EU political relations with Latin America

2017/2027(INI) - 20/07/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report drawn up by Javi LÓPEZ (S&D, ES) on EU political relations between the EU and Latin America.

Members recalled that the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region is an **ideal partner for the European Union** to respond to the major challenges currently facing the world.

The long-standing EU-LAC partnership, based on historical, cultural, human and economic ties, should take on a more cross-cutting character, based on common values and principles such as **respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, international peace and security** and a common commitment to a multilateral system of global governance based on common standards and dialogue.

Expanding political and economic cooperation with LAC countries: while the two regions share a common vision of the world based on multilateralism and face the same challenges, Members suggested building stronger partnerships with LAC countries. Such cooperation would help to consolidate economic growth through sustainable socio-economic development policies while ensuring social integration, civil liberties and human rights and reduce poverty.

The report called on the EU-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) to strengthen their partnership and political dialogue:

- by incorporating them into thematic dialogues and main initiatives, such as the Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation, the Structured Dialogue on Migration, and the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs;
- working on clearly defined common interests in order to jointly address major global challenges, such as good governance, economic growth, social cohesion, culture, innovation and the environment, in multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the G20.

Regional integration: Members stressed the need for greater coordination between the different regional integration schemes in place, while respecting differences in the pace of integration. They recommended enhancing dialogue, cooperation and exchange of best practices with CELAC, Mercosur, the Andean Community of Nations (ACN), the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Pacific Alliance which brings together the Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

The importance of **stimulating interparliamentary cooperation** between the EU and the LAC region, in particular between the European Parliament and the various regional parliaments, is underlined.

The report stressed, among other things, the need to:

- integrate economies into global value chains based on a circular economic model and recognise the importance of developing bilateral and multilateral trade agreements;
- create conditions allowing the economies of both regions to diversify so that they are less dependent and vulnerable to global cyclical variations;
- create public and private partnerships to foster economic development, entrepreneurship, growth and foreign investment, and to fight the informal economy;
- establish sustainable and efficient tax systems in both regions;

- strengthen environmental cooperation with particular emphasis on energy transition and decarbonisation.

Sustainable development: Members stated that economic growth and trade alone are not sufficient to reduce poverty, inequality and exclusion. However, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be the foremost objective of cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the EU.

Employment, training: Members considered that public policies, in particular health, education and training, are essential, as are initiatives aimed at opening up prospects for the nearly 30 million young people who are not yet in employment. They advocated **further cooperation** with economic funds in the form of bilateral agreements between universities, scholarships, knowledge exchange and international mobility between EU and LAC students, in particular by boosting the Erasmus + programme.

Members also advocated systematically including rules on corporate responsibility and clauses safeguarding human rights and social rights in association, trade and investment agreements between the EU and LAC countries.

Security, corruption: the report highlighted the issues facing the two regions in the area of defence and security, including terrorism and the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime. It called on the EU and the LAC countries to tackle the problem of corruption by adopting measures ranging from prevention to law enforcement and criminal prosecution and through the effective implementation of multilateral and international conventions.

Deeply concerned about the serious deterioration of the democratic and human rights situation in **Venezuela**, Members urged the Venezuelan Government to safeguard the separation and independence of branches of government and to restore full constitutional authority to the National Assembly.