EU-Mexico strategic partnership

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by José Ignacio Salafranca **SANCHEZ-NEYRA** (EPP-ED, ES) with a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on an EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership.

The report recalls that Mexico and the EU share a set of fundamental values, common principles and historical and cultural links. Mexico is increasingly consolidating its political weight on the international stage. Mexico has a population of over 100 million, with a marked preponderance of youth given that 45% of Mexicans are aged under 20. It occupies an important geostrategic position as a bridge both between North and South America and between the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Mexico has become the world's tenth-largest economy, a member of the G-20 and of the G-5 (Brazil, China, India, South Africa and Mexico), and, furthermore, the only Latin American member of the OECD. In addition, Mexico and the EU have undertaken to promote multilateralism in the international sphere.

The EU-Mexico Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement (the 'Global Agreement') signed on 8 December 1997 has three pillars: political dialogue; the gradual creation of a free-trade area; and cooperation. Since the agreement came into force in 2000 relations between the two sides have been marked by deepening and consolidation, both politically and in the trade and cooperation fields.

It is against this background that the Committee on Foreign Affairs is addressing a proposal for a recommendation to the Council on the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership.

MEPs hope that the Strategic Partnership will mark a qualitative leap in EU-Mexico relations, both multilaterally in terms of issues of world importance and that it will give a new impetus to the EU-Mexico Global Agreement in its various aspects - political (including human rights), security, anti drugs trafficking, environmental, cooperation (technical and cultural) and socioeconomic.

MEPs wish the trade chapter to be based on like-for-like treatment, solidarity, dialogue and respect for the specific characteristics of Mexico and the EU. They propose that the new partnership should, inter alia:

- institutionalise annual EU-Mexico summits within the framework of the Strategic Partnership, as is already the case for those with the US, Russia, China and Brazil;

- support the Mexican government in its contributions to the work of the UN and in its fight against drug trafficking, international terrorism and organised crime, especially in view of the increasing numbers of victims of drug trafficking and consumption;

- support the Mexican Government and President Calderón in their vital work of cleaning up certain institutions of the state and stopping corruption;

- falls within the sphere of its activities to fight feminicide in both regions, on a basis of dialogue, cooperation and the exchange of best practices;

- lead to closer coordination of positions on crisis situations and issues of world importance, on the basis of shared interests and concerns;

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see clear guidelines on how best to ensure close cooperation with a view to promoting effective multilateralism;

- be seen as an opportunity to debate how to confer greater operationality on the human rights and democracy clause and evaluate compliance with it;

- official recognise the Mexico-EU Civil Society Forum and that its recommendations should be taken into account wherever possible;
- give fresh impetus to the bilateral relationship and will favour the expansion and improvement of cooperation programmes such as the Integral Support Programme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (PIAPYME).

The committee recommends that Mexico should become a permanent member of the new financial and economic international architecture of the G-20. In addition, it stresses that more coherent efforts are needed to promote scientific and technological transfer, with a view to boosting real cooperation in fighting climate change and improving environmental protection.

MEPs wish to see further progress in developing a comprehensive and structured dialogue on immigration, both legal and illegal and invites the Joint Council to consider the timeliness of establishing, inter alia, an agreement on an immigration policy between the two parties.

Lastly, MEPs call for the reaffirmation of the Millennium Development Goals commitments and for renewed awareness of the need for close cooperation in the areas of social cohesion, gender equality, climate change, sustainable development, the fight against international terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime, food security, and the fight against poverty.