

The Leiden Rectors' Declaration
Towards the creation of a EU–LAC knowledge area
ANNEX

Preamble

The Rectors of the Universities gathered at the initiative of Leiden University, with the support of the Coimbra group and the Grupo Montevideo, met in Leiden on January 19 and 20, 2006, in order to discuss issues for consideration in the IVth Summit Meeting, to be held in May in Vienna, between Heads of State and Governments of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the European Union.

The Rectors subscribe to the terms of the Guadalajara Declaration, and agree in particular with the statement that the EU-LAC “partnership is rooted in deep historical and cultural links and shared principles of international law and values of our peoples” and furthermore that the EU-LAC recognise the “insoluble link between development, culture, science and technology”.

They support the creation of a EU-LAC Knowledge Area, which according to the Guadalajara Declaration “should be built on the results of the successful science and technology bi-regional dialogue and include reinforcement of cooperation in science and technology, higher education, innovation and information and communication technologies”. They fully agree that science and technology are of paramount importance “for the economic and social development of the EU-LAC countries”. They think it therefore consistent to further projects which “include Latin America and the Caribbean as a target region for the EU Framework Programmes in these sectors, thereby contributing to deepening and developing bi-regional links and encouraging mutual participation in research programmes”

The universities present at this meeting are research-intensive institutions with specific roles in society, which maintain high standards of quality in teaching, develop strong postgraduate programmes, and are committed to fundamental and applied research.

The broader aim of universities is, however, not only research for products, but also knowledge in a far broader sense of the word, constituting a collective patrimony of society. Universities have an obligation to preserve ways of knowing; the dialogue, the curiosity, and the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives that have been nurtured in a long common historical tradition. The international inflow and outflow of teaching staff, researchers and students is fundamental, not only to the exchange of knowledge, but also to the economies, growth and development of all countries.

In order to attain these objectives, to make the transfer of knowledge more efficient and less bureaucratic, and, in particular, to implement the bi-regional EU-LAC knowledge area, the rectors have decided that the following issues need to be addressed:

1) Visa requirements should be relaxed in order to facilitate academic mobility:

- The requirements for visa should be less time-consuming, less expensive and less complicated, in view of the fact that the exchange of teaching staff, researchers and students is always for a limited, well-defined period.

- These requirements should also be more realistic, for instance, with regards to the required income for knowledge migrants.

2) Legal obstacles should be removed for the recognition of academic degrees, including joint degrees:

- For the establishment of a bi-regional knowledge area, the circulation of knowledge and mutual cooperation is crucial. Universities participating in these programmes guarantee the high level quality of the programmes because they feel responsible for the programmes they offer, the researchers they deliver, and the degrees and diplomas they award.

- When universities decide to foster bi-regional cooperation and promote exchange programmes, these programmes require recognition and joint programmes require joint titles. This implies the removal of legal impediments at the various levels involved: at bachelor's, master's, but foremost at PhD and postdoctoral levels.

3) Strategic cooperation should be prioritized in the following specific areas:

- i) biodiversity and environment
- ii) public health
- iii) sustainable development
- iv) nanosciences, nanotechnology, and new materials
- v) public safety, human rights, immigration and migration, urban issues
- vi) cultural diversity

Achieving tangible results in these areas would provide a visible demonstration of the benefits of the EU-LAC higher education space, and could generate the momentum needed to stimulate joint work in other areas at the next stage.

These areas are perfectly aligned with the areas stipulated by the European Union's new Research Framework Programme 2007-2013, EU Seventh (FP7).

The rectors have selected these areas for their relevance to both regions, in terms of research, development, and innovation and furthermore for being essential to the economic and social development of the EU-LAC countries.

In order to realize the bi-regional cooperation in the prioritized areas, funding is indispensable. The universities involved are prepared to invest in the above-mentioned programmes of strategic cooperation; however given the existing conditions of academic financing on both sides of the Atlantic, especially in the LAC-region, substantial financial support from the EU-LAC governments is essential to further the objective of the joint knowledge area.

4) Co-funding should be offered for:

— **academic mobility, mainly for doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows.**

To increase and maintain bi-regional cooperation, there is a strong need for bi-regional academic mobility, which should start at an early stage and include longer stays abroad. This implies that mobility programmes have to be made more attractive for all those involved.

To stimulate bi-regional continuity in cooperation, it is fundamental that specific attention is given to exchanges at the doctoral and post-doctoral levels.

A key principle should be that equal numbers of doctoral students and postdoctoral fellowships should be awarded in the two regions. The Latin American PhD scholarships would be held for a minimum of one year, to be extended to two, and postdoctoral fellowships would be held for a

minimum of two years at European Universities, as would European PhD scholars and fellowships in Latin America. The PhD scholars and fellowship holders would be selected primarily on the basis of their individual research proposals and potential, but the postdoctoral fellows would also be expected to act as promoters and advocates of their respective networks, and they would meet at least once a year with their counterparts in the same priority knowledge area, as well as with members of an appropriate scientific committee responsible for overseeing each area.

Consideration should be given to increasing the number of PhD scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships available to each scientific committee, by means of negotiation of co-financing agreements. National governments, research funding institutions, international organizations, etc. could be invited to provide matching funding for the prestigious post-doctoral appointments in the prioritized research areas. However, each of the six scientific committees would have to retain overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and focus in their respective project areas. Similar systems would have to be set up for funding PhD research.

A 3 year programme for postdoctoral and doctoral research is proposed as follows:

- 120 post-doctoral awards (3 years, including salary, support costs, and travel budgets)
- 6 Scientific Committees (3 years running costs, including web pages, administrative support, travel budget, annual conferences)
- 1 overall monitoring body, (with responsibilities for quality control, reporting, supervising dissemination, and developing the post-doctoral programme into a long term project)
- A budget for doctoral awards and the promotion of postgraduate courses and sandwich doctoral programmes throughout the two regions, in each priority area (4 million euros per scientific committee in the first cycle)

These details are shown in the budget further along.

— **the establishment of bi-regional doctoral programmes**

To foster structural long-term bi-regional cooperation in the various areas of research and to cement the exchange of the doctoral scholarships, the establishment of joint-programmes at the doctoral level is of crucial importance.

— **the opening up of a Latin American window within Erasmus Mundus**, as stated in the Guadalajara Declaration in May 2004:

§ 90 “We will also encourage the participation of higher education and research institutions from the two regions in the Erasmus Mundus Programme.”

— **to promote the establishment of structural bi-regional networks of higher education and research,**

A wide range of academic institutions throughout all the nations of the two regions could be linked together through horizontal research and teaching networks in these six areas. Effective research collaboration, however, requires the establishment of a core group of leading practitioners in each subject, with the time and resources to co-ordinate the rest. The Rectors recommend establishing a bi-regional doctoral and postdoctoral competition in each of these areas, as the catalyst for this purpose.

It is vital that a wide range of nationalities and institutions within each region contribute to the construction of this bi-regional space. Therefore each of the six scientific committees should

include leading researchers from at least three institutions from different countries in each region (appointing one university on each side of the Atlantic as the principal sponsor of that research network). No university should be the principal sponsor of more than one research network at one time, and the principal sponsor would have the residual responsibility for hosting any doctoral and post-doctoral fellows not accommodated elsewhere in the network. One of the two principal sponsoring universities would also host the web page and support staff for each network. This would generate a core group of approximately 36 universities in the two regions contributing to the six scientific committees, of which twelve would become principal sponsors.

There should also be one overall bi-regional steering committee composed of the Rectors, or, in practice, of the chairpersons of the six scientific committees. This body would have responsibility for ensuring the required levels of transparency and equality in the postdoctoral awards processes; for maintaining equality of resources and performance across the six subject areas; and for monitoring the breadth of national, institutional and disciplinary participation in these bi-regional research projects.

The scientific committee for each sector running one of the research networks would also have the responsibility of ensuring a wide dissemination of the results of the network’s research, not only through the web page, but also through conferences, publications, and perhaps the provision of consultancy services. In addition, these committees would have the duty of encouraging relevant research and teaching in other universities throughout the bi-regional space. This might be facilitated through the granting of full or partial doctoral awards, through the promotion of master’s courses, or through the circulation of best practice teaching resources to interested parties. Such initiatives should not be limited to the core group of supporting institutions, but would need to extend throughout the centres of expertise in all the countries of the two regions.

— **the improvement of ICT–infrastructure for teaching and research.**

Besides the importance of “bridging the digital divide and providing universal access”, as put forward in the Guadalajara Declaration, it is important to create a joint knowledge area, provide access to digital library collections, and offer assistance with the establishment of e-learning systems (virtual mobility).

Budget for 3 years from 2007 to 2010, in euros:	million euro
* 6 prioritized research areas : 10 000 000 per area	60
* 6 scientific committees: annual conferences, + 1 monitoring body (quality control, reporting, and developing the post-doctoral programme into a long term project)	12
* doctoral awards, postgraduate courses, sandwich doctoral programmes	24
*120 postdoctoral fellowships at 150,000 euros (3 years, including salary, support costs, and travel budgets)	18
* erasmus mundus [100 students per year at 4 million]	12

* ICT programme + digital library collections	15
Total	141

47 million per year

Conclusion

The Rectors fully support the agreement put forth in the Guadalajara Declaration, that the “allocation of funds for bi-regional cooperation”, is essential “in order to strengthen the process of bi-regional partnership between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.” For the establishment of a joint knowledge area this implies an initial budget of 141 million euro for three years. This means an annual contribution of 47 million euros, 20 million euros for research in the six prioritized areas, 18 million euros for the doctoral scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships, 4 million for Erasmus Mundus students, and 5 million euros for the improvement in ITC. In the long run, this support should be a minimal structural commitment to the EU-LAC knowledge area.

The Rectors of the following universities were present at the meeting in Leiden:

Latin America and Caribbean

Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina	Grupo Montevideo
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil	Grupo Montevideo
Universidade Federal de Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil	Grupo Montevideo
Universidad de Chile, Chile	
Universidad de la Habana, Cuba	
Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico	
Universidad Autónoma. de Nuevo León, Mexico	
Universidad de la República, Uruguay	Grupo Montevideo
Universidad de los Andes, Venezuela	

European Union

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium	Coimbra Group
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Germany	Coimbra Group
Università di Padova, Italy	Coimbra Group
Universiteit Leiden, The Netherlands	Coimbra Group
Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal	Coimbra Group
Universidad de Granada, , Spain	Coimbra Group
Universidad de Salamanca, Spain	Coimbra Group
University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom	Coimbra Group
University of Oxford, United Kingdom	Coimbra Group