EU political strategy on Latin America

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The European Parliament adopted by 354 votes to 195, with 77 abstentions a resolution on EU political strategy on Latin America.

Given the deep human, historical, cultural, economic, and religious ties between the EU and the LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean), Members considered that the EU and the LAC, as natural strategic partners, have **a historic opportunity to strengthen their alliance** in the current international context marked by strategic competition. They noted that the EU's commitment has waned in recent decades, opening up space for the growing influence of China, Russia, and Iran. They denounced the fact that such closeness with authoritarian regimes ultimately undermine democracy in the region.

Geopolitical importance of the EU-LAC strategic alliance, strengthened dialogue and cooperation

Parliament called for strengthened dialogue and strategic cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to **defend democracy, the rule of law and the multilateral order**. It encouraged political convergence in the face of the war in Ukraine and humanitarian crises, while supporting shared strategic autonomy.

Members are concerned about the democratic backsliding observed in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2019 and condemned human rights violations and restrictions on fundamental freedoms in the region, particularly by the regimes of Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela, which are among the most authoritarian regimes in the world. They urged the immediate release of all political prisoners.

Parliament recalled that, unlike other global powers such as China and Russia, the EU is not seeking an unbalanced relationship, but rather **partnerships based on reciprocity, sustainability and the creation of added value**. This model of cooperation, which prioritises respect for sovereignty, transparency and the rule of law, makes the Union a privileged partner for the region.

Economic cooperation for sustainable growth

Parliament welcomed the strong economic and trade partnership between the EU and the LAC. It underlined (i) the EU's ambition to lead the global green transition and its recognition of Latin America as a key partner in this effort; (ii) the need to address growing inequalities, promote peace, and strengthen democratic processes and institutions in both regions; (iii) the importance of economic cooperation that promotes gender equality; and (iv) the need to align EU-LAC economic relations with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to ensure greater coherence between economic, social, and environmental objectives. It encouraged stronger regulation and transparency in key economic areas, such as the mining sector.

Strategic partnerships and international agreements

Parliament welcomed the ratification of the EU-Central America Association Agreement and the entry into force of its three pillars: political dialogue, cooperation, and trade in May 2024. It also welcomed the signing of the EU-Chile Advanced Framework Agreement and the conclusion of negotiations on the EU-Mexico Comprehensive Agreement. It stressed that **the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement** will provide an opportunity to significantly strengthen EU-Mercosur bi-regional cooperation in the face of common challenges, while countering the growing influence of authoritarian actors in the region and helping the Union diversify its sources of supply of critical raw materials.

EU-LAC development cooperation, humanitarian aid and sustainable investments through the Global Gateway initiative

Parliament recalled that the primary objective of the EU's development cooperation policy is **the reduction and, in the long term, the elimination of poverty**. It supports debt restructuring and stressed that the SDGs and the Paris Agreement must remain central to cooperation between LAC countries and the European Union.

Members reaffirmed the importance of **strengthening EU development policies and humanitarian aid** in the LAC region. Concerned about the reduction in funding for development and humanitarian aid globally, they called for the LAC region to be provided with sufficient development and humanitarian aid. They called for **civil society** to be fully involved in the design, implementation, and monitoring of EU programmes.

Parliament called on the EU and its Member States to leverage major initiatives such as the Global Gateway initiative to **increase investment** in the LAC region, ensuring that the EU remains a strong and competitive partner for LAC countries, given the growing presence of China and Russia in the region. It called on the Commission to implement the projects planned under the Global Gateway to build **sustainable, high-quality infrastructure** that creates local value, strengthens bi-regional value chains, and improves economic security for both regions. It insisted that the Global Gateway initiative always respects the **fundamental values of the EU.**

According to Members, investments under the Global Gateway initiative in the LAC region should prioritise reducing infrastructure and inequality gaps, including digital and energy poverty, particularly in rural and peripheral areas. Global Gateway should also prioritise investment in education, vocational training, and employment policies.

Parliament also called for **transparent and accountable management**, aligned with European values and local priorities.

The resolution also stressed the need to (i) strengthen cooperation on security and the fight against **drug** trafficking, (ii) ensure that judicial reforms in LAC respect the independence of the **judiciary** and comply with international rule of law standards, (iii) ensure full cooperation and solidarity between countries of origin, transit and destination, and respond in a coordinated manner to ensure the rights, dignity and security of all **migrants and refugees**, (iv) strengthen cooperation on **human rights**.

Lastly, Parliament stressed that the upcoming EU-CELAC summit will be an important opportunity to project EU-LAC’s voice to the world on the basis of common values, and an opportunity to renew political commitments at the highest level and set an ambitious and operational bi-regional agenda.