



European Economic and Social Committee

**SIXTH MEETING OF EUROPEAN UNION-LATIN AMERICAN
ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY**

MADRID, 5, 6 and 7 MAY 2010

FINAL DECLARATION

The European Economic and Social Committee organised the Sixth Meeting of European Union-Latin American Organised Civil Society in Madrid on 5, 6 and 7 May 2010.

The meeting brought together representatives of civil society organisations from the European Union and Latin America, including their national and regional consultative bodies.

The participants are appreciative of the support of the European Commission, and the hospitality shown by the Spanish Economic and Social Council in connection with this meeting.

At this Sixth Meeting, the participants adopted the following Declaration, addressed to the Summit of Heads of State and Government which will meet on 17 and 18 May 2010 in Madrid (Spain).



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This declaration reiterates the participants' commitment to contributing to the reinforcement of political, economic, social and cultural ties between the two continents as part of the Bi-regional Strategic Partnership between the two continents.
- 1.2 The participants express their firm conviction that, in a new world context marked by widespread economic crisis and huge challenges, the Bi-regional Strategic Partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean is needed more than ever in order to contribute, on the basis of the shared values of society in the two regions, to a solution to these global challenges and to achieving better-regulated world governance.
- 1.3 The Sixth Meeting ratified the proposals of previous Meetings on migration, the environment, climate change, social cohesion, energy resources, decent work and cooperation, and discussed the following themes: scientific, cultural and productive innovation and its social dimension, the association agreements between the EU and the various regions of Latin America, and civil society participation as a central plank of the European Union-Latin American and Caribbean Bi-regional Strategic Partnership.

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2. On the scientific, cultural and productive innovation and its social dimension

The participants:

- 2.1 recognise that innovation should serve humanity, contribute to human security, and provide answers to key social, economic, political and environmental challenges;
- 2.2 consider that innovation is essential for the modernisation of production and economic development; innovation should focus on fostering entrepreneurship and promoting social cohesion;
- 2.3 recognise that universities, technology centres and businesses are key for innovation; therefore advocate stepping up the bi-regional dialogue in all areas, such as science, technology, research and basic and higher education, that are relevant to this purpose;
- 2.4 consider that the resolutions of the Sixth Summit in this regard should be accompanied by an Action Plan with the appropriate resources, allowing results to be achieved as quickly as possible;
- 2.5 believe that innovation policies must promote economic development, boost social and territorial cohesion and always be designed to have a positive impact on improving the public's quality of life. Areas which should be taken into account include sustainable food production and food security, health, education, reducing illiteracy, gender equality, the role of women in development, security, access to the new technologies, access to drinking water, limiting soil desertification, climate change, migration, energy, decent work, young people, indigenous peoples and other excluded sectors;
- 2.6 consider that these policies should take into account the protection of innovative activities and consumers;
- 2.7 call for the capacity of innovation to create opportunities for forging social links and solidarity to be taken into consideration, as these links are crucial to promoting the introduction, assimilation and dissemination of innovations. Participants therefore call for innovation to contribute to sustainable development;
- 2.8 consider that it is important to involve civil society in ensuring that public policies and innovation activities are owned and taken on board;
- 2.9 call for public policies that help to overcome barriers that hamper innovation such as poverty, the absence of democracy, legal insecurity, the lack of business or trade union freedom, social inequalities, gender inequality and other forms of discrimination;

- 2.10 consider it necessary to analyse and take account of innovations that arise from social experience, cultural context and ancestral knowledge, in order to convert those that prove to be useful into public policies;
- 2.11 urge that stakeholder participation in processes - by introducing effective, responsible social dialogue into all areas of working relations - be incorporated as a criterion for developing innovation;
- 2.12 call for the Summit to ensure in particular that bi-regional cooperation programmes in the field of innovation policies systematically take the social dimension and social consequences of these policies on board.

3. On the association agreements between the EU and the various regions of Latin America

The participants:

- 3.1 believe that, at the current stage of negotiations, the Association Agreement between Central America and the EU is not fully satisfactory. These negotiations should respect the economic and social asymmetries between the two regions and should therefore consider giving developing countries preferential treatment. The involvement of civil society in the negotiation process has been very limited. It has been decided to include in the agreement the organised civil society joint committee, which will follow up, monitor and check all aspects of the agreement. Participants therefore call for these requests made by civil society to be incorporated before the closure of negotiations;
- 3.2 look forward to the resumption of negotiations between the EU and Mexico, and urge that a timetable be drawn up leading to the signature of an Association Agreement between the two regions;
- 3.3 note that the difficulty of negotiating an association agreement between the Andean Community and the EU has led to negotiations on free trade agreements with Colombia and Peru which are gradually taking shape; in any case, participants reiterate their support for a bi-regional association agreement;
- 3.4 consider that, despite the derogation clause inserted by the European Parliament at the request of the social partners and the EESC among others, these trade agreements with Colombia and Peru should include essential provisions on respecting human rights and labour, social and environmental rights, and should also include an effective mechanism for ensuring that civil society participates in following them up;
- 3.5 express, in this regard, their firm position in favour of effectively and vigorously upholding the goal of achieving bi-regional agreements as a part of strengthening Latin American integration processes;

- 3.6 emphasise that the promotion and respect of human rights and fundamental social and labour rights should be an integral part of agreements between the EU and Latin America;
- 3.7 call for the immediate introduction of mechanisms for civil society to take part in negotiations currently under way, including those between the European Union and Mercosur which are due to re-start;
- 3.8 repeat their demand that joint consultative committees, to be made up of representative OCS bodies from both sides, be created under the trade agreements and association agreements as mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and consultation on the agreements;
- 3.9 call for representative civil society organisations to take part in assessments of the real impact of these agreements both before and after they are ratified;
- 3.10 emphasise that the existing asymmetries between the EU and Latin America must be duly reflected in the negotiations, by means of instruments such as sustainability assessment, the principle of special and differential treatment, the establishment of exceptions and transitional periods in those sectors where they are needed, support for convergence funds and the implementation of sectoral policies that help to offset the asymmetries within the region's own integration processes;
- 3.11 call on governments to focus their political will on working towards a model that guarantees sustainable development together with social justice;
- 3.12 advocate stepping up dialogue on sectoral policies that facilitate social cohesion and physical and communications infrastructure, so that they can support the impetus for integration and economic and social cooperation between the two regions, while at the same time respecting the environment;
- 3.13 suggest that consultation of trade union and business organisations on issues relevant to them should be put on an institutional footing in the association agreements.

4. On civil society participation as a central plank of the European Union-Latin America and Caribbean Bi-regional Strategic Partnership

The participants:

- 4.1 recall that EU-LAC relations were born of the links forged between social organisations, and that this is only possible in a system which is fully democratic;
- 4.2 are convinced that organised civil society participation is crucial to making bi-regional relations more open and transparent, and to giving greater impetus and legitimacy to regional integration processes;

- 4.3 call for organised civil society of both regions to be involved on an institutional footing in the future EU-LAC Foundation;
 - 4.4 call for institutional support for setting up coordination machinery between the organised civil society consultative bodies of both regions (the Mercosur Economic and Social Consultative Forum, the SICA Consultative Council, the Andean Labour, Business and Indigenous Peoples' Consultative Councils, the Andean Consumers' Organisation, other counterpart economic and social representative bodies which must be set up in Chile and Mexico, and the EESC itself), so that they can make a more sustained contribution to the objectives and programmes of the Bi-regional Partnership and make their positions known beyond the momentary scope of the Summits, and strengthen their communication strategies in order to do this;
 - 4.5 restate the need to ensure that representative organised civil society bodies are involved in the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership and the EU-Chile Association Agreement, as already occurs with the EU-Brazil Civil Society Round Table under the Strategic Partnership between that country and the EU which has its own agenda (energy, infrastructure, technology, cooperation, etc.);
 - 4.6 call for representative organised civil society bodies to be regularly included at the two-yearly EU-LAC social cohesion forums;
 - 4.7 reiterate that it is very important to social cohesion to recognise the collective rights of indigenous peoples, to consult them in accordance with existing international instruments which have been ratified, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for example and ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries;
 - 4.8 call for the new version of the EUROsociAL programme to include boosting civil society organisations and their representative bodies on Latin American regional forums;
 - 4.9 call for more women to be involved in EU-Latin America relations;
 - 4.10 welcome the efforts made by the EU-Latin America Joint Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat) to take on board the views of civil society, and call for the civil society consultative bodies of the various regions of Latin America to be given observer status in both their respective regional parliaments and in the Joint Assembly itself, along the lines of the EESC's position within EuroLat.
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