

Meeting of Research Centres and Study Associations based in Latin America and the Caribbean dedicated to the analysis of the European Union and Bi-regional Relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe

- Concept Note -

Dates: 12 and 13 December 2022

Organisation: EU-LAC Foundation, Centro de Estudios Europeos (CEE) - Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ)

Format and location: The event will be held in face-to-face mode at the Centro de Estudios Europeos (CEE), Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ).

Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak has unequivocally highlighted the global interdependence and vulnerability of our political systems, economies and societies to a disease caused by a virus that knows no borders. In terms of deaths and infections linked to the coronavirus, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has been one of the hardest hit regions; at the same time, the region faced the worst contraction in gross domestic product since 1946.¹ While, in Europe, the impact of the pandemic was alleviated through a wide range of direct and fiscal support managed by the European Commission and national governments, thereby stabilising existing social protection systems, retaining employment and income support, and assisting vulnerable families and populations, in LAC COVID-19 exacerbated social and economic gaps and accentuated institutional weaknesses and the issue of political representation, leading to a growing number of voices calling for a new social contract oriented towards more sustainable political, economic and social development, with expanded citizen participation in public policy consensus-building, improved public services and extension of social protection, greater investment in inclusive and quality educational institutions, diversification and digital and green transformation of the economic sector, and more relevant fiscal frameworks.

Transformative, sustainable, inclusive and science-based recovery was the focus of the LAC countries' Forum on Sustainable Development 2022 in San José (7-9 March 2022), where delegates deliberated on policies and tools to reduce economic, social and environmental gaps and asymmetries between and within countries; access to innovative financing; cooperation and transition and access to concessional funds; the promotion of new social and economic pacts; gender equality and care society; as well as regional integration, greater regional political dialogue and the unification of the region's voice before the international community, which goes hand in hand with the aspiration for a multilateralism that puts sustainable development first and includes the reconfiguration of the international financial architecture.²

¹ See: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2021/03/1489112> (in Spanish only) and <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/46504-preliminary-overview-economies-latin-america-and-caribbean-2020>

² See: <https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2022/en>

On the part of the European Union, the needs and aspirations of the LAC region have been addressed, among others, during the informal meeting of EU and LAC Foreign Ministers on 14 December 2020 in Berlin³, and the EU meeting with seven leaders chairing regional and sub-regional bodies in LAC on 2 December 2021⁴. In these fora, the relevance of political dialogue, solidarity and cooperation to join forces towards a sustainable recovery from the pandemic was highlighted, aimed at increasing the responsiveness of public institutions on health, climate change and biodiversity loss, accompanied by a new Digital Alliance, the linking of LAC in the EU's connectivity strategy, the willingness to make better use of existing trade and association agreements, new impulses for dialogue on human rights, security and the rule of law, as well as the implementation of the Strategic Roadmap on Science, Technology and Innovation.

In her State of the Union Address of September 14th, 2022, the President of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, confirmed the commitment of renewing relations with like-minded partners in important growth regions worldwide, indicating that she was about to submit the agreements with Chile and Mexico, among others, for ratification. She also announced that EU's "Global Gateway" approach, launched in December 2021 as the EU's contribution to invest in economic recovery and accompanying the green and digital transitions beyond European borders, was now to be expanded across Latin America as part of a larger engagement strategy.⁵

But even so, with Russia's war against Ukraine that began on 24 February 2022, the focus of European partners' attention shifted sharply to the east of their own continent and to the power, territorial and security interests of Russia, which seeks unconditional political and military surrender throughout Ukraine - a country that in recent years has been increasingly oriented towards the values and principles of European democracies and whose political leaders continue to stress that it is these principles that are being defended on Ukrainian territory. In a context characterised by uncertainty about the evolution of the war, many analysts assume that this only appears to be the beginning of what could be decades of geopolitical upheavals and rearrangements that will affect the entire international community.

Against this background, Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) met on 27 October 2022 in Buenos Aires. The meeting was the first formal EU-CELAC Ministerial since July 2018 and marked the resumption of a bi-regional dialogue based on a forward-looking, substantive and positive agenda. Under the general theme „Renewing the bi-regional association to strengthen peace and sustainable development“, three subject areas were discussed:

- inclusive, equitable and sustainable post-pandemic economic recovery,
- innovation, fight against climate change, disaster risk management and digital agenda,

³ See: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/eeas-joint-communiqué-of-14-december-2021/product-details/20210115DPU28407>

⁴ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/12/02/eu-latin-america-caribbean-leaders-meeting-joining-forces-for-a-sustainable-post-covid-recovery/>

⁵ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ov/speech_22_5493

- multilateralism, cooperation in the field of security and governance, and promotion and protection of human rights.

The Ministers agreed to organise a series of high-level events on shared thematic priorities, the same of which would mount in an EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government in Brussels the second half of 2023, during the Spanish Presidency of the EU Council, which would imply the relaunch of the political dialogue at the highest level.⁶

Objectives of the Meeting

Against this backdrop, the EU-LAC Foundation and the Centro de Estudios Europeos (CEE) of the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) consider it an opportune moment to invite representatives of research centres and study associations based in Latin America and the Caribbean, and whose field of work is the study of the European Union and/or relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe, to an open exchange on the recent challenges for EU-LAC relations, as well as the effects of these developments on their respective research agendas and their capacity to influence EU-LAC agendas, the Caribbean and Europe, to an open exchange on recent challenges for EU-LAC relations, as well as the effects of these developments on their respective research agendas and their capacity to influence the agendas of policy makers.

Specifically, this face-to-face meeting at the USFQ in Quito, Ecuador, will have the following objectives:

- Exchange on the effects of current global challenges on the priorities of research agendas of centres and scientists, including trends in theoretical and conceptual reflections, research questions and methodologies;
- Dialogue on the impact of recent challenges on the transfer of information and knowledge from research centres and associations to national and Latin American and Caribbean societies, as well as to European societies;
- Joint analysis of the challenges and opportunities that have emerged for EU-CELAC bi-regional cooperation in the new global scenarios;
- Discussion on the ways in which research centres and associations have succeeded - or had troubles - in influencing decision-making processes at national and regional level, with regard to cooperation with the EU;
- Brainstorming on convergences, complementarities and possible joint efforts to create greater synergies and strengthen the work of each of the invited institutions.

Invited institutions

In order to achieve the objectives of the present meeting, invitations have been extended to representatives from:

⁶ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/59827/celac-eu-fmm-joint-communicue.pdf>



- Asociación Latinoamericana de Ciencia Política (ALACIP) – Grupo de Investigación en Relaciones Internacionales
- Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) – División de Estudios Internacionales
- Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales (CRIES)
- FLACSO Ecuador
- Fundação Getúlio Vargas
- Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (Funglode)
- Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales (IAEN), Ecuador
- Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú
- Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar
- Universidad de Chile – Instituto de Estudios Internacionales
- Universidad de Concepción – Programa de Estudios Europeos
- Universidad de la Habana – Jean Monnet Chair; Vicerectoría de Relaciones Internacionales
- Universidad de la República, Uruguay – Departamento de Ciencias Sociales
- Universidad Externado de Colombia – Jean Monnet Chair
- Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) – Centro de Estudios Europeos (CEE)
- Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS)
- University of the West Indies – Institute of International Relations

Guiding questions for dialogue

- (1) What effects have recent global challenges had on the priorities of research agendas of centres and scientists, including trends in theoretical and conceptual reflections, research questions and methodologies?
- (2) How have recent challenges had an impact on the transfer of information and knowledge from research centres and associations to national and regional societies as well as European societies?
- (3) What are the challenges and opportunities that have emerged for EU-CELAC bi-regional cooperation in the new global scenarios?
- (4) How have research centres and think tanks been able to influence decision-making processes at national and regional level? And how could the EU region be made more relevant to national agendas and the regional agenda?
- (5) What could be shared interests, complementarities and possible joint efforts to create greater synergies and strengthen the work of existing research centres and research associations?

Expected results

- Promotion of an open and constructive dialogue between representatives of research centres/associations based in Latin America and the Caribbean, whose field of work is European studies and/or relations between Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, on the current global scenarios and the challenges and opportunities that these have implied for the work of the centres and associations, as well as for cooperation between the two regions;



- Joint reflections on complementarities and efforts to create greater synergies in the work of the study centres and associations present and to raise the profile of the EU region on national agendas and the regional agenda;
- Preparation of a report of the meeting, which will reflect the main issues discussed, and which will complement the perspectives and analyses generated at a similar meeting with EU-based research centres and research associations dedicated to the analysis of Latin America and the Caribbean and Bi-regional Relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe, which the EU-LAC Foundation organised on 28-29 April 2022 in Berlin.

Languages

At the meeting, each participant will be able to speak and articulate their ideas in the language of their choice, preferably in English or Spanish.

Logistical information

Ecuador currently welcomes visitors under the following rules: all persons entering mainland Ecuador by international air must present the Traveler's Health Declaration in digital form upon boarding the airline, which is available at the following link: <https://declaracionsalud-viajero.msp.gob.ec/>, which must be presented only and compulsorily prior to boarding. All travellers over 3 years of age must present the vaccination certificate with QR code or valid COVID-19 vaccination card with at least 14 days of validity after completing the scheme, or the negative result of the qualitative RT-PCR or antigen test carried out up to 72 hours prior to boarding to Ecuador at the airline counter. Likewise, participants are requested to comply with the sanitary regulations adopted by the national authorities of the Republic of Ecuador.⁷

⁷ See: https://www.salud.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/lineamiento_ingreso_al_pais_por_via_aerea_01-08-2022-signed-signed-signed.pdf (only in Spanish).