

## EU-Latin America and the Caribbean Forum: Partners in Change Youth, Civil Society and Local Authorities

### Panel “Partnerships and Multi-Stakeholders’ Engagements: Democracy, Knowledge, Gender Equality and Just Transitions” - Concept Note-

**Organiser:** European Union (DG INTPA and the European External Action Service, EEAS)

**Co-organiser:** EU-LAC Foundation

**Place:** Maison de la Poste, Brussels, Belgium

**Date:** 14 July 2023

**Segment:** 2 hours (15:30-17:30 tbc)

#### 1. Background and Rationale

The partnership between the European Union (EU), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries is based on close historical and cultural ties as well as on shared values and aspirations, such as commitment to democracy, human rights, the search for sustainable development for prosperous and inclusive societies. Over the years, both regions have progressively built a relationship based on mutual respect and open dialogue. In 1999 a bi-regional strategic partnership was established, which provides a consensual and dynamically evolving framework for political dialogue and cooperation in specific areas of mutual interest.

By decision of the Heads of State and Government of both regions in 2010, the EU-LAC Foundation was established and has been as an instrument to promote the bi-regional partnership. Made up of the 60 countries of the EU and LAC, as well as the EU itself, for a total of 61 members, the Foundation became an international intergovernmental organisation in May 2019.

Throughout its 12 years of existence, the Foundation has contributed to strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to engage in and promote bi-regional policy dialogue. Indeed, one of the Foundation’s mandates is to work with agents of civil society and bring them closer to the processes of bi-regional dialogue. Therefore, within its thematic work areas, the Foundation has been active in developing its relations with civil society organisations (CSOs) -including academic institutions- and supporting their collaboration and the consolidation of networks in both regions.

Bearing in mind its mandate, **the EU-LAC Foundation has aimed to play an active role in bringing into dialogue CSOs and political decision-makers from both regions in the framework of the EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government to be held on 17-18 July 2023.**

This meaningful role has been achieved through the organisation **of thematic and sectoral Fora with CSOs**, the purpose of which has been to develop recommendations and proposals for the bi-regional cooperation to be transmitted to Member States in the framework of the EU-CELAC Summit. In the first semester of 2023, the EU-LAC Foundation organised the following Fora:

a. **EU-LAC Forum of Journalists** in Stockholm, Sweden (23-24 March 2023)

<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/ii-eu-lac-forum-journalists>

The EU-LAC Foundation, with the support of the Nordic Institute of Latin American Studies (NILAS) of the University of Stockholm and the Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS), organised the II EU-LAC Forum of Journalists with media workers from the European Union (EU), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The forum was held in Stockholm, Sweden on March 23-24, 2023.

The Forum participants were invited to exchange on the status of the EU-CELAC strategic partnership in times of multiple, global crises and with a view to the EU-CELAC summit in July 2023, to generate inputs towards a new narrative on the bi-regional partnership from a societal perspective, and to participate in a session on collaborative journalism and evidence-based reporting.

The Forum was attended by 28 journalists from LAC and the EU with varied backgrounds, working for specialised magazines, journals, television, newspapers and traditional digital media. Together with the partner organisations and external guests, a total of 58 participants joined the event, on-site or virtually via Zoom.

Over two days, participants identified the key challenges facing journalism in both regions: the global decline of democracy, growing distrust of journalists by societies, economic and technological challenges, political interests and, above all, the safety of journalists. They agreed on five priority areas for common bi-regional action in the field of journalism: drug trafficking and organized crime; money laundering and corruption; climate change and the environment; democracy; and geopolitics. They concluded that transnational journalistic projects could contribute significantly to the advancement of bi-regional knowledge in these areas and that EU-LAC media collaborations are an important way to create more visibility for the strategic partnership. To this end, the journalists called for a stronger commitment by LAC and EU governments to press freedom and the safety of media workers, as well as the creation of funds and platforms for bi-regional journalism projects.

b. **EU-LAC Knowledge Forum** in Montevideo, Uruguay (24-25 April 2023)

<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/eu-lac-knowledge-forum>

The EU-LAC Knowledge Forum was held at the Spanish Cooperation Training Centre in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 24 and 25 April 2023, and brought together around 106 face-to-face and virtual participants - mostly representatives of EU and LAC networks, associations, students, academic, university and scientific organisations, and experts from international organisations. The partners of the event were the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI), the Ministry of Education and Culture of Uruguay and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Forum dialogues revolved around challenges, good practices, and recommendations to strengthen bi-regional cooperation in science, technology and innovation, the EU-LAC Common Higher Education Area, and access, equity and quality of education and skills.

Throughout the two days, good practices were shared at bi-regional, regional, sub-regional and national levels - many of which deserve to be strengthened or even revived. Participants emphasised the need to strengthen the 'researcher mobility', 'global challenges', and 'innovation' pillars of the EU-CELAC Joint Research and Innovation Initiative (JIRI) through an

action plan and funding, taking as an example the working group on the 'research infrastructures' pillar. It was advocated to create the minimum conditions to foster an institutional framework for the EU-CELAC Higher Education Area, based on principles such as information sharing, mutual trust, earmarking of financial resources, building and convergence on existing ones, graduality and quality, developing gradual operational steps, in dimensions such as accreditation and recognition of degrees, quality assurance; mobility schemes, etc.). Another recommendation focused on expanding mechanisms and resources to facilitate joint research in key areas to generate evidence and solutions to address common challenges. There was also consensus on the need to strengthen links and cooperation between scientific actors, the private sector, and broader societies. Given the multitude of instances, forums and spaces for academic cooperation and RDI, concrete ideas about coordination processes and mechanisms were formulated. Finally, participants articulated the necessity to generate joint reflections on the transformation of higher education between the two regions, to foster policies aimed at generating greater equity and fostering key capacities, and to promote multilingualism in science.

c. **EU-LAC Gender Equality Forum** in Berlin, Germany (11-12 May 2023)

<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/eu-lac-gender-equality-forum>

On 11-12 May 2023, the EU-LAC Foundation organised the EU-LAC Gender Equality Forum at the German Federal Foreign Office and the representative office of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Berlin - Germany and in hybrid format. The Forum brought together around 140 face-to-face and virtual participants - mostly representatives of civil society networks and organisations working on gender equality and the rights of girls and women as well as LGBTIQ+ people, experts from academia and international organisations specialised in the field, and government representatives from LAC and the EU. The co-hosts of this Forum were the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Argentina and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Throughout the two days, good practices were shared at bi-regional, regional, sub-regional and national levels on economic and social gender inequalities, gender-transformative actions in the face of climate change, as well as women's leadership in politics and peace building. Structural gender issues that were aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic were addressed, including patriarchy and the persistence of gender-based violence in all its dimensions; incomplete enforcement of applicable international conventions and national laws; obstacles of women and LGBTIQ+ persons to accessing justice systems, financial services, land tenure, and care services. Participants also reflected on bottlenecks in bi-regional and international cooperation aimed at the full realisation of the rights as well as the physical, political, and economic autonomy of girls and women, as well as LGBTIQ+ people. Finally, a series of recommendations were made, including the strengthening of organisations and alliances working on gender equality and bi-regional dialogues with the active participation of civil society organisations; the need to generate more data and statistics disaggregated by gender to monitor the situation on specific issues (impact of climate change, peace building, among others); the strengthening of access to and retention of women in education and vocational education systems; the commitment to a bi-regional pact for care; the promotion of gender-just green, digital and social transitions; the implementation of effective mechanisms for the protection of women human rights and environmental defenders in LAC; the adoption of due diligence legislation in the EU that ensures that business activities do not have negative

impacts on people and the environment; the production and dissemination of guides, protocols and awareness-raising campaigns on the issues addressed during the Forum.

d. **EU-LAC Just Transitions Forum** in Spain (15-16 May 2023)

<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/eu-lac-just-transitions-forum>

The EU-LAC Foundation, in collaboration with the *Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals* (IBEI), the *Diputació Barcelona*, “la Caixa” Foundation and the Club of Rome, organised the Just Transitions Forum. The forum was held in Barcelona, Spain on May 15-16, 2023.

The **Just Transitions Forum** aimed to generate a discussion space for experts, researchers and other civil society actors on the challenges and opportunities of the bi-regional cooperation LAC-EU in the areas of: climate change adaptation and mitigation, just energy transition and inclusive digital transformation. In addition, the purpose of the Forum was to generate contributions and policy recommendations from civil society to the bi-regional dialogue that will take place at the next EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

The Forum brought together 54 face-to-face participants and 44 virtual participants, which totalled 98. Most of the attendees were representatives of civil society organisations, academia, and international organisations such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), among others. Representatives from private sector and trade unions - mostly members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)- also participated. In addition, the Forum was attended by representatives of CELAC Member States and the European Union (EU) as observers. Two former Ministers and two former Vice-Ministers from the LAC region, who currently hold positions in international or civil society organisations, among other bi-regional leaders, participated in the Forum.

Participants advocated for: transparency and public access to information on environmental impacts and climate finance; generating quality public information on costs associated with climate change and the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); strengthening the local approach to climate finance and the role of affected communities; fostering EU-LAC bi-regional dialogue and cooperation on CBAM; strengthening EU-LAC bi-regional technical and financial cooperation for energy democratisation; prioritising cooperation that promotes value-added production in LAC; ensuring respect for indigenous and local communities' rights, including the guarantee of free, prior, and informed consent on mining and energy projects; investment in technological infrastructure and connectivity with priority in rural areas and vulnerable populations LAC; promoting cooperation between LAC and the EU to close the digital divide, among others.

The contributions and policy recommendations generated at EU-LAC Forum of Journalists, Knowledge Forum, Gender Equality Forum, and Just Transitions Forum will be presented at the **Panel “Partnerships and Multi-Stakeholders’ Engagements: Democracy, Knowledge, Gender Equality and Just Transitions”**, which will be held on 14 July 2023 in Brussels, in the framework of the “**EU-LAC Forum: Partners in Change**” organised by the European Union with the support of a Steering Group of CSOs.

The “**EU-LAC Forum: Partners in Change**”, to be held on 13 and 14 July 2023 in Brussels, will bring together youth leaders, civil society representatives, and local authorities from both regions, in order to discuss opportunities to build a sustainable and inclusive future. The expected outcome of the Forum is the preparation of recommendations ahead of the EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

## 2. Objective

The Panel “**Partnerships and Multi-Stakeholders’ Engagements: Democracy, Knowledge, Gender Equality and Just Transitions**” aims to present the conclusions, contributions, and policy recommendations of the Civil Society Fora, organised by the EU-LAC Foundation and partner institutions, to the EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

## 3. Methodology and Participants

The Panel “**Partnerships and Multi-Stakeholders’ Engagements: Democracy, Knowledge, Gender Equality and Just Transitions**” will be held at the “**EU-LAC Forum: Partners in Change**” organised by the European Union in collaboration with a Steering Group of CSOs from the EU and LAC. The Panel will have 6 panellists from CSO, whose representation and participation in the EU-LAC Fora was outstanding, 4 commentators representing International Organisations, and 2 moderators from the EU-LAC Foundation:

- **Moderators of the Panel:**
  - [Adrián Bonilla](#), Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation
  - [Leire Pajín Iraola](#), President, EU-LAC Foundation
- **EU-LAC Knowledge Forum Panellists:**
  - [Myriam Moïse](#), Secretary General - Universities Caribbean (UC); Université des Antilles, Martinique
  - [Soledad García Ferrari](#), Vice-Chair - [Working Group on Latin America – Coimbra Group](#)
- **EU-LAC Gender Equality Forum Panellists:**
  - [Elektra Lagos Koetsenruijter](#), Director - International Network of Human Rights Europe (RIDHE), Belgium
  - [Javier García de la Oliva](#), Head of Country Support Europe and Americas – Action Aid International, Spain; Secretary of Board – CONCORD
- **EU-LAC Just Transitions Panellists:**
  - [Maiara Folly](#), Executive Director and Co-Founder of Plataforma CIPÓ, Brazil
  - [Mark Urban](#), Director for International Cooperation, Academic Relations, and Communication at CLARA- BELLAI, Uruguay

- **Commentators:**

- [Cecilia Alemany](#), Regional Director of UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean
- [Ana Gúezmes](#), Chief of the Division for Gender Affairs , Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- [Kristin Lang](#), Head of division Global Partners, European Investment Bank
- [Fazia Pusterla](#), Representative of Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group Office in Europe

- **Coordinators of the Panel and Rapporteurs:**

- [Anna Barrera](#), Senior Programme Manager for Knowledge, Culture and Gender, EU-LAC Foundation
- [Daniela Araujo](#), Programme Manager for Sustainable Development and Economic Issues, EU-LAC Foundation

**The panel will consist of two parts. The first part** will start with an introduction by the President of the EU-LAC Foundation (5 min.). Afterwards, the panellists will present the conclusions, contributions, and policy proposals of each Forum (8 min. per panellist – about 50 min. in total). This will be followed by a round of comments from the international organisations invited (5 min. per commentator – 20 min. in total). The first part of the panel will last about 75 min. in total.

**In the second part of the panel**, the panellists will interact with the audience with the support of the moderators for about 40 minutes. This time would allow a round of 5 to 6 questions, followed by the panellists' answers. The second part will conclude with remarks by the Director of the EU-LAC Foundations (5 min.). In total, the second part of the panel will last about 45 min.

In addition, at least two journalists from the EU-LAC Forum of Journalists will be invited to participate in the audience.

#### 4. Languages

The Panel will use two languages: Spanish and English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided by the organisers of the event to facilitate the dialogue.