

**EU-CELAC JOINT
INITIATIVE ON RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION
SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING**

28-29 NOVEMBER 2023
Brussels, Belgium



CONCEPT NOTE

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1. Rationale of this document

This document outlines the main topics in the research and innovation (R&I) cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). It presents leverage points and concrete suggestions to the delegates of the EU-CELAC Senior Official Meeting, resulting from prior activities or emerging initiatives, to enhance the process of the further development of the Common Research Area (CRA).

2. EU-CELAC Common Research Area

The cooperation in R&I between EU and CELAC is advancing at numerous levels. During the 2010 EU-CELAC Summit in Madrid, the EU and CELAC agreed to establish an EU-CELAC Action Plan, whereby 'science, research, innovation and technology' constitutes an independent chapter. In addition, the **Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI)** was adopted to promote a regular bi-regional dialogue on R&I. Since 2011 eight Senior Officials' Meetings (SOM) have been organised to support the implementation of the JIRI.

As the bi-regional partnership evolved over the years, the **EU-CELAC Common Research Area** was announced at the EU-CELAC Summit in June 2015 and adopted at the fifth EU-CELAC JIRI SOM in March 2016 to further strengthen the bi-regional partnership in research and innovation (R&I) under three pillars: Mobility of researchers; international outreach of research infrastructures; and jointly addressing global challenges. During the JIRI SOM in 2020, innovation was added as fourth pillar.

The following paragraphs give a short summary of the advancements in each pillar since the last JIRI SOM in 2020:

- In the **pillar of researchers' mobility**, the LAC region participates in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) of the EU and is also currently being supported by two EURAXESS offices in Brazil and Colombia, and 35 MSCA National Contact Points (NCP). In addition, the Marie Curie Alumni Association has created a new chapter for the Andean Region and the Caribbean.
- The **pillar of research infrastructures** has advanced considerably following six virtual and one on-site meeting of the EU-CELAC Working Group on Research Infrastructures (RI WG). In addition, five thematic cooperation workshops and two online seminars on bi-regional RI collaboration have been organized. In 2024, a new round of study visits to RIs in the EU and CELAC will be implemented. The EU-LAC ResInfra project has ended in early 2023, to be followed up by the project ResInfra Plus in early 2024.
- In the **pillar global challenges** significant advancements have been achieved in the following areas: The cooperation in **sustainable urbanization** is now supported by the EU-LAC dialogue on nature-based solutions. In the area of **marine research**, the All-Atlantic Ocean Research (AAORIA) and Innovation Alliance Declaration was signed in July 2022 with the participation of Argentina, Brazil and the EU; and an EU-Caribbean Workshop on Marine Scientific Cooperation

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was organised in Barbados. In the area of **digital cooperation**, the EU-LAC Digital Alliance was launched in March 2023; the second phase of BELLA was agreed in 2022; a new cyber training centre for LAC was launched in Dominican Republic. In the area of **health**, the EULAC-PerMed project saw the participation of Brazil, Panama and Chile in joint transnational calls and the implementation of a Clinical Trials Helpdesk. Active topics of the bi-regional cooperation in health research continue to be chronic and infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, chronic diseases and translational and collaborative cancer research.

- The pillar **innovation** is currently supported by the H2020 project European Network of Research and Innovation Centres and Hubs in Latin America and the Caribbean (ENRICH in LAC), ending in 2023. However, the non-profit association of the same name, founded in 2019, will continue to promote innovation cooperation between LAC and EU beyond the project's lifetime.

The transversal priority **open access** was followed up by a bi-regional study published by the Commission in March 2023 and by a bi-regional conference in June 2023.

In addition, the EU-LAC Foundation¹ co-organised several events relevant to topics of the bi-regional partnership in R&I in 2023. Information about the foundation and their respective activities is given in Annex 10.4.2.

In preparation of the SOM 2023, the European Commission together with the 2023 CELAC Pro-Tempore Presidency Saint Vincent and the Grenadines organised three virtual preparatory meetings addressing the following topics:

1. 25 October: Mobility of researchers; innovation
2. 26 October: Global challenges – health, green transition, digital and other thematic priorities
3. 27 October: Research infrastructures; open science; AOB

During these meetings delegates appointed by CELAC and the European Commission developed input related to each of the four pillars of the Common Research Area, which is included in the present document.

3. Evolution of the current bi-regional mechanism

Given the dramatically changed geopolitical context and the emerging societal challenges, the delegates are encouraged to reflect on the current bi-regional policy dialogue mechanism, the JIRI framework, considering the available options for its evolution to better reflect the changing circumstances.

¹ <https://eulacfoundation.org/en>

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With the July 2023 EU-CELAC Summit, its conclusions and Declaration, the JIRI structure should be reviewed to assess its readiness to bridge the political discussion and vision with the joint EU-CELAC R&I priorities.

Such debate should result in a renewed JIRI framework that will more accurately align the political and R&I challenges facing both regions.

4. Mobility of researchers

The human capital development through training and mobility of research and innovation actors, as well as the establishment of international partnerships, doctoral networks and postdoctoral collaborations, are all essential for the creation of bi-regional cooperation links and indispensable for the generation of research and innovation initiatives within EU-CELAC. The **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA²)** and the **Erasmus+³** programme are among the most successful EU instruments in this regard, further details on the present bi-regional state are given in Annex 10.1.

The following developments have contributed to enhance the profile of MSCA among organisations and researchers in the LAC region:

- The number of MSCA National Contact Points (NCPs) has increased from 5 in the first years of Horizon Europe (HE) to 35 now. The capacities of NCPs in the region have been reinforced through capacity building and mentoring activities through the MSCA-NET project.
- The Marie Curie Alumni Association has created a chapter for the Andean Region and the Caribbean besides its existing chapters in Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Mexico.

Erasmus+ offers short-term opportunities of mobility between CELAC countries and Europe for students and staff from higher education institutions. This type of mobility guarantees that participants return to their institutions and bring home the benefits of their experience abroad, including professional traineeships. The Commission has been working since 2022 with LAC countries to designate Erasmus+ National Focal Points (ENFP⁴) to support participation, up to date ten countries have implemented these ENFPs.⁵ Various alliances in education (e.g. the European Universities Initiative) can provide a promising framework to develop new international networks.

The powerful dimension of both instruments, MSCA and Erasmus+, is underlined by their bottom-up participation based on excellence, without requirements for specific thematic areas, paving the path towards future participation in HE projects.

² <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/>

³ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>

⁴ https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/contacts/erasmus-national-focal-points?facets_permanent%7Cfield_eac_topics=1956

⁵ Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay

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Given the importance of efficient tools to support mobility of researchers, **EURAXESS Latin America** and the Caribbean continuously provides tailored and relevant information to LAC-based researchers via its two offices in Brazil and Colombia, also working closely with the alumni associations to develop a proactive community of MSCA or Erasmus+ Alumni in the region. Further information on EURAXESS LAC is given in Annex 10.4.3 and on the LAC NCP Network in Annex 10.4.4.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC in researchers' mobility:

- ❖ How to expand the support to LAC countries and organizations to facilitate MSCA and Erasmus+ applications?

Suggestions:

- ❖ Appoint additional Erasmus+ National Focal Points in LAC countries not covered yet.
- ❖ Encourage LAC countries to nominate MSCA NCPs (if not existent already).
- ❖ Foster exchange and twinning opportunities between the MSCA-NET project and LAC MSCA NCPs.

5. Research infrastructures

The EU-CELAC cooperation in RI aims at deepening the cooperation across the Atlantic in priority areas by grouping/pairing RIs from both regions, focusing on the enhancement of joint development and access to RIs. Setting framework conditions is important to better link European RI clusters with LAC RIs in the future.

In 2017 the **EU-CELAC Working Group on Research Infrastructures** (EU-CELAC RI WG⁶) was created to strengthen research ties across the Atlantic, leading to a better use of RIs and bringing clear benefits to each region. Virtual cooperation workshops were organised on energy, biodiversity, health, emerging technologies, and food security, as well as two online seminars on bi-regional RI collaboration in 2020, a large number of institutions (approx. 100 RIs) was able to connect and exchange best practices on how to cooperate, as well as on how to formalise the collaboration between RIs in EU and LAC.

In 2019/2020, nine study visits to RIs in Europe and Latin America, with a total of 55 participants, mostly RI managers, policy makers and representatives of user groups, were organised. The evaluation results of the study visits revealed that the mutual cooperation interest between RIs in both regions is high. Study visits have shown to be an efficient tool for establishing contacts between RIs from both regions and generate cooperation. Results include established collaborations, knowledge transfer and the pursuit of bilateral MoUs or consortia for scientific collaboration. In 2024 a new round of study visits to RIs in the EU and LAC will be implemented.

⁶ <https://resinfra-eulac.eu/eu-celac-working-group/>

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In September 2023, the first face-to-face meeting after the COVID-19 pandemic took place in Tenerife, Spain, which allowed the RI WG to integrate a number of newly appointed delegates into the group and to discuss the transversal topic of open science policies in the EU and CELAC.

Delegates also discussed the extent to which the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) can serve as a model for the CELAC region, as well as the benefits and challenges of creating RI hubs/networks in the areas of health, climate change and biodiversity, which will be prioritised for the study visits in 2024. In addition, the final list of study visits to RIs in Europe and CELAC for 2024 was agreed by the RI WG delegates at this meeting (three visits to each region), which also fall within the above thematic areas. The supporting contract of the Global Service Facility is running until 2026, providing a stable support. An important step was the formal nomination of Claudia Romano from AUCI, Uruguay as technical secretary of the CELAC side.

EU-LAC ResInfra project: As a result of the Horizon 2020 EU-LAC ResInfra project⁷, implemented between late 2019 and early 2023 to further strengthen and accelerate bi-regional RI cooperation through the funding of four RI pilot projects in the areas of structural biology, climate change and biodiversity, cultural heritage and high-performance computing, a sustainability plan was presented to the Working Group in April 2023 for discussion and endorsement. The follow-up project ResInfra Plus will start in early 2024.

The ResInfra project also successfully collaborated with the EU-CELAC Interest Group⁸ during the preparations of the call topics for the last joint call published in 2022, which had been especially dedicated to the bi-regional RI collaboration. The Interest Group is currently planning a fifth joint call, potential topics being green transition, biodiversity and health. All EU-CELAC countries are encouraged to participate, as the joint calls offer an excellent opportunity to gather experiences in international research collaborations, providing an “entrance door” towards future participation in consortia of EU funded research programmes.

Further information on the H2020 project EU-LAC ResInfra is given in Annex 10.2, and on the EU-CELAC Interest Group in Annex 10.4.6.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation between Research Infrastructures:

- ❖ Which instruments can help to harmonize internationalization policies and facilitate the mutual access to services offered by the involved RIs?
- ❖ What are the future challenges and opportunities for open science, open data, specifically in research infrastructures within the EU-LAC collaboration?
- ❖ How can RIs enhance/support cooperation and promote effective data sharing between the EU and LAC? What instruments and mechanisms are being used at the moment?

⁷ <https://resinfra-eulac.eu/>

⁸ <https://www.eucelac-platform.eu/>



6. Global Challenges

This extensive point is sub-divided into various thematic areas covering manifold aspects of the challenges that both regions are facing. This often involves reflections on the economic and societal model and the achievement of more efficient and sustainable management to meet the demands and priorities for the citizens' well-being.

6.1. Green transition

Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to the world. To overcome these challenges, the European Green Deal is Europe's growth strategy, which will transform the Union into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy⁹.

6.1.1. Earth observation

Global Earth Observation (GEO)¹⁰ is a unique global network, uniting policy, academia and business, and aiming at creating solutions to global challenges. GEO advocates free data sharing and the GEO community is creating a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) to better integrate observing systems, their interconnection and to share data by connecting existing infrastructures using common standards. All CELAC countries are invited to join the network¹¹.

Opportunity for EU-CELAC cooperation in earth observation:

- ❖ Explore the bi-regional collaboration opportunities for applying spatial data in research and innovation.

6.1.2. Climate change

Fighting climate change is one of the main priorities of the European Commission. In support of this priority, the Commission is reinforcing Green Deal-related research and innovation with a dedicated call for proposals under the current research and innovation programme HE. In addition to technological development and demonstration, the call encourages experimentation and social innovation for new ways to engage civil society and empower citizens.

⁹ https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/green-transition_en

¹⁰ https://www.earthobservations.org/geo_community.php

¹¹ Peru had the first meeting to prepare the GEO Peruvian note to join.



The European regional flagship programme on climate action in Latin America **EUROCLIMA**¹² launched in 2013, expanded to the Caribbean in 2023 is now under implementation in the 33 LAC countries. It is a EUR 124 million programme which shall be widened to also cover biodiversity and circular economy in the future.

The current bi-regional research actions are listed in Annex 10.3.1.

Opportunity for EU-CELAC cooperation in climate change:

- ❖ Explore potential collaboration opportunities in the frame of EUROCLIMA.

6.1.3. Energy

Further successful cooperation between the EU and CELAC countries in **Mission Innovation** involves the renewable energy technology development, where the EU co-leads the Clean Hydrogen Mission together with Chile and three other members; and the Integrated Biorefineries Mission where the EU cooperates with Brazil, both parties being members of this Mission.

The Commission's aim is to triple the renewable energy capacity by 2030. A deepened cooperation with CELAC in the frame of the Global Gateway is thus welcomed, e.g. on the topic of green hydrogen.¹³

Other thematic areas may have a positive impact on collaboration on energy transition, in particular the joint work on **low-carbon hydrogen and critical materials**.

Opportunity for EU-CELAC cooperation in climate change:

- ❖ Explore the bi-regional collaboration opportunities in the area of green hydrogen.

6.1.4. Sustainable Urbanisation

In the area of **sustainable urbanisation** both regions prioritise a systematic and participatory approach, key focus areas being sustainable cities and communities, nature-based solutions, renewable energies, availability of clean water and sustainable resources management, reduction of flood risks, urban transport, secure societies, fight against crime, impact of urbanisation challenges on population and human behaviours, and management of plastic waste. In addition, complementary actions are needed to explore synergies with the mobility and innovation pillars.

¹² <https://www.euroclima.org/en/>

¹³ Argentina has created a national Hydrogen Roundtable aiming at developing and implementing public policies to promote the use of green hydrogen.

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The global **Urban Transitions Mission** (UTM¹⁴) of Mission Innovation was launched at COP26 and is one of the seven missions of Mission Innovation¹⁵, working with a cohort of 48 cities worldwide, including 13 CELAC cities¹⁶. Support is provided to these cities through two channels:

- EUR 2 million funding under HE for the UTM Centre¹⁷
- The growing Global Innovation Alliance, including e.g. the Commission and the Global Covenant of Mayors as co-leads of the initiative, several national governments and many international organisations that cater to urban net-zero.

The initiative is still in an initial stage, activities will intensify in the future and CELAC countries are invited to join the **UTM Global Innovation Alliance**. In 2024, further cities shall be selected to reach a cohort of 250 cities worldwide. A call was open until 21 October 2023 to select the second UTM city cohort and LAC cities were encouraged to apply. The selected cities will be announced at COP28.

In addition, the European Partnership on **Driving Urban Transitions** (DUT¹⁸), co-funded under Horizon Europe, issues yearly transnational calls where the participation of national research and innovation agencies from LAC countries is welcome. The calls focus on three transition pathways: Circular Urban Economies, Positive Energy Districts and the 15-Minute City.

The current bi-regional research actions are listed in Annex 10.3.2.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation in sustainable urbanisation research:

Resume the bi-regional dialogue on sustainable urbanisation to jointly develop a strategic R&I agenda, building upon the previously defined priority topics, based on a cross sectorial, multidisciplinary and systemic approach:

- ❖ Greening cities for sustainability and resilience
- ❖ Efficiency in the final-stage energy use and usage of renewable energy
- ❖ Clean water availability, reduction of flooding and drought risks
- ❖ Urban transport

¹⁴ <https://urbantransitionsmiission.org/>

¹⁵ Mission Innovation is a global initiative catalysing a decade of action and investment in research, development and demonstration to make clean energy affordable, attractive and accessible for all. UTM will mobilise decision makers across all levels of government to prioritise climate-neutral and net-zero pathways enabled by clean energy and systemic innovation across all sectors and in urban governance. By accelerating capacity-building and closing the gap between research, development and deployment, the Mission will empower cities to adopt innovative solutions and help reach tipping points in the cost and scale of those solutions for urban transitions.

¹⁶ Argentina: Luján de Cuyo Mendoza, Santa Fe, Villa Carlos Paz; Brazil: Belo Horizonte, Contagem, Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador; Chile: Peñalolén, Puerto Montt, Renca, Vitacura; and Colombia: Cartagena de Indias.

¹⁷ <https://urbantransitionsmiission.org/centre/>

¹⁸ <https://dutpartnership.eu/>



6.1.5. Nature-based solutions (NBS)

The ongoing '**EU-LAC dialogue on nature-based solutions**' is expected to establish a regular bi-regional dialogue on nature-based solutions and the relevant policies and developments in LAC and in the EU, including a future bi-regional conference.

In the key focus area of nature-based solutions, under the Horizon 2020 funding programme, two EU-funded projects, **CONEXUS**¹⁹ and **INTERLACE**²⁰, have delivered significant results in the context of co-creating nature-based solutions to support the restoration of urban ecosystems, to address local-global societal challenges in EU and CELAC cities.

The work has proven that the integration of nature-based solutions in global strategies to build resilience results in a range of societal benefits beyond sustainable urbanisation. The projects have successfully proven the very essence of nature-based solutions, which is that they are able to provide a wide range of benefits from nature to people.

NBS are increasingly at the forefront of European and global agendas. The EU has made significant investments in these solutions, contributing to the concept, testing, demonstrating, and promoting effective NBS at home and abroad. Future cooperation between the regions on NBS are important in terms of reaching our global biodiversity and climate targets. Due to its significance to combat the interlinked and mutually exacerbating climate change and biodiversity loss, and pollution, strengthened cooperation at multilateral level related to science (such as IPCC, IPBES and GEO) should be envisaged, with an information exchange of mutual initiatives, striving to allow open access to relevant data.

Opportunity for EU-CELAC cooperation in nature-based solutions research:

- ❖ Deepen the bi-regional dialogue on nature-based solutions in the frame of the first bi-regional conference.

6.1.6. Food security, sustainable agriculture and bioeconomy

The 'EU-CELAC JIRI SOM Roadmap 2021-2023'²¹ underlines the importance of research and innovation on **sustainable agriculture, bioeconomy and circular economy** both to climate change and to the well-being and prosperity of citizens. It is also noted that, in addition to policy exchanges, the use of earth observation infrastructure and increased digitalisation could bring benefits to both regions.

¹⁹ <https://www.conexusnbs.com/>

²⁰ <https://www.interlace-project.eu/>

²¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-07/eu-celac_strategic-roadmap-2021-2023.pdf

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Europe is committed to the area of bioeconomy, including multilateral cooperation with CELAC countries, where some countries (e.g. Costa Rica) have a strong bioeconomy strategy in place, whereas others could benefit from bi-regional partnerships to unlock their huge bioeconomy potential.

The European programme AL-INVEST VERDE²² promotes sustainable growth and job creation in Latin America, aiming to support the transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and more circular economy.

In addition, the European Commission has led the development of the **International Bioeconomy Forum (IBF)**, a co-owned platform to guide international cooperation on a limited number of R&I priorities and horizontal activities which are crucial for the development of a global, sustainable bioeconomy and addressing related global challenges, Argentina being the only CELAC member.

The **Mission on Soils** is a major European initiative, currently being developed, and potentially creating good cooperation opportunities across the related thematic areas, priority areas being soil health, agrobiodiversity, pest management, protection of pollinators and land management. Starting from these areas, the following two initiatives are considered the most promising for a bi-regional cooperation, a mapping of potential international partners being planned:

- 'A Soil Deal for Europe'²³ aims to establish 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030;
- The 'European R&I partnership on agroecology living labs and research infrastructures'²⁴ aims to structure and support a network of living labs and research infrastructures that will accelerate the transition towards agroecology throughout Europe.

The Commission clarified sustainable agriculture has a strong focus on biodiversity and green-house emissions, which are related to sustainable land-use.

The current bi-regional research actions are listed in Annex 10.3.3.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation in food security, sustainable agriculture and bioeconomy:

Explore potential cooperation opportunities in the frame of:

- ❖ AL-INVEST VERDE
- ❖ The upcoming Mission on Soils, targeting soil health, agrobiodiversity, pest management, protection of pollinators and land management.
- ❖ The priority topics biodiversity (safeguarding natural ecosystems) and green-house emissions.
- ❖ The International Bioeconomy Forum (IBF), encouraging LAC countries to participate.
- ❖ The PREZODE initiative.

²² http://alinvest-verde.eu/en_gb/

²³ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/soil-deal-europe_en

²⁴ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/agriculture-forestry-and-rural-areas/ecological-approaches-and-organic-farming/partnership-agroecology_en



6.1.7. Wildfires

Following the recognition of the importance of wildfire (prevention and mitigation) contribution to biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change at the SOM 2020, a bi-regional group of experts has been established, meeting twice a year, next in Colombia in November 2023. The overall aim is to develop a coherent information system across the region under Copernicus, using its global components, and to organize trainings, which is already being done.

In July 2023, a scientific workshop was held in Manaus, Brazil, gathering scientists from the French Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD) and five Amazonian countries (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, France and Peru) signing the "**Manaus Declaration for committed and shared research in Amazonia**"²⁵. The declaration for an inclusive and pragmatic regional approach to the sustainable management of Amazonian socio-ecosystems includes 25 actions in favour of:

- Biodiversity and sustainable and equitable management of natural resources
- Geo-resources and improved human health
- Sustainable cities and regional development
- Sustainable food systems and the land-soil connection
- Climate, water, and a land-sea gradient

Joint research efforts could be explored in special ecosystems such as the Amazonia rainforest and the Gran Chaco in order to contribute to the social and economic development of these regions in a sustainable way.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation in wildfire research:

- ❖ Deepen the bi-regional expert meetings on wildfire prevention and mitigation.
- ❖ How can regional approaches be integrated into a coherent wildfire information system under Copernicus?
- ❖ Explore potential collaboration opportunities following up on the Manaus Declaration.

6.1.8. Deforestation

The Commission has a longstanding cooperation with the Brazilian National Space Research Institute (INPE) in the context of automatic mapping of deforestation and forest degradation across the tropics, covering the whole Amazon region and the Brazilian Mata Atlântica forest. The drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, the extent and speed of forest regrowth, the related carbon emission and sinks,

²⁵ <https://en.ird.fr/manaus-declaration-committed-and-shared-research-amazonia>

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and forest cover change in other biomes like the Cerrado or the Chaco Forest are also becoming important research topics. Research cooperation on secondary forest in the Amazon is planned with Peru.

The **One Forest Summit**, (Libreville, March 2023) entirely dedicated to tropical forests, was an opportunity to advance and renew the collective ambition for the preservation and sustainable management of forests, which are essential to meeting interdependent global challenges, foremost among which are climate change and the loss of biodiversity. During the summit a high-level segment was organised on the common challenges facing the African, Amazonian and Asian tropical forest basins. The "**Libreville Plan**" drawn up at the Summit represents the roadmap for new commitments and concrete initiatives to meet these major challenges.

The "**One Forest Vision**" Initiative (OFVi) was launched during the Summit. It aims to map at the tree level and to measure the carbon balance of the most vital carbon and biodiversity reserves in the Amazon, African and Asian forest basins within the next five years.

Opportunity for EU-CELAC cooperation in deforestation research:

- ❖ Explore joint collaboration opportunities targeting drivers of deforestation, forest degradation, forest regrowth including related carbon emission and sinks.

6.1.9. Marine research

Since 2017, with the launch of the Belém Statement on Atlantic Research and Innovation Cooperation²⁶, a joint declaration between the European Union, Brazil and South Africa, the EU has expanded its marine research cooperation with CELAC. The signing of the bilateral arrangement with Argentina has expanded this cooperation, culminating with the signing of the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA²⁷) Declaration in Washington DC in July 2022.

AAORIA currently includes eight partners (EU, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, Morocco, South Africa, United States) and has recently approved its terms of reference, which are setting the working framework of the Alliance and include the procedure to welcome new partners. The 2023 edition of the AAORIA Forum in November 2023 will identify the specific priorities around which the short- and medium-term effort of the Alliance will focus on.

²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/belem_statement_2017_en.pdf

²⁷ AAORIA is the result of science diplomacy efforts involving countries from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean which aims at enhancing marine research and innovation cooperation along and across the Atlantic Ocean, from the Arctic to Antarctica.

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Furthermore, the necessity to approach the challenges and opportunities offered by the Atlantic Ocean was explicitly highlighted by the Caribbean participants at the JIRI SOM in 2020, presuming that active involvement and enhanced cooperation of countries connected to the Atlantic Ocean could bring new insights and further benefits. The EU organised an **EU-Caribbean Workshop on Marine Scientific Cooperation**²⁸ in Barbados on 14-15 November 2023, gathering 35 stakeholders on-site and some 40 experts online from both regions to discuss the opportunities, needs and gaps in marine research and cooperation for the Caribbean region. The workshop focused on community resilience and climate change, healthy ecosystems, societal reliance on oceans, and ocean observation for governance. The “EU-Caribbean study on marine scientific cooperation” will be published in December 2023. Cooperation on sargassum should be also deepened, presenting a major issue for the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean.

The **European Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership**²⁹ aims to restore the ocean’s health, resilience and services to people by enabling economic activity that is climate-neutral, sustainable and productive. The first co-funded call with the Commission and 23 countries was launched in 2023 addressing the following five priority areas:

- Planning and managing sea-uses at the regional level
- Development of offshore marine multi-use infrastructures to support the blue economy
- Climate-neutral, environmentally sustainable, and resource-efficient blue food and feed
- Green transition of blue food production
- Digital twins of the ocean test use cases at EU sea-basins and the Atlantic Ocean.

Brazil has participated to the call, and LAC countries are invited to participate as observers in the steering committee, or to join with own funding to build up scientific partnerships.

The third **UN Ocean Conference** (UNOC) will take place in France in June 2025 under the joint chair of the governments of France and Costa Rica. This follows the first and second UN Ocean Conferences, respectively held in New York in June 2017 and in Lisbon in June 2022. Building on the outcomes of the previous editions, the governments of France and Costa Rica are very much aware that:

- The third conference must offer transformative actions and should provide solutions to the ocean needs, to truly address and resolve key challenges.
- Ocean science and the funding of SDG14 will be the two legs on which they propose the UNOC to stand and walk towards a “Summit of Ocean Action”.
- For this to happen, the participation of civil society organizations, including advocacy NGOs,

²⁸ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/flash-report-eu-caribbean-workshop-marine-scientific-cooperation-2023-11-22_en

²⁹ <https://bluepartnership.eu/>



is key.

The third conference will be preceded by a **stakeholder meeting in Costa Rica in June 2024**, also with NGO participation. The prospect of France and Costa Rica co-hosting the next United Nations Conference on the Oceans offers a unique opportunity to develop cooperation networks between the two countries/regions.

The current bi-regional research actions are listed in Annex 10.3.4.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation in marine research:

- ❖ Continue the EU-Caribbean dialogue on marine science initiated during the workshop held in Barbados.
- ❖ Explore collaboration opportunities in the frame of AAORIA, including the question as how further LAC Atlantic may be encouraged to join the Alliance?
- ❖ Explore bi-regional cooperation and networking potential in view of the third UN Ocean Conference, to be held in France 2025.

6.1.10. Freshwater research

The WATER4All³⁰ partnership aims at enabling **water security** for all in the long term, with a joint commitment of the Commission (EUR 126 million) and the EU Member States (EUR 420 million). This European Partnership brings the Commission and private and/or public partners together to address some of Europe's most pressing challenges through concerted research and innovation initiatives. Brazil is a partner of the Water4All 2023 Joint Transnational Call³¹, and all LAC partners are encouraged to look for potential synergies such as participation in joint activities and calls.

Opportunity for EU-CELAC cooperation in freshwater research:

- ❖ Explore the bi-regional potential of future transnational calls targeting water security.

6.1.11. Space

At present, the Commission has bilateral administrative arrangements to deepen cooperation **on Copernicus with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Panama**. From the initial three Galileo information centres, two have ceased, namely Brazil and Chile, while the information centre in Mexico covering Central America and the Caribbean will cease its activities at the end of this year. The Centres

³⁰ http://www.water4all.eu/implementation/water-challenges-in-horizon-europe/water4all_summary_2pv2b.pdf

³¹ <https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/joint-activities/water4all-2023-joint-transnational-call>

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have provided information on the technologies and programmes of European Global Navigation Satellite Systems (EGNSS) and contributed to the cooperation on Galileo.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation in space research:

- ❖ Training / capacity building on space activities.
- ❖ Light pollution, especially for major astronomy host sites.
- ❖ Contribution by Copernicus to the regulation implementation in the area of deforestation.

6.2. Digital transformation

The **EU-LAC Digital Alliance** was launched in March 2023. Both regions can benefit from further cooperating on a wide range of areas such as connectivity, regulatory dialogue, free and safe data flows and space.³² The objective of the Alliance is to bring the EU and LAC digital markets closer together and the implementation strategies will explicitly integrate the dimensions of environmental protection, climate change, bettering resilience, gender equality, and digital inclusion for social inclusion.³³

In the frame of this policy dialogue, an onsite meeting will be held on 27-29 November 2023 in Cartagena, Colombia, among others tackling data for emergency management, which becomes crucial at the moment of (national) disasters; and CELAC experiences with the Copernicus centres. The Chilean Copernicus centre focuses on climate change mitigation and adaptation for the South American region. The centre in Panama supports the disaster risk reduction efforts in the whole LAC region.

The **EU-LAC Digital Accelerator**, established under the framework of the EU-LAC Digital Alliance, is fostering multi-stakeholder and private sector collaboration, competitiveness, skills and innovation in the digital area. Additionally, the EU-LAC regional digital policy dialogues in the context of the EU-LAC Digital Alliance will support capacity building and digital skills at institutional level.

The EU's Digital Single Market provides models which could be of interest to the LAC region, including data security and electronic identification, contributing to the possible development of a digital regional market in LAC.

The construction of the new data-highway **BELLA**³⁴ (Building the Europe Link with Latin America) concluded successfully, establishing the high-speed transatlantic link between Portugal and Brazil

³² https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/eu-latin-america-and-caribbean-digital-alliance_en

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/programmes/bella-building-europe-link-latin-america_en

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(EllaLink) and expanding the terrestrial network from Brazil to Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Panama. The second phase of the programme (BELLA II³⁵), agreed in late 2022, will bring BELLA connectivity to Peru, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, without prejudice of further extending the network to other countries in Central America and the Caribbean depending on feasibility analysis.

BELLA can be used by projects that need the expanded capacity, such as capacity building in the areas of data science, artificial intelligence, image sensors and advanced electronics³⁶. Additional attention can be dedicated to **advanced computing** (e.g. high-performance computing, distributed computing, quantum computing) and its impact on R&I. The EuroHPC³⁷ gathers key European HPC actors and through its RISC2 project³⁸ also involves CELAC countries.

On 26 May 2022, the **Cyber competence centre for Latin America and Caribbean (LAC4³⁹)** was launched in Santo Domingo. LAC4 is a training centre that will contribute to improving cybersecurity education and skills, enhancing collaboration between the EU and the Latin America and Caribbean region. The Centre was opened under the EU CyberNet⁴⁰ project, managed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission.

EU Member States closely cooperate in cybersecurity. The 'European Union's cybersecurity industrial policy' is available and CELAC partners may consult on the vision, values and approach adopted in the EU. Cybercrime is one of the areas covered under the EI PACcTo⁴¹ programme, and cybersecurity has been included as priority area under the policy dialogue component of the EU-LAC Digital Alliance.

The current bi-regional research actions in digital cooperation are listed in Annex 10.3.5.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation in digital transformation research:

Foster the EU-LAC Digital Alliance by deepening the bi-regional policy dialogue across the full spectrum of digital issues:

- ❖ Digital infrastructures, convergence of digital standards, cybersecurity
- ❖ High-Performance-Computing (HPC) and quantum computing
- ❖ Data for emergency management, Deployment of 5G, Cloud-Computing, Data Economy, Internet of things and Artificial intelligence (AI)

³⁵ <https://bella-programme.eu/index.php/en/>

³⁶ For example through a new project jointly developed by the Italo-Latin American International Organization (IILA) and CERN

³⁷ https://eurohpc-ju.europa.eu/index_en

³⁸ <https://www.risc2-project.eu/consortium/>

³⁹ <https://www.lac4.eu/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.eucybernet.eu/>

⁴¹ https://www.fiiapp.org/en/proyectos_fiiapp/el-paccto-assistance-programme-against-transnational-organised-crime/



6.3. Health

The JIRI SOM Roadmap 2021-2023 highlights the importance of shared challenges related to the epidemiology of COVID-19, infectious diseases and pandemic prevention; antimicrobial resistance; non-communicable (chronic) diseases; and cancer, including personalised medicine approaches.

In relation to personalised medicine, the **EULAC-PerMed**⁴² project (2019-2022) managed to carry out a number of actions. For instance, Brazil, Panama and Chile participated in joint transnational calls. The consortium established, among others, a Clinical Trials Helpdesk, which offers guidance on regulatory requirements and information on the most relevant funding agencies in the two regions. A good ground for future collaboration is provided by the ICPeMed⁴³ international consortium, which has developed a vision of how the use of personalised medicine approaches will lead to the next generation of healthcare by 2030.

In regards to the network **GloPID-R**⁴⁴, discussions have been launched between the European Commission and EU Delegations in LAC about the possibility of establishing a regional hub of GloPID-R in LAC as advisory capacity through the GloPID-R secretariat. GloPID-R is trying to involve countries from CELAC, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico have already joined.

The delegates of the SOM 2020 also called for strengthening **regional research networks**, including the link between health and environment and in support of the efforts of the CELAC countries on priority topics, e.g. on the CELAC Network of Specialists in Infectious Agents and Emerging and Re-emerging Diseases.

Cancer also remains high on the bi-regional agenda: building on an inclusive consultation with LAC partners, the HE work programme is presently dedicating a special initiative to translational collaborative cancer research with CELAC countries, funding three collaborative research projects.

A new bi-regional partnership was launched by the Commission in 2022 to develop regional capacity for the manufacturing of **vaccines, medicines and health technologies and for strengthening health systems**, which is part of the Global Gateway Strategy. While much of this initiative focuses on capacity building and on the production processes, one of its main objectives is to boost research and innovation by exchanging scientific knowledge and policy and regulatory expertise between the EU and LAC. This initiative will thus take a strategic position linking research and innovation with the regulatory and manufacturing actors in the LAC region. In this context, both the EU-CELAC Summit in July and the “EU-

⁴² <https://www.eulac-permed.eu/>

⁴³ <https://www.icpermed.eu/>: Interested funding agencies can check for information on how to become a member at: <https://www.icpermed.eu/en/icpermed-members.php>

⁴⁴ <https://www.glopid-r.org/>

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Central America Business Forum on innovation in pharma sector” held in September in Costa Rica were important.

The French international **PREZODE** (PREventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence⁴⁵) initiative, announced in 2021, has received the support of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, funded as OIE), the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and aims to increase knowledge and broaden cooperation on the emergence of zoonoses in order to put in place appropriate prevention and epidemiological surveillance strategies capable of preventing future pandemics of zoonotic origin.

To date, the PREZODE community has more than 230 members from research centres, academia, civil society, international organizations, and others – and 25 governments⁴⁶, including from the LAC region, involving more than 1,500 researchers.

Active research topics of the bi-regional cooperation in health are chronic and infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, chronic diseases and translational and collaborative cancer research, listed in Annex 10.3.6.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation in health research:

- ❖ How can EU-CELAC countries best leverage existing research activities, projects, networks and structures to better prepare for current and future challenges like a pandemic, health-climate-migration or the increasing health burdens by metabolic diseases?
- ❖ Which are areas of special added value to tackle above mentioned challenges? Potential topics for discussion: Clinical trial methodology, standardization of research and clinical data, digitalization of health research.
- ❖ Explore collaboration opportunities related to linking research and innovation with the regulatory and manufacturing actors, incl. regulatory frameworks for approval of medical devices.
- ❖ Deepen the new bi-regional partnership to develop regional capacity for the manufacturing of vaccines, medicines and health technologies, and for strengthening (public) health systems.
- ❖ Encourage and promote a broader CELAC engagement in the multilateral initiatives ICPeRMed and GloPID-R.

⁴⁵ <https://prezode.org/>

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Belgium, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Chile, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominica, Gabon, France, Guinea Conakry, Congo, Haiti, Laos, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Senegal, Thailand, Vietnam, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe



7. Innovation

Innovation became the fourth pillar following the unanimous decision by the Senior Officials at the 2020 meeting to include it in the JIRI structure. Due to this short time period since its addition and the long disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the dialogue on innovation has not progressed as originally envisaged by the delegates. Nevertheless, as existing initiatives show, this pillar offers much to both regions that can be developed through future actions.

Innovation and its social aspects should also be considered, as a solution to problems associated with the quality of life of citizens, many of whom are affected by the global challenges and therefore require diverse approaches, innovative organisational schemes and extensive collaboration.

The Commission has set out the **Global Gateway**⁴⁷ agenda where many investments are related to innovative projects, a good basis to expand the bi-regional cooperation at political and private level.

The European Network of Research and Innovation Centres and Hubs in Latin America and the Caribbean (ENRICH in LAC⁴⁸) is a Horizon 2020 project running from 2021-2023. It aims to encourage and promote innovation cooperation between Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, fostering the innovation capacities in both regions and supporting international partnerships, especially in the fields of global societal challenges.

In 2019, the **ENRICH in LAC Centre** was founded as a non-profit association to guarantee sustainability to the network beyond the project's lifetime. It has played an important role in fostering networking, cooperation and capacity building amongst EU and LAC R&I stakeholders, joining the Enterprise Europe Network Brazil (EEN⁴⁹) in 2023 and hosting the EU-LAC Matchmaking Platform⁵⁰.

In this vein, the possibility of establishing a regional innovation centre in the LAC region could be explored that could, once established interact and define actions with EU innovation programs, as is the case of the EUREKA⁵¹ programme. A bi-regional workshop on innovation could be held, alternating between Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe, where the main topics of interest would be reviewed regarding technology transfer, intellectual property, patent development, public-private partnerships, diagnosis, progress and challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe. Financing of such initiative could be explored jointly by the EU and CELAC, given the importance of generating a bi-regional

⁴⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en

⁴⁸ <https://lac.enrichcentres.eu/>

⁴⁹ <https://eenbrasil.ibict.br/>

⁵⁰ <https://europe-lac.b2match.io/>

⁵¹ <https://www.eurekanetwork.org/>

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innovation alliance that allows the development of R&D projects between technology-based companies and an articulation between the institutions and innovation agencies of both regions.

The **European Innovation Council (EIC⁵²)** is Europe's flagship innovation programme launched in 2018 to identify, develop and scale up breakthrough technologies and game changing innovations by supporting top-class innovators, entrepreneurs, small companies and scientists with bright ideas and the ambition to scale up internationally.

There is a general interest to engage in dialogue with CELAC, however, cooperation is sensitive the closer it comes to the market. International cooperation has not yet started; it shall follow the principle of reciprocity and sharing rules and ethics. LAC countries are invited to open a dialogue with the EIC.

EUREKA is an international network established in 1985 as an agreement between 18 countries to foster European competitiveness and integration and to encourage R&D cooperation. Since then it has expanded to include over 45 countries, among them Argentina and Chile, and there is a tendency to further expand the number of members. EUREKA is open to themes. For small- and medium sized companies it is often a first step towards international cooperation activities. The EUREKA Globalstars programme calls for projects (sometimes thematic) with countries outside of the network. LAC countries can benefit from collaboration with organisations working in a range of leading and emerging markets.

Smart specialisation is another promising area for further development, with potential to foster localised, innovation-driven sustainable territorial development. The JIRI SOM Roadmap 2021-2023 takes note of the EU pilot actions aimed at testing the smart specialisation approach in the region of Latin America and Caribbean, such as the one supported under the EU Regional Facility for Development in Transition.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission has produced the following science for policy report in the frame of the International Urban Cooperation Programme in 2020: *"Smart Specialisation, an innovation bridge between the EU and Latin America"*⁵³, which can serve as source of inspiration.

Bi-regional cooperation can be further boosted by effective use of established and well-functioning structures: a number of EU Member States have dedicated offices in CELAC countries staffed with counsellors who can bring the necessary expertise to the development of innovation cooperation between both regions.

⁵²

https://ec.europa.eu/easme/sites/easme-site/files/eic_accelerator_fund_pilot_investment_guidelines_for_applicants.pdf

⁵³ <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC120873>

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The **Pacific Alliance**⁵⁴, an initiative of regional integration comprised by Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru established in 2011, is considered important for the funding of innovative projects, offering competitive advantages for international business and can act as a leverage to access additional funding.

In the EU a mapping of innovation performance has been launched with the 'Innovation Scoreboard'. This comparative approach could be a starting point to assess how well individual LAC countries are performing.

Opportunities for EU-CELAC cooperation in innovation:

- ❖ How to foster, promote, implement and align innovation friendly framework conditions at bi-regional level?
- ❖ Explore collaboration opportunities aiming at fostering bi-regional start-up and incubator networks, facilitating their access to the international market, e.g. by mentoring programs.
- ❖ Explore potential synergies with the activities and network/matchmaking platform of the ENRICH in LAC Centre.
- ❖ Explore the potential of the Global Gateway in the frame of the bi-regional innovation cooperation.
- ❖ Explore potential collaboration opportunities targeting the need for regulating mechanisms in the areas of intellectual property and technology transfer.

8. Open Science

Open Science takes a prominent place in the JIRI SOM Roadmap 2021-2023 and in addition to its own narrative about research and innovation cooperation in general, is specifically highlighted in the chapters on research infrastructures and on health research, due to their particular situation as regards the research data.

In 2022 and 2023 the Commission asked independent experts to prepare a study on **Open Access to scientific results in the EU and LAC**, providing a detailed overview in the regions, specific countries, and making several recommendations for policy actions. The study was published by the Commission in March 2023.⁵⁵

A bi-regional conference on Open Access was organised by the Commission in June 2023, gathering more than 100 experts from the policy environment, to open access experts, to data repositories and others. A main outcome of the conference was the strong support to the recommendations formulated in the independent expert's report and a clear interest to intensify the dialogue and cooperation on Open Science between the two regions. The participants in the EU-LAC conference on Open Access supported

⁵⁴ <https://alianzapacifico.net/en/what-is-the-pacific-alliance/>

⁵⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8a4852c6-bca3-11ed-8912-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-281861965>

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the idea that stronger EU-LAC cooperation on this topic is much needed, and acknowledged the long experience of the LAC research community in it. Further, the reform of research assessment was agreed as an essential enabler for the practice of Open Science. LAC organisations were also encouraged to join the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA⁵⁶).

The uploading of publications in repositories (Open Science Cloud, EOSC⁵⁷), as well as fair data management is being strongly pushed by the HE programme as well as by the CELAC countries.

The questions of digital infrastructure gap or diversity of formats could affect multiple R&I areas, including open science platforms and should thus be examined, to avoid an increase of inequalities in access to science. Both regions can work together to minimise such risks. In particular, deepening such inequalities among researchers working in institutions that cannot afford increased payments due to excessive pricing imposed on authors should be avoided.

Opportunity for EU-CELAC cooperation in Open Science research:

- ❖ Intensify and structure the bi-regional dialogue to develop a better understanding of the approaches on both sides, aiming at promoting best practice policies towards an open access model that is not-for-profit and multi-format, as well as at reforming the current form of research assessment.

9. Other transversal priorities

Other areas for consideration during the Senior Officials Meeting include social sciences and humanities, engineering sciences and mathematics and cooperation in higher education, thus building on the priorities of the current Roadmap: “[...] highlighted the essential contribution of social sciences and the humanities to address the global challenges and recognised that engineering sciences and mathematics are transversal disciplines at the interface of science, technology and the needs of society.”

⁵⁶ <https://coara.eu/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.eosc-portal.eu/>



10. Annex: Background information

10.1. Mobility and human capital development

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) were the most international part of Horizon 2020 (2014-2020), accounting for more than 50% of all participations of third countries. Beyond the support to career development and training of researchers and innovators through trans-national, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility, the MSCA fund the development of excellent doctoral training and programmes, as well as the international and cross-sectoral collaboration and knowledge transfer between institutions.

During the Horizon 2020 programme period, the MSCA have supported almost 2,500 CELAC nationals from 25 different countries. Nearly 30% of them are doctoral candidates, who came to Europe to enrol in one of the MSCA doctoral networks. In the same period, 15 CELAC countries have hosted around 1,400 MSCA fellows of different nationalities, the vast majority of them being seconded research and innovation staff members from Europe. To date, 201 different institutions from 15 CELAC countries and mainly from the academic sector have participated in 212 MSCA-funded projects, hosting research and training activities on almost 440 occasions.

A first trend based on the first seven MSCA calls published under Horizon Europe counts a total of 78 different CELAC institution participations from 11 countries in a total of 64 projects. With just over 60%, most CELAC participation is accounted for in Staff Exchanges, followed by Postdoctoral Fellowships at a little over 20%, Doctoral Networks at around 15% and COFUND Actions at 2%.

The MSCA have an important structuring impact on participating higher education institutions and non-academic organisations by widely spreading excellence, setting standards for high-quality researcher education and training, fair and attractive recruitment and working conditions, but also by strengthening the research capacity of participants and enhancing their global reputation and ability to attract talent from abroad.

Erasmus+ Programme

Brazil (966), Mexico (741) and Colombia (514) have the highest (1st /5th /6th) number of successful Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters applicants in the world. In total, the EU has awarded 3,461 Erasmus Mundus scholarships for LAC students to pursue joint masters in Europe.

Other Erasmus+ actions, like Jean Monnet or Capacity Building for Higher Education, are also available to foster bi-regional mobility projects in an indirect way. Erasmus+ mobilities are a vector of



internationalisation, help improve the quality of higher education and represent an important catalyst in the reform of higher education systems.

10.2. H2020 project EU-LAC ResInfra

The EU-CELAC RI Working Group gained additional stimulus through the H2020 project '[EU-LAC ResInfra](#) - Towards a new EU-LAC partnership in Research Infrastructures', which ran from the end of 2019 to March 2023. The ResInfra-project further strengthened and sped-up the bi-regional Research Infrastructures collaboration through promoting four pilots in the areas of structural biology ([INSTRUCT-ERIC](#)), climate change and bio diversity ([LIFEWATCH-ERIC](#)), cultural heritage ([E-RIHS](#)), and high-performance computing ([RICAP](#)).

The EU-LAC ResInfra project pursued the **construction of a bi-regional collaboration between European Union and the LAC countries**, envisaging a range of different activities such as staff exchanges that will contribute to this aim. The main outcome of the project will be the **development of a stable framework of cooperation** and a roadmap that will:

- promote the internationalization of RIs from both regions,
- reinforce EU-LAC cooperation
- and perform human capital development and capacity building

The EU-LAC ResInfra project used all the results and information obtained for drafting a Sustainability Plan, which was presented to the Working Group for discussion and endorsement in April 2023. The Sustainability Plan includes the following aspects/recommendations for future RI cooperation between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean and was developed specifically for the RI WG:

1. **Political dialogue:** Strengthen the dialogue on RI policies with the following relevant stakeholders, Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation - Senior Officials Meeting (JIRI SOM); *European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)*; Group of Senior Officials Global Research Infrastructures (GSO-GRI); Global Science Forum (OECD-GSF); and with the network of National Contact Points (NCPs) in LAC and Europe.
2. **Visibility and communication:** Continuous updating of interactive map of RIs in LAC; lobbying in international organisations; creation of an inter-institutional communication working group on RI cooperation; show best practices of RI cooperation on web pages and social media of EU & LAC RI, Ministries and R&I Organisation.
3. **Support and financing:** Creation of an EU-LAC RI secretariat that strengthens bi regional cooperation (currently done by AUCI, Uruguay); future EU-LAC Interest Group 5th Joint Call; private funds; MSCA staff exchange, Horizon Europe programmes; CYTED Thematic Network; Global Service Facility).



4. Practical experiences - articulation with different RI projects: Collaboration memorandums; new agreements based on experiences of the four RI pilots; short term exchange programmes for technicians and policy makers.

The follow-up project ResInfra Plus was successfully applied for by the same consortium and will start in early 2024.

10.3. Research actions with LAC participation in Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe

10.3.1. Climate change

Research actions with LAC participation initiated during the H2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 and/or Horizon Europe Programme as of 2021:

- [PONDERFUL](#): POND Ecosystems for Resilient Future Landscapes in a changing climate. (2020-2024). LAC partner: Uruguay
- [FutureMARES](#): Climate Change and Future Marine Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity (2020-2024). LAC partners: Chile, Belize
- [MaCoBioS](#): Marine Coastal Ecosystems Biodiversity and Services in a Changing World (2020-2024). LAC partner: Jamaica
- [DRYVER](#): Securing biodiversity, functional integrity and ecosystem services in drying river networks (2020-2025). LAC partners: Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador
- [SINCERE](#): Coordination and Support Action coordinated by Joint Programming Initiative Climate and funded by the European Commission, aiming to strengthen international climate change research and innovation cooperation, with a 'Flagship Action for Latin America'. The Action aims identification of strategies, partnerships and funding mechanisms for climate change research collaborations between de EU and de CELAC region (2018-2022).
- [BiodivScen](#) ERA-NET Cofund: Promoting and implementing joint programming at the international level to reinforce research on the development of scenarios of biodiversity and ecosystem services (2017-2022), LAC partners: Argentina, Brazil.

10.3.2. Sustainable urbanization

Research actions with LAC participation initiated during the H2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 and/or Horizon Europe Programme as of 2021:

- [WaterProof](#): Urban WASTE and water Treatment Emission Reduction by utilizing CO2 for the PRODUCTION OF Formate derived chemicals (2022-2026): LAC partner: Colombia
- [Trans-Lighthouses](#): More than green - Lighthouses of transformative nature-based solutions for inclusive communities (2022-2026). LAC partners: Argentina, Brazil, Chile
- [AWARE](#): Aquaponics from WASTEWATER Reclamation (2022-2026). LAC partner: Chile.

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- [CONEXUS](#): CO-producing Nature-based solutions and restored Ecosystems: transdisciplinary neXus for Urban Sustainability (2020-2024). LAC partners: Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Peru
- [INTERLACE](#): CO-producing Nature-based solutions and restored Ecosystems: transdisciplinary neXus for Urban Sustainability (2020-2024). LAC partners: Ecuador, Costa Rica, Colombia
- [TUBE](#): Transport derived Ultrafines and the Brain Effects (2019-2023). LAC partner: Chile
- [SOLUTIONSplus](#): Integrated Urban Electric Mobility Solutions in the Context of the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda (2020-2023). LAC partners: Uruguay, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia
- [ePlcenter](#): Enhanced Physical Internet-Compatible Earth-friendly freight Transportation answer (2020-2023). LAC partner: Colombia

Environmental Observations:

- [HYPERNETS](#): hyperspectral radiometer integrated in automated networks of water and land bidirectional reflectance measurements for satellite validation
- [BioMonitor4CAP](#): Advanced biodiversity monitoring for results-based and effective agricultural policy and transformation
- [RAINFOREST](#): Co-produced transformative knowledge to accelerate change for biodiversity
- [LANDMARC](#): LAND-use based MitigAtion for Resilient Climate pathways
- [BIOTRAILS](#): Nexus framework for biodiversity-relevant transformative change
- [TC4BE](#): Transformative Change in Telecoupled Agrofood Systems for Biodiversity and Equity
- [TRANSPATH](#): Transformative pathways for synergising just biodiversity and climate actions

Additionally, the EU is planning to prepare a study on the nature-based solutions in the EU and LAC, which will serve as a basis for a bi-regional NBS dialogue.

10.3.3. Food security, sustainable agriculture and bioeconomy

Research actions with LAC participation initiated during the H2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 and/or Horizon Europe Programme as of 2021:

- [MIDAS](#): Utilization of Marginal lands for growing sustainable industrial crops and developing innovative bio-based products (2022-2026). LAC partner: Brazil.
- [MarginUp](#): Raising the bio-based industrial feedstock capacity of Marginal Lands (2022-2026). LAC partner: Argentina
- [NATURELAB](#): Nature based interventions for improving health and well-being (2023-2027): LAC partner: Peru.
- [Cure4Aqua](#): Curing EU aquaculture by co-creating health and welfare innovations (2022-2027). LAC partner: Chile.
- [PATAFEST](#): Potato crop effective management strategies to tackle future pest threats (2023-2027). LAC partner: Ecuador.

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- [INNOAQUA](#): Innovative Approaches for an Integrated Use of Algae in Sustainable Aquaculture Practices and High-Value Food applications (2023-2027). LAC partner: Brazil.
- [FOSC](#): Food System and Climate: Assessing the impact of climate change on food and nutrition security and designing more sustainable and resilient food systems in Europe and beyond (2019-2024, ERA-NET Cofound). LAC partners: Honduras, Panama, Uruguay
- [MUSA](#): Microbial uptakes for sustainable management of major banana pests and diseases (2017-2021). LAC partners: Costa Rica, Cuba
- [TROPICSAFE](#): Insect-borne prokaryote-associated diseases in tropical and subtropical perennial crops (2017-2021). LAC partners: Jamaica, Chile, Mexico, Cuba
- [TRADITION](#): Long-term coastal adaptation, food security and poverty alleviation in Latin America (2019-2024). LAC partner: Brazil
- [ASTRAL](#): All Atlantic Ocean Sustainable, Profitable and Resilient Aquaculture (2020-2024). LAC partners: Brazil, Argentina
- [AquaVitae](#): New species, processes and products contributing to increased production and improved sustainability in emerging low trophic, and existing low and high trophic aquaculture value chains in the Atlantic (2019-2023). LAC partner: Brazil

10.3.4. Marine research

- [AAORIA](#): All Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (2018-2023). LAC partners: Argentina, Brazil
- [AANChOR](#): All Atlantic Cooperation for Ocean Research and innovation (2018-2023). LAC partners: Argentina, Brazil
- [SARG'COOP](#) interreg project (2019-2022): LAC partners: Caribbean countries
- [TRIATLAS](#): Tropical and South Atlantic climate-based marine ecosystem predictions for sustainable management (2019-2023). LAC partner: Brazil
- [iAtlantic](#): Integrated Assessment of Atlantic Marine Ecosystems in Space and Time (2019-2023). LAC partner: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico
- [AtlantECO](#): Atlantic ECOsystems assessment, forecasting & sustainability (2020-2025). LAC partner: Brazil
- [MISSION ATLANTIC](#): Towards the Sustainable Development of the Atlantic Ocean: Mapping and Assessing the present and future status of Atlantic marine ecosystems under the influence of climate change and exploitation (2020-2025). LAC partner: Brazil

10.3.5. Digital transformation

Research actions with LAC participation initiated during the H2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 and/or Horizon Europe Programme as of 2021:

- [DiBiCoo](#): Digital Global Biogas Cooperation (2019-2022). LAC Partner: Argentina
- [RISC2](#): A network for supporting the coordination of High-Performance Computing research between Europe and Latin America (2021-2023). LAC Partners: Argentina, Brazil, Chile,



- Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Uruguay
- [BELLA II](#): Building the Europe Link to Latin America and the Caribbean (2022-2026): LAC partners: Latin America and the Caribbean (RedClara)
- SPIDER: EU-LAC Strategic Partnership for the Implementation of Digital Dialogues in R&I Cooperation (November 2023-2025). LAC partners: Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica

10.3.6. Health

Research actions with LAC participation initiated during the H2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 and/or Horizon Europe Programme as of 2021:

- [GloPID-R](#): Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness. LAC partners: Mexico, Argentina, Brazil
- [GACD](#): Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases. LAC partners: Argentina, Brazil
- [EU-LAC PerMed](#) : Widening EU-LAC policy and research cooperation in Personalised Medicine
- [International Consortium for Personalised Medicine IC PerMed](#): how the use of personalised medicine approaches will promote "next-generation" medicine in 2030
- [JPIAMR](#): Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance. LAC partner: Argentina
- [CRUZIVAX](#): New anti-infective agents for prevention and/or treatment of neglected infectious diseases (2019-2024). LAC partner: Argentina
- [END-VOC](#): Ending COVID 19 variants of concern through cohort study (2022-2025). LAC partner: Brazil
- [OPADE](#): Optimise and predict antidepressant efficacy for patient with major depressive disorders using multi-omics analysis and AI-predictive tool (2022-2027). LAC partner: Colombia
- [AI4HF](#): Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence for Personalised Risk Assessment in Chronic Heart Failure (2023-2027). LAC partner: Peru.
- [HAIInnovPrev](#) (ERASMUS+): Empowering Nursing high education with innovative healthcare-associated infection prevention and control practices in Latin America (2023-2025). LAC partners: Brazil, Peru
- Translational collaborative cancer research between Europe and CELAC: Under this programme, the following projects are being funded:
 - [ELEVATE](#): Early detection of cervical cancer in hard-to-reach populations of women through portable and point-of-care HPV testing (2019-2023). LAC partners: Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil
 - [CLOSER](#): Childhood Leukemia: Overcoming distance between South America and Europe Regions (2019-2023). LAC partners: Argentina, Chile, Uruguay
 - [EULAT Eradicate GBC](#): Establishment and Exploitation of a European-Latin American Research Consortium towards Eradication of Preventable Gallbladder Cancer (2019-2025). LAC partners: Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina



10.4. Initiatives supporting the implementation of the CRA

10.4.1. Service Facility in Support of the Global Approach in Research and Innovation

The Global Service Facility was launched by the European Commission in September 2022. Within the framework contract, a specific contract supports the operation of the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation and the implementation of the EU-CELAC Common Research Area. Activities within this contract are done in closest cooperation with the European Commission and the Pro Tempore CELAC Presidency.

The structural support to the JIRI ensures the coordination of cooperation policies and activities at bi-regional level, the streamlining of communication, instruments and background documents, including under each of the four Common Research Area pillars, the preparation of biannual Senior Officials' Meetings, and the organisation of regional thematic R&I policy workshops to implement the Common Research Area priorities.

In addition to supporting the JIRI, the following services are dedicated specifically to the LAC region:

- Support to the EU-Latin America and Caribbean Working Group on research infrastructures (ongoing)
- Support to the EU-Caribbean Ocean Research cooperation (ongoing)
- Future support to the EU-CELAC Policy Dialogue on Open Access
- Future support to the EU-CELAC Policy Dialogue on Nature-Based

10.4.2. EU-LAC Foundation

Created in May 2010 by the VI EU-LAC Summit of Heads of State and Government, the [EU-LAC Foundation](#) began its activities in November 2011 at its headquarters in Hamburg, Germany, first as a foundation according to German civil law. On 25 October 2016 in Santo Domingo, the EU and CELAC signed the agreement to establish the EU-LAC Foundation as international organisation.

The EU-LAC Foundation brings together the EU and the CELAC member states with the following objectives:

- Encouraging further mutual knowledge and understanding between both regions,
- Strengthening the EU-CELAC bi-regional partnership process, with increased participation of the civil society,
- Enhancing the mutual visibility between both regions, as well as of the bi-regional partnership itself.

The EU-LAC Foundation fulfils its objectives through activities such as encouraging debates through seminars, conferences and publications, thus creating new contact opportunities and promoting the

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exchange between stakeholders in both regions. It promotes events related to the topics addressed in EU-CELAC Summits, launches bi-regional programmes and encourages studies on topics of bi-regional relevance.

Among others, the EU-LAC Foundation co-organised the following events relevant to topics of the bi-regional partnership in R&I in 2023:

- [Workshops for Institutional Capacity Building in Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union](#): Focus on the Andean Region, Bogota, Colombia, 22-24 February 2023
- Dialogue '[Perspectives and proposals for renewing the strategic partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean](#)', Madrid, Spain, 3-4 April
- [EU-LAC Knowledge Forum](#), Montevideo, Uruguay, 24-25 April
- [EU-LAC Just Transitions Forum](#), Barcelona, Spain, 15-16 May 2023
- [EU-LAC Multi-Actor Dialogue Forum on Just Green Transition, Inclusive Digital Transformation, and Social Cohesion](#), Costa Rica, 4 October 2023
- [International Conference 'Food Security: Challenges and Opportunities for EU-LAC Relations'](#) taking place in Barcelona, Spain, 9 November 2023
- Workshop '[Digital Transformation as an Enabler for the Improvement of Food Security and Clean Energy Transition](#)' taking place in Panama City, Panama, 16-17 November 2023

10.4.3. EURAXESS Latin America and the Caribbean

EURAXESS is a European Commission initiative focused on researcher mobility and career development and aimed at strengthening scientific collaboration between Europe and the rest of the world. EURAXESS is active in 43 European countries and has representatives in six countries/regions worldwide.

Based in Brazil and Colombia, EURAXESS Latin America and the Caribbean promotes three types of activities: The dissemination of information, networking of researchers, and organisation of events by providing the following free services:

- [EURAXESS LAC website](#) provides information on jobs and funding opportunities, as well as recent developments of interest to the research community and relevant events.
- A mailing list for interested researchers or institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean to receive regular updates on open calls, research events, funding, jobs, policy developments, and collaboration between Europe and LAC countries.
- Facebook and Twitter pages in Spanish focusing on researchers based in the Latin American and Caribbean region: EURAXESS LAC.
- Facebook and Twitter pages in Portuguese focusing on researchers based in Brazil: EURAXESS Brasil.
- A group on [LinkedIn](#): EURAXESS Worldwide – Internationally Mobile Researchers.

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- Personalised support for researchers and institutions concerning their international mobility projects by addressing your queries to lac@euraxess.net
- On-site presentations of the EURAXESS network and services offered at institutions or scientific events in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico, as well as introducing the main European funding programmes for mobility (MSCA, ERC).
- Virtual presentations (webinars and videoconferences) in any LAC country.

10.4.4. LAC NCP Network

The LAC NCP Network is a platform of National Contact Points in Latin America and the Caribbean which provides information regarding cooperation opportunities, calls for the creation of consortia and projects, as well as seminars, conferences and Info Days on Horizon Europe. It promotes the participation of LAC NCPs in training activities organised by the European Commission and other relevant actors, and pursues to establish long-term twinning and partnering schemes between EU NCPs and LAC NCPs. The Network has established a specific platform for LAC NCPs to allow an efficient exchange of best practices and to engage with their European counterparts in priority areas of common interest.

To ensure sustainability of the NCP Network, Senior Officials from 18 LAC countries have signed a Letter of Interest in 2017 which aims at achieving sustainability and continuous strengthening for this LAC NCP Network, created in the frame of the [ALCUE NET](#) project (Latin America, Caribbean and European Union Network on Research and Innovation, 2013-2107). Governments have nominated NCPs and collaborate in order to define their competences and profiles.

In 2018, the LAC NCP Network was maintained by the Uruguayan Government under the coordination of Mrs. Claudia Romano.

Since 2019 the LAC NCP Network is supported by the Service Facility to strengthen the designation and motivation of the NCPs in this region and thus the entire Network for Latin America and the Caribbean for Horizon 2020 and the upcoming Horizon Europe programmes.

The present work plan includes: the promotion of Horizon Europe and the importance of designating NCPs, the regular update of the database of LAC NCPs officially named to the European Commission, the developments of a web platform for information and dissemination, publication of newsletters, a schedule of public virtual meetings (general trainings, sharing of Best Practices for NCPs and virtual participation to European Information Days), organise the structure of the LAC NCP Network, a regular monitoring and evaluation of the CELAC participation in activities and projects, among others.

Strengthening of the network of National Contact Points should achieve a greater impact and more effective involvement, helping with knowledge transfer, creating networks and disseminating relevant information.



10.4.5. ENRICH in LAC

[ENRICH in LAC](#), the European Network of Research and Innovation Centres and Hubs in Latin America and the Caribbean, is a Horizon 2020 project running from 2021-2023, aiming to encourage and promote innovation cooperation between Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, fostering the innovation capacities in both regions and supporting international partnerships, especially in the fields of global societal challenges.

To date the project has played an important role in fostering networking, cooperation and capacity building amongst EU and LAC R&I stakeholders. The project facilitates collaboration between EU and LAC actors, building a solid network as well as boosting capacity. Focus is given to selected thematic fields such as health, bioeconomy, digitalisation, renewable energy and sustainable urbanisation; as well as to horizontal topics such as capacity building on international cooperation, research and innovation management.

ENRICH in LAC has ensured that European and LAC R&I actors acquired practical knowledge and detailed hands-on information about bilateral cooperation opportunities and supporting mechanisms along the internationalization journey. Engagement with other EU initiatives such as EURAXESS and EEN has been ensured. Through ENRICH in LAC, European R&I and business actors have access to broad and diverse networking opportunities, and cost-saving possibilities in form of qualified and accredited soft-landing-hubs. Furthermore, ENRICH in LAC has become a main hub and contact point fostering and promoting R&I cooperation between the two regions, raising awareness about relevant topics to the European and LAC science, technology and innovation cooperation.

To guarantee the sustainability of the project, the ENRICH in LAC Centre was founded in 2019 as a non-profit association. The Centre deploys a financially feasible business model, having secured 44 members and associates, from which 30 are paying members.

Among others, the capacity building and networking activities offered by the project and centre comprise the following activities:

- Bespoke training sessions, e. g. on 'Foresight and Innovation Management'
- Innovation talks and knowledge pills
- Roundtables, e.g. on 'New technologies for the production and application of green hydrogen'
- Market immersion programme in Brazil
- Funding guide
- Outreach grants
- Innovation Tour to Brazil
- Soft-Landing Hub Twinning Programme
- Europe-Latin American Caribbean RTI Networking Matchmaking Platform

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In addition, the ENRICH in LAC Centre has joined the Brazilian branch of the Enterprise Europe Network ([EEN](#)) in 2023. EEN is a business promotion network created by the European Union in 2008. One of EEN's main objectives is to support the internationalisation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises from more than 60 countries. To this end, it promotes links between these companies via its online platform.

10.4.6. EU-CELAC Interest Group

The [EU-CELAC Interest Group](#) (IG) is a group of funding agencies from Latin America, the Caribbean countries and the EU Member States and Associated Countries cooperating in bi-regional science, technology and innovation. The European Commission is participating in this initiative with a specific view of maintaining the overall coherence with the Governance of the EU-LAC relations. The EU-CELAC IG was founded in March 2017 on initiative of Germany and Argentina to maintain the very active bi-regional network built up by the European Commission-funded ERANet-LAC project (Network of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean Countries on Joint Innovation and Research Activities, 2013-2017).

The EU-CELAC IG builds on the longstanding collaboration experience and mutual trust established in the framework of ERANet-LAC, ALCUE NET and several BILAT projects. So far, four EU-LAC joint calls have been organised, aiming to support the implementation of the Common Research Area and to create further added value to its four pillars: Mobility of Researchers; International outreach of Research Infrastructures; Increased thematic cooperation to address global challenges; Innovation.

The EU-CELAC IG defines priority topics and instruments of common interest, taking the suggestions of its members into consideration. The participating funding agencies individually decide in which joint activities and themes they want to get involved (variable geometry).

The last EU-LAC Joint Call was launched in 2021 with the participation of 15 funding organisations from 13 countries (7 EU, 6 LAC), among them CONFAP from Brazil comprising a total of 22 state funding agencies. From 38 submitted multilateral projects meeting the eligibility criteria, 10 were selected for funding but following the withdrawal of one project by its coordinator, 9 projects are presently being implemented. Thematic areas and corresponding number of ongoing projects are: Global Challenges - Interactions and integration between the climate science, SSH and other communities (2), Health I - Personalised Medicine (2), Health II - EU-LAC Regional Hubs: Integrating Research infrastructures for Health and Disease (2), Biodiversity - Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Research Infrastructures (2), Energy - Interoperability of energy data spaces for an optimized exploitation by producers and prosumers / Research Infrastructures (1).

The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, BMBF, and the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology, FECYT, jointly coordinate the Interest Group and would very much welcome a LAC partner among the coordination team. FECYT also hosts the secretariat of the EU-LAC IG.