



EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC



EU-LAC Roundtable:

‘European Green Deal: Opportunities and Challenges to the Bi-regional Cooperation’

Concept Note & Agenda

Organised by: EU-LAC Foundation, AL-INVEST Verde

Moderation: EU-LAC Foundation

Date: 04/12/2024 // 09:00-11:00a.m. (Belém do Pará)

Place: Hotel Grand Mercure Belém do Pará, Av. Na Sra. De Nazaré, 375 – Nazaré, Belém – PA, Brazil, within the framework of the event #CONEXIÓNVerde+

Format: In-person

Background

The EU-LAC International Foundation ([Fundación EU-LAC](#)) is an International Organisation created in 2010 by the 27 Member States of the European Union (EU) and the EU itself and the 33 States of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The mission of the EU-LAC Foundation is to strengthen the cooperation between the two regions, especially through the participation and input of civil society actors. In particular, the Foundation links the process of intergovernmental political dialogue with the social, academic, business and, in general, civil society sectors of both regions; promotes the development of a joint and dynamic global vision and shared strategy in both regions; stimulates the bi-regional strategic partnership by fostering the development and implementation of policies and agendas; and disseminates knowledge to improve mutual understanding and visibility of both regions.

[AL-INVEST Verde](#) is a programme funded by the European Commission to promote sustainable growth and job creation in Latin America. It aims to support the transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and more circular economy, to facilitate the implementation of sustainable production models. It has a budget of 37.7 million euros and a duration of 60 months: it started in October 2021 and will end in September 2026. In its development, the programme is divided into three components working respectively with Latin American small enterprises, public institutions in the region and the management of intellectual property rights.

In the paragraph 31 of the [EU-CELAC Declaration of 2023](#), the Heads of State and Government of European, Latin American and Caribbean countries recognised the importance of open and fair trade based on internationally agreed rules, productive supply chains and market access, as well as its contribution to the promotion of sustainable development in its three dimensions, economic, social and environmental. They agreed to target investments and avenues of cooperation for closer integration in clean energy supply chains, including critical raw materials and technology transfer, and committed to strengthen trade and investment relations between the EU and CELAC countries and regions, taking into account the bilateral and multilateral Association and Trade Agreements between the EU and the various CELAC partners.



The European Green Deal

A major strategy enhanced by the European Union in order to promote sustainable development in all its dimensions is the [European Green Deal](#) (EGD), whose ambitious projection is to achieve carbon neutrality in the region by 2050. To achieve this goal, it aims to promote a just and sustainable transition in the EU economy, gradually decoupling economic growth from the excessive exploitation of natural resources. Beyond its internal focus, and taking into account the economic and financial interdependence of this region with other regions of the world, the EGD also has a significant dimension for non-EU countries, related to the EU's ecological and carbon footprint along value chains as well as its intention to establish green standards that impact international trade.

In this way, the EU intends to implement measures such as the inclusion of sustainability chapters in its trade agreements with partner countries, or certification systems that ensure the sustainable production of imported products. These actions not only seek to transform the European economy, but also open up new trade opportunities for regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, facilitating access to markets for green products. The Green Deal also marks a fundamental shift in EU foreign policy, establishing climate diplomacy and international cooperation as central in order to achieve the EU's sustainability goals. By promoting funding initiatives in areas such as energy efficiency and renewable energy development, the EGD aims to integrate its trading partners in this transition, increasing the competitiveness of companies that can adopt these standards.

In short, the European Green Deal positions the EU as a leader in establishing robust environmental policies, driving not only a decarbonised European economy, but also a transformation in extra-regional trade relations and ecological diplomacy. Through this strategy, the EU promotes sustainable practices that open up opportunities for its international partners, encouraging them to adopt more responsible and competitive production models that respond to the growing global demand for sustainable products and to international commitments on climate change. In this sense, Latin America and the Caribbean has considerable potential to become a key strategic partner, not only as a supplier of sustainable products but also as a recipient of investments aimed at modernising its production processes and value chains, and adapting them to the sustainability requirements of the European market.

Objective of the roundtable

In the context of the [event #CONEXIÓNVerde+](#) that will take place in Belém do Pará, Brasil, on 3-5 December 2024 - a space to connect and foster the exchange of experiences between business and trade associations, SMEs including the smallholder sector and cooperatives, as well as public authorities from Latin America and Europe working on the transition towards more sustainable growth and job creation - the EU-LAC Foundation and the AL-INVEST Verde Programme join forces to convene a dialogue table on sustainable growth and job creation, as well as public authorities from Latin America and Europe working on the transition towards more sustainable growth and employment generation for micro, small and medium-sized producers in the Latin American region, and for bi-regional cooperation in general. More specifically, the conversation will revolve around:



- The **trade opportunities** that open up through the EGD for SMEs in Latin America seeking to market their products in the EU, specifically in terms of designing more sustainable value chains in agriculture and forestry;
- The **'blind spots' and specific challenges** that the new standards outlined may imply for SMEs in the Latin American region, and how these can be overcome;
- The **solutions** that SMEs (incl. smallholder sector and cooperatives) have been developing in the Latin American region in designing more sustainable value chains in agriculture and forestry;
- **Recommendations for decision-makers** to increase the capacities of Latin American SMEs to adhere to mandatory due diligence standards, ensuring their productivity, competitiveness and inclusive and fair territorial development.

Format and method

The roundtable will be implemented on 4 December 2024 and will have a duration of two hours. The format will be face-to-face, and will be open to all attendees of the #CONEXIÓNVerde+ event in Belém do Pará. The roundtable will be moderated by a representative of the EU-LAC Foundation who will open the dialogue, inviting invited experts to present initial statements, followed by 2 to 3 rounds of questions that will be developed in interaction with the audience. This dialogue will be implemented mainly in Spanish and English. Simultaneous interpretation (Portuguese/Spanish/English) will be provided.

Moderator: **Anna Barrera**, Director of Programmes, EU-LAC Foundation

Confirmed Speakers: **Alberto Lora Aguanca**, Director General for Trade, Andean Community (CAN)

Michel Tesch, Deputy Secretary of Rural Development of the State of Espírito Santo, Brazil

Fernando Schwanke, Director of Projects, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Claudia Romano, Manager of the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI)

Expected results

Through this space for dialogue and analysis, the EU-LAC Foundation and the AL-INVEST Verde Programme seek to identify key elements to strengthen cooperation between both regions in the generation of fairer and more responsible trade relations and sustainable value chains, as well as in working together to meet their global climate commitments, while strengthening the most vulnerable sectors of the productive chains.

Another product that will emerge from the exchange of perspectives and arguments of this dialogue will be a policy paper that will contribute to the technical debate on the implementation of these policies and regulations. This document will synthesise the key points and recommendations that emerged from the discussion, with the aim of providing a comprehensive and collaborative perspective to support decision-making and strengthen sustainable trade relations between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean.