

REGION TO REGION COOPERATION

EU and CELAC (Comunidad de los Estados Latino Americanos y del Caribe) :

Organized cooperation in the making to face to-day's challenges

after the Brussels EU-CELAC Summit of June 2015

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The paper examines the development of relations between the EU (European Union), on the one hand, and CELAC (Comunidad de los Estados Latino Americanos y del Caribe), on the other, in the aftermath of the EU-CELAC Summit of 10 and 11 June 2015, in Brussels.

The paper begins by reviewing the emergence of CELAC in 2011, when CELAC was created, associating the member countries of the Rio Group. It will analyse its evolution to the Santiago EU-CELAC first summit, of 2013. The declaration reaffirms the basic principles of CELAC on the promotion of social, cultural, political and economic integration between the countries of the region, with an added emphasis on its commitment to ensure peace in the area through dialogue and negotiation. The Habana CELAC meeting of 2014 was a diplomatic and political success for Cuba, the first rotating presidency of the group. The Costa Rica CELAC Summit in January 2015 was attended by the EUHRVP Frederica Mogherini who stressed the necessity to strengthen the EU-CELAC relationship (§1).

The paper analyses the last EU-LAC summit and the two summits between EU and the new entity, CELAC : at the last EU-LAC Summit in Madrid in 2010, the civil society advocated a change in the global economic model. The Santiago I EU-CELAC Summit in 2013, with a fully-fledged CELAC, social and economic issues were high on the agenda whilst the civil society took part in the proceedings in the form of a Business Summit, the first Academic Forum and various parallel events. The Brussels II EU-CELAC 2015 Summit focused on bi-regional and global issues. It was an opportunity to underline the importance of EU-CELAC cooperation and to re-invigorate the relationship in a complex, rapidly changing world (§2).

The Business , Academic and Civil Society Forums are briefly considered. During the Civil Society Forum of 19th March 2015 in Brussels, the EUHRVP Frederica Mogherini underlined the strength of the natural links between the Civil Society and the EU-CELAC partnership which constituted its reason for being and its cornerstone (§3).

The updated and expanded Plan of Action of the Brussels Summit is reviewed. Attention is drawn to the study of cooperation between the two regions along certain significant lines. The EU and CELAC consider now that sustainable development and climate change to be the central pillars of their relationship, in light of the theme of the Brussels June Summit, "*Shaping our common future : working*

for prosperous, cohesive and sustainable societies for our citizens". Two new items were added to the Plan of Action : Higher Education and Citizen Security (§4).

Meanwhile, CELAC is developing relations with extra-regional partners, i.e. India, China, ROK, the Russian Federation, ASEAN, the Council of the Arab States of the Gulf, of which the most significant will be analysed in this paper. However the dialogue seems to be in limbo, most of these extra- regional powers do not share exactly the same views on the suggested partnership (§5).

Finally, a look at CELAC's relations with international organisations, namely the UNO and the FAO, will round up the paper. CELAC expresses its adherence to the UN principles, particularly to International Law, International Rules of Human Rights Protection and International Humanitarian Law to fight terrorism (§6).

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the EU-CELAC Summit of June 2015 in Brussels, this paper gives a presentation of CELAC (Comunidad de los Estados Latino Americanos y del Caribe) and its goals, as well as a short description of the relationship EU-CELAC for a better understanding of the event of June. The Summit is another opportunity to quicken the pace of cooperation and to define concrete and substantial programs, with a view on deepening the bi-regional strategic partnership.

The European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean summits (EU-LAC) have been held on a regular basis since the first bi-regional EU-LAC Summit of Rio de Janeiro in 1999, where the bi-regional strategic partnership was established.

The EU-CELAC Summit of January 2013 in Santiago de Chile brought together for the first time, the EU, and CELAC which was constituted in 2011.

Reaching the goals defined by EU and CELAC is a bi-regional challenge in the context of what is known as the end of the cold war and since the economic and financial crisis of 2008. The international context has changed and the centers of power are rearranged, creating new alliances around the globe.

A introductory seminar to the June Summit was organized on the 15th April 2015 by the Egmont Institute at the Egmont Palace in Brussels in the presence of the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, H E Mr Didier Reynders. It was attended by participants from the business community, academic institutions and the civil society and offered an opportunity to exchange views to find ways and means to attain the goals of the strategic bi-regional partnership.

§ 1. The emergence of CELAC, its prehistory

The creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is a milestone in the history of Latin America and the Caribbean, as it is the first time that all thirty-three countries in the region are permanently grouped in a regional mechanism for dialogue and consultation that is shaping up as a political forum. Its goal is to move forward in the process of political, economic, social and cultural integration, achieving the necessary equilibrium between unity and diversity in a multipolar world.

The combined gross domestic product of the countries within CELAC make it the third-largest economic powerhouse in the world. It is also home to the world's largest oil reserves and the first and third largest global producers of food and energy.

CELAC also builds on existing inter-regional bodies and experiments. These include a number of regional organisations and the establishment of trade mechanisms between some countries, replacing the US dollar with local and regional currencies. Many international organisations and trade agreements which existed in the area are now covered by CELAC.

One essential goal of CELAC is to avoid misunderstanding and duplicates that arise from the large number of organizations present throughout the region : since it groups all countries of the American continent, except the USA and Canada, regular meetings are held with all counterparts ; CELAC aims to

be complementary to numerous sub regional ongoing projects and programs, viz. currencies, air and sea transports, infrastructure, etc.

1.1 The 1st CELAC Summit : Caracas in 2011

CELAC's official coming into being was decided during the 23rd Summit of the Rio Group in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, the "Unity Summit", in 2010, with a view to promote cooperation between all Caribbean, Central and Latin American countries.

CELAC is functioning since 2011, impelled by Venezuela and its former president Hugo Chavez, as well as by the former Brazilian leader Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. Both presidents planned to accelerate the political and social unity of the area. Some countries thought that CELAC would be a duplicate of the Organization of American states (OAS), based in Washington D.C., of which the Latin and Central American states, including the USA and Canada, are members.

It is noteworthy that, in theory, CELAC is not a formal international organisation but rather a regional forum. Like the Rio Group, it has no defined permanent bodies, on which to rely on, does not have any legal personality, nor a budget. Its purpose therefore is to coordinate actions within the other formal regional organizations of the area.

CELAC strives for a key role in the resolution of conflicts, in strengthening democracy in the area and in the promotion of economic development.

The following excerpt of the Caracas Declaration, of December 3, 2011 reflects the spirit of CELAC :

“CELAC, as the only mechanism for dialogue and consensus that unites the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, is the highest expression of our will for unity in diversity, where henceforth, our political, economic, social and cultural ties will strengthen on the basis of a common agenda of welfare, peace and security for our peoples, with a view to consolidation of our regional community.”

Cuba, which was excluded from the Organization of American States (OAS), was selected to host the 2014 CELAC Summit, Chile having hosted the 2013 summit, Costa Rica in 2015.

1.2 CELAC Santiago Declaration of 2013

CELAC's aim is to expand the action plan adopted at the Madrid EU-LAC Summit of 2010. Likewise, the civil society networks adopted a declaration ahead of the Santiago I EU-CELAC Summit of 2013 in which they reaffirmed their commitment to the common principles adopted in Madrid as well as proposing concrete solutions. They aspire to be adopted as relevant and serious players.

CELAC reaffirmed its principles in the Santiago Declaration of 2013 also contained in the Madrid Joint Declaration EU-CELAC of 2010 with respect to the political pluralism within the community and commits to non-intervention in the internal affairs of its members. Noteworthy are the repeated reassurances to ensure peace in the area through dialogue and negotiation.

1.3. The 2nd CELAC Summit : Habana in 2014

The CELAC meeting at Habana in 2014 was considered a legitimate and veritable diplomatic success for Cuba, which received support from all the member states. The fact that this country had been quickly designated at the head of the rotating presidency might be considered as a signal sent by the CELAC states of their assertion and autonomy on the world scene.

Many points of interest to CELAC were expressed in the Habana Declaration of 2014.

CELAC gives prominence to productive and industrial development, infrastructure, which are by far, the primary subjects studied by this forum. The Declaration focuses on extreme poverty and on food safety. Existing initiatives would be continued, and new ones set up, i.e. promotion of small agro businesses, facilitating access to the necessary material, tools, technologies. CELAC is resolved to enforce literacy programs, and to making basic education free and available to all. Regarding culture, CELAC suggests to promote cultural integration and ensure the diversity of cultures in the region, as well as maintaining the cultural heritages, material as well as immaterial, namely development of science, technology and innovation, and their expansion in the area. It also refers to applying preferential tax rates between member states.

1.4. The 3rd CELAC Summit : Costa Rica in January 2015

The 3rd CELAC Summit of Costa Rica in January 2015 was an opportunity for an exchange of views and of experiences between the participating countries, education ministers, academicians and other specialists. The Summit issued a special declaration on education for sustainable development.

EUHRVP Frederica Mogherini attended the Summit. This was her first visit to Latin America, ahead of the Brussels Summit of June. In her speech, she stressed the necessity to strengthen the EU-CELAC relationship, underlining that the EU sees this partnership as one of equals, based on mutual respect. However, EU relations with Latin America and the Caribbean should be stronger in order to unlock the potential that joint effort can bring – with the two regions as well as globally.

§ 2 The bi-regional summits EU – CELAC

Even before the existence of CELAC, the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) had enjoyed privileged relations since the first bi-regional Summit of Rio de Janeiro in 1999, which established and defined the strategic partnership. They are natural partners linked by strong historical, cultural and economic ties. They wish to cooperate closely at international level and maintain an intensive political dialogue at all levels – regional sub regional and bilateral level – in a changing multipolar international world scene, where new sources of power have emerged.

Since 1999, summits of the EU and LAC leaders took place biennially. As from the constitution of CELAC, the pattern remained and the pace has generally been maintained, the last time the leaders of the region met was in Santiago de Chile, in January 2013, and the next one will take place in Brussels in 2015.

2.1 The last EU-LAC Summit : the Madrid Summit (2010)

The purpose of the Madrid Summit was to reaffirm and continue promoting and strengthening the "bi-regional strategic partnership based on shared principles, values and interests".

Significantly, a few weeks before the Madrid Summit, organizations from the civil society of both EU and CELAC countries, published a declaration referring to the participants' commitments.

This declaration advocated a heightening of public authorities' action within the global economic system, a greater attention dedicated to environmental issues, stemming from concerns in the wake of the failure of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, December 2009. They voiced their apprehension regarding all types of democratic setbacks, viz. human rights issues, militarization, drug and human trafficking... The civil society also envisioned international cooperation as a means to promote human capacities and not to serve commercial or political interests.

According to the civil society, the current economic model, based on unlimited growth and a reduced role issued to public authorities is unsustainable, in the present economic, environmental and social context. More and more people in the future, taking into account the population growth and the reduction of economic opportunities, would be poverty stricken and destitute if the global economic model, as it now stands, is not adapted.

As for the Heads of State and Government present at the Madrid Summit, environmental protection seems here to be one of the main sources of apprehension since both regions repeated their commitment to abide by the conclusions drawn from the different international meetings on climatic issues. References were made to the Rio+20 objectives. In order to reach those goals, besides the use of renewable energy, suggestions were made towards the enforcement of a shared network of energy.

2.2 The Santiago EU-CELAC Summit (2013)

In Santiago, around the theme "*An alliance for sustainable development: promoting social and environmental quality investments*", the Heads of State and Government repeated the goals of the EU-CELAC alliance ensuing from the Madrid bi regional Summit of 2010 and agreed to abide strictly by the UN principles : combat terrorism, promote multilateralism as well as free trade, and build a new international financial architecture to avoid another crisis like that of 2007-2008. Social issues were also on the agenda, and the various players wished to share experience and knowledge on the welfare systems in the different countries and facilitate access to potentially effective plans. The EU reaffirmed its commitment to respect its target of 0.7% of its gross national income to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in order to raise the general standard of living and reduce disparities between rich and poor. The joint initiative for Research and Innovation, launched in February 2010, and the existence of a EU-CELAC chapter for exchange in educational matters, were introduced in the Santiago declaration.

The struggle has to continue against different forms of crimes. International crime organizations, which threaten most states, should be subjected to new common policies. These policies relative to Europe are part of the wider EU external policy on drugs, including strengthening international cooperation in this field.

The Summit stressed the necessity to fight corruption and other forms of white collar crimes, to maintain, and even strengthen, the role of nation-states in this field, enhancing cooperation.

The EU and CELAC look to gender equality within both regions. The stakeholders acknowledge women's contribution to society as a pre-condition for social development and resolve to support investments that comply with the common social and economic conceptions in the framework of inclusive economic growth of the EU-CELAC relationship. The final common declaration firmly stands its ground and reaffirms states' sovereignty, a major point and a condition which would guarantee the success of economic reforms.

This summit also underlined the significance of European investments for the economy of the CELAC countries, and pointed at the economic growth that Latin America has been sustaining during the past few years. Some improvements have been noticed on the indicators of the labor market in South and Central America. Both elements can explain the desire for rapprochement.

Free trade agreements have been signed between some CELAC countries and regional organization, others are under negotiations.

2.3 The Brussels EU-CELAC Summit (2015)

The Brussels Summit which took place on the 10th and 11th June 2015 was attended by the Presidents and Heads of government from both sides of the Atlantic testifying to the high degree of importance that the participants attach to this event. The Summit was co-chaired by M. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, and President Rafael Correa, of Ecuador, holding the Pro Tempore presidency of CELAC. The summit was accompanied by a number of parallel events, organized and promoted by civil society, academics, businesspeople, trade unions, youth and parliamentarians.

Two declarations were adopted, a shorter political declaration "*A partnership for the next generation*" and a second covering the several strands of the relationship, the "*Brussels Declaration*". An updated and expanded Action Plan between the two regions was adopted.

The large part played by the civil society in Brussels and the high rate of participation from the leaders is a sign that the partnership is meaningful and strong and could have a decisive impact on a rapidly changing world on such themes as the global climate talks bearing in mind the Paris COP 21 meeting later on this year, the post-2015 development agenda and the fight against drug trafficking.

One concrete commitment taken in Brussels was that the foreign ministers will meet between summits to make sure that decisions are be respected.

To complete and modernize economic ties, the parties decided to modernize the EU agreements already in place with Mexico and Chile. The EU and MERCOSUR remain committed to complete a balanced, comprehensive and ambitious Association Agreement as soon as possible.

International and regional security was high on the agenda. On this item, it must be recalled that Chile and Colombia have already signed agreements with the EU to cooperate in crisis management operations. The peace negotiations in Colombia are supported by the EU and a future peace deal will be bolstered by an EU trust fund. The modernization process in Cuba and the normalizing of the relations between Cuba and the USA is a welcome development in world politics. The visa waiver agreements signed with the five Caribbean States and initialed by Colombia and Peru bear witness to the need and the wish to bring citizens of both regions closer together.

An EU contribution (€25 million) to the enhancement of broadband trans-Atlantic connectivity between Latin America and the EU through a direct new fiber-optic cable was announced.

The EU-LAC Foundation, based in Hamburg, created at Santiago in 2013, has been transformed in an international body, and the EU has committed itself to support the Foundation with €3 million over the next two years.

In the margins of the summit in Brussels, the VI EU-CARIFORUM (Caribbean Forum) and an EU-SICA, the Central American Integration System, both lead to a joint communiqué with the purpose of encouraging closer cooperation between the regions.

The Caribbean countries were more outspoken than in the previous summits. The Bahamas and Suriname stressed the need to pay attention to the MICs (Middle Income Countries) as well as the LDCs (Less Developed Countries). It was agreed to expand the EU-CELAC Action Plan with the additional chapters on citizen security in Central America and the Caribbean.

§3 Activities of the Civil Society in relation to the Summits

3.1. EU-CELAC Business Summit.

A successful first Business Summit took place in Santiago in 2013, the second one in Brussels, whilst a third one is in the making for 2015-16.

In Brussels, the Business Summit attracted more than 500 high-level participants of the business community, financial institutions and policy makers from across EU and CELAC Member States.

The outcome of the second Business Summit was submitted as a formal recommendation to the EU-CELAC Heads of State and Government Summit as a way forward to increase EU investment and business cooperation in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The Business Summit announced the launching of two new projects in Brussels in the framework of the LAIF initiative. This EU initiative was presented at the Madrid EU-LAC Summit of 2010.

LAIF is a financing mechanism aiming at mixing grants (non-refundable financial contributions from the European Commission and other donors) with loans of multilateral or bilateral public European Development Finance Institutions and Regional Latin American Banks. LAIF has had an enthusiastic response from the Partner Countries, the Member States and the Finance Institutions.

For the period 2010-2013, **25 projects** were approved, representing a total investment cost of approximately **€5.46 billion**, a total lending of **€4.51 billion** and a grant contribution of about **€196.6 million, with a leverage effect of 1:25**. Some examples of the financed projects include: Improving service delivery and investment planning in the power sector (Brazil), Chilean solar Energy Programme, Water and Wastewater Investment Programme, and Programme for Entrepreneurial Development and Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Central America.

Coordination with the different donor actions is essential (pls. see chapter 4, para. 4.3 on the Brussels Action Plan).

Since 2012, this investment facility has funded ten projects, including a wind farm, a project which had been criticized as it would furnish first major European companies in electricity in addition to not having

a clear positive social impact for local companies. Projects funded by this mechanism have to be approved by the European institutions before the CELAC countries can agree.. There is barely time for the policy-makers and the civil society in the policy-making process to air their views.

In relation to some projects, opposition from the local population is not taken into account.

The private sector is at the center of this mechanism. Investors expect financial benefits from their ventures.

3.2. EU-CELAC Academic Forum

The purpose of this forum was to reassert the importance of the partnership and cooperation between the EU and CELAC with a view to creating an EU-CELAC space for higher education and knowledge by way of the promotion of a joint higher education accreditation system for the Latin American and Caribbean countries based on quality indicators for training, research and their internationalization.

In the framework of the June Summit, the second EU-CELAC Academic Summit was held in Brussels and was organized with the Royal Egmont Institute and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). The main purpose of this Academic Summit was to feed a broad, open, bottom-up process and give a direct voice to the academic communities of both regions in order to spur the design of operational ways and concrete policies for implementing a “*Euro-Latin American-Caribbean space for higher education, science, technology and innovation*”. These activities should be a cornerstone of the Strategic Partnership for Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union.

An initiative was added to the Brussels Action Plan concerning the promotion of higher education (pls. see chapter 4, Para. 4.9).

3.3. Civil Society Forum

In the run up of the EU-CELAC Summits the civil society meetings paved the way for dialogue and negotiation between members of the civil society and decision makers from both EU and CELAC. The civil society can express its aspiration and viewpoints on the ongoing policies or those that are going to be implemented (pls. see the chapter 2, para. 2.1 on the last EU-ALC Madrid Summit of 2010). This trend is getting more and more momentum.

The forum of civil society paid attention on promoting socio-economic equality in regional organizations of the partners, putting pressure for respect of human rights and finally promoting citizen participation which are in line with the main goals of CELAC.

A quotation from the speech of HRVP Federica Mogherini at the opening session of the EU-CELAC Civil Society Forum, on 19th March 2015 illustrates how strong and natural the link is between the civil society and the EU-CELAC partnership and constitutes its reason for being and its cornerstone :

“The political and economic and social partnership between our regions is all about building prosperous and sustainable societies for our citizens. The whole point is to improve people’s quality of life – which brings me back to the essential and central role played by civil society.

Creating synergies between public authorities and civil society organizations makes a real and tangible

contribution to tackling poverty and inequality more effectively and building genuinely sustainable development. Those synergies are vital elements for reinforcing democratic governance.”

§.4 The Action plan of the EU-CELAC Brussels Summit

The Action Plan of the Brussels EU-CELAC Summit includes a number of initiatives consistent with the priorities established at the VI EU-LAC Summit of Madrid in 2010 as encompassed in its Final Declaration as well as in new areas incorporated at the VII EU-LAC Summit / I EU-CELAC Summit held in Santiago de Chile in 2013 and the II EU-CELAC Brussels Summit.

The 10 initiatives contained in the Santiago declaration are the following: 1) Science, research, innovation and technology ; 2) Sustainable development; environment; climate change; biodiversity; energy ; 3) Regional integration and interconnectivity to promote social inclusion and cohesion ; 4) Migration ; 5) Education and employment to promote social inclusion and cohesion ; 6) The world drug problem ; 7) Gender ; 8). Investments and entrepreneurship for sustainable development ; 9) Higher education ; 10) Citizen security.

Two new areas – Higher education and Citizen Security - were added in the Action Plan of the Brussels Summit.

4.1 Science, research, innovation and technology

The main objective in this area is to develop the “EU-CELAC Knowledge Area “ through: 1) improving cooperation in research and innovation ; 2) strengthening scientific and technological capacities and infrastructures ; 3) enabling sustainable research, innovation and knowledge sharing taking into account the contribution of ancestral and traditional knowledge ; 4) boosting the use of new and existing technologies and technology development and transfer underpinning sustainable socio-economic development ; 5) fostering cooperation between both regions as regards the digital-economy and the reduction of the digital divide for improving competitiveness while making social inclusion a cross-cutting issue.

4.2 Sustainable Development, environment, climate change, biodiversity, energy.

The EU –CELAC partnership considers climate change and sustainable development to be central pillars of their relationship. Both regions share a common agenda on the importance of tackling climate change. They both have a vital role to play to promote the conditions necessary to achieve progress in the run-up to the 2015 deadline for a new legally binding agreement on climate change.

Therefore, the 2015 Summit in Brussels, “*Shaping our common future : working for prosperous, cohesive and sustainable societies for our citizens*”, focused on climate change, sustainable development and inclusive growth with the aim of encouraging low carbon development in both regions and promoting an ambitious narrative of domestic and international action on climate change to feed into the United Nations Framework for the Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The private sector, the businesses, will have a major role to play in achieving the defined goals.

Both the EU and CELAC recognize the need to ensure sustainable development in business ventures in both regions, encouraging cooperation between the public and the private sector.

The 2015 Summit was an opportunity to take stock of EU-CELAC joint initiatives, communicate best practices and discuss how to promote investments while respecting the goals of sustainable development. During the Santiago EU-C ELAC Summit the business community committed itself to work with governments to promote both environmentally friendly solutions and ensuring economic growth. A series of steps have been taken at EU-CELAC level on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to enhance the business climate taking into account long-term action and coordination. One of the main aspects is the question of professional and vocational training which is mainly the responsibility of the public sector. SMEs especially should be included in the development of public policies. For their part, businesses will play an active role in developing technologies to meet the defined targets. Finally and hopefully, the United Nations Climate conference in Paris in December 2015 should lead to agreements with long term objectives of limiting global warming below 2° C. In this respect, the success of the COP 21 is to be a shared goal by governments and businesses of both regions.

The field of energy is of major concern for all nations of the CELAC regions and calls for precise collective solutions, policies and initiatives that guarantee an homogeneous and stable energy development. The region is blessed with abundant natural resources ... There exist vast disparities in access, cost and sustainability of natural resources. It is necessary to stabilize the region's energy future with sustainable use of renewable resources. Latin America and the Caribbean has attracted 6 % of global renewable energy investment, a 16-billion US dollar slice of a 268 billion worldwide. It is set to grow but must be nurtured and facilitated by government policy and initiatives.

However, according to a World Energy Council (WEC) report, the CELAC must optimize its energy supply options nationally and across the region in order to support the needs of its growing economies and increasing population. The study finds that even in the best case, the growth of energy supply in the region will still be insufficient to meet the rising energy demand associated with economic growth. The reason for this, according to the report, lies in the fragmented energy market. The report explains that the fragmentation has been hindering the effective use of energy resources nationally and across the region and has compromised the competitiveness of national energy markets. The study sees a doubling of energy demand by 2050, driven by non-OECD growth. To meet this demand, total global primary energy supply is set to increase by between 27 % and 61 %.

4.3. Regional integration and interconnectivity to promote social inclusion and cohesion

The main objectives in this area are :1) to increase regional integration and social inclusion and cohesion ; 2) to contribute to the overall goal of poverty eradication, especially among persons in conditions of vulnerability in the context of sustainable developments, including the pursuit of the MDGs and the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Some key elements to achieve these goals are the promotion of investments in infrastructures favouring decent and dignified job creation, interconnectivity and the development of social and economic. The necessary financial resources to improve and develop sustainable infrastructures and networks are mobilized, notably, by the LAIF mechanism (pls. see chapter 3, para. 3.1 on the Business Summit).

4.4 Migration

In recent years migration has become an issue of increasing importance in relations between the EU and CELAC. Both regions wish to maintain a dialogue to implement adapted public policies, to exchange

information, and above all to avoid human abuse. This dialogue was launched in 2009, with the EU-LAC Structured and Comprehensive Dialogue on Migration, seeking to pinpoint and identify common challenges, leading to a better understanding of these occurrences, and in this manner apply the principle of shared responsibility. It provides a framework to exchange best practices and build capacities that can help to address bi-regional migration challenges in which the positive link between migration, development and human rights will be strengthened.

The main objectives in this field are : 1) to enhance bi-regional cooperation by identifying common challenges and opportunities that require common solutions ; 2) to build a stronger evidence base on migration between both regions, in order to better understand this reality ; 3) to address the positive synergies between migration and development ; 4) to maximize the development impact of migration and human mobility ; 5) to address regular and irregular migration and other related issues including smuggling of migrants and trafficking of persons; 6) to promote the full respect of human rights of all migrants, including of unaccompanied minors.

CELAC will strengthen the internal normative, the regional frameworks of protection and cooperation, in order to guarantee human rights and fundamental liberties of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status, with special emphasis on children and youth, accompanied, unaccompanied or separated.

Projects are usually being implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), often in coordination with a national institution holding a stake in the proceedings.

4.5. Education and employment to promote social inclusion and cohesion

The main objectives in this area are to promote education, life-long learning and training (including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with a view to develop, in both regions, skills for employment, promote decent and dignified job creation, thereby increasing income and contributing towards the overall objective of poverty eradication.

4.6. The world drug problem

In addition to policies on directly reducing supply and demand on the drugs issue, the combat against drug trafficking is related to other topics concerning drugs such as money laundering and enhancing judicial and law enforcement agencies. Programs have been implemented by the European Commission, in collaboration with Latin American and Caribbean countries.

In June 2013, the first EU-CELAC debate on drugs policy, called the high level Mechanism of Coordination and Cooperation meeting on drugs, took place in Quito. CELAC and EU will continue their cooperation in the struggle against drug trafficking within this framework.

South America is an important hub for some drugs' production. States often limit their actions to repressive policies, punishing both consumers and producers/sellers, without implementing positive and constructive policies and programs.

Prevention and educational policies to fight this phenomenon will be put into action. The purpose of a dialogue with the EU on this subject is also to be more effective, knowing that health, society and the economy suffer from drug trafficking and consumption.

Reducing both demand and supply of drugs is intended not only to act as "drugs networks destroyers", but also offering viable alternatives to communities that are living from the profits of drug production and in full respect of human rights and other UN principles. Strengthening controls at the point of export means more controls at airports, sea- and river ports, international borders, coastlines, etc.

4.7. Gender

The introduction of the gender issue in the Brussels 2015 Action Plan is a welcome and progressive novelty in comparison to the Santiago 2013 Action Plan.

The Brussels Action Plan describes the gender issue in the following terms : the main objective is to prioritize the gender issue in the context of bi-regional relations and underscore the political will in both regions to guarantee gender equality and the protection, exercise and promotion of women's rights, including i) Political participation of women; ii) Elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence; and iii) Economic empowerment of women and their participation in the world of work and in all decision-making processes

4.8 Investments and entrepreneurship for sustainable development

In the line with the I CELAC –EU Santiago Declaration, the objective in this area : to promote bi regional investments of social and environmental quality to achieve sustained economic growth, while promoting social cohesion and inclusion and protecting the environment and to facilitate the conditions that foster entrepreneurship and innovation, remove obstacles, build capacity and increase competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and new social actors of the economy.

4.9 Higher education

This was a them added to the Brussels Action Plan.

The objective is to give a new impetus to EU-CELAC cooperation in higher education and to support inclusive development of the higher education sector, including equitable access and quality, by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and technology transfers through institutional strengthening, capacity building actions and mobility of students, researchers, experts, academic and administrative staff (pls. see chapter 3, para. 3.2 on the Academic Forum).

4.10 Citizen security

The item of Citizen security was also added to the Brussels Action Plan.

The main objective in this area is to support actions in order to strengthen citizen security, recognizing that is essential for the development of both regions and the improvement of quality of life and the well-being of the citizens.

§ 5 Relations of CELAC with extra-regional partners

The CELAC forum is also in charge of dialogue with other countries and entities. So far, its representatives have already being meeting in China, India, Korea, the Russian federation, the Council of

the Arab States of the Gulf, ASEAN ... in order to coordinate the international positions of the region on international issues.

A few examples of relations between CELAC and extra-regional nations are below.

5.1. India (2012)

CELAC has the ability to play an important role in this economic and political transformation for India. Trade, energy and geopolitical relations are key areas for strategic cooperation between the two regions.

India presents an enormous export opportunity, due to the vast size of its middle class. But beyond exports, India has a highly experienced tech sector, service industry, and culture of education and innovation—from which Latin American countries can learn. The reverse is also true: Latin America has a wealth of knowledge to share in the areas of creative conditional cash transfer programs for the poor, innovative conventional and sustainable energy technologies, and agroindustry machinery and best practices.

The meeting between CELAC and India in August 2012 in New Delhi resulted in a joint statement between the two parties which emphasized the significance for them to avail their development priorities for their respective regions, viz. an increase in trade and investment which is on the rise and has great potential. Communication, as air traffic and shipping, is lacking between the two regions and should be developed as well as regular and secure energy production for both partners. Minerals present in CELAC had not escaped the interest of the Indian authorities who suggested to exchange minerals by setting up manufacturing units and other commodities through direct trading. Interchange of knowledge and cooperation in agricultural matters, science and technology was a topic of interest for both parties.

On world matters, both share a similar vision on the necessary UN reforms as well as concerns about the international financial crisis, climate change and terrorism.

5.2 China (2015)

China has been active in the CELAC region, surpassing the US as the regions' leading export destination. After the big loan agreements signed in the week of 17th May 2015 with Venezuela and Ecuador : a major China-CELAC cooperation plan signed in January 2015 pledges an increase to trade by 500 bn \$ and investments by 250 bn \$ and to cooperate in science and technology, trade and environmental protection.

In Beijing, beginning January 2015, at the first CELAC-China conference, the participants reached an agreement for a cooperation plan for the next five year agreeing that cooperation would be based on equal partnership.

Most of the issues brought up were much the same as those of other previous CELAC meetings. It must be noted that the interest expressed by CELAC such as priority given to green energies and human rights was received with polite attention from the Chinese counterpart. Although it had obviously been discussed, the subject matter stems from a pragmatic need for energy from both sides, in addition to economic gains.

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China-CELAC cooperation plan signed in January 2015 pledged an increase to trade by 500 bn \$ and investments by 250 bn \$ and to cooperate in science and technology, trade and environmental protection. Brazil, Peru, Chile and Colombia are next on the tour of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in the region.

5.3 South Korea (2014 and UNGA 69)

A High Level Forum on Korea-Latin American Partnership was held in 2014 in Seoul to discuss ways to enhance the strategic partnership between the two counterparts. The forum carried significance in that amid the expanding role of CELAC in the international community, the parties discussed ways for the ROK-CELAC cooperation to develop with high-level government officials, entrepreneurs, professors and other academics, students and ordinary citizens of both parties. The range of fields covered by the forum included trade, investment, energy, infrastructure, culture, environment, development, e-government and public healthcare, and so on.

On the sidelines of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly a high-level meeting was held with the Foreign Minister and the CELAC Troika+1 (Cuba, Chile, Costa Rica and Trinidad and Tobago) on September 27 2015 to discuss ways to boost cooperation between the Republic of Korea and CELAC.

5.4 Japan (UNGA 69)

In September, during the 68th United Nations General Assembly, a meeting was held between Japan and CELAC. CELAC expressed the wish to expand trade and investments and continue to hold high level talks. Japan would like to collaborate closely with various sub-regional integration organizations and increase high-level dialogues between with CELAC, suggesting to cooperate with CELAC in the improvement of the business environment in light of the significant expansion of trade and investment between Japan and Latin America and Caribbean countries in recent years, and in disaster reduction, utilizing Japan's knowledge and experience in the area.

5.5 ASEAN

Latin America also has an expanding regional market for Asian industrial goods and FDI. Technology transfer and marketing connections from Asian multinationals can assist Latin American firms joining global value chains and can promote internationally competitive industrialization. Small and medium enterprises in both regions can also benefit as suppliers, subcontractors and service providers to multinationals.

Trade between the two regions has more than doubled over the past decade, reaching a historic high of over US\$500 billion dollars in 2014. This figure is expected to grow to at least \$750 billion by 2020.

§ 6 CELAC and International Organizations

6.1 United Nations

CELAC participates in the specialized institutions of the UN. It is significant to mention the UNDP and ECLAC, without going into a detailed description of each.

According to UNDP, Latin America and the Caribbean is well on the way to achieving the MDGs—and several countries achieved targets comfortably and before the deadline. Progress towards the MDGs is uneven between countries. Therefore, average MDG achievement for countries with historical inequalities is insufficient. In the Brazilian states of São Paulo (Southeast) and Piauí (North), or in the Mexican states of Nuevo León (Northeast) and Chiapas (South) progress towards the MDGs is considerably different. To help address unequal performances, UNDP and other UN agencies have been partnering with governments in the region to assess and report progress in the state and municipal levels. For example, this has led Chiapas, Mexico's poorest state, to adopt the MDGs as guidelines for local-level poverty reduction and other social programs, resulting in improvements in education and health.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, known as ECLAC, UNECLAC or in Spanish CEPAL, is a United Nations regional commission to encourage economic cooperation. ECLAC was established in 1948 as the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, or UNECLA. In 1984, a resolution was passed to include the countries of the Caribbean in the name. It reports to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The headquarters are in Chile.

CELAC aspiring to a role on the international scene has expressed its worries about several international crises, particularly nuclear weapons and the non-proliferation treaty. It voiced its disquiet on the international front, aspiring at reinforcing the position of the Latin American and Caribbean countries within the international organizations as well as the illicit trade of light weapons.

6.1.2 CELAC's position on terrorism

CELAC always emphasized its disapproval of all acts of terrorism and reiterated its pledge to fight terrorism in adherence to International Law, International Rules of Human Rights Protection, and International Humanitarian Law. CELAC promised to strengthen national legislation and cooperate with international partners to prevent acts of terrorism. In addition, it pledged to take necessary actions to prevent, penalize and eliminate terrorism financing and deny safe haven to those that participate in such activities.

CELAC expressed its desire to create a mechanism within the framework of the United Nations that will provide assistance to the victims of terrorist acts.

6.1.3 CELAC's Position on Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

CELAC voiced its concern regarding the threat presented to humankind by the existence of nuclear weapons and the threat or possibility of their use. It reiterated the urgency of complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament, as well as nuclear nonproliferation.

CELAC asked for the complete and balanced fulfillment of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and confirmed its pledge to apply comprehensive IAEA safeguards, and encouraged all States to do the same.

It advised all Nuclear Weapon States to accelerate their process of nuclear disarmament and equally, recommended that the States that have not ratified and/or signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty expedite this process so that the Treaty can be enforced.

6.2. FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)

CELAC aspires to eradicate hunger in the region by 2025 and has launched the Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication of CELAC in 2014. This plan is based on four pillars: coordination of policies at national and regional level (regional food strategy) ; fostering conditional transfer programs, improving labor markets and strong support for family farming, including school food programs to improve the situation of children; ensure stability of production by preventing natural disasters, and likewise maintaining food reserves (CONAB-Brazil, EMAPA-Bolivia, Ministry of Popular Power for Food of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela).

FAO has itself three priorities for the region: initiatives in support of the Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative 2025 ; agricultural and rural territorial development ; improvement of food systems in the Caribbean.

CELAC has made outstanding progress regarding hunger. However, more than 5% of the population remains undernourished. Small farmers need the most help ; ensure a minimum level of income to families ; foment attendance of children at school ; access to medical care.

With the FAO regional offices, many CELAC countries have adopted rural development policies helping farmers to lift their living standards.

Successful results in the struggle against poverty and promotion of farming requires investments in infrastructures.

CONCLUSION

Since the first EU-LAC Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1999, the EU and the LAC countries, which became the CELAC, have both worked on the development of a true strategic partnership. The EU is now CELAC's most structured partner and the leading foreign investor in the region.

China who has just signed massive financing deals in the region is looming as a formidable competitor in the South American continent. As this paper pointed out, CELAC is also developing relations with non regional partners.

There is a crucial need to defend the partnership and friendship between the two regions on the long term, as EU HRVP Frederica Mogherini pointed out on various occasions. The prominence which the EU-CELAC relationship has taken over the years is clearly illustrated by the number of meetings and summits which took in the run-up to and in the margin of the June 2015 EU-CELAC Summit in Brussels. The interest and confidence in this partnership is revealed by the forums organized by the business community, the academic world, various aspects of the civil society as this article tried to emphasize.

This paper shows that CELAC has grown and developed since 2011 and has become a relevant partner for the EU, although declarations of good intentions are not always followed by specific and substantial action. EU investments are still considerable in the CELAC regions, surpassing those of the EU in Russia, India and China combined.

On the economic front, according to the IMF, the CELAC economy will dip 1 % in 2015 after a disappointing 2014 with a growth of 1,4 %. However, managing natural resources correctly is essential for the CELAC region's economy, if not, their very source of comparative advantage will dwindle translating into lost growth, lost elections and lost opportunities. Hopefully, the IMF's analysis which appears all doom and gloom will not materialize, and developments of this year's economy will be more positive than the dire predictions.

To conclude, the stage is set to reinforce the relationship between the two regions and increase mutual efforts to attain the defined goals as there is already a common history based on shared values. Moreover in a rapidly changing multipolar world where new and various centers of power have emerged, the EU-CELAC relationship takes on a new meaning. However, the economic development of the next few months will have a strong impact on the partnership as there are other players in the game.

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