so different from 2015, when the last EU-CELAC Summit took place—the EU shows a significant interest in forging a new image of political autonomy. In contrast, Latin America and the Caribbean are at a moment where a significant diversification of their relationships could occur. This new stage of the relationship, to be inaugurated at the Summit, will therefore be a stage of political partnership, not monogamy, where fair trade and the inclusion of youth should be prioritised themes within the strategic relations.

## BLOCK 1

### INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND EXISTING PROGRAMMES IN EU-CELAC RELATIONS



#### JUAN FERNÁNDEZ TRIGO

Secretary of State for Ibero-America and the Caribbean and Spanish in the World. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation of the Government of Spain. Spanish Presidency of the EU Council.

**Juan Fernández Trigo** | Secretary of State for Ibero-America and the Caribbean and Spanish in the World. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation of the Government of Spain. Spanish Presidency of the EU Council.

Juan Fernández Trigo began his intervention by emphasising that the renewed relationship between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean must aspire to the consolidation of shared values such as democracy, the rule of law, respect for international law, and the pursuit of economic and social well-being in both regions. Based on this premise, the Secretary of State took the opportunity to revisit the agenda proposed by the EU for the EU-CELAC Summit.

Key challenges for the new alliance include socio-economic, ecological, and digital transitions. Despite the complexity of these processes, the economic complementarity between the regions opens a door to achieving the proposed objectives. In this regard, Fernández Trigo specifically highlighted the urgent need to jointly promote flexibility in the interventions of investment banks, aiming to empower citizens of both regions to make decisions about their lives without resorting to migration.

The speaker emphasised that the relationship with the Latin American and Caribbean region is undeniably important for the European Union, as evidenced by statistics and recent approaches. European investment in the region surpasses that of Russia, China, India, and Japan combined. Despite Latin American countries no longer being recipients of various sources of cooperation in recent years, the EU continues to demonstrate significant interest in bi-regional relations through multiple programmes and cooperation policies.

A notable example is the Global Gateway strategic initiative, which has allocated 340 million euros for cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean in programmes addressing inequality, poverty, informality, social vulnerability, lack of retirement pensions, and unemployment protection, amongst others. Another significant indication of growing European interest in the region has been the visits to Latin America and the Caribbean by the High Representative, the President, and the Vice President of the European Commission.

Amongst the Summit's objectives, the speaker emphasised the need to deepen the institutionalisation of dialogue, approving a joint declaration leading to a structured relationship with permanent monitoring mechanisms. This includes scheduling biannual meetings and foreign ministers' encounters in odd-numbered years. This strategic approach aims to establish solid foundations for long-term collaboration and mutually beneficial cooperation. As a second important objective, the speaker highlighted the need for increased investment in the Global Gateway, given its role in promoting energy, environmental, and social transitions, as well as the Digital Alliance in both regions.

In addition to the Summit, other prioritised topics include the modernisation of trade agreements with Chile and Mexico, the ratification of the EU-Central America and EU-MERCOSUR agreements, and the implementation of multiparty agreements with Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador. These agreements are crucial pillars within the process of revitalising the bi-regional relationship.

Finally, Fernández Trigo concluded by stating that for the European Commission, the EU-LAC alliance is natural and strategic because it involves creating strategic links between two regions very close in terms of values, challenges, and objectives. Additionally, the speaker expressed hope that the momentum in the relationship will persist even after Spain's presidency, as continuity is essential for building a renewed and lasting alliance.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

ASSOCIATION,  
TRADE, AND  
ECONOMIC  
AGREEMENTS:  
WHAT  
PROSPECTS?



**CHRISTIAN GHYMERS**

President of the Interdisciplinary Institute for EU-CELAC Relations (IRELAC). Vice-President of Robert Triffin International – RTI/UCLouvain.



**ADRÍAN BONILLA**

Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation.

**Christian Ghymers** | President of the Interdisciplinary Institute for EU-CELAC Relations (IRELAC). Vice-President of Robert Triffin International – RTI/UCLouvain.

**Adrián Bonilla** | Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation.

The panel discussion began with the intervention of Dr Adrián Bonilla, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation, who provided context on the association agreements between the European Union and various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This introduction was deemed necessary to understand the dynamics of negotiation and implementation of association agreements.

The first decade of the 21st century was marked by intense relations between Latin American and Caribbean countries and their extra regional counterparts. It was characterised by the expansion of resources throughout the region, particularly in South America, due to the exportation of raw materials. The growth of global demand, driven significantly by China, played a crucial role in this expansion.

This influx of resources financed a series of social policies aimed at reversing negative indicators related to income distribution and expanding government services in areas such as health, housing, and education. This phenomenon is known as the "first wave of Latin America" and was led by left-leaning governments advocating for regulation, nationalisation, and state intervention in the economy. However, the speaker emphasised that not only did indicators improve under these governments, but governments guided by liberal logics, such as Peru or Colombia, also saw improvements in their indicators.

In the realm of international politics, the growth and development in Latin America and the Caribbean gave rise to a wave of new regionalisms and integration projects. These include the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Andean Community (CAN), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), and the Pacific Alliance (AP). Of these mechanisms, the older subregional systems are the ones better surviving discontinuities. However, most will be deeply affected as the economic crisis, which began in Europe and the United States in 2008, extended throughout Latin America and the Caribbean over a decade and deepened further with the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Dr Bonilla emphasised that it is during this first decade of expansion that a significant portion of the association agreements between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean (ALC) were proposed. These agreements consist of three pillars:

1. Commercial: Serving as the backbone of the entire agreement, this pillar does not have a single pattern, with each agreement differing in terms of trade policies.
2. Cooperation pillar.
3. Political dialogue pillar.

Therefore, these are political instruments of affinity built upon the commercial foundation. Apart from the case of Cuba, in all association agreements, the operational pillar is the commercial one, whilst political dialogue is more vulnerable to political and circumstantial tensions.

As important points to consider about the nature of these agreements, the speaker highlighted that an association agreement is not an essential instrument for trade between the two regions to exist. In fact, in the case of the Southern Cone, whose agreement is still in the negotiation and ratification phase, the trade flow between European countries and MERCOSUR countries is intense and has increased in recent years. Another consideration, continued the speaker, is that typically trade, even with negotiation agreements, occurs between national companies on both sides. Trade systems are complex and do not depend solely on these agreements but rather on the needs that the parties demand.

Association agreements, therefore, regulate common components such as trade in goods and services, intellectual property issues like geographical indications, and mechanisms for resolving commercial disputes. In commercial terms, these agreements represent the prevailing rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), but with the added element of defining which goods have tariff exemptions and to what extent.

In the cooperation and political dialogue dialogues that govern the agreements, regulations are established on labour standards not only to protect workers' rights but also to prevent unfair trade practices such as dumping. There are also norms to ensure the validity of human rights, democratic clauses, and, in more recent agreements, environmental and sustainability standards.

The Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation concluded his intervention by stating that these agreements are always established in asymmetric environments, with limited capacity for consensus, where negotiations are always conditioned by respective domestic policies. However, it also takes place in an environment where Latin America and Europe seek to diversify options and have an interest in cooperation.

The panel continued with the intervention of Dr Ghymers. The speaker began by clarifying that, in the academic context generated by the Yuste Course, strong criticism of the current situation of bi-regional relations between the EU and LAC, as well as expectations for the Summit and post-Summit relations, would be allowed.

Dr Ghymers asserted that the bi-regional relationship should be analysed in the context of a multi-crisis in the global system. The pricing system, governance system, political system, and rent-capture system are all in crisis. To address these crises, European, Latin American, and Caribbean societies, within the framework of bi-regional relations, have several advantages: shared values based on democracy and human rights protection, mutual trust in the bi-regional method, a strategic alliance toward coal neutrality as a priority in the geopolitical scenario, and the possibility of integrating into global value chains (GVC) to solve these problems.

Regarding EU-LAC bi-regional agreements, the speaker emphasised that he considers them, technically, a failure. These agreements were promoted as instruments that would facilitate multilateralism, and this has not happened. Latin America and the Caribbean have the lowest level of trade openness amongst all regions globally, as well as the lowest participation in the global value chain. Intra-regional exchanges in the region are also the lowest compared to the rest of the world. Within south-south exchanges, it can be observed how Latin American trade has plummeted since 2005. The economies of the region have become more dependent on primary resources, leading to an increase in poverty and inequality and a shrinking of the region in all aspects.

The speaker wanted to highlight the hypocrisy of leaders worldwide. Alongside speeches calling for the fight against climate change, governments continue to subsidise companies and industries involved in fossil fuel burning. The levels are concerning, and the amount of public money allocated to this industry is excessive. In total, 7.6% of the global GDP is dedicated each year to contributing to the climate crisis. The speaker insisted that this emergency crisis is the most serious and urgently needs attention. However, the lack of market regulation, especially in the hydrocarbon industries, obstacles to multilateralism, and the lack of concrete and binding actions by governments and international organisations are major challenges.

Referring to the history of globalisation, Dr Ghymers pointed out that we are entering a process of deglobalisation, applying protectionist dynamics and fuelling radical ideological positions that do not contribute to improving future projections. As a conclusion to his intervention, Dr Ghymers asserted that the bi-regional alliance currently appears as a paradox, where the set expectations are challenging to achieve. He reiterated that the number one priority should be the climate emergency. As a final proposal, he called for a reform of the diplomatic and cooperation system, giving a voice to a network of experts and academics to analyse the situation, so that politicians can make decisions afterward. The system needs to be reformed so that proposals and transformations are led from the bottom up.

## BLOCK 2

### SOCIETY PROJECTS AND CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S WORLD IN THE EUROPEAN UNION-LATIN AMERICA RELATIONS



**ERIKA RODRÍGUEZ**  
Researcher at the  
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**ÁUREA MOLTÓ**  
Executive Editor of  
Política Exterior



**PAMELA ARÓSTICA**  
Senior Researcher at the Centre for  
Studies on the Asia-Pacific and India  
(CEAPI) at the National University of  
Tres de Febrero (UNTREF) in Argentina

#### THE CHALLENGE OF FOOD SECURITY

**Pamela Aróstica Fernández** | Senior Researcher at the Center for Studies on the Asia-Pacific and India (CEAPI) at the National University of Tres de Febrero (UNTREF) in Argentina.

Dr Pamela Aróstica Fernández presented one of the major challenges faced by the EU and LAC regions: food security. The doctor emphasised the definition of food security established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at the 1996 World Food Summit: "Food security exists when all people have, at all times, physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their daily energy and nutritional needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." The definition is based on four key pillars:

1. The physical availability of food;
2. Physical and economic access to food;
3. The utilisation of food; and
4. The simultaneous utilisation over time of the three dimensions mentioned above.

Currently, situations such as international conflicts, adverse climatic conditions, the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crises, and political crises have exacerbated the challenge of food security, making the goal of "zero hunger" (SDG 2) from the 2030 Agenda increasingly unattainable. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, it was estimated that approximately 29.3% of the world's population was in a situation of severe or acute food insecurity, meaning 350 million more people than before the outbreak of the health crisis. This, emphasised the speaker, allows us to see how the food crisis is not a single crisis but a succession of crises.

In the European context, it is necessary to discuss how food security has been affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the outbreak of war. Because Ukraine is a regional agricultural power, Russia's invasion has, amongst many consequences, led to a disruption in the prices of basic commodities worldwide. Since the conflict, there has been a turning point that has sparked many debates around the issue of food security, especially in Europe, and the need to diversify the sources of input. Moreover, in response to these events, LAC has become the main source of agricultural resources for the EU, drastically altering the usual trade balances.

The EU has not been the only region interested in LAC, as China has also shown interest in the region. The Asian power had already invested and directed its interests to ALC before the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis, as part of a food self-sufficiency strategy in the early 21st century and a direct foreign policy with horizontal dynamics and comprehensive, multi-level, integral strategic cooperation strategies, as part of the broader Belt and Road Initiative. This project focuses its investment on strategic areas such as natural resources, infrastructure, connectivity, and telecommunications. For this reason, ALC has become and continues to develop as a partner and supplier for China, and it is estimated that in the near future (2035), it will be the region's top trading partner. This will ensure China's food security, as its middle class grows alongside the demand for food.

Dr Aróstica emphasised that the EU has a learning opportunity in the China-ALC relationship. Amongst the lessons, she urges promoting a relationship with greater symmetry and horizontality, without ignoring differences, as well as greater consistency in the execution of bilateral and bi-regional summits to maintain the periodicity that allows the development of concrete plans in food, technology transfer, fertilizer importation, and infrastructure development.

Regarding the opening of the panel to audience questions, the doctor explained the Theory of Asymmetry, where, in the context of international trade relations, the smaller party—Latin America and the Caribbean in this case—also has deficits, including low institutional quality and a shortage of long-term perspectives. However, the pragmatism of the stronger counterpart leads this smaller party to achieve its objectives. Additionally, Dr Aróstica highlighted China's incredible economic and political growth in recent decades, and the fact that it is a single country—compared, for example, to the EU, which is composed of a multitude of voices—allows it to have a unified policy.

Regarding the last question, which questions the use of the terms food security or sovereignty due to their peasant origins, the doctor noted that sovereignty cannot be discussed because we are in a globalised and interdependent world. It is not possible to close off at the national level to ensure the food well-being of countries. In the current scenario, multi-actor cooperation is necessary to move towards food security.

In conclusion, Dr Aróstica mentioned UN projections, indicating that hunger and food insecurity will increase despite the global economic recovery post-pandemic. In this context, EU-ALC bi-regional relations can stimulate multi-level policies to create a long-term dialogue on industrial agricultural policies, as well as environmental care and protection. Additionally, the panellist proposed improving and promoting incentives for young Latin American and Caribbean agronomy students to travel to Europe to learn techniques that can later be applied in their respective countries. This, in turn, is part of a soft power policy through a scholarship system, a practice that can be learned from China.

## CHANGES IN THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE WORLD

Áurea Moltó | Executive Editor of *Política Exterior*.

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Áurea Moltó's conference focused on the transformation of the international political environment, not from more recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but from the arrival of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States in 2016. Trump was the first head of state to warn about the geopolitical and geo-economical loss of ground that the West was experiencing against China. For the first time, the importance of the European Union on the international stage, and especially in the multilateral arena, is questioned in the field of international relations.

According to the speaker, this trend was identified in 2016 and remains relevant today. There is a shift in the international scenario where the West and the global North are being moved from the centre to the periphery. Power distribution is, therefore, becoming increasingly diffuse, and whilst in the past being a power was enough to gain influence in certain regions, now these powers must insert themselves into different markets and regions to influence the political course of the global order. The reality, emphasised Moltó, is that there are currently new and significant geopolitical realignments in which authoritarian and hybrid regimes have taken their place in the new power distribution dynamics.

As a second element that has redefined geopolitics, the speaker commented, is the cross-cutting and redefinition of the concept of security. Security is increasingly penetrating and influencing power structures. In economic and social areas such as trade, energy, technology, and even migration movements, security plays an increasingly central role. This is exacerbated by what Áurea Moltó called a "polycrises" environment where everyone is immersed in a crisis with multiple facets: financial, health, food, environmental, migratory, and war-related.

All these factors have caused the transformation of the international order on different fronts. In this transformation, the speaker emphasised that multi-actor intervention is increasingly present, especially thanks to the multiplying factor of technology, which has opened space for meeting and debate, empowering groups that were not necessarily part of the conversation in the past.

On the other hand, the post-pandemic scenario has also caused significant changes in the global geopolitical landscape. During the COVID-19 crisis, the level of globalisation and interdependence, both from the south to the north and from the north to the south, has become more evident. Moltó also added that, due to the context, this



interdependence has been treated as a vulnerability element, resulting in a growing trend for many countries and regions to seek decoupling as a tool to reduce risks and diversify opportunities, ultimately aiming to acquire more autonomy. In this field, the Latin American and Caribbean region has played a very relevant role for the European Union by positioning itself as a "Euro-compatible" region. Although geographically distant, from the EU's geostrategic perspective, this region is safe for expanding supply chains and can be a good ally in the new world order.

According to Áurea Moltó, this context has not been beneficial for either Latin America and the Caribbean or the European Union so far. The European Union faces a reality marked by its very small geographical size, the lack of key resources, and the difficulties this poses for deepening green transition and digital transformation. On the other hand, Latin America and the Caribbean are immersed in a situation of state and institutional weakness, with very serious economic and social problems and deep fragmentation within a competitive regional scenario. Despite being a coveted region of interest for several powers, the lack of multilateralism and regional cohesion places them in an unfavourable situation.

The speaker concluded her intervention by pointing out some of the elements that define the role of the regions in the new international scenario. Latin America and the Caribbean are characterised on the international stage by their pragmatism but have significant deficits in financial matters such as trade, debt, connectivity, investments, and institutions. Faced with this reality, China has sought to position itself as the obvious partner. It is necessary to question whether it really is, considering factors such as the reprimarisation of the regional economy.

In the case of the EU, the challenge is to gain more critical mass in areas where it is a power: trade, multilateralism, and regulation. In the multilateral space, the EU could position itself as a leading player in promoting, for example, the reform of financial organisations. This would greatly benefit Latin America and the Caribbean, which needs this reform.

It is necessary to recognise that the bilateral relationship comes with many unmet expectations in strategic issues such as trade, development, security—especially a priority for Latin American societies—and infrastructure construction. The bi-regional relationship is focusing too much on the current situation with China and the positioning that Latin America has or should have regarding the Ukraine war. For these reasons, the Summit must be taken as a staging of how the South is facing the West. The multilateral system is so broken that bringing together the countries of the summit will be a thermometer.

## **INEQUALITY AND POVERTY. REALITY AND MECHANISMS TO ADDRESS THEM**

**Erika Rodríguez Pinzón** | Researcher at the Complutense Institute of International Studies (ICEI).

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Dr Rodríguez Pinzón addressed the heterogeneity of poverty, security, and inequalities in the Latin American and Caribbean region, emphasising that the European perspective tends to homogenise the entire region without considering its specificities. In her intervention, she identified multiple regional challenges and proposed mechanisms to address them.

The challenges outlined by the speaker included:

1. Inequality:

Inequality in the region is a deep-rooted historical problem, extending beyond classic metrics like the GINI index. Factors like ownership of strategic assets such as productive lands contribute to limiting access to work and capital for individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

2. Poverty:

Dr Rodríguez stressed the region's significant setbacks in recent years, labelling it the "New Lost Decade". Limited social policies, coupled with extractivism and reprimarisation, have exacerbated multidimensional poverty, leaving the region vulnerable.

3. Instability of the Middle Class:

Fragile social mobility persists due to inadequate social policies. The absence of safety nets and government support networks means that various factors like illness, education access, or family deaths destabilise entire families.

#### 4. Migration Flows:

Dr Rodríguez urged a nuanced perspective on migration, challenging the automatic perception of it as negative. Migration, whether regular or irregular, is a planned and costly action. Destigmatising and comprehensively understanding migration flows is essential.

#### 5. Remittances:

Intrinsic to migration, remittances serve as a crucial intra-family development factor. However, their significance lies in being an escape valve rather than a solution to broader social issues.

#### 6. Insecurity:

Insecurity negatively impacts all inhabitants of LAC, influencing daily decision-making. Societal securitisation processes tend to worsen inequality by criminalising certain groups based on race or socioeconomic status.

#### 7. Intergenerational Stagnation:

Families' apparent inability to ascend socially contributes to a lack of expectations, reinforcing populist political trends. This is particularly prevalent in a region marked by hyper-presidentialist politics and institutional weaknesses.

#### 8. Informal Labour:

LAC boasts the highest global rate of informal labour. Whilst not synonymous with poverty, informal labour generates vulnerability, especially in the long term.

#### 9. Climate Change:

The region's vulnerability to climate change, coupled with a lack of preparation and management capacity, exacerbates structural inequalities.

To address these challenges, Dr Rodríguez Pinzón proposed the following mechanisms:

- Generation of Fiscal and Social Pacts:

Given resistance to fiscal reforms, invoking social solidarity is necessary for the most disadvantaged to access resources.

- Legal Reforms:

Reforms should decrease public subsidies for hydrocarbons and promote managed migration. This would advance diverse agendas, including gender equality and children's rights.

- Managing Tension with Emerging Political Representation Groups:

Policies must be developed that advocate for integration and mutual respect.

In conclusion, Dr Rodríguez Pinzón suggested that the EU's agenda should incorporate more content to foster convergence in the interests and expectations of both regions. Achieving this would require joint and horizontal bi-regional education.

## COMMENTARY ON BLOCK 2

**SOCIETY PROJECTS  
AND CHALLENGES  
TODAY IN THE  
EUROPEAN UNION,  
LATIN AMERICA,  
AND THE CARIBBEAN  
RELATIONS**



**ALBERTO VAN KLAVEREN**  
Chile's Minister of Foreign Affairs

**Alberto van Klaveren** | Chile's Minister of Foreign Affairs

Alberto van Klaveren, Chile's Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed gratitude for participating in the forum and shared reflections on the intricate relations between Europe and Latin America amidst global uncertainty.

He highlighted tensions between superpowers, emphasising the EU's role as a major economic power and the challenges faced by Latin America and the Caribbean in avoiding entanglement in global trade conflicts. The Minister discussed the impact of the pandemic, political tensions, the rise of populism, and anti-globalist movements in both regions.

Van Klaveren underscored the intense war context in Europe and Chile's condemnation of the war as a challenge to fundamental principles of international law. He acknowledged different perspectives in Latin America and the Caribbean regarding the conflict.

Regarding interregional relations, the Minister highlighted the significance of interregional summits, trade agreements, and cooperation. He discussed the new agenda proposed by the EU, focusing on environmental protection, human rights, energy transition, and multilateralism.

Van Klaveren concluded by emphasising the need to manage expectations for the EU-CELAC Summit, considering the diverse interests and concerns of the participating countries. He introduced the concept of "variable geometry" as a mechanism to advance issues with consensus and avoid significant blockages.

# SECOND DAY

Wednesday, June 28, 2023, 09:00 AM – 03:00 PM (CEST)

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE BUSINESS SUMMIT AND THE EU-CELAC SUMMIT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EXCHANGE, INVESTMENT, AND STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

### BLOCK 1

**THE EU-CELAC SUMMIT:  
A NEW BOOST FOR A  
STRATEGIC ALLIANCE**

**NEW GLOBAL  
PRODUCTIVISM AND  
EU-LAC RELATIONS:  
TOWARDS A NECESSARY  
SHARED  
REINDUSTRIALISATION**



**RAMÓN JÁUREGUI ATONDO**

President of the Euro-America Foundation and member of the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste.



**MARIO CIMOLI**

Associate Professor at the Institute of Economics of the Sant Anna School of Advanced Studies (Pisa, Italy) and former Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

### THE EU-CELAC SUMMIT: A NEW BOOST FOR A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

**Ramón Jáuregui Atondo** | President of the Euro-America Foundation and member of the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste.

The Summit between the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) has gained great relevance in the international political and economic landscape. This meeting, scheduled for July 2023, aims to promote a plan of European infrastructure and economic investments in Latin America and the Caribbean. Additionally, it seeks to strengthen the digital alliance and foster joint development in the digital transition. In this context, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo's conference focused on analysing the importance of the Summit, the events that have kept both regions distant, and the expected outcomes to consolidate a stronger strategic relationship.

Jáuregui Atondo argued that the EU-CELAC Summit is crucial for several reasons:

1. It represents a unique opportunity to establish stronger ties and deepen connections between two regions with rich joint cultural, political, and economic histories. Cooperation and dialogue between the EU and LAC can contribute to the economic, social, and political development of both parties.
2. The Summit takes place at a crucial moment for the EU. During the polycrisis from 2010 to 2016, the European region faced internal challenges that jeopardised the cohesion of the bloc. The Euro crisis, threatening the survival of the single currency, and the migration crisis caused by conflicts in the Middle East led to controversial measures, including the closure of European borders after hosting a million refugees. This, according to the speaker, created a moral crisis. Subsequently, terrorism and the historic Brexit significantly affected the stability and unity of the EU. All these events shifted European attention to other regions, such as Eastern Europe and Africa, relegating Latin America and the Caribbean to a secondary position on its political and economic agenda. Therefore, the Summit represents an opportunity to revitalise the relationship and strengthen cooperation on mutual interests.

The historical distance between the EU and CELAC has been marked by events that have conditioned their interaction. On the one hand, Latin America and the Caribbean have faced their series of challenges, characterised by political instability and frequent changes of government. The "golden decade," with economic prosperity

generating higher expectations and demands towards weak states, led to social tensions and radical political proposals.

The speaker added that, despite sustained economic growth, the region still depends on exporting natural resources, hindering sustainable development. There is an urgent need for a more powerful supranational organisation to jointly address regional and global challenges, an organisation that has been non-existent until now.

On the other hand, the region needs to attract more European investments to tackle economic, technological, and environmental challenges. Technological and environmental disruptions require joint responses and shared solutions. Therefore, cooperation with the EU can be a catalyst for sustainable development in the region.

In the case of the EU, as indicated earlier, the region has focused its geopolitical efforts on other areas globally in recent years, leaving Latin America and the Caribbean in a secondary position on its international cooperation agenda. However, the situation has changed in recent years. After the COVID-19 crisis and the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the EU is now forced to look again towards Latin America and the Caribbean for closer and stronger cooperation. Additionally, the current geopolitical scenario, characterised by growing rivalry between the United States and China, has led the EU to reconsider its position on the international stage.

Jáuregui Atondo stressed that, in this context, strengthening the economic, political, and social ties between both regions becomes a task of strategic importance for both the EU and LAC, aiming to promote the growth and strengthening of their regions in the new global geopolitical landscape.

Within this new narrative, the speaker continued, the EU-CELAC Summit presents an opportunity to find convergences and points of agreement on fundamental issues, as well as to develop mechanisms that allow more effective economic efforts.

Amongst the expected outcomes of the Summit, Jáuregui Atondo highlighted the need to overcome internal divergences within the Latin American and Caribbean region, enabling all countries to come together and work jointly for the common good. This requires a constructive approach and political will to find common solutions to shared challenges.

Additionally, the Summit seeks to establish mechanisms for economic connection that promote investment and the transfer of knowledge and technology between both regions. This includes promoting public-private partnerships that boost economic and social development in both regions.

Finally, for Jáuregui, it is crucial that the EU opens its doors to Latin America and the Caribbean, allowing greater access to European markets for products from the region. Likewise, it is expected that this Summit generates momentum for cooperation on mutual interests, such as the fight against climate change, the promotion of democracy and human rights, and finding solutions to technological and digital challenges.

In conclusion, Jáuregui Atondo highlighted how the EU-CELAC Summit represents a unique opportunity to strengthen a strategic alliance between two regions with significant economic and political potential. Through dialogue and cooperation, the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean can find convergences and develop economic connection mechanisms that promote sustainable development and the well-being of their citizens. This Summit stands as an important step to strengthen bonds and promote a more robust and beneficial relationship for both parties in the current global context.

## **NEW GLOBAL PRODUCTIVISM AND EU-LAC RELATIONS: TOWARDS A NECESSARY SHARED REINDUSTRIALISATION**

**Mario Cimoli** | Associate Professor at the Institute of Economics of the Sant Anna School of Advanced Studies (Pisa, Italy) and former Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

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Conducted by Dr Mario Cimoli, in "The New Global Productivism and EU-LAC Relations: Towards a Necessary Shared Reindustrialisation," various topics related to collaboration between the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) were addressed. One of the main objectives of the presentation was to emphasise the importance of the joint reindustrialisation process in the context of globalisation and economic and technological concentration.

From the outset, the significance of focusing on investments, a topic insufficiently addressed until then, was highlighted. The discussion explored how increased investment could drive shared reindustrialisation and promote economic and social progress in both regions. Dr Cimoli stressed the need for resource generation to cover social policies and the requirement for strong and equitable financing to support social policies of reindustrialisation and sustainable development. Another relevant issue raised was whether cooperation between both regions needed to be reconsidered to adapt to new global dynamics, as the concentration of economic and technological power in countries such as the United States, China, and the European Union demands a renewed and more effective approach to collaboration. In a context where the United States, China, and the EU lead the generation of new technologies, the importance of including this topic in the agenda of shared reindustrialisation was stressed. The involved nations could not afford to lag in terms of innovation and technology.

The reality of Latin America and the Caribbean was not overlooked in the discussions. The region faces challenges such as low economic growth, the inability to meet social demands, and persistent informal labour. Joint reindustrialisation, beyond mere investment, was proposed as the solution to address these issues. The conference also addressed the existence of a new industrialisation paradigm in the global north. Despite existing economic gaps, the need for reindustrialisation as a joint effort, in which the "Global Gateway" plays a significant role, was emphasised.

During the question-and-answer segment, fundamental inquiries arose, such as trust in European investment, supported by studies demonstrating its quality and capacity to drive development. However, there was an urge to rethink investment mechanisms to make them more flexible and adaptable to a constantly changing environment. On the other hand, technological industrial policies emerged as a necessity, emphasising that they should be driven by the state, devoid of ideology to achieve pragmatic and effective development. Additionally, the importance of strategic autonomy for both the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean was recognised as a fundamental part of long-term cooperation.

The conference provided an academic space to address key issues in the cooperation between both regions. Joint reindustrialisation, based on investment, autonomy, and industrial planning, emerged as a promising path to tackle present and future challenges, seeking more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous development for both parties. The Summit paved the way for continuous and constructive dialogue towards a shared and enriching future.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

### THE PLAN OF THE DIGITAL ALLIANCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S INVESTMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA



**JOSÉ IGNACIO TORREBLANCA**

Professor of Political Science at UNED. Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) Office in Madrid. Political analyst and journalist.



**DANIELA ARAUJO**

Programme Manager at the EU-LAC Foundation.

**José Ignacio Torreblanca** | Professor of Political Science at UNED. Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) Office in Madrid. Political analyst and journalist.

**Daniela Araujo** | Programme Manager at the EU-LAC Foundation.

The panel discussion addressed the "digital and regional alliance" between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. The first speaker, José Ignacio Torreblanca, highlighted the importance of investments in this collaboration. Torreblanca began by emphasising how the European Union can use its normative and regulatory power to establish more equitable and democratic relations with other regions, especially in the digital field. The EU's digital strategy and its attempt to establish a "digital alliance" with Latin America should be seen as a first attempt to revitalise this approach. This strategy is based on three pillars:

1. Connectivity.
2. Security, including cybersecurity; and
3. Digital rights and freedoms.

In this regard, the speaker pointed out that the European Union still faces challenges in implementing this strategy due to a complicated global context where international multilateral institutions are weakening, there is a lack of global public goods (as seen with health services during the COVID era or peace and security transgressions initiated by Russia against Ukraine despite being a permanent member of the Security Council), there is evidence of globalisation fragmentation with tensions between China and the United States, and closed reindustrialisation processes. There is also a setback in global democracy. These challenges impact Europe, leading it to seek strategic opportunities to establish digital alliances with Latin America based on human values and an attractive digital regulatory model. The focus on Latin America as a region of opportunity to establish alliances and compete with China in investment and infrastructure projects is also considered a relevant strategy for the EU. Therefore, the panel discussion addresses the challenge of the European Union in its quest for strategic autonomy in a changing geopolitical context.

The need for economic, political, and digital transformations was highlighted, but the speaker pointed out that the European Union lacks essential tools to achieve this autonomy. Dependence on technologies and raw materials from other countries, such as China and Russia, and the lack of European companies with global reach limit the EU's ability to compete internationally in this area. Torreblanca acknowledged that the EU must approach strategic partners intelligently to strengthen its capacity and avoid vulnerability. Therefore, the EU has modified its internal regulations regarding digital transformation as part of a foreign policy strategy.

Regarding China and Russia's influence in Latin America and the Caribbean, this manifests in votes at the United Nations and deals for the production and export of raw materials, making the region an area of strategic alliances in which the offer and demand for digital policies is innovative. In this sense, the EU Foreign Affairs Council in July 2022 approved digital conclusions for the first time: this is a test of a first unified digital strategy, although it was previously a topic of debate but more fragmented among European nations. An example of what could be

covered with these projects is the prevention of attacks on election processes experienced in Latin America, the protection of SMEs, and the generation of projected tax revenues of \$29,000 in the region.

However, due to its interest in expanding beyond its usual partners, the EU, Torreblanca emphasised, has added Latin America and the Caribbean to the Global Gateway project (GG). This project is a counter-initiative to the Belt and Road Initiative/Silk Road, signed by 21 Latin American countries and is therefore a tool for China's commercial dominance over the LAC region. The GG is an infrastructure investment programme announced by the Commission in December 2021, aiming to forge bonds and not create dependencies under standards of quality, good governance, and transparency. It seeks to strengthen digital, transport, and energy networks, with the goal of investing up to €300 billion by 2027. Its priority areas are digital, climate and energy, transport, health, education, and research. Currently, 80% of the projects are green, 15% digital, and 5% social, and 20% of the global Gateway projects are in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Whilst the project presents significant bi-regional development opportunities, it has faced a series of criticisms, such as:

1. The persistence of territorial restrictions. Although the transformation is digital, territorial restrictions persist; for example, submarine cables pass through the territorial sea of certain countries.
2. Fragmentation and slowness in the implementation of projects.
3. Lack of transparency.
4. Lack of clarity about its priorities.
5. Repackaging existing projects.

This is particularly important due to the current situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, being the most unequal region in the world with the lowest productivity globally and the one most severely affected by the pandemic. However, the project is highly compatible with the GG. At the same time, the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean into this scheme would increase the number of countries agreeing with the EU's data treatment, giving more legitimacy to the Western region.

The second speaker, Daniela Araujo, pointed out that cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean had been weak in recent years. However, the new scenario of the Global Gateway aligns with the interests of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially regarding the digital divide. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an exacerbation of productivity based on the lack of access to educational services, which during the pandemic focused heavily on digital means, so children without access to technology lost 1 to 2 years of education.

For this reason, the EU-LAC Just Transition Forum discussed Inclusive Digital Transformation through the formulation of proposals and recommendations for government leaders. Priorities included, among others:

1. Investing in technological infrastructure in rural areas and vulnerable populations;
2. Ensuring universal access to digital tools in Latin America and the Caribbean;
3. EU-LAC cooperation to close digital gaps;
4. Educational recovery for children who were deprived of learning during the pandemic;
5. Training in digital skills for teachers;
6. Rethinking the establishment of non-extractive value chains EU-LAC around lithium.

Regarding interventions from the public, the issue of social media regulations was addressed and how online misinformation has caused the outbreak of an infodemic. Whilst social media spaces have the capacity to initiate large-scale dialogue processes, they also generate a lot of misinformation. For this reason, cyberspace must be regulated in multi-actor forums that include civil society.



## BLOCK 2

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE GREEN TRANSITION



#### ANDREA MEZA MURILLO

Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and former Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica (2018-2022).

**Andrea Meza Murillo** | Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and former Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica (2018-2022).

Andrea Meza Murillo started by addressing the role of the three "Rio Conventions" held within the framework of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil): the Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Convention to Combat Desertification. She emphasised the importance of analysing global challenges in climate matters based on the risks, opportunities, and goals established by these conventions and understanding the challenges revolving around the green transition.

Meza Murillo identified two key points for analysis when discussing ecological transition:

1. Transition to renewable energy sources.
2. Management of the "Land" resource to protect its biodiversity and ecosystems.

With a significant impact on the Latin American and Caribbean region, there is a crucial element related to land closely linked to climate change and parallel to the discourse on emissions from fossil fuel combustion. This issue, referred to as "land use change" by Meza Murillo, calls for a transformation of land and water exploitation systems, which currently produce substantial amounts of greenhouse gases.

Therefore, Meza Murillo emphasised the need to consider the opportunities provided by an agenda that considers new models of socio-economic organisation, prioritising the transformation of the environment into a safer, more sustainable, and fair space. To drive this transformation, new conceptual frameworks around categories such as planetary boundaries and the *donut economy* need to be created.

In the specific case of the EU-Latin America and the Caribbean partnership in ecological transition, the protection of nature and the development of new socio-economic paradigms for the proper management of the "land" resource should be central to the dialogue.

In the Latin American and Caribbean region, Meza Murillo explained that the contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is relatively small, and many of these emissions come not from the energy sector but from sectors linked to land exploitation. However, the energy sector is growing significantly in the region due to a significant increase in demand. How the socio-economic system responds to this increased demand will be crucial in determining whether the region can achieve the emission targets set by the Paris Agreement for 2050. In this regard, the development of a legal framework and the implementation of public policies are essential for ensuring sustainable development. In turn, understanding the production and transportation systems of the region is necessary to design these public policies.

Amongst the roadmaps guiding the energy transition in different sectors, the electricity production sector is fundamental. This sector must radically transition to obtaining electricity through renewable energies.

In much of the Latin American and Caribbean region, especially the Caribbean, electricity production comes from fossil fuel combustion. To facilitate the transition of these production sectors to more sustainable means of electricity generation, Meza Murillo considered it necessary to stop investments in fossil fuel industries as soon as possible. Public investment must shift towards more sustainable energy sources, creating new policy frameworks with incentives to support sustainable energy sources. Meza Murillo emphasised that energy policy must abandon

counterproductive measures—such as financing the fossil fuel sector—or incremental measures—such as replacing fossil fuels with natural gas—to drive transformative changes based on renewable energy sources. Only these changes can reduce emissions by 80% and improve future environmental prospects.

In the same context, the speaker insisted on the need to incentivise the private sector to invest in new renewable energy sectors and contribute to the green transition. It is relevant to start discussing the significant business that renewable energy sectors will constitute in the near future. Therefore, investing in the renewable energy sector should not only be seen as an obligation in the face of climate change but also as an opportunity for the development of new sectors, value chains, and innovation ecosystems.

Once the decarbonisation phase in electricity production is complete, it will be necessary to electrify its various uses, with one of the most important being the transportation sector. Latin American countries such as Chile or Colombia, noted the speaker, have already implemented initiatives for the electrification of public transportation. This should be taken as an example to follow throughout the region.

On the other hand, renewable energy sectors can also benefit other related industries. In the Latin American context, reference could be made to lithium extraction. This is an added value to the potential energy industry that needs to be carefully studied to contribute first to sustainable and ecological energy development in the region, but especially to overall human development.

As a final consideration, these transformations must be aimed not only at reducing emissions but also at gaining resilience. The Latin American and Caribbean region is one of the most vulnerable to the climate crisis, and the need to protect society from the catastrophes resulting from it must be a fundamental goal for the region's governments. Ecological transition within the framework of the nexus between the proper management of the "land" resource, the care of water resources, and the protection of biodiversity must become central instruments to combat the climate crisis.

To conclude, Meza Murillo highlighted the concrete goals that should guide this green transition, both in Latin American and Caribbean countries and in European ones:

1. Protect 30% of terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030.
2. Restore 30% of ecosystems.
3. Sustainably manage at least another 30% of ecosystems.

This entire realm of political, economic, and social action presents numerous challenges, so it is necessary to implement coherent policies from public administrations and understand that large-scale financial flows will be required. Nevertheless, the speaker ended by emphasising that future analyses are providing very positive socio-economic data when we talk about these possible investments.

Regarding questions from the audience, one focused on the possibility of taking effective actions to protect nature within the framework of bi-regional cooperation whilst simultaneously talking about reindustrialisation. Meza Murillo stressed that bi-regional cooperation development must be consistent with the ecological and sustainability model to which all socio-economic systems must migrate. Protection schemes for nature must continue to be consolidated. In other words, recognising nature as a subject of rights must impact international cooperation models and the development of legal and international policy frameworks. When talking about reindustrialisation or the power of extractive sectors in the region, these must develop based on sustainability limits and a safe space. The role of public institutions as regulators of the development of these sectors is once again fundamental.

The second question focused on the role of civil society, especially in the rural environment, which is increasingly vulnerable to the development of new extractive industries related to the green transition, such as lithium. The speaker appreciated delving into this issue more because it is necessary to emphasise that the green transition cannot only focus on obtaining renewable energies but must also impact the way we use the land and the protection we provide it. The issue of land resource management also implies analysing the social impact that this management has on civil society, especially at the local level. To protect civil society and ensure that it remains connected to the fight against climate change, it is necessary, the speaker insisted, to establish legal frameworks for protection and ratify international treaties in defence of human rights and the rights of nature.

## ROUND TABLE

**CULTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY OF EUROPEAN COMPANIES. COHESION AND SOCIAL QUALITY, HUMAN MOBILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, AND DEVELOPMENT AGENDAS**



**ANDREA COSTAFREDA**  
Program Director for Latin America at OXFAM Intermón



**ANA MARTÍNEZ PÁRAMO**  
Director of Strategic Alliances with the Private Sector at Ayuda en Acción.



**VALENTÍN PABLO ALFAYA**  
Sustainability Director at Ferrovial. President of the Spanish Group for Green Growth.

**Andrea Costafreda Quesada** | Program Director for Latin America at OXFAM Intermón.

**Ana Martínez Páramo** | Director of Strategic Alliances with the Private Sector at Ayuda en Acción.

**Valentín Pablo Alfaya Arias** | Sustainability Director at Ferrovial. President of the Spanish Group for Green Growth.

**Moderator: Ramon Jáuregui Atondo** | President of the Euro-America Foundation and member of the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste.

Ramón Jáuregui Atondo opened this new round table expressing his desire to address the topics discussed in previous sessions on a more practical level. In his presentation, the moderator invited the three panellists of this round table, representatives from the business sector and civil society organisations, to showcase the types of actions being taken in the field of social action and private economic activity to promote public-private partnerships in the promotion of a more sustainable system.

The first speaker, Ana Martínez Páramo, Director of Strategic Alliances with the private sector at Ayuda en Acción, began by briefly discussing this NGO and the significant role it plays through development cooperation projects and humanitarian aid in many regions of Latin America and the Caribbean. The organisation's vision of change focuses on creating opportunities for youth and is based on six action axes:

1. Advocacy for the "Triple E": education, employment, and entrepreneurship through long-term monitoring of young people.
2. Protection of young people and their families in risk processes such as migration.
3. Advocacy for sustainability through the implementation of climate change protection programmes.
4. Promotion, protection, and promotion of women and their life projects.
5. Economic inclusion to ensure quality job opportunities.
6. Humanitarian aid as a necessary link in many regions towards future development cooperation.

Martínez Páramo emphasised the importance that Ayuda en Acción places on the private sector as a partner in the journey toward social sustainability. Social sustainability is currently on the agenda of private companies, which are being affected by new sustainability analysis programmes such as ESG (Environmental Social Governance) or, from the European initiative, social taxonomy.

The speaker, however, stressed that to advance social sustainability, trust-generating institutions are necessary. In this sense, according to statistics, both companies and NGOs generate trust in Latin American and Caribbean regions, creating a window of opportunity for their joint action. Nevertheless, Martínez Páramo pointed out that, in the new context of social and climatic crisis, this partnership is not just recommended but necessary. Through a strategic alliance, NGOs and private companies can better tackle social challenges, aim at the SDGs, and generate new initiatives driven by a mutual social purpose, promoting innovation and the creation of inclusive businesses and companies as agents of change.

The first speaker's intervention concluded with a brief mention of some of the projects that Ayuda en Acción is developing both in Spain and in Latin American and Caribbean countries in conjunction with the private sector. Working with companies such as Ferrovial, South Pole, and FEMSA, Martínez Páramo explained how initiatives focused on environmental protection, the protection and improvement of childhood education, and the enhancement of food security, amongst many others, are being developed.

The second speaker, Andrea Costafreda Quesada, began her intervention by highlighting the qualitative importance of European investment in Latin America and how it can be a driver of change and development in the region. However, Costafreda Quesada also wanted to focus on the role of civil society as an actor of political influence, pointing out that civil society plays a crucial role in promoting rights and reducing social gaps in Latin America.

Andrea Costafreda represents Oxfam Intermón, a global confederation with a presence in 70 countries and 28 affiliates working on development and social justice issues. During her intervention, Costafreda highlighted the challenges facing Latin America, including the increase in inequality and poverty following the COVID-19 crisis and the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. She pointed out that inequality is not inevitable but a political decision, and the European Union can and should play an important role in reducing these inequalities through cooperation and investment.

The speaker argued that the private sector has a significant impact on reducing inequalities, both directly and indirectly. She emphasised the importance of making companies accountable in the fight against inequalities and the protection of human rights. Additionally, she mentioned that the transition to a green and digital economy will not be automatic, and it is necessary to ensure benefits for the entire society throughout the process, including worker protection and the promotion of gender equality.

One key aspect of Costafreda Quesada's presentation was her call for binding standards for large companies regarding their impact on communities and human rights. She argued that voluntary principles have not had a significant impact on holding companies accountable and that the EU should lead the shift toward binding standards. She proposed that these standards should encompass the responsibility of all companies, regardless of their size or risk exposure, and cover the entire global value chain, including the financial sector.

Finally, Valentín Pablo Alfaya Arias, Sustainability Director at Ferrovial and President of the Spanish Group for Green Growth, took the floor. In his intervention, Alfaya highlighted the importance of the green agenda, stating that climate change has become a systemic risk. Due to this risk, investment is mobilising towards the green agenda due to the need to find more certainty for capital investment. Within these parameters, many companies have become very actively involved in the transition to a more sustainable model. Nevertheless, Alfaya Arias emphasised the existence of what is known as "greenwashing" in companies, and he assured that these practices need to be detected through instruments such as the mentioned European taxonomy.

The speaker also focused on highlighting not only the economic benefits of the transition but also the social benefits: job creation, impact on public health, long-term projects involving both companies and public institutions. This green transition must necessarily be accompanied by a reindustrialisation and a reconfiguration of urban spaces. And this, both in Latin America and Europe, will require massive investment in which the private sector will play a fundamental role.

Regarding the link between the public and private sectors, Alfayara Arias argued that it is essential to have a public vision in the relationship between both sectors and that private investment must align with public policies. He also emphasised the importance of generating capabilities, technologies, and solutions that drive green and digital reindustrialisation. He also mentioned the importance of strengthening institutions in Latin America to ensure legal security and avoid political risks.

Valentín concluded his intervention by emphasising the need for companies to be proactive in seeking new business models, decarbonising their investment portfolios, and having internal governance focused on sustainability. Ultimately, he emphasised the importance of certainty and acting intelligently in the relationship between the public and private sectors to optimise the social and environmental impact of investments.

Regarding questions from the audience, one focused on the challenge of establishing long-term partnerships in cooperation projects in Latin America. Ana Martínez Páramo highlighted that one of the general challenges in Latin American projects is to work on the ground for an extended period. The lack of local counterparts, funding, and government support hinders the sustainability of long-term initiatives.

Andrea Costafreda Quesada addressed the question of how to build trust in public-private partnerships despite citizen distrust. She argued that trust is earned through transparency, oversight, and accountability. She highlighted the importance of subjecting both the public and private sectors to the same scrutiny and highlighted the role of democracy and transparency in accountability. On this issue, Valentín Pablo Alfaya Arias added that it is essential to create spaces for conversation and consensus amongst all involved actors, including civil society, the public sector, and the private sector. He emphasised the need to view political polarisation as a risk to investment and the development of new initiatives.

Finally, there was a question about the role of universities in this green transition, and speaker Alfaya Arias argued that it is necessary to reconfigure educational curricula and learning models in public universities to adapt this education to current needs. He also mentioned the importance of generating knowledge and transferring it to the private sector to address sustainability challenges.

The round table ended with the moderator's intervention, who wanted to highlight again this important debate on the culture of responsibility of European companies, cohesion, and quality, facing key issues such as strategic bi-regional cooperation, public-private cooperation, inequality reduction, sustainability, and investment in Latin America. He considered it important to stress again the importance of European investment in the region, as well as the role of the private sector, which is crucial in promoting sustainable and socially responsible initiatives.

# THIRD DAY

Thursday, June 29, 2023 09:00 am – 03:00 pm (CEST)

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT AND EU-LAC RELATIONS IN THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER

## BLOCK 3

### DEMOCRACIES AND POLITICAL REGIMES IN LATIN AMERICA



**SUSANNE GRATIUS**

Professor of International Relations at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

**Susanne Grätius** | Professor of International Relations at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

In her presentation, Professor Susanne Grätius began by stating that she would focus on explaining the current state of Latin American and Caribbean political systems and their relationship with the EU. This panel aimed to explore political dynamics in Latin America and their relationship with Europe in the new international order. The professor structured her intervention around six core themes:

1. Relationship between Latin America and Europe: Ideological distancing in democracy

Grätius began by noting that Latin America is currently a laboratory of political regimes, many of which are distancing themselves from the liberal democratic model exported to the region by the US and Europe. The speaker emphasised that democratic regimes in Latin America are becoming rare, with only one, Uruguay, or two, Uruguay and Chile, being countries with full democracies. In contrast, many others have flawed democracies, whilst the number of hybrid regimes and autocracies is increasing. Grätius highlighted the deep differences between the regions in terms of democracy scales, including liberal democracies, polyarchies, direct democracies, delegative democracies, and democratic populisms. European liberal democracy is protected by strong institutions, parliamentary systems, and non-presidentialist structures, whilst many Latin American and Caribbean countries are still deeply entrenched in dynamics of corruption, caciquism, and abuse of power. However, she stressed that both regions face shared challenges, such as the rise of populism, power concentration, and societal trust crises in politics.

2. Hybridisation and autocratisation in Latin America

Grätius pointed out that academia has analysed processes of democratic transition and their failures in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a focus on civil-military relations. Argentina is the only country that managed to subordinate the military to civilian authority, whilst in many others, the military structure remains deeply linked to the national political and economic system. This is one reason why Latin America and the Caribbean have more hybrid regimes and autocracies than democracies, and this trend is on the rise. Some studies indicate the emergence of "new authoritarianisms" in the region with novel elements, including authoritarian presidents, shadowy military figures, new forms of selective repression and intimidation without necessarily resorting to coups, and new leadership styles centred around authoritarianism and populism.

3. Internal and external causes

The speaker highlighted internal factors such as democratic disillusionment, poverty, inequality, corruption, and leadership crises contributing to the emergence and strengthening of authoritarian regimes. Using recent Latinobarómetro data, Grätius demonstrated the increased preference for authoritarian government in many Latin American countries. Regarding external causes, she mentioned the promotion of democracy by the United States

and the European Union through coercion, such as sanctions on Cuba and Venezuela, as a key element contributing to the stabilization of autocratic regimes. Another significant factor is the gradual decrease in the influence of the United States and the European Union in the region, contrasting with the significant increase in the presence of China and Russia, along with the global crisis of democracy and the rise of autocratisation worldwide.

#### 4. Consequences for the relationship with the European Union

Gratius revealed the reality of the Latin American and Caribbean political system, less committed to democracy, and therefore further removed from shared values with Europe. This has had a significant impact on bi-regional relations in recent decades. The veto of certain countries like Cuba or Venezuela has prevented meetings or summits between the two regions for years, to the detriment of common goals and strategic interests. Additionally, the speaker emphasised that the relationship between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean has largely been constructed from the European worldview. Issues like the Green Deal or digital transformation have been fundamental in European foreign policy but have side-lined other essential issues for Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the defence of human rights and the environment, eradication of massive levels of inequality and poverty, etc. This framework within bi-regional relations has limited the possibilities of making common decisions from more horizontal and democratic positions.

#### 5. Responses and joint EU-Latin America and the Caribbean plan

Gratius proposed the need for a genuinely horizontal dialogue, where the Latin American agenda is equally important and binding as the European one. She also stressed the importance of recognising differences in democratic quality and the specific challenges of each region. As possible instruments to improve the relationship, Gratius mentioned the creation of a joint forum to address issues related to sanctions. This mechanism is potentially very useful because it will help eliminate diplomatic tensions and bring the two regions closer.

#### 6. Conclusion and perspectives

Professor Gratius concluded her presentation by identifying reverse trends between the two regions. There is an increase in autocracies and hybrid regimes in Latin America, whilst in Europe, democracies, albeit with risks and new goals, continue to consolidate. The challenges are entirely different, with Latin America and the Caribbean facing a specific issue: the nexus between democracy, security, and development, whilst Europe, within the framework of its interest in strengthening ties with the Latin American region, is dealing with a region closely linked, especially economically, to major powers like Russia and China.

Regarding questions from the audience, Gratius took the opportunity to emphasise that the new authoritarian experiences occurring in countries like El Salvador are not only due to the authoritarian leader but are the result of an entire power structure that allows an individual to unilaterally access and hold all the powers of the State. Weak institutions, high levels of corruption, and poorly consolidated democracies in post-conflict societies are essential components for the consolidation of authoritarian regimes.

In response to a final question, in this case, related to the growing influence of China and Russia in the Latin American region, the speaker stated that, from her research field, no evidence has been found that China promotes its autocratic regime through the economic and cultural relations it has deployed in the region. However, future perceptions between both regions and the influence of power mechanisms such as soft power need to be carefully studied.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

### DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL REGIMES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



**SUSANNE GRATIUS**  
Professor of International Relations at the Autonomous University of Madrid



**LORENA CHANO**  
Assistant Professor of Constitutional Law. University of Extremadura



**RAMÓN JÁUREGUI ATONDO**  
President of the Euro-America Foundation and member of the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste.

**Ramón Jáuregui Atondo** | President of the Euro-America Foundation and member of the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste.

**Susanne Gratius** | Professor of International Relations at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

**Lorena Chano Regaña** | Assistant Professor of Constitutional Law. University of Extremadura.

Professor Lorena Chano Regaña opened the round of interventions expressing her willingness to explain the challenges of democracy in the current global political landscape. She stated that by doing so, it would be easier during the debate to approach the specific scenario or context of Latin American democracies and the complex relationship between populisms, new authoritarianisms, and liberal democracies.

As her first reflection, Chano emphasised the importance of democratic legitimacy as a fundamental pillar of any democratic system. She stressed that this legitimacy is not constructed but granted through the citizens' vote and validated through parliamentary mechanisms. However, authoritarianism in some countries has legitimised itself by exploiting the trust placed by voters in their political representatives. This phenomenon has given rise to authoritarian regimes that rely on popular will, creating a significant challenge for democracies in regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean.

In attempting to regain a global perspective on the state of democracies, Chano discussed the outbreak of multifaceted crises affecting the global landscape. Events such as economic crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and other long-lasting structural issues like increased inequality and persistent extreme poverty worldwide have materialised into what experts call a "polycrisis," where multiple global challenges have created a prolonged period of uncertainty and instability.

Within this context, it is necessary to study political systems and the evolution of democratic systems. The speaker mentioned significant institutions tasked with assessing the democratic performance of countries, including Freedom House, The Economic Intelligence Unit, the Bertelsmann Foundation, and the V-Dem Project. Whilst there are debates about the reliability of measurement indices, relying on these institutions is essential as they provide crucial indicators for analysing the state of democracies in different countries.

According to Professor Chano, the reports from these institutions have highlighted the setback and democratic regression in various countries. According to the November 2022 report from IDEA International, 70% of the world's population lives in a non-democratic regime or a democratic recession. In the Latin American and Caribbean context, several countries have experienced significant setbacks in democratic terms, especially in countries like Brazil and El Salvador.

Chano pointed out that the report also reflects how social movements across Latin America are alarming signals that traditional representation institutions are in a deep crisis of representativeness and trust. The theory of representation fulfils its static function of representing institutions but fails to address the specific demands of society, especially in a context of political subject fragmentation and social minorities with challenging-to-converge specific demands.



This distrust in democratic institutions is reflected in reports like the Latinobarometer. In 2021, less than half of the surveyed individuals supported democracy in the region, and amongst young people aged 16 to 25, only half supported the democratic system. Alarming, Chano Regaña continued, this report indicates that 51% of Latin Americans would tolerate a non-democratic government if it solved problems.

The role of populism in polarisation and democratic crisis was also thoroughly examined by the speaker. It was emphasised that populism and polarisation have a feedback relationship that can legitimise authoritarianism and illiberal regimes. Latin America and the Caribbean have been particularly vulnerable to authoritarianism due to their weak democracies. The rise to power of populist parties has also entailed setbacks in areas such as freedom of expression, separation of powers, and transparency in governance. Additionally, the increase in social polarisation, combined with low support for democracy, greatly affects the credibility of democratic institutions in the region.

In the second intervention, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo explored the practical application of theoretical concepts in current politics, especially within this context of democratic crisis. Since World War II, liberal democracy was structured around the right-left dichotomy, providing a clear political identity to citizens. However, this distinction has blurred with the emergence of various political platforms, leading to a multi-party system. This change has complicated governance and has resulted in a lack of understanding by citizens of political processes.

Multi-party systems have generated new political formulations, often linked to identity tensions, further complicating governance. This complexity is not effectively conveyed to the population and results in a diffuse perception of how governance works. Additionally, social media, initially seen as tools for citizen empowerment and potential instruments for improving the democratic system, have simplified political debates and polarised opinions. Online manipulation has undermined democratic health, challenging the legitimacy of elected leaders and weakening internal processes of political parties.

These challenges have given rise to the emergence of populist and far-right expressions. Although some compare this situation to the crises of 20th-century fascisms, Jáuregui argues that there are significant differences. Contemporary society, influenced by individualisation induced by social media, is affected by emotions and feelings that become collective and can result, in the speaker's words, in "angry identities." These identities are skilfully manipulated by the far-right, which radicalises and channels feelings toward specific issues such as immigration, security, and identities but rarely offers or proposes solutions. In addition to these populist trends, illiberal trends also feed on the emotions of those threatened by cultural changes. This dynamic is currently evident, Jáuregui noted, in countries like Poland.

Parallel to the analysed individual perspective of the democratic crisis, the speaker highlighted that a significant institutional crisis is unfolding and undermining the entire democratic system. In this crisis, the separation of powers, the rule of law, and respect for judicial decisions are compromised. Moreover, the global trend toward executive dominance, driven by the fast pace of modern life, is eroding the authority of the legislative branch.

Jáuregui concluded his intervention by stressing the need to avoid systemic *caudillismo* that has plagued Latin America and warning that, whilst we see illiberal practices by the far-right, the left is not exempt from this danger and must strive to move away from totalitarianism. For Jáuregui, freedom is one of the primary foundations of socialism. Ultimately, although there have been justified revolutions in history, it is also filled with numerous failures that have failed to build the ideal societies they sought to establish. These challenges underscore the urgency of addressing the current political complexity and protecting fundamental democratic institutions to preserve freedom and the democratic state in the future.

As the last contributor, Susanne Gratius added important dimensions to the debate. She wanted to emphasise that the democracy crisis is only one face of this polycrisis, and other crucial issues such as the crisis of multilateralism or the decline of the United Nations are constructing a less liberal and much more uncertain international order.

The speaker also highlighted identity as a central theme, closely related to populism, and wanted to stress the importance of social media for the permeation and mass communication of populist movements, which typically simplify information but also enable an open space for dialogue amongst numerous interlocutors.

In response to audience questions, the three speakers debated the viability of an alternative model of production and organisation against capitalism. Lorena Chano highlighted that one should not speak of viability but of necessity, and transformations in political and constitutional systems must always be linked, for their effectiveness, to transformations in the production system.

Adding to this argument, Gratius added that Europe lives in a bubble compared to the rest of the world, and the rule of law and the welfare state are an isolated and minority system globally. Considering that it is a model sustained by a long colonial history and many self-protective policies, such as restrictive migration policies, Europe is an island of well-being surrounded by other things. The model has to change, Gratius concluded, because it is not feasible to export it to other regions. In contrast, there are interesting proposals such as the well-living (“buen vivir”) initiative or the theory of degrowth.

As the last intervention and closing of the session, Jáuregui contributed to the debate by stating that, in his opinion, the market economy has no alternative and has been accepted by all states. The path, he indicates, lies more on the side of reformism and controlling the capitalist system than on the abolition and replacement of the system itself.

## BLOCK 3

### ROUND TABLE: CROSSING VIEWS BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH: EXTRAREGIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND VISIONS ON CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL



#### CRISTINA MONGE LASIERRA

Political analyst and researcher in governance for ecological transition. Executive advisor at ECODES and Sociology professor at the University of Zaragoza.



#### RAFAEL ENRIQUE ACEVEDO PUELLO

Ph.D. in History. Director of the History programme at the University of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

### A LOOK AT THE EARLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NEW WORLD AND THE OLD WORLD: POLITICAL ORDER, EXPECTATIONS, AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF LATIN AMERICA

**Rafael Enrique Acevedo Puello** | Ph.D. in History. Director of the History programme at the University of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

The round table began with the intervention of Rafael Enrique Acevedo, who focused on providing a historical perspective on the bi-regional relationship between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union. Initiating his presentation, the speaker highlighted the importance of connecting history with contemporaneity, arguing that the present has historical dimensions that make many of its issues comprehensible only through past relationships. Professor Acevedo divided his presentation into four essential points to address:

1. The invention of the New World: the extension of an empire.

In the Renaissance context, Europe faced the challenge of understanding and mapping the American territory. Acevedo illustrated how intellectuals of the time, without setting foot in America, began to imagine this New World. During the first centuries after the discovery, Europe created maps attempting to rationalise the American territory, shaping it according to European parameters of understanding. These maps, emphasised by the speaker, were not only geographical representations but also instruments of power defining relations of domination and control. Cartography dynamically transformed as societies in the Americas developed. It is essential to consider how early maps and pictorial representations were filled with strange images and monstrous beings, contributing to the formation of an idea of "wild America" in contrast to the development and knowledge of Europe.

2. The establishment of order: the foundation of cities in the New World.

The colonisation process extended beyond cartography, involving the foundation of cities that served as centres of power and domination. Professor Acevedo stressed that the cities of the New World were designed following Eurocentric models, reflecting the mindset of order and control imposed by Europe in the Americas. Additionally, certain regions, such as the city now known as Bogotá in Colombia, were perceived as "civilised" in contrast to rural and coastal areas symbolising barbarism and the "wild." These conceptual frameworks have persisted over time, insisted the speaker, and still reproduce in society today.

3. Nature portrayed and described by the Chronicles of the Indies.

The encounter between America and Europe also led to the fundamental question of how past societies should interact with the nature of America. Acevedo mentioned examples like the study of tobacco in Spain and how narratives ranging between terror and docility were created when describing creatures and plants from the New World. The integration of the "strange" into familiar frameworks of understanding, i.e., Eurocentrism, played a crucial role in this process.

4. The rupture of ties between Spain and its American realms: another form of incorporation into the international order.

The independence of America from Spanish rule marked a crucial point in bi-regional history. After independence, American territories faced the challenge of creating national identities and building functional states. It is relevant to reflect on the heritage that is preserved and discarded in this historical process of shaping Latin American states. After independence, new states destroyed all cultural traces of Spain as a response to the separation; however, during the 20th century, movements emerged seeking to recover this lost heritage to reintroduce it into the cultural and social frameworks of Latin American societies as essential riches and key pieces to understand the evolution and development of organisational structures and Latin American society as a whole.

In conclusion, Professor Acevedo proposed to consider the relations between the European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean as historical relationships that have been developing for 500 years and revolve around issues and challenges that, to this day, albeit through a different language, continue to emerge.

## A VIEW FROM EUROPE TOWARDS THE GLOBAL SOUTH

**Cristina Monge Lasierra** | Political analyst and researcher in governance for ecological transition. Executive advisor at ECODES and Sociology professor at the University of Zaragoza.

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The second intervention in the round table was undertaken by Professor Cristina Monge Lasierra. Starting from the premise that global relations are not a new phenomenon but deeply rooted in history, Monje Lasierra delved into the analysis of the new global order that has emerged after the impact of the pandemic.

Monje Lasierra began her presentation by highlighting the six lessons learned from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, transforming our understanding of the world. Firstly, she emphasised absolute global interdependence, where any event can have repercussions worldwide. Secondly, the pandemic is another sign of the absolute eco-dependence of global society globally, and how everyone's health is intrinsically linked to the health of the biosphere. On the other hand, the pandemic has also updated the classic debate between security and freedom, forcing societies to choose between restrictive measures and individual freedom. Fourthly, the speaker highlighted the widespread increase in inequality and the loss of democratic quality worldwide due to the crisis. Finally, Professor Lasierra pointed out that the pandemic has challenged our perception of the knowledge society, transforming it into a society of uncertainty.

With this new perception and understanding of the world, the characteristics of the risks facing world society are that they are global, extremely complex risks requiring diverse knowledge for their management. This complexity implies that these risks cannot be managed from a single discipline but require a multidisciplinary approach.

On the other hand, relying on data from CIS and Eurobarometer, the speaker wanted to stress the lack of trust in democratic institutions, a growing and very significant trend in Europe. This loss of trust has led to a widespread sense of uncertainty and powerlessness amongst the population. Based on this, Monje Lasierra raised crucial questions: can a society that feels powerless and distrusts political parties still be democratic? Can there be democratic politics without a solid democratic society?

Within this framework of global crisis and increasing uncertainty, a renewal of the social contract is occurring, in the opinion of the speaker. This contract, which emerged after World War II and gave rise to the social and democratic rule of law and was reformed based on neoliberal policies after the 1973 Oil Crisis, is transforming again in response to the pandemic and other global crises. In this context, Monje Lasierra presented three essential aspects for reflection:

1. Rethinking the role of the State: The State must act as a leader who coordinates and promotes collective action. Its democratic legitimacy is reinforced when it becomes the driving force behind the initiatives of other social actors.
2. Rethinking the role of the private sector: Companies play a determining political and social role and must be aware of their impact on the societal model.
3. Role of civil society: Civil society emerges as a space for collective intelligence and consensus-building. These consensuses must be used to address current challenges.

Alongside this, the speaker proposed three new elements that should be incorporated into the social contract:

1. Global vision: Given our interdependence, the social contract must consider a global and non-homogenising perspective.
2. Incorporating the future: Given our eco-dependent link with the biosphere, the social contract must consider future needs.
3. Promoting knowledge: In a world flooded with misinformation, it is essential to promote knowledge from multidisciplinary and the encounter of diverse epistemological perspectives, academic areas, and cultural perspectives.

In response to audience questions, the speakers reflected on the importance of incorporating multiple fields of knowledge, including historiographical analysis, to better understand and address the global polycrisis. Interdependence, citizen trust, and co-creation of solutions are key elements to face these new challenges. By embracing the diversity of perspectives and knowledge, global society can work towards a future where sustainability, democracy, and social justice are fundamental pillars of our global coexistence.

## BLOCK 3

THE GLOBAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT: THE EUROPEAN PROPOSAL FOR STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND NON-ALIGNMENT INITIATIVES IN LAC

NEW AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EU-LAC: SCIENTIFIC, CYBER AND TECH DIPLOMACY



**ANNA AYUSO POZO**

Investigadora sénior para América Latina de CIDOB



**MARIO TORRES JARRÍN**

Director del Instituto de Estudios Europeos y Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca (UPSA)

### THE GLOBAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT: THE EUROPEAN PROPOSAL FOR STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND NON-ALIGNMENT INITIATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

**Anna Ayuso Pozo** | Senior Researcher for Latin America at CIDOB.

Researcher Anna Ayuso Pozo began her presentation by stating that her purpose is to outline a conceptual framework of the responses and positions of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean within the current global geopolitical scenario. Whilst the European Union has a consolidated strategy known as "Open Strategic Autonomy," Latin America and the Caribbean are shaping an approach known as "Active Non-Alignment," and although both positions share some goals, there are essential issues hindering bi-regional relations.

In the context of the ongoing multi-crisis in international politics, the speaker emphasised the need to analyse the heterogeneity in the impact of each crisis on each region. Recent examples, noted the speaker, confirm this. In the 2008 financial crisis, although Europe was the first affected, levels of inequality and poverty increased drastically in Latin America and the Caribbean. The same happened, added Pozo, with the COVID-19 crises, where the impact on the Latin American region was severe in terms of both casualties and increased inequality, and with the climate crisis, to which Latin American and Caribbean regions are particularly vulnerable.

In this complex global panorama, the speaker argued that strengthening global governance is more necessary than ever. This call for greater multilateral cooperation, however, faces various crises undermining the effectiveness of international institutions. The first of these crises is the representation crisis. Current multilateral institutions no longer adequately reflect the balance of power in the world, leading to a geopolitical struggle to revise their bodies and structures. This has caused paralysis in many institutions, such as the WTO, where different powers compete to impose changes in their favour.

Secondly, there is a crisis of values within the framework of a "post-western" new world. The traditional values of the Western liberal system are being challenged by more illiberal approaches seeking to defy ideological hegemony but have not yet given rise to the establishment of new consensuses.

The speaker added that international organisations often lack the necessary tools to address global needs efficiently and effectively. Sometimes, this inefficiency is due to a lack of capacity to impose decisions on states, whilst other times it is due to factors such as internal politicisation of the institutional structure or lack of transparency. This lack of effectiveness has led to a credibility crisis, as these organisations are not meeting the expectations of the international community.

Finally, the inability of international organisations to incorporate other actors and be more inclusive in a multi-actor scenario has led to a legitimacy crisis. The speaker stressed that these organisations are struggling to interrelate the transactional world between powers and the entry of new demands from multiple actors.

With this geopolitical scenario, researcher Pozas highlighted that both the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean have embraced multilateralism as a response to complex global crises. However, the strategies of both regions differ in significant nuances.

On the one hand, the European Union has adopted a key initiative known as "Open Strategic Autonomy." This approach seeks to free itself from excessive dependence on organisations like NATO and develop its own security policy. The definition of open strategic autonomy established by the European Council in 2016 summarises this strategy as the ability to act autonomously when and where necessary, in collaboration with partner countries and considering the interests and capabilities of the EU. The speaker pointed out that this approach seeks to reduce dependence and vulnerability in an interconnected world, allowing an independent response in strategic sectors such as energy and major industries. Furthermore, it aims to improve the ability to anticipate future vulnerabilities and manage uncertainty.

Unlike the Latin American view of non-alignment, the speaker emphasised that "Open Strategic Autonomy" does not imply an equidistant position in relation to other powers. Instead, it focuses on freedom of action, preserving sovereignty through active participation in international organisations. This approach seeks to balance autonomy with reliability, predictability, and flexibility. The EU acknowledges its declining situation on the geopolitical and geoeconomical stage but has shown resilience after significant crises. Additionally, it has established international regulations and standards that not only defend its interests but also have generated important international regimes as producers of governance mechanisms for strategic global issues.

Open Strategic Autonomy, concluded researcher Pozo, also implies a redefinition of alliances. Although traditional alliances remain essential, the EU recognises the need to expand and adapt its partnerships in an increasingly transactional world. This adaptation involves being more proactive and willing to forge ad hoc alliances according to changing needs. The EU seeks to meet the challenges of a dynamic world, where transactionality has become a central feature of international relations.

In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, Pozo pointed out that the situation is very different. In the new phase of globalisation in the international order, the region faces the challenge of how to address geopolitical tensions in its own territory, where major powers are waging their own geopolitical and geoeconomic battles.

Latin America and the Caribbean are considered a region belonging to the "far West" as they defend multilateralism, human rights, and non-intervention policies. However, they also integrate at times into what is currently known as the "global south," a group of countries challenging the established order and embracing a decolonial thinking that questions existing institutions. This duality creates tensions between the ideals and principles the region upholds, its projection on the international stage, and its own developmental interests.

In response to this dynamic, the Latin American and Caribbean region has adopted the notion of "Active Non-Alignment," a complex and multifaceted strategy that seeks to challenge established power structures. The speaker emphasised that non-alignment is not a new strategy, as it has been part of the foreign policy of significant Latin American countries such as Brazil and Mexico for decades and has been reflected in economic theories like the CEPAL theory. However, the new strategy of active non-alignment is inserted into a new world order, where the bipolarity of the Cold War and the non-alignment of "third world" countries have evolved into the formation of a multipolar world and the emergence of a "global south" with its own agenda and interests.

The strategy of active non-alignment that is beginning to develop in Latin America and the Caribbean has not been confirmed, continued the speaker, based on official government statements but has emerged around the publication of the work "Active Non-Alignment and Latin America: A Doctrine for the New Century" (2021), in which several intellectuals reflect on the role of the region in the world and its positioning strategy. Within this framework, four are the main needs of the strategy formulated in the work:

1. Non-alignment from equidistance, unlike the European position.
2. Strengthening regional instances.
3. Coordination in international organisations amongst the countries of the region.
4. Joint adoption of a more proactive attitude. This proactive approach implies the need to generate concrete proposals to redefine financial institutions, multilateralism, and establish points of consensus to collectively defend the interests of the region.

In the midst of these complexities, Latin America and the Caribbean face the risk of falling into global marginality. Although Europe also struggles to avoid irrelevance, the Latin American region is in a delicate position.

Finally, researcher Pozo wanted to highlight how the difference in perceptions and approaches to global events, such as the conflict in Ukraine, illustrates the disparities between the two regions. Whilst most Latin American countries uphold the principle of non-intervention, the current aggression in Ukraine has generated ideological and political dilemmas in the region. Calls for a ceasefire and questioning unilateral sanctions imposed by the EU raise questions about the compatibility between defending the principles of non-intervention and inaction against aggression, as well as the stability and strength of relations between both regions.

Regarding audience questions, the speaker highlighted the importance of recognising not so much the European "follower" of U.S. State Department and NATO policies but the relationship of strategic alliance that, for decades and currently, binds the EU with the major Anglo-Saxon power.

On the other hand, the researcher emphasised the difficulty facing the Latin American and Caribbean region in adopting a common foreign policy strategy, due to the great regional fragmentation and ideological, political, and economic divisions that afflict the entire region.

Finally, within the framework of the bi-regional Summit, the speaker indicated that the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean are expected to seek alignments on strategic issues and develop concrete instruments to strengthen their autonomy on the international stage. However, to achieve effective collaboration, both regions must overcome differences in their approaches and work together to define a common path in a multipolar and complex world.

## **NEW AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EU-LAC: SCIENTIFIC DIPLOMACY, CYBER DIPLOMACY, AND TECH DIPLOMACY**

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Bi-regional relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union have been present for centuries, as seen during the time of Emperor Charles V and the establishment of universities in Santo Domingo, Lima, and Mexico. This was the opening statement from Dr Mario Torres Jarrín at the thematic forum on "Scientific diplomacy, cyber diplomacy, and tech diplomacy."

Before delving into the topic, Dr Jarrín defined some relevant terms for the panel, such as scientific diplomacy and interregionalism. Scientific diplomacy refers to scientific cooperation at the individual, institutional, and network levels, with the latter being the level of cooperation sought through the EU-LAC bi-regional pact. Regarding interregionalism, this concept focuses on the links between regions, under an understanding of recognition as a bloc, not merely the recognition of multiple nation-states (Hettne, Söderbaum, and Ståålgren). Interregionalism is a phenomenon that gained strength between World War II and the fall of the Soviet Union, involving structural reconfigurations in the international system. Policies were no longer being formulated solely within states but jointly, leading to the emergence of numerous regional organisations. These new international dynamics have prompted new perspectives on understanding regionalism, as explained by Hångi. Regionalism can be understood from three aspects:

1. Traditional (region-region).
2. Transregional (nation-states-political forums).
3. Hybrid.

In the case of EU-CELAC relations, Dr Jarrín categorises them as multiplayer interregionalism because they have generated a multitude of summits at the civil society, governmental, and organisational levels. Examples include their collaboration during the Paris Agreement and the EU-CELAC Summit, both occurring in 2015. Whilst cooperation between both regions has taken various forms over the years, one topic that has not been adequately addressed is cyber and tech diplomacy. This is particularly relevant considering the contributions of Dr Klaus Schwab focused on what he calls the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which takes place in physical, digital, and biological realms.

Regarding the digital space, cyberspace, it is important to note that it is unregulated and maintained by 4.0 technology companies of American and Chinese origin with significant economic power, as the capital of Big Tech surpasses the GDP of several countries. A concrete case is Apple, whose GDP is greater than that of 183 countries. Due to this, the geopolitical influence they wield is enormous, even though it exists in a non-geographic territory



like cyberspace. Dr Jarrín stressed the importance of keeping other powers outside of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the EU in mind, such as India, China, and the United States, due to their political influence. He also highlighted the importance of bi-regional cooperation to address these scenarios through global governance. For example, the EU-LAC alliance represents 38% of the World Trade Organization's member countries, 32% of the World Bank, and 32% of the International Monetary Fund, respectively. This cooperation becomes a decisive factor in establishing regulations for this emerging issue seemingly beyond the control of civil society, organisations, countries, and regions.

The fact that cyberspace is in the hands of private companies raises concerns about the security and beneficial or harmful handling of data. Dr Jarrín mentions the case of the Arab Spring as a positive element, whilst a negative one was the cyberattack in Estonia in 2015. In cases like this, who is held civilly and administratively liable? These questions take deeper routes when concerns about Artificial Intelligence are added.

As diplomacy is the key element to connect and influence decision-making, Dr Jarrín mentioned the need for multi-actor scientific diplomacy, involving scientists, institutions, and networks. This is not a new proposal but an emphasis; between LAC and the EU, there already exists the Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI). During the period from 2015-2019, when there were no bi-regional dialogues, this alliance was the only permanent mechanism of connection between both regions, underscoring the importance of interregional scientific cooperation. Currently, the LAC-EU Digital Alliance is underway to promote cooperation toward digital transformation, aiming to create secure, resilient, people-centred, and democratic digital infrastructures, emphasising privacy and digital rights.

Both regions understand that cyberspace must be freely accessible and a peaceful space. Latin America has a continental dialogue on this through the Organization of American States (OAS), with its 17 points on cybersecurity. Thus, cyber diplomacy is gaining emphasis at both regional and global levels. Globally, there is the case of tech diplomacy in Denmark, a pioneer in establishing tech ambassadors and tech embassies, which has led to a reinvention of diplomacy in the digital era. These actions were a de facto recognition of the new executive powers of major technology companies (previously referred to as Big Tech). Today, five countries recognise tech diplomacy as a line of action in their foreign policy: Australia, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Estonia. In the G20, this is also a topic of great importance.

In conclusion, Dr Jarrín mentioned that tech diplomacy is a key factor in addressing the growing influence of Big Tech companies in cyberspace and the power this gives to countries where these companies are based. The regulations obtained from this will be cyber diplomacy, achieved through a quadruple helix: political actors, private entities, civil society, and academia, i.e., through multiplayer regionalism. As mentioned earlier with JIRI, it is important to use existing structures to create permanent bodies that lead to cyberspace governance. When rethinking multilateralism, digital alliances must be based on interregionalism through technical cooperation, common funds, and a vision of cooperation amongst equals, with the same level of economic contributions and not just contributions of specific policies, as has systematically happened with unequal economic contributions from Latin America. Dr Jarrín concluded that inequality gaps go hand in hand with digital gaps, which can be reduced through scientific diplomacy that paves the way for the further development of interregionalism 4.0, and thus, governance 4.0.

After his presentation, there was a question from one of the attendees, asking for Dr Jarrín's opinion on China's monitoring systems. In response, Dr Jarrín commented that there is a significant debate between security and fundamental rights, which depends on each region. In the case of China, he stressed that citizens prefer the security provided by facial recognition over the guarantee of their right to privacy.

## CLOSING OF THE SUMMER COURSE



### JUAN CARLOS MORENO PIÑERO

Director of the European and Ibero-American Academy Foundation of

**Juan Carlos Moreno Piñero** | Director of the European and Ibero-American Academy Foundation of Yuste.

In the closing of the summer course conducted by Juan Carlos Moreno Piñero, the magnitude of the event was highlighted as a result of the tireless joint work of the involved institutions and their teams, including Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, Adrián Bonilla, María Salvadora Ortiz, Miguel Ángel Martín, Lorena Chano, Diego Durán, Lucie Gaildraud, and Paula Reixach, who have been fundamental to the achieved success. This achievement, far from being coincidental, is the product of months of dedication and effort.

Juan Carlos Moreno Piñero stated that the European and Ibero-American Academy Foundation of Yuste is a public foundation, and the performance of this summer course is essential as an example of careful and meaningful use of taxpayers' money. This course, the director continued, was not just a physical meeting place but also a space where valuable knowledge and experiences were transmitted and exchanged. Highly qualified individuals shared their valuable knowledge with young attendees, who represent the future leaders guiding the course of relations between both regions.

In the relationship between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, social commitment and involvement are fundamental pillars. The foundation, with a European and Ibero-American character, wants to emphasise the need to complement, not confront, the realities of both regions. Beyond this, everything discussed is meaningless if it does not start from an irrevocable principle: the absolute respect for human rights. In this defence, one cannot close their eyes to the challenges. Europe faces a war within itself, a conflict that attacks European values of equality, democracy, and freedom. Likewise, Latin America also faces profound challenges, with delicate situations such as the crisis in Nicaragua and other regional problems. In this journey, Europe and Latin America are interconnected, and the 60 countries that make up both regions must grow in the same direction of respect and mutual assistance towards a better future.

During the Ibero-American Summit in Guadalajara held in Mexico in 1991, the need to transform cultural and emotional ties into collaboration and solidarity was emphasised. Over time, the discussion has shifted from cooperation and solidarity to financial architecture and digital transformation. Although these topics are vital and aim to address new global challenges, it is necessary to continue infusing emotion into the narrative. Countries are built on genuine emotions and feelings.

The director concluded by highlighting the importance of turning the shared knowledge and experience during the course into powerful tools for building a better future, where cooperation, solidarity, and respect for human rights are the pillars guiding our path forward.

