

Workshop at the LASA 2024 Congress

'The strategic partnership between Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe one year after the summit'

Concept Note and Programme

Track of the Congress: International Relations and Global Studies

Date and time: June 14, 2024; 17:40-19:10 (Colombia time)

Organisation: LASA, EU-LAC Foundation

Place: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogota, Colombia

Format: Hybrid

Context

The upcoming International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), to be held from 12 to 15 June 2024 in Bogotá, Colombia, will address the theme “Reaction and Resistance: Imagining Possible Futures in the Americas.”¹ The organisers of the Congress start from the diagnosis that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated economic and social inequalities in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, revealing failures in public services and deepening disparities in social classes, gender, ethnicity, and race, while the climate crisis and the exploitation of natural resources have increased uncertainty². There has also been a decline in support for democratic values and institutions, combined with increasing levels of violence and insecurity, and a rise in authoritarian tendencies³. Despite this, progressive governments and social movements are gaining strength, demanding social justice, women’s equal participation in all spheres of decision-making, and protection for indigenous peoples and other ethnic groups⁴. These actors seek to reshape the political, social, and economic landscape, prioritising inclusion and human well-being.

In this context, relations between the EU and LAC are developing at a geopolitical moment marked by uncertainties and challenges, with reactionary and resistance forces also present within Europe. However, LAC has emerged on the European agenda as a key actor to strengthen, for instance, multilateral cooperation and a global order based on rules and the peaceful resolution of conflicts; to develop strategic autonomy in key sectors; and to act as partner to tackle the challenges of sustainable recovery after the pandemic⁵.

¹ See the LASA Congress 2024 website: <https://lasaweb.org/es/lasa2024/>

² ECLAC (2024). *América Latina y el Caribe ante el desafío de acelerar el paso hacia el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030: transiciones hacia la sostenibilidad* (LC/FDS.7/3). <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/5d78ae51-ddf7-4660-bd04-fced65d36f9b/content>

³ Latinobarómetro (2023). *Informe Latinobarómetro 2023: La recesión democrática de América Latina*. <http://www.latinobarometro.org/lat.jsp?Idioma=724>

⁴ UNESCO (2024, April 26). *Garantizar los derechos de los pueblos indígenas y las comunidades afrodescendientes*. <https://www.unesco.org/es/articulos/garantizar-los-derechos-de-los-pueblos-indigenas-y-las-comunidades-afrodescendientes>

⁵ Olivé, I. & Santillán O'Shea, M. (2024). *Un futuro común para Europa, América Latina y el Caribe*. Informe Colectivo ETTG 2/2024. <https://media.realinstitutoelcano.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ettg-un-futuro-comun-para-europa-america-latina-y-el-caribe.pdf>

The EU-CELAC Summit in July 2023 in Brussels aimed to reactivate bi-regional relations after eight years without an exchange in this format between representatives at the highest political level. During the Summit, the political agenda was updated to address current international challenges, such as democratic governance, human and labour rights, climate change and biodiversity loss, food and energy security, migration, health and digitalisation. The EU has committed €45 billion until 2027 under the Global Gateway Investment Agenda – an agenda focused on infrastructure investments (energy, digital, transport, education, health) in response to China’s Silk Road Initiative⁶, and the EU agreed with several Latin American states to work on Critical Raw Materials (such as lithium and others) in order to strengthen sustainable supply chains.

In the context of the Summit, other ongoing programmes and initiatives were highlighted, as well: Experts mentioned the opportunities offered by the European Green Deal⁷ for cooperation between the two regions to avoid the marginalisation of the most vulnerable sectors and the widening of development gaps were highlighted in the context of the Summit⁸. Successful bi-regional cooperation programmes, such as EUROsociAL+ or Euroclima+, were also reinforced to promote fair social and climate cohesion, among others⁹. It is worth remembering the role of local governments as key actors in the overall achievement of the SDGs¹⁰. Other issues, in turn, have not gained the important place that civil society actors, academic communities, experts, representatives of international organisations, and others have expected. This is the case, for example, of the 'EU-LAC Common Higher Education Area'¹¹, or the 'Bi-regional Pact for Care'¹².

⁶ Estrada, G. (2023). *¿Hacia dónde va la asociación estratégica euro-latinoamericana?* Fundación EU-LAC. <https://eulacfoundation.org/es/hacia-donde-va-la-asociacion-estrategica-euro-latinoamericana>

⁷ Averchenkova, A., Lázaro Touza, L., Escribano, G., Prolo C., Gonzáles Carrasco L.E., Guzmán Luna S. (2023). *El Pacto Verde Europeo como motor de la cooperación UE-América Latina*. Real Instituto Elcano. <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/policy-paper/el-pacto-verde-europeo-como-motor-de-la-cooperacion-ue-america-latina/>

⁸ Lara Miranda, I. & Lázaro Touza, L. (2023). *Transición justa: fortalecimiento de la cooperación entre la UE y América Latina y el Caribe (ALC)*. Real Instituto Elcano. <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/policy-paper/transicion-justa-fortalecimiento-de-la-cooperacion-entre-la-ue-y-america-latina-y-el-caribe-alc/>

⁹ Sanahuja, J. A. (2023). *La vía latinoamericana de Europa*. El Grand Continent. <https://legrandcontinent.eu/es/2023/07/17/la-via-latinoamericana-de-europa/>

¹⁰ Fernández de Losada, A., Galceran-Vercher y Alexandra Vidal D’oleo (2023). *¿Una Europa a contracorriente? La invisibilidad de las ciudades en las relaciones UE–CELAC*. Barcelona Centre for International Affairs. https://www.cidob.org/es/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/cidob_briefings/una_europa_a_contracorriente_la_invisibilidad_de_las_ciudades_en_las_relaciones_ue_celac; Martínez, R. & Fernández Losada, A. (2023). *La Cumbre de Ciudades de las Américas: una apuesta por la diplomacia sincrónica*. CIDOB Opinion 767. https://www.cidob.org/es/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/opinion_cidob/2023/la_cumbre_de_ciudades_de_las_americas_una_apuesta_por_la_diplomacia_sincronica

¹¹ Sánchez, F. & Martín Bardera, A. (2023). *Opportunities and advances in the construction of the EU-CELAC Higher Education Area*. EU-LAC Foundation. <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/opportunities-and-advances-construction-eu-celac-higher-education-area>

¹² Barrera, A. (2024, April 27). *Ideas para concretar un “Pacto Birregional por los Cuidados”*. EU-LAC Foundation. <https://eulacfoundation.org/es/ideas-para-concretar-un-pacto-birregional-por-los-cuidados>; EU-LAC Foundation (2024). *Reporte: Diálogo de alto nivel: ‘Bases para un Pacto Birregional por los Cuidados entre América Latina, el Caribe y la Unión Europea’*. <https://eulacfoundation.org/es/reportes-dialogo-alto-nivel-bases-para-un-pacto-birregional-por-los-cuidados-entre-america-latina-el>

Workshop Theme and Participants

The Workshop organised by the EU-LAC Foundation within the framework of the LASA 2024 Congress brings together European and Latin American researchers and aims to stimulate academic debate about the agenda of the bi-regional relationship between Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, as defined by the Heads of State, one year after the EU-CELAC Summit held in Brussels in 2023. The needs and expectations of the two regions will be analysed in the light of their geopolitical environment, their economic and trade needs, and social issues, from an interregional and comparative perspective. Each researcher will focus on a specific area of cooperation between the EU and LAC:

Barbara Göbel, Director of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (IAI) in Berlin, will address in her presentation the **“Potentials and challenges of bi-regional scientific cooperation.”** Historically, bi-regional scientific relations will be explored, with their great thematic diversity and the stability of transatlantic scientific networks, despite their persistent structural inequalities. The importance of science for the just green transition, inclusive digital transformation and strengthening social cohesion will also be underlined. In addition, it will address how these scientific cooperations can help address the persistent bottlenecks affecting both regions.

From the University of Buenos Aires, **Elsa Llenderrozas**, Director of the Political Science Career, will evaluate **“The Strategic Partnership between Latin America and the Caribbean with Europe: an opportunity to strengthen democratic governance and sustainable development from the perspective of the Southern Cone”**. The progress made at the 2023 CELAC-EU Summit will be analysed and mechanisms will be proposed to boost the bi-regional agenda, with special emphasis on democratic governance and sustainable development in the Southern Cone in the current context of geopolitical and geoeconomic crisis with global democratic setbacks.

Vladimir Rouvinski, Director of the PoInt Laboratory at Icesi University, will focus on **“Relations between the European Union and Latin America: challenges and opportunities regarding the role of China, Russia and other Eurasian powers in the international arena.”** He will examine the challenges, but also the opportunities that emerge due to the strengthening of interactions between China, Russia, and some other Eurasian countries with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, in terms of the bi-regional partnership between Latin America, the United States and the European Union.

The intervention of **Paz Milet García**, Associate Professor at the University of Chile, will delve into the **“New designs and priorities in the LA-EU relationship”** that emerged after the EU-CELAC Summit 2023 in the context of the polycrisis, placing particular emphasis on cooperation in energy and security. In addition, she will discuss the role Europe can play in Latin America in the context of the growing confrontation between the United States and China.

Likewise, **Susanne Gratius**, professor of International Relations at the Autonomous University of Madrid, will analyse the **“Strategic autonomy as a shared challenge between Latin America and the EU.”** European-Latin American relations are developing in an adverse international context, marked by the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza, where both parties failed to forge solid consensus. However, LAC and the EU share a firm commitment to the renewal of the multilateral system and to global governance that opens up new opportunities for cooperation, in the face of international meetings such as the Future Summit convened by the United Nations for September 2024, among others, with the aim of advancing the post-2030 agenda and the fight against climate change. Within this framework, the viability of the interregional model of European-Latin American cooperation in its current format is raised and the convergences and divergences of both partners on global issues such as the environment and climate change, sustainable development or visions on international conflicts and their possible solutions will be identified.

Finally, **Carlos Quenan**, Professor of Economics at IHEAL-Sorbonne Nouvelle University in Paris, wishes to address “**The construction of the Euro-Latin American and Caribbean space of higher education and the global geoeconomic and geopolitical context.**” After eight years of weakening interregionalism, the holding of the IV CELAC-EU Summit in 2023 is a milestone in the relaunch of bi-regional ties. However, one of the pillars of the bi-regional Strategic Partnership was not addressed at the Summit: the construction of the common Euro-Latin American and Caribbean space for Higher Education. This intervention analyses and discusses the interest of resuming this perspective more closely associated with cooperation in science, research, technology, and innovation and with the new proposals in the economic field (Global Gateway) to strengthen and, above all, redefine the strategic links between the two regions in a world of polycrisis and characterised by growing geoeconomic and geopolitical tensions.

Methodology

Participation in the Workshop requires a prior registration for the Congress¹³. The hybrid component will enable registered participants to attend the workshop either in person at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, Colombia, or remotely online. The duration of the workshop will be 1.5 hours. The session will be moderated by Anna Barrera, Director of Programmes at the EU-LAC Foundation; Adrián Bonilla, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation, will act as Chair of the session and comment on the presentations.

Objective of the Workshop

The expected outcomes of the Workshop will be as follows:

- Exchange of perspectives and recent research results on the political, economic and social agenda between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, one year after the EU-CELAC Summit 2023;
- Identification and joint discussion of the main challenges and opportunities faced by both regions in a tense geopolitical context and in the process of recovery and adaptation to the triple transition (social, green and digital);
- Preparation of a publication edited by the EU-LAC Foundation that offers relevant analytical contributions for the next CELAC-EU Summit 2025 to be held in Colombia.

Languages

The workshop will be held in Spanish.

¹³ Information on the registration for the Congress is available here: <https://lasaweb.org/en/lasa2024/registration/dual-model#:~:text=In%20order%20to%20participate%20or,meaning%20until%20June%2016%2C%202024.>