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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL NETWORK  
RED INTERNACIONAL DE MUJERES



GOBIERNO DE  
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INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE LAS MUJERES



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sobre la Mujer  
de América Latina y el Caribe  
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## 'Towards the construction of comprehensive care systems: Experiences from Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean'

Concept Note for Side Event - XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

### Background and context

The EU-LAC Foundation, the Global Alliance for Care, the National Institute of Women of Mexico (INMUJERES), UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) convene this side event that to identify the progress and challenges in building comprehensive care systems from a bi-regional perspective between the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

The European Commission presented last September a European care strategy with specific guidelines, actions and recommendations to ensure comprehensive care services including the provision of quality, affordable and accessible early childhood and long-term care services in all EU countries. The Commission proposes that Member States set new targets up to 2030 to increase the participation of children in early childhood care services.

The strategy also focuses on ensuring access to care services for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and people with special needs, reviewing the conditions of caregivers, paying special attention to the conditions and rights of migrant caregivers, and offering technical assistance to Member States in the design and implementation of reforms to integrate care as a cross-cutting issue in health, education, social protection, labour and other policies<sup>1</sup>. This strategy is an important step in moving from sectoral policies towards the conceptualisation and design of comprehensive care systems in EU countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the European Commission on the European Care Strategy. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13298-Estrategia-asistencial-europea\\_es](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13298-Estrategia-asistencial-europea_es)

On the other hand, governments in the Latin American and Caribbean region have recognised care as a human right, highlighting the key social function that care plays in the production and reproduction of life and the well-being of societies. In this regard, the Montevideo Strategy adopted in 2016 urges governments to encourage the adoption of care policies and the promotion of co-responsibility between women and men that contribute to women's autonomy and a fair social organisation of care. This commitment was recently ratified at the XIV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in January 2020 in Santiago de Chile, through the Santiago Commitment.<sup>2</sup>

However, while the crisis brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the centrality and importance of care work, it has also demonstrated the precariousness of current care systems, policies and plans, intensifying existing economic and gender inequalities and hitting care provision hard.

Against this background, the EU-LAC Foundation, the Global Alliance for Care, INMUJERES, UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean and ECLAC, as key actors in generating multi-stakeholder and multi-level dialogues on issues of utmost relevance for the cooperation of LAC and EU countries, seek to develop a series of inclusive inter-regional dialogues to identify obstacles and opportunities in common and to make visible good practices and innovative solutions that will enable progress towards the construction and implementation of comprehensive care systems in the EU and LAC, seek to develop a series of inclusive inter-regional dialogues to identify obstacles and opportunities in common and make visible good practices and innovative solutions that will allow progress towards the construction and implementation of comprehensive care systems in the EU and LAC at regional, national and sub-national levels.

## Objectives

This side event has three specific objectives:

- (1) to share advances and good practices in building comprehensive systems of care in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean;
- (2) to exchange on challenges, gaps and lessons learned in building comprehensive systems of care in the EU and LAC;
- (3) to offer a space for identifying actions and recommendations in a timely manner in the processes of building comprehensive systems of care in the EU and LAC.

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<sup>2</sup> ONU Mujeres & CEPAL (2020). Cuidados en América Latina y el Caribe en tiempos de COVID-19. Hacia sistemas integrales para fortalecer la respuesta y la recuperación. Recuperado de:

[https://lac.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Americas/Documentos/Publicaciones/2020/08/Final%20Brief/ES\\_cuidados%20covid.pdf](https://lac.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Americas/Documentos/Publicaciones/2020/08/Final%20Brief/ES_cuidados%20covid.pdf)