



**European Economic and Social Committee**

**FIFTH MEETING OF EUROPEAN UNION-LATIN AMERICAN-CARIBBEAN CIVIL  
SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

**LIMA, 16, 17 AND 18 APRIL 2008**

**FINAL DECLARATION**

The European Economic and Social Committee organised the Fifth Meeting of EU-Latin American-Caribbean civil society organisations in Lima (Peru) on 16, 17 and 18 April 2008.

The meeting brought together representatives of civil society organisations from the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean, including their national and regional advisory bodies.

The participants are highly appreciative of the support of the European Commission, and the hospitality shown by the Secretariat-General of the Andean Community and the International Labour Organisation in connection with this meeting.

At this Fifth Meeting, the participants adopted the following declaration, addressed to the Summit of Heads of State and Government which will meet in Lima (Peru) on 16 and 17 May 2008, and undertake to follow up on the requests and proposals it puts forward, and to contribute to their successful application.



**1. Introduction**

1.1 This declaration, in line with the four previous meetings of EU-LAC civil society organisations held from 1999 to 2006, reiterates the participants' commitment to contribute to the biregional strategic partnership between the two continents.

1.2 The participants state the need for relations between the countries and blocs of Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe to be geared to strengthening democracy and economic and social development, the promotion and creation of high-quality employment, and consumer protection. The main objective must be to improve standards of living while respecting and guaranteeing social, political, economic and cultural rights, especially the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples and most vulnerable sectors.

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- 1.3 The participants note that negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement have been concluded with the Caribbean, that there has been a sustained political will to reach an association agreement with Mercosur, and that new negotiations for association agreements with both Central America and the Andean Community have begun.
- 1.4 The Fifth Meeting discussed the following four topics: strengthening and involving organised civil society in the regional integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean; the sustainable development dimension of EU-LAC relations, and civil society involvement in both the current negotiations for association agreements between the EU and Latin America and the monitoring of agreements already signed; social inclusion and migration in Latin America and the Caribbean; and, lastly, civil society's contribution to the issue of climate change and energy resources.

## **2. Strengthening and involving organised civil society in the regional integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The participants:

- 2.1 note that strengthening regional integration is a tool to boost development; this regional integration must include an economic, social, labour, environmental and cultural dimension;
- 2.2 point out that to achieve social and territorial cohesion in any integration process, representative civil society organisations must be involved in decision-making, and that their proposals must be considered when national and regional development agendas are drawn up;
- 2.3 call for the recognition and strengthening of the role of the institutional advisory bodies existing in the different regions, and, when there is agreement among all stakeholders, for the establishment of such advisory bodies where they do not yet exist;
- 2.4 call on the Latin American and Caribbean political authorities to support their representative civil society organisations by means of appropriate official recognition and financial, training and information measures that will enhance their strength, independence and capacity for proposal and dialogue. They must pay special attention to equal rights, and the training and participation of women. The same approach must apply to indigenous peoples. They also urge governments to implement measures and policies to foster the emergence of consumer and user organisations where they do not exist, and to strengthen those that do;
- 2.5 note the substantial increase in European funds for empowering and strengthening civil society and its institutions in the 2007-2013 programming period, and call for these funds to be made more accessible and their use more flexible, by means *inter alia* of individually-designed projects to strengthen regional advisory bodies;

- 2.6 appreciate the progress made since the Vienna Summit in 2006 in strengthening relations between the EESC and the regional advisory bodies in Latin America and the Caribbean, which have led to programmes of reciprocal visits, joint initiatives, cooperation protocols and exchanges of experience. This positive trend should however be consolidated;
- 2.7 demand that subregional and biregional integration processes be guided by the principle of transparency;
- 2.8 the negotiation processes must provide the population as a whole and its representative organisations with appropriate and effective mechanisms for consultation and active participation and for access to adequate information on the negotiations, thereby ensuring greater support and social legitimacy;
- 2.9 call for joint organised civil society committees to be set up to take part in and monitor both the negotiations between the EU, Mercosur, Central America and the Andean Community, and the implementation of the agreements in force with Mexico and Chile;
- 2.10 welcome the creation, under the Caribbean-EC Economic Partnership Agreement, of the CARIFORUM-EC Consultative Committee comprising members of civil society organisations from both sides, with the aim of monitoring the implementation of the economic, social and environmental aspects of the Agreements.

### **3. The sustainable development dimension of EU-LAC relations**

The participants:

- 3.1 consider that, with regard to EU-LAC relations, agreements must be conceived as instruments for sustainable development and lead to greater social cohesion;
- 3.2 consider that access to markets must be fair and balanced in order to achieve sustainable development;
- 3.3 also stress that these agreements must ensure clear, fair and predictable legal rules for investment, reinvestment, labour rights and environmental matters, as well as the development of an internal market in the various regional blocs and the establishment of independent and transparent regulatory agencies;
- 3.4 consider that key factors for economic and social development include the creation and improvement of infrastructure, better access to financing for SMEs, promotion of cooperatives with their internationally recognised principles, of other social economy enterprises and of the local/regional economic fabric, and the introduction of customs compensation and solidarity mechanisms;

- 3.5 acknowledge that the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development influence each other mutually, and are crucial to boosting the competitiveness of the productive fabric;
- 3.6 call for impact and sustainability assessments on the economic, social and environmental effects of the agreements, as well as on the contribution they might make to the general development of the relevant regions, to be carried out sufficiently prior to the conclusion of the negotiations. In this respect, they urge that these assessments be made by independent bodies chosen by common agreement, and that civil society organisations be effectively involved in defining any measures that emerge from the assessments;
- 3.7 reiterate that the purpose of the trade and economic provisions of these agreements must be to boost the complete economic development of the beneficiary regions. To this end, it is essential to recognise the existence of any imbalances that may arise between the parties and to apply the necessary compensatory measures;
- 3.8 call for agreements to include a social and labour chapter enshrining the "decent work" concept (promoting proper work, promoting social protection, guaranteeing the application of universally applicable fundamental labour and social rights, that also cover self-employed workers) and safeguarding the social and labour rights set out in the ILO's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, ILO Recommendation 193 on cooperatives and Conventions 155 and 169 concerning, respectively, occupational safety and health and indigenous and tribal peoples, the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Mercosur Socio-occupational Declaration, and the Andean Social Charter;
- 3.9 call for the socio-occupational dimension to include mechanisms for appeal, arbitration and resolution of disputes arising from the application of core labour standards, and for employers' and employees' organisations to be involved in the operation of these mechanisms;
- 3.10 welcome the inclusion in the CARIFORUM-EC EPA of a social chapter, which includes, inter alia, an explicit recognition of the benefits of the ILO core labour standards and of decent work for the economic efficiency, innovation and productivity of Caribbean countries;
- 3.11 consider that damage to the environment poses a serious threat to our societies and economies. It is consequently their view that all the industrialised countries must be at the forefront in responding to this challenge, and must transform this risk into an opportunity for reducing inequalities and laying the foundations for sustainable development which will, in any case, require a global commitment and an adjustment to the current model of production and consumption;

- 3.12 welcome the inclusion in the CARIFORUM-EC EPA of an environmental chapter, which stipulates that the sustainable management of natural resources and of the environment will be applied and integrated at every level of their partnership.

#### **4. Social inclusion and migration in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The participants:

- 4.1 point out that the promotion of peace, democracy, the rule of law, social cohesion and economic development in countries should be basic tools for tackling the issue of migration in a comprehensive way. The same factors that undermine social cohesion are also responsible for migration: poverty, overexploitation of natural resources, and lack of social protection and of education;
- 4.2 are aware that Europe was formerly the main source of migratory flows and is today a growing destination for migrants, and therefore ask that the EU contribute through agreements and programmes that facilitate legal immigration, integration of migrants and their families, and the establishment of a co-development policy between the host countries and countries of origin;
- 4.3 call for a proactive and comprehensive immigration policy, founded on clear admission and residence rules that respect human dignity. Such a policy should be set within a framework of migrants' rights, as set out in United Nations conventions (United Nations International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families), ILO conventions (C 97, C 143 and C 157) and, more broadly, of compliance with international human rights agreements and treaties;
- 4.4 warn of the possible negative effects on developing countries of the brain drain and the departure of the younger sections of their populations, and call for migration policies to take account of these aspects by introducing compensatory mechanisms;
- 4.5 propose that the EU, its Member States and countries of origin in Latin America and the Caribbean analyse circular migration procedures (work and residence permits, transfer of pension rights, recognition of professional qualifications) in order to facilitate migration by means of flexible, transparent mechanisms;
- 4.6 welcome, in this respect, the signature of the Multilateral Iberoamerican Convention on Social Security at the 17th Iberoamerican Summit, aimed at ensuring that migrant workers can enjoy in their countries of origin the benefits earned from their work in host countries, and call for this convention to be applied effectively and without delay;
- 4.7 advocate an EU migration policy to be managed in cooperation with the Latin American and Caribbean countries of origin, so that migration flows can serve as a factor for the economic

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development of these countries. They are convinced that, in order to achieve this, it is essential that other policies in areas such as trade, investment and development cooperation be consistent with this aim, and that efforts be made for the comprehensive exchange of best practices in social, labour and anti-poverty policies;

- 4.8 recommend, among other co-development activities, fostering business activity at local level, along with social economy initiatives to generate employment and make use of local resources; and call for the promotion of policies to support these initiatives in order to create businesses that contribute to the growth and competitiveness of the local productive fabric so that it is possible for people to stay in their countries of origin;
- 4.9 call for fair and non-discriminatory treatment of all migrants with regard to pay and working conditions, respect for their human and trade union rights, and the establishment of procedures for the regularisation of their employment status and social integration. They also urge that in the event of repatriation, full legal and human safeguards are applied;
- 4.10 they also call for migration policies that are not based exclusively on workers' vocational qualifications;
- 4.11 categorically oppose all forms of human trafficking and human smuggling, that affects women and children in particular;
- 4.12 support all measures to promote the free movement of workers within the different regional integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean, and therefore call for migration and visa policies within the Latin American continent to be adapted in order to facilitate legal migratory movements;
- 4.13 request that it be made easier for migrants to channel their remittances, that the transfer costs be reduced and their freedom to send them where they want be guaranteed;
- 4.14 call for the social partners and civil society organisations to take part in drawing up public policies on migration, particularly with regard to social integration, as well as training and employment, in both the countries of origin and destination.

## **5. Climate change and energy resources: civil society's contribution**

The participants:

- 5.1 take note of the conclusions of the EU–Latin America and Caribbean Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in Brussels on 4 March 2008, in which the parties undertake to step up dialogue and cooperation on climate change, sustainable energy, energy technologies, biodiversity and deforestation;

- 5.2 urge the parties to set up a political framework for joint action in these areas, with a view to including climate change in initiatives to boost economic and social progress and reduce poverty in the region;
- 5.3 highlight that, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports make clear, it is the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean which are most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change;
- 5.4 against this backdrop, argue for an integrated approach to action on environmental problems, as the cross-border nature of these problems lends itself to such an approach;
- 5.5 highlight that much damage to the environment is caused by the inappropriate exploitation of natural resources. Given the importance of these resources for sustainable development, they recommend that civil society organisations and governments become more involved in programmes to promote the responsible use of resources, and call for programmes of cooperation and exchange of best practice in the use of these resources for the benefit of the communities that own them, with the least possible damage to the environment;
- 5.6 request that EU projects in Latin America be preceded and followed systematically by environmental impact studies that are defined with the participation of local organisations and communities;
- 5.7 recommend carrying out initiatives to educate and raise awareness among the general public, and involving civil society organisations, central governments and local communities through decentralised policies to empower the socio-economic players, particularly those in the agricultural sector;
- 5.8 request that the agreements specifically protect genetic resources and biodiversity.

Therefore, the participants:

- 5.9 are convinced that international cooperation is essential if sustainable development is to be successfully achieved, and therefore call on the governments to step up their efforts to achieve a new, post-Kyoto, international protocol by 2009, which would include all countries and regions, particularly those that produce the most greenhouse emissions, with common but differentiated responsibilities;
- 5.10 advocate proclamation by the United Nations of a universal right of access to energy, and that, to this end, key technologies be accessible to all;
- 5.11 consider that natural forests are carbon traps that must be preserved. They therefore call for the application of compensation systems for the services provided by countries which protect their forests and wetlands;

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- 5.12 call for coordinated intervention and prevention policies to provide relief for people affected by storms, floods and other effects of climate change;
  - 5.13 also urge that the economic and social impact on energy prices and access to energy be taken into account, together with employment and occupational health and safety conditions;
  - 5.14 consider that as a result of climate change, there will be a greater need for the development of environmental technologies that are adapted to local conditions;
  - 5.15 are of the view that in regional integration processes, energy production models should be based on complementarity of sources, in order to reduce economic and social imbalances and to facilitate the rational and efficient use of resources, in view of the potential risks linked to deforestation and high water consumption;
  - 5.16 strongly urge that the research effort into technologies to harness renewable energy sources be stepped up;
  - 5.17 recommend that, in keeping with the rule of law, governments establish close cooperation with global institutions and agencies working in the sphere of agriculture and food, such as the FAO and the WFP (World Food Programme), in order to guarantee sovereignty and food security for each country;
  - 5.18 consider that the development of biofuels could provide opportunities for the economies producing them, as long as proper cooperation is sought from the various stakeholders;
  - 5.19 are convinced that proper use of energy resources must involve civil society organisations and the local communities concerned, and consider that only if there is a change in collective behaviour at grass-roots level, with a widespread increase in knowledge and awareness, will it be possible to achieve perceptible results, in order to encourage responsible energy use.
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