Stronger partnership between the European Union and Latin America

2005/2241(INI) - 27/02/2006

The Council adopted the following conclusions on strengthening the partnership between the EU and Latin America. In particular, it :

- reaffirms the importance of the EU's strategic partnership with Latin America and is determined to further strengthen the alliance in the mutual interest of both regions;

- underlines the EU’s objective to continue to cooperate closely with Latin America to promote our common values and interests, and to contribute jointly to peace and security, protection and promotion of human rights and the strengthening of citizens’ participation and democracy. Social cohesion, sustainable development including the protection of the environment and the strengthening of international environmental governance within the UN system, and support to regional integration and stability, are key objectives of our strategic partnership with the region;

- recognises the need to support efforts to reinforce democratic institutions, good governance and the rule of law, to combat drugs and organised crime including human trafficking, to promote gender equality, children’s and indigenous rights, and to address migration issues and human security in all its dimensions;

- recalls the EU and Latin American countries’ commitment to an effective multilateral system, with a central role for the United Nations, to meet global threats and challenges;

- welcomes and supports the important role of the OAS in providing support to regional stability in Latin America and the Caribbean;

- welcomes initiatives to develop effective sectoral dialogue, including on social cohesion and environment. In this respect, it especially welcomes the recommendation to hold meetings on environmental policy at ministerial level;

- acknowledges the need for a genuine, well-tailored, political dialogue with the region as a whole, with the various sub-regions, as well as with individual countries, making the most of existing structures. Such political dialogue should focus on strengthening the bi-regional capacity for cooperation on global issues of common concern;

- considers it beneficial to both regions to share views on current international or regional issues, to support each other in a multilateral framework and exchange experience and knowledge on peace-keeping, crisis prevention, counter-terrorism and response to natural disasters. In particular, the growing participation of Latin American countries in peacekeeping efforts deserves support and proves that the countries of the region are determined to play a crucial role in ensuring regional stability;

- recalls that development cooperation with the region will be implemented in accordance with the Joint Statement on the European Consensus on Development defining the objectives and principles for the Community’s development cooperation;

- underlines that Community cooperation in Latin America for the period 2007- 2013 should have as its primary objective the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. It further highlights the importance of policy coherence for development and that

development cooperation should follow a differentiated approach based on Latin American countries' own needs, strategies, priorities and assets, and be implemented in accordance with the commitments in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, aiming at improved donor coordination and harmonisation and alignment to recipient country systems. Resource allocation to the countries of the region should reflect the principles in the Joint Statement on the European Consensus on Development and take into account the importance accorded by the EU to Latin America. The Council welcomes the willingness of several countries to voluntarily explore and implement innovative mechanisms of financing for development such as the International Finance Facility, the International

Finance Facility for immunisation, or a contribution on airline tickets. In this framework, remittances are also an important tool for development;

- believes that more effective cooperation and an increased mutual understanding between both regions can be developed through the fields of education, scientific research and culture. The building of an EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education by 2015 will be a decisive step in this direction;

- acknowledges the importance of reinvigorating economic and commercial relations. It further recognises the importance of a favourable climate for the promotion of business and investment opportunities between the two regions in order to make optimal and mutually beneficial use of their existing potential;

- welcomes the recommendation to step up regulatory dialogue, including on issues such as barriers to trade and investment, as well as the organisation of the first EU-LAC Business Summit on the occasion of the forthcoming EU-Latin American and Caribbean Summit in Vienna;

- recognises that the promotion of inter-connectivity is an integral part of effective regional integration. Furthermore, the Council welcomes the European Investment Banks' continued support for Latin American countries.

- while reiterating its attachment to ongoing multilateral negotiations in the WTO under the DDA, the Council recalls the EU's strategic objective of enhancing the EU-Latin American bi-regional partnership through a network of association agreements, involving all the countries of the region and aimed at promoting the integration of the region as a whole;

- reaffirms its call to finalise negotiations on a balanced and ambitious EUMercosur association agreement as soon as possible. It also expects that appropriate decisions can be taken regarding the opening of negotiations on association agreements, including free trade agreements, with the Andean Community and Central America;

- looks forward to the upcoming IVth EU-Latin American and Caribbean Summit that will take place in Vienna on 12 May 2006, involving Heads of State and Government, civil society and the business community from both regions. The Council also considers that the Vienna Summit should reaffirm policy priorities and confirm the importance of the partnership by strengthening it through tangible outcomes;

- considers that a dialogue should take place with all relevant stakeholders, notably with Latin American partners, to ensure that both regions share a common commitment on the way forward. The Council invites all relevant parties to ensure effective follow-up of the recommendations of the Communication and of these Conclusions.