

EU-LAC SEMINAR

Advancing the whole-of-society approach in European Union – Latin America and the Caribbean cooperation against transnational organised crime

JUNE 15, 2026 BRUSSELS
EUROPEAN CRIME FIGHTING WEEK

CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA





EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

EU-LAC Seminar in the framework of the EU Crime Fighting Week

‘Advancing the *whole-of-society approach* in European Union – Latin America and the Caribbean cooperation against transnational organised crime’

Concept Note

Organiser: EU-LAC Foundation

Location: NH Brussels EU Berlaymont, Belgium

Date: 15 June 2026

Objective

The EU-LAC Seminar ‘Advancing the whole-of-society approach in European Union – Latin America and the Caribbean cooperation against transnational organised crime’ in the framework of the EU Crime Fighting Week will serve as a platform to:

- **Facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue** and exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences between civil society actors, local governments and communities’ representatives, private sector actors, practitioners, academic experts and researchers in the endeavours against transnational organised crime;
- **Produce a space for revising** the evolution, achievements and areas of opportunity of bi-regional and sub-regional initiatives in this policy area;
- **Contribute to scaling up the *whole-of-society approach*** through identifying best practices of inclusive public policies that respect human rights as well as comprehensive strategic partnerships;
- **Foster bi-regional cooperation building on** experiences-sharing, best practices and future opportunities between various actors in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe
- **Expected outcomes:** A policy report building on the key takeaways, best practices and action-oriented recommendations

Participants and format

- **Participants:** Civil society and state actors, local governments and communities’ representatives, private sector actors, practitioners, academic experts and researchers
- **Duration:** A half-a-day programme structured in different sessions based on the main topics for discussion
- **Languages:** English and Spanish with simultaneous interpretation



Context

The 4th Community of Latin America and the Caribbean States (CELAC) – European Union (EU) Heads of State and Government Summit that took place in Colombia in November 2025 provided a timely opportunity amidst a global changing landscape for high authorities from these regions to discuss a wide range of pressing topics and renew their commitment to cooperate on citizen security, justice and the fight against organised transnational crime, the promotion of trade and investment, the defence of multilateralism, fostering social cohesion and digital transformation¹.

A Joint Declaration followed, whereby Heads of State and Government recognise that the global drug problem requires a joint response based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, §36 “welcomed the progress achieved in our dialogue and cooperation on citizen security, while recognising that today’s growing challenges demand joint comprehensive, cross-sectoral strategies and reaffirm our determination to scale up bi-regional efforts at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels to address common citizen security challenges and strengthen the rule of law”. Moreover, the high authorities, §38, “valued the role of the [CELAC–EU Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs](#) and support the objectives of [La Paz Declaration](#)”².

A milestone in bi-regional cooperation was determined by the launch of the [EU-LAC Alliance for Citizen Security](#)³ at the margins of last November Summit. The Alliance builds on the political momentum of the Partnership on Justice and Security cited in 2023 Summit, and it provides “a value-based framework for cooperation to address these threats, collectively and multilaterally, with full respect for human rights and the Rule of Law at all levels”. In addition, it builds on existing cooperation and it mobilises, for this purpose, the relevant State institutions, agencies, and platforms, as well as the private sector and non-state organisations and associations —across sectors and in both regions, including the European outermost regions and overseas countries and territories.

The subscribers in Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU of this Alliance acknowledged “the contribution of EU-funded initiatives including [EL PAcCTO 2.0](#), [COPOLAD III](#), [EUROFRONT](#), the [EU Global Threats Programme](#), and cybersecurity actions including those under the [EU-LAC Digital Alliance](#) and [GLACY-e programme](#) as well as platforms like [EMPACT](#) in enhancing our strategic partnership [...]” and further acknowledged “the important initiatives taken in Latin America and the Caribbean to address the challenges posed by transnational organised crime, including through the [Amazonian Cooperation Treaty Organization](#), [MERCOSUR](#), [Andean Community](#), [the Brasilia Consensus](#), as well as

¹ Community of Latin American and Caribbean States & European Union. (2025). Joint declaration of the CELAC-EU Summit 2025. Santa Marta, Colombia.

² European Union & Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. (2024). La Paz Declaration: EU–CELAC Mechanism. European External Action Service.
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/2024La%20Paz%20Declaration-Councildoc-EU-CELAC%20Mechanism_1.pdf

³ European Union External Action. (2025) Press Statement: EU-LAC Alliance for Citizen Security. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/press-statement-eu-lac-alliance-citizen-security_en



the establishment of [AMERIPOL](#), and the key work of CARICOM bodies, specifically the [CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security \(IMPACS\)](#) and the [Regional Security System \(RSS\)](#).

Committed to swiftly implement its commitments, the Alliance’s Declaration §4 strives for “a **whole-of-society approach** to citizen security, in accordance with national legal frameworks and the need to address the root causes, socioeconomic and risk factors, including those that make different segments of society more vulnerable to crime, prioritizing the development of preventive measures, which should be built through inclusive public policies, respect for human rights as well as comprehensive strategic partnerships—especially with civil society and the private sector, as well as with international agencies, academia, local governments and communities⁴”. Some of these relations were already at the centre of the initiatives that paved the way for the EU-LAC Alliance for Citizen Security⁵, including those crafted and implemented by the EU-LAC Foundation as part of its [Strategic Roadmap](#) towards the 4th CELAC-EU Heads of State and Government Summit in Colombia in 2025.

Background

Following its mandate of contributing to the CELAC-EU Summit process and the intergovernmental dialogue by bridging decision-makers with civil society and private actors for the production of valuable inputs on priority issues, the EU-LAC Foundation has included security and illicit economies as one of its strategic action lines in its work plans since the bi-regional Summit in Brussels in 2023. This mission has been carried out by means of implementing multi-stakeholder fora in the fashion of the *whole-of-society approach* in close collaboration with and complementing the endeavours of those institutions and initiatives enshrined in the Security Alliance Declaration.

In June 2024, the EU-LAC Foundation and the European External Action Service organised a [Seminar on Cooperation to combat the illicit maritime trade of drugs](#) in the framework of the EU Crime Fighting Week and the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU. This multi-stakeholder seminar produced a series of strategic analyses and recommendations coming from key civil society actors, governments and international organisations on how to combat the illicit maritime trade of drugs as well as to strengthen current and future forms of bi-regional cooperation.

In April 2025, as part of its [Strategic Roadmap](#) towards the 4th CELAC-EU Summit in Colombia, the EU-LAC Foundation crafted, together with the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and with the support of the City of Hamburg, the workshop ‘[Port Cities Fighting Transatlantic Drug Trafficking](#)’. Recognising the challenges that local, national and international actors face along the commodity chain with the surge in supply and demand of drugs, the repercussions for public health as well as the importance of fostering the *whole-of-society approach*, this workshop offered a

⁴ EU-LAC Alliance for Citizen Security: Joint Declaration. European External Action Service. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025/documents/v12Nov_EU-LAC%20Alliance%20for%20Citizen%20Security%20Joint%20Declaration.pdf

⁵ Council of the European Union. (2025). Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Interior and/or Security of the Member States of the European Union and the Ministers with responsibility for security matters of the Member States of the Latin American Committee on Internal Security (ST 6403/2025). <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6403-2025-INIT/en/pdf>



space to generate interdisciplinary action-oriented discussions between a wide array of experts from both regions. Its core focus was twofold: to facilitate knowledge and information exchange on the dynamics of drug trafficking from Latin America and the Caribbean to Europe and addressing the role of ports and port cities therein and to provide policymakers, civil society actors and relevant stakeholders with recommendations on how to canalise endeavours in this matter.

These recommendations were presented in a [Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on the fight against Illicit Drug Trafficking \(IDT\)](#) was held in the city of Lima in September 2025, organised by the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU-LAC Foundation as part of a work agenda aimed at strengthening bi-regional cooperation in addressing Illicit Drug Trafficking (IDT). This Dialogue moreover provided a space whereby government representatives of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and representatives of EU Member States; officials of EU institutions; academics and experts on the field; representatives of international organisations, i.e. the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), of research centres and civil society organisations generated substantial contributions on the dynamics of illicit cocaine trafficking, on possibilities for cooperation, on threats posed by synthetic drugs and institutional response capacities, on port security and customs cooperation to improve control systems and on challenges and prospects to strengthening common and shared responsibility towards IDT and other illicit economies.

Building upon the cross-sectoral approach mandated by bi-regional authorities, these multi-stakeholder produced salient cross-cutting takeaways, namely that civil society and private sector's contributions are identified as pivotal in the knowledge and local feedback on implemented strategies and policies effects, as well as gaining access to information retained by those parts of society not easily accessible to the state. Also, that cooperation in action-taking, for instance, including the private sector in strategies' planning (e.g. controls in ports and customs) ensures greater cooperation and therefore has a stronger impact in combatting IDT. Civil society's role was stressed due to its potential for a better and wholesome grasp on the socioeconomic factors that drive supply and demand of drugs, in addition to how IDT and organised crime affect, impact and "work with" – i.e. recruiting – society and private sector. Further recommendations highlight and stress the necessity for the *whole-of-society approach* recognising that IDT and drugs consumption should be understood, and therefore addressed, as a social problem⁶.

The political and social momentum generated by the 4th CELAC-EU Summit and the launch of the Alliance for Citizen Security have given traction to all these collective endeavours by numerous entities and initiatives and therefore the EU-LAC Foundation has included in its work plan for 2026 the realisation of a Seminar in the framework of the EU Crime Fighting Week.

⁶ Lassalle, M.; et al. (2026) Opportunities for cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union in the area of security and in addressing drug trafficking under the principle of Common and Shared Responsibility. *EU-LAC Foundation*: <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/publications>



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Programme

<p>15 June 2026</p> <p>Venue: NH Brussels EU Berlaymont</p>	
13:30 – 14:00	Registration/Welcome coffee
14:00 – 14:20	<p>Opening session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberto Brunori, Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation • Pablo Sader, Ambassador of Uruguay to the European Union, Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC • Pelayo Castro, Director/Deputy Managing Director for the Americas at the European External Action Service <p>Group picture</p>
14:20 – 15:00	<p>Keynote: one year after the establishment of the Alliance for Citizen Security, which are the key achievements, results and future opportunities for bi-regional CELAC-EU cooperation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlos Alvarado Quesada, former President of Costa Rica (2018-2022), President of the Latin American and Caribbean Group on Security and Democracy (GLACSED) • Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia, Ambassador of Peru to the European Union, Co-presidency of the CELAC-EU Coordination and Cooperation mechanism on Drugs • Olivier Luyckx, Head of Unit for Latin America and the Caribbean, Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), European Commission
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee break/Networking space

<p>15:15 – 16:30</p>	<p>How can private sector actors and local communities better contribute to the whole-of-society approach in bi-regional cooperation against transnational organised crime?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Céline Chazelas-Baur, European Ports Alliance Public Private Partnership Coordinator • William O’Neill, High Commissioner’s Designated Expert on Haiti • Atlee Rodney, Deputy Executive Director Strategic Services and International Affairs, Regional Security System (RSS) • Elizabeth Dickinson, Deputy Director for Latin America, International Crisis Group • Charlotte Geertman, PhD researcher FORT-PORT project, Erasmus University Rotterdam <p>Moderator: Lieselot Bisschop, Expert on Corporate Crime, Erasmus School of Law</p>
<p>16:30 – 16:45</p>	<p>Coffee break/Networking space</p>
<p>16:45 – 18:00</p>	<p>How are academia and civil society actors enriching the whole-of-society approach in bi-regional cooperation against transnational organised crime and what can be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ana Arjona, Founder and Director, Red de Estudios Sobre Drogas en América Latina (REDESDAL) • Sarah David, Head - Global Partnership on Drug Policies and Development (GPPD), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH • Luciana Torchiaro, Regional Advisor Latin-America and the Caribbean, Transparency International Secretariat • Romain Le Cour, Director Haiti and Caribbean Observatory, Global Initiative Against Organised Crime (GI-TOC) • Tony Duffin, Chair Advisory Committee of Correlation – European Harm Reduction Network <p>Moderator: Alessia Schiavon, Executive Director, Fundación Internacional Baltasar Gastón (FIGBAR)</p>
<p>18:00</p>	<p>Closing remarks</p>