



EU-LAC Foundation  
Fundación EU-LAC

EU-LAC FOUNDATION'S NEWSLETTER

# End of mandate 2020-2024: Achievements, challenges and future perspectives

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## ALBERTO BRUNORI APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EU-LAC FOUNDATION



The Board of Governors of the EU-LAC International Foundation has appointed Alberto Brunori as its new Executive Director for the 2024-2028 mandate. Brunori, an Italian national with an extensive background in international relations and human rights, will lead the organisation in its mission to enhance bi-regional partnerships between the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). He will officially assume his new role on 26 July 2024.

Brunori has had a distinguished career with notable roles in the United Nations. He recently served as the Regional Representative for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Central America and the English-speaking Caribbean, overseeing human rights monitoring and coordinating a regional team. His previous roles include OHCHR Representative in Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico. Brunori has received several prestigious awards, including the Orden del Quetzal en grado de Gran Cruz from Guatemala and the Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia from Italy.

As the new Executive Director, Brunori is poised to lead the EU-LAC International Foundation into a future of enhanced collaboration between the two regions. His appointment underscores the organisation's commitment to strengthening ties and promoting joint initiatives that benefit both the EU and LAC regions.

### Statement by Alberto Brunori, appointed Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation:

I am honoured to have been appointed as the new Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation by its Board of Governors. I will certainly dedicate all my efforts to strengthening such a relevant organisation, which plays a crucial role in the bi-regional relationship between the European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

I will closely and attentively follow the significant work that the EU-LAC Foundation team has been carrying out under Adrian Bonilla and Leire Pajin, to whom I extend my personal thanks for the warm welcome and introduction to the Foundation's operations.

I am a convinced supporter of multilateralism, cooperation, and dialogue—whether between states, between civil society and the state, or among the civil societies across regions. I recognise the vital roles played by all actors, such as the private sector and academia, in the exchange of ideas, cultures, and initiatives between the EU and LAC. I will continue to implement the mandate of the EU-LAC Foundation based on those same principles.

Inspired by our common values and guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, we will work together with a common vision for the future, as underlined in the Final Declaration of the III EU-CELAC Summit.



## THE EU-LAC FOUNDATION AND ITS RECENT HISTORY

By Adrián Bonilla

The EU-LAC Foundation was established just over twelve years ago as a result of a period marked by intense contacts between the two regions. The first decade of the 21st century, identified in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, was a period of relative prosperity due to global demand for the region's export products, mostly primary goods. This boom allowed for the emergence of visions that projected the need to generate regional processes of greater political density. The described moment was also characterised by the search for internal regional options, culminating in the creation of CELAC. The European Union then found a counterpart encompassing all the countries in the region, and the Foundation was established in this context to express the strategic relationship institutionally, with the aim of becoming an intergovernmental international organisation, which eventually happened in 2016.

On the European side, situations such as migration crises and conflicts on the periphery set the background for its priorities at the time. In this context, there was an eight-year political lapse characterised by the absence of Heads of State Summits, the most important event in the bi-regional strategic relationship.

In addition to this circumstance, the 2020-2024 authorities of the Foundation began their functions amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic. The normal ties of relationships between people and institutions were physically and spatially fractured, and for a year and a half, the institution's initiatives were built with virtual resources but did not stop. On the contrary, they multiplied. Moreover, the pandemic opened the opportunity to establish forums for proactive and frank discussion among international organisations, governmental authorities from both regions, scientists, and civil society entities to identify and propose common bi-

regional policies in a scenario characterised by urgency and scarcity, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The EU-LAC Foundation, on the other hand, had to face the challenge of building information platforms and knowledge production that would support its own relevance in a context marked by the absence of high-level regional contacts. Being an international organisation that depends on the common policies of heads of state, persisting in promoting the agenda and the relationship itself became a goal that had to be achieved through strategies prioritising the visibility of the institution and the link between Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Thus, the multiplication of activities, publications, and initiatives, even with very limited resources, became the appropriate instrument for achieving this purpose. This led to another strategic device: taking advantage of each initiative to create spaces for interaction among diverse actors that could eventually generate networks.

Particularly important, given the moment experienced, was the promotion of the bi-regional relationship, which, in addition to being the organisation's mission, was an internal policy aimed at consolidating its presence and guaranteeing its survival in difficult conditions. Given the vast agenda agreed between the regions, the Foundation identified five areas of action to execute this purpose: development issues (just transitions), culture, knowledge (higher education, science, and technology), and multilateralism, aimed at supporting the political dialogue of governments and societies as much as possible.

These backgrounds and institutional decisions allowed the Foundation to articulate with its stakeholders and the support of successive pro tempore presidencies of CELAC,

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as well as the office of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The EU-LAC Foundation was able to develop 175 different international activities in these four years and produce 104 publications, including books, policy briefs, newsletters, and working papers. The bi-regional relationship became more evident, and the visibility of the Foundation improved significantly.

One of the strategic advantages of the international organisation is that its scope of action requires consensus in decision-making, but its practices and legal delimitation force the construction of positive agendas.

The challenges of the Foundation are essentially the same as those of the bi-regional relationship. These are two conglomerates of countries with diverse realities and some evident asymmetries. Moreover, their foreign policies do not always coincide. However, in a world where the international order is rapidly transforming, there are shared options that diversify the spectrum of international political relations for both. The two regions face global challenges, and in several of these issues—those that are part of the declarations of high authorities—there are coincidences that arise from common needs and, eventually, many shared values. This was ultimately the backdrop for the management of the last four years.



## RESILIENCE AND PROGRESS: THE 2020-2024 MANDATE

By Leire Pajín

During the last four years, I have had the honour of presiding over the EU-LAC Foundation, a responsibility I assumed at a critical moment due to the pandemic. Since then, I have worked altruistically alongside Adrián Bonilla and an exceptional technical team to strengthen relations between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. Despite the difficulties imposed by the health crisis, we managed to strategically reorient our activities and create essential spaces for dialogue and exchange.

The balance of these years is undoubtedly positive. The pandemic did not stop us; on the contrary, it forced us to adapt and find new ways of interaction. During this time, we have succeeded in getting several countries to ratify the Constitutive Agreement of the Foundation, which has been a crucial step in consolidating us as a solid international organisation. This commitment has also been reflected in the financial and human support received, which has been vital to maintaining our activities.

One of our greatest achievements has been the ability to multiply our activities and partnerships. We have expanded our reach to new organisations and sectors and strengthened our networks through policy briefs, publications, and communication actions. Collaboration with universities, civil society, and other international organisations has been key to this success. Partnerships have been essential, allowing us to jointly respond to the common and complex challenges faced by our regions.

An example of this is the EU-LAC Women's International Network (EU-LAC WIN), created in November 2021. The Network, together with allied institutions, has organised interregional dialogue cycles on climate action and gender, as well as on comprehensive care systems. In this regard, one of the main goals in the near future is to implement the Roadmap for the Bi-regional Care Pact.

Collaboration with the members of the Board of Governors has also been remarkable. The constant support of the co-presidencies of CELAC and the EU, as well as of the ambassadors and members of the Board, has been fundamental. I especially want to highlight the support of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, Josep Borrell, who has always trusted in the work of the Foundation. Finally, I want to deeply thank the Foundation's technical team. Their dedication and talent have been the foundation of all our achievements. They have worked tirelessly with limited resources, demonstrating exemplary commitment.

The EU-LAC Foundation is prepared to face new challenges and continue contributing to the strengthening of bi-regional relations. The recent Summit in Brussels, a boost to the strengthening of bi-regional relations, has marked the beginning of a new stage and opened up new opportunities and challenges for us. In this context, the Foundation must and can play a significant role. The organisation still has much more capacity to follow up on the process between Summits, help implement the agreements, and catalyse these agreements with other civil society organisations and international bodies. Looking ahead to the next EU-CELAC Summit in Colombia, we must maintain the momentum of bi-regional ties, as well as continue working to implement the agreements reached and ensure that the meeting yields concrete results and adopts appropriate cooperation instruments. This will make it possible to ensure that the green and digital transition is just and that the commitment to strengthening bi-regional relations continues.

Now, as I bid farewell to my term, I am confident that the EU-LAC Foundation will continue to prosper and successfully face future challenges, always with the goal of strengthening the alliance between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.



WANDERER, YOUR FOOTSTEPS ARE THE ROAD...

## Mandate Report

2020-2024: Challenges, objectives, and results

ADRIÁN BONILLA - LEIRE PAJÍN



## MANDATE REPORT 2020-2024: CHALLENGES, OBJECTIVES, AND RESULTS

The contributions made during the presidency of Leire Pajín and executive direction of Adrián Bonilla are systematised in a report, that serves as a compendium of the steps taken to foster the organisation's aims, how those translated into activities and what outcomes were glanced.

[Read the Report!](#)

## News

### International Symposium on Collaboration for Global Health took place in Berlin

25 June 2024



Co-organised by the EU-LAC Foundation and the German-Latin American Centre for Research in Infectious Diseases and Epidemiology (GLACIER), this high-level dialogue united researchers from various disciplines, specialised organisations, government officials, and interested members of the public from Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The event aimed to share pandemic experiences and discuss strategies for developing stronger, more reliable cooperation structures and mechanisms to facilitate more coordinated action between the regions.

[More information!](#)

### EU-LAC Foundation organises workshop on the bi-regional partnership one year after the summit

14 June 2024



The workshop held in the framework of the LASA 2024 Congress in Bogota, Colombia, brought together European and Latin American researchers to stimulate academic debate on the agenda for the bi-regional relationship, as defined by the Heads of State and Government during the EU-CELAC Summit in Brussels in 2023. The needs and expectations of the regions in light of their geopolitical environment, economic and trade needs and social problems were analysed from an interregional and comparative perspective.

[More information!](#)



## EU and LAC representatives discuss cooperation to combat the Illicit Maritime Trade of Drugs

10 June 2024



As part of Crime Fighting Week in Brussels, the EU-LAC Foundation organised the seminar “EU-LAC cooperation to combat the illicit maritime trade of drugs” in collaboration with the Belgian EU Presidency 2024 and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The event aimed to foster dialogue among key actors from civil society, governments, and international organisations regarding the illicit maritime drug trade between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. Additionally, it sought to examine current and future forms of bi-regional cooperation.

[More information!](#)

## III EU-LAC Forum of Journalists held in Rio de Janeiro

7 June 2024



On June 7, 2024 the EU-LAC Foundation, in partnership with the Getulio Vargas Foundation School of Communication, Media and Information (FGV ECMI), organised the III EU-LAC Journalists Forum with media professionals from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean. This year’s event focused on the opportunities and challenges that the digital transformation presents to the field of journalism, with a focus on the use and regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the fight against disinformation.

[More information!](#)

## Brazil and Bulgaria approve the agreement establishing the EU-LAC Foundation as an international organisation

5 June 2024



The Federative Republic of Brazil and the Republic of Bulgaria approved the Constituent Agreement that transforms the EU-LAC Foundation into an International Organisation, paving the way for imminent ratification. The act of ratification by those two countries signals towards their commitment to the Foundation. This makes them vital players in the efforts of the EU-LAC Foundation to build bridges between the governments and civil society groups of the two regions.

[More information!](#)

## Colloquium: “Social protection systems, public policies and social challenges of aging in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean”

30 May 2024



The EU-LAC Foundation together with the Institut des Amériques and in collaboration with the French Development Agency (AFD), Expertise France and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), organised on the 29 and 30 May the Colloquium 2024 “Social protection systems, public policies and social challenges of ageing in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean” within the framework of the Latin America and Caribbean Weeks.

[More information!](#)

## EU-LAC Foundation Board of Governors met in Hamburg

24 May 2024



The X Ordinary Meeting of the Board of Governors of the EU-LAC Foundation took place on Friday, May 24, 2024. At this first meeting of 2024, the Board of Governors received an update on the functioning of the organisation, the initiatives implemented and the results achieved during 2023 and throughout the term of office of the current authorities.

[More information!](#)

## XIII Strategic Triangle Meeting: Latin America and the Caribbean - Europe - Africa

16 May 2024



The XIII Strategic Triangle Meeting between Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Europe took place on 15 and 16 May in Lisbon, Portugal. The EU-LAC Foundation co-organised a panel discussion on financing for sustainability initiatives for the Caribbean in the framework of the multiple needs generated by climate change. Our director, Dr Adrian Bonilla, was one of the keynote speakers in a high-level dialogue, as well as one of the participants in panel number VI entitled “Dissecting the EU’s Global Gateway”.

[More information!](#)

## Recent Publications

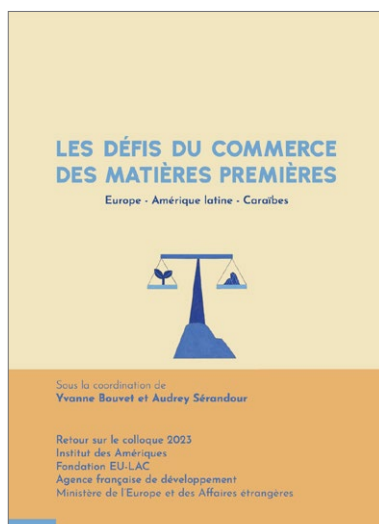


### Report. Workshop to articulate the efforts of actors promoting the “Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation” and the “EU-CELAC Common Space for Higher Education”

The present publication presents the results and written contributions generated from a workshop implemented by the EU-LAC Foundation on 8-9 April 2024 at the Cervantes Institute, Hamburg. The workshop aimed to promote articulation between representatives of public institutions, scientific associations, and networks involved in the activities and meetings of the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (JIRI), and/or those who have worked towards the constitution of the EU-CELAC Common Higher Education Area.

The goals were to highlight the role of Higher Education and the university sector in generating the competences and knowledge required to address the multiple crises of our times, identify shared priorities and gaps that need to be overcome to link ongoing processes and initiatives, explore possibilities for cooperation, and formulate proposals to guide cooperation between both regions in these areas.

[Read the publication!](#)



### The Challenges of Commodity Trade: Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean

This publication is the result of the colloquium on “The challenges of commodity trade. Europe - Latin America - Caribbean” which was held in May 2023 within the framework of the Latin American and Caribbean Weeks (SALC). This annual meeting has been organised since 2012 by the Institut des Amériques (IdA) in partnership with the Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères (MEAE) and the EU-LAC Foundation. In 2017, the French Development Agency (AFD) joined the organising committee, becoming a key partner of this meeting.

An unmissable SALC event, this conference promotes the analysis and strengthening of bi-regional relations between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, bringing together specialists from academia, science, diplomacy, public administration, business and civil society to discuss topical issues.

The 12th edition was held against the background of a desire for socio-ecological transition, in which non-renewable raw materials play a key role; but also in a context of escalating armed conflicts, especially in Ukraine, which has accentuated the need to reflect on the supply of raw materials, particularly energy. Its scientific coordinators, Audrey Sérandour and Yvanne Bouvet, have brought together multiple perspectives and explored avenues for cooperation.

[Read the publication!](#)

## Blog Articles

### Bridging the Gender Gap: Unleashing Creativity in the Caribbean through EU-LAC Strategic Alliances

From the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean:

**Olayinka Jacobs-Bonnick**, National Programme Officer for Culture/Coordinator, Creative Caribbean Project; **Paula Istúriz Caveró**, Programme Specialist for Social and Human Sciences; and **Angelica Shilova**, Assistant for Gender Equality and Empowerment (UNV).

8 July 2024



The Caribbean, a region known for its vibrant culture and rich tapestry of music, art, cuisine, and literature, continues to face pressing human rights concerns, particularly gender inequality. Despite ongoing efforts by activists, organisations and governments, gender disparities persist across various spheres, from education to socioeconomic opportunities. These disparities are further entrenched by social, political, and economic systems steeped in patriarchy and historical colonial experiences.

[Continue reading](#)

### Where is the Euro-Latin American strategic partnership headed?

**Gaspar Estrada**, Political scientist at Sciences Po, specialising in Latin America

8 May 2024



This is where one of the main challenges of the Euro-Latin American strategic partnership lies: how to keep alive the dynamic generated by the Brussels summit? From a political perspective, the situation in both regions has not been very encouraging.

Working to implement the investments and programmes announced in Brussels last year and to promote exchanges on education, gender equality, energy transition, science, technology and research, as well as climate change, is essential to ensure that the roadmap agreed by the heads of state and government in Brussels for the next EU-CELAC summit in 2025 remains a political priority on both sides of the continent.

[Continue reading](#)



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Edition: EU-LAC Foundation

Graphic Design: Juan Barrera



Federal Foreign Office



The EU-LAC Foundation is funded through the voluntary contributions of its Members and in particular, for this activity, from the European Union and the German Federal Foreign Office.