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*EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee*

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## **JOINT DECLARATION**

**21st Meeting of the**

**EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee**

**17-18 October 2016,**

**Brussels, Belgium**

The delegations of the European Parliament and the Congress of the Union of United Mexican States to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (the ‘JPC’), led by its Co-Chairs, Teresa Jiménez Becerril MEP and Senator Rabindranath Salazar, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the JPC and following the conclusion of the 21st Meeting held in Brussels, agree the following:

### **Joint Declaration**

1. The Mexican and European delegations welcome the holding of the 21st meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) and its outcome, and are encouraged by the continuing excellent relations between the two parties and the strength of their joint work.
2. Both delegations reaffirm their commitment to the values that both parties share and which are evident in our democratic, pluralist societies, which uphold basic freedoms, human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development. They also reaffirm their commitment to consolidating democracy, legal certainty, fighting poverty, and equitable economic and social development.

3. The European and Mexican delegations emphasise the importance of EU-Mexico relations under the Global Agreement and Strategic Association, and commit to continuing to work towards their modernisation through political and interparliamentary dialogue in the interests of European and Mexican citizens.

### **Political and economic situation in the European Union and Mexico**

4. The Joint Parliamentary Committee highlights that the international and regional political situation requires progress to be made on bilateral, bi-regional and multilateral cooperation to support improved governance that more fully integrates the stakeholders involved. This applies to cooperation on issues such as the economic and financial crisis, unemployment and social inequality, climate change, insecurity, and preventing and combating terrorism and organised crime, among other matters.

5. Both delegations are very satisfied with the recent appointment of Mr António Guterres as the new Secretary General of the United Nations. They also welcome the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize 2016 to Mr Juan Manuel Santos, the President of the Republic of Colombia. They consider the prize to be a clear impetus to all parties to continue making progress on the road towards peace, and hope that it will act as an incentive to reach a definitive peace agreement that takes all Colombians into consideration. They urge Mexico and the EU to continue to provide as much collaboration and support as required for the peace process in Colombia, as another sign of their shared commitment to resolving conflicts by peaceful means.

6. The European and Mexican delegations declare their commitment to continuing their efforts to promote and preserve human rights. They also commit to continuing to prevent, correct and prosecute unlawful human rights violations and impunity, through the exchange of experience and best practice on the subject, and by working together efficiently through the relevant international fora.

7. The European and Mexican delegations agree that the effects of a global economic crisis can still be felt, that this has been more severe in certain parts of the world, and that it has become more complex as a result of climate and security threats. This has led the international community to outline specific actions to combat rampant inequality, through the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which Mexico and the European Union have both adopted.

8. Both delegations emphasise the need to continue strengthening mutual cooperation and collaboration to confront global problems such as preventing and combating terrorism, human rights violations, threats to freedom of expression, combating organised crime (including the trafficking of arms, drugs and people), tax fraud and climate change, among

other issues.

9. Both parties acknowledge the Mexican Government's efforts to combat the problem of inequality through specific projects, such as the social inclusion project 'Prospera', which supports 6.8 million families by providing study grants, assistance for productive projects and life insurance for female heads of family. The parties also highlight the changes that have been implemented through Mexico's Educational Reform, which will result in better teachers, better schools and better curriculums, and improve the quality of education.

10. They emphasise the Mexican Government's institutional achievements in promoting and establishing the National Anti-Corruption System, which has new instruments to help to strengthen the probity and integrity of the public service, including the involvement of civil society. The system also meets the demands of the EU's new trade strategy, which was announced in October 2015.

11. They note the efforts made by Mexico on the issue of security, with nationwide adoption of the new accusatory criminal justice system. However, that is not to overlook the complex security situation in the country, where there is still work to be done to combat organised crime and impunity, to lower crime rates, and to promote and defend human rights and social cohesion effectively.

12. Both delegations recognise that economic growth in the EU is still insufficient. The legacy of the economic and financial crisis, the poor performance of non-European economies, the limited expansion of international trade, growing social inequality and the repercussions of Brexit are all contributing to an unfavourable context. They also declare themselves in favour of introducing a sustainable economic growth policy, and improved, more adequate governance to achieve economic development that supports the consolidation of public finances, the protection of the internal market, the integrity of the Eurozone, the fight against social inequality, and environmental protection.

13. Both delegations condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the successive terrorist attacks that have taken place in recent months in a number of European cities, and express their solidarity with the victims, their families and the countries affected. They reiterate that these acts are a real threat to the shared values of liberty, fundamental rights and human dignity. Both parties are in favour of strengthening cooperation between them and globally, in the fight against terrorism and extremist violence.

14. The European and Mexican delegations express their full support for the recently reestablished sectoral dialogue on security and justice, intended to increase the exchange of information, promoting capacity building, and facilitating the exchange of experience in public security, the rule of law and border management. They welcome the EU's approval

of the Passenger Name Record Directive in April 2016, the new Europol Regulation, the Action Plan to step up the fight against the financing of terrorist activity, and the proposal for a new directive on combating terrorism.

15. The Mexican delegation expresses its deepest condolences with regard to the terrorist attacks that have affected some EU Member States, such as Belgium, France and Germany. It asks the European members of the JPC to convey its solidarity to the authorities in those countries and the families of the victims. The European delegation thanks the Mexican Congress for the solidarity expressed in the Point of Agreement published in the Parliamentary Gazette of 7 April 2016. It also conveys its condolences to the families and friends of the victims, and its solidarity with the European people affected.

16. The European delegation notes the results of the referendum held in the United Kingdom on 23 June 2016, which voted against remaining in the European Union. It considers this to be against the interests of the country and the EU.

17. The European and Mexican members of the JPC hope that, after the United Kingdom activates Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon (expected in March 2017), the British and EU authorities can begin the necessary negotiations to achieve a fair agreement that is appropriate and balanced for both parties, and which affects European citizens as little as possible.

**Right to development, international mobility and joint responsibility in the management of migratory flows.**

18. The European and Mexican delegations recognise that migration is a normal global phenomenon that is multidimensional, multifaceted and cross-cutting. It is caused by a wide range of factors, including economic, social, labour and political conditions, situations of violence and insecurity, and the gradual degradation of the environment and intensity of natural disasters. The phenomenon must be addressed in a way that is humane, coherent, broad and comprehensive, and that complies with international law.

19. Both delegations insist on the obligation to guarantee that the human rights of migrants are respected, regardless of their migratory status. They urge the exchange of best practice between origin, transit and destination countries in migratory flows, based on the principle of shared responsibility. They also insist on strengthened cooperation to combat the trading of people, trafficking of migrants, racism, xenophobia and all other forms of intolerance, including religious and gender intolerance, which are negative consequences of the migratory phenomenon.

20. The members of the JPC emphasise that enabling the organised, safe, lawful and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the application of planned,

well managed migratory policies, is an objective of the Sustainable Development Goals to reduce inequality in and between countries. They also emphasise that organised, safe, lawful and responsible migration and mobility must be seen as an opportunity for development, which is an inalienable right, and not as a threat to the countries from which migration originates or the transit and destination countries. As reflected in the data produced by Eurostat, without immigration, Europe's population could decrease by 100 million people by 2080.

21. The JPC highlights the remarkable growth in the number of migrants arriving in the EU territory in 2015. The agency Frontex has stated that 1.83 million unlawful border crossings were detected at the EU's external borders, of which 1.04 million were to Greece and Italy alone. Migration and asylum have therefore become priority issues for discussion in the EU. It therefore hopes that the EU institutions and countries will reach effective agreements that enable the root causes of the current mass influx of migrants to be resolved. They must also enable people seeking asylum for reasons of political or religious persecution, or any other kind, and refugees who are fleeing military conflict, to be handled appropriately and in accordance with international law.

## **Progress on modernisation of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement**

22. Both delegations emphasise the importance of continuing to strengthen relations between Mexico and the European Union, potentially by updating the two pillars of the Global Agreement, namely: i) trade; ii) political dialogue and cooperation. They support the work carried out by the Working Group responsible for preparing the Joint Vision Report and welcome the agreement reached on the ambition and scope that the new updated agreement should have. They also highlight that the new agreement must maintain and strengthen the democratic and human rights clauses binding on both parties. This is in view of the relevance that the issue of human rights has acquired in the EU as a result of the binding nature of the Charter of Fundamental Rights under the Treaty of Lisbon, and in Mexico as a result of the constitutional human rights reform.

23. From a political perspective, the new agreement must strengthen the mechanisms and instruments for cooperation and dialogue, particularly in international organisations and fora. It must also contain ambitious provisions and mechanisms for monitoring human rights and defending the values shared by both partners.

24. The JPC members welcome the fact that the EU and Mexico are continuing to explore new areas of cooperation, particularly in science, technology and innovation, that have a positive impact in areas such as energy, information and communication technology, the environment, climate change and food security, among others. They note that sectoral dialogue is particularly helpful in this regard.

25. They insist on the importance of effectively incorporating parliamentary level political dialogue through the JPC, and particularly its Co-Chairs, in the process of reflecting on and participating in the modernisation of the Global Agreement, which began in 2016. Debate and joint reflection by both parties' legislators needs to be promoted, and the flow of information between parliamentarians and executive authorities needs to be optimised in both Mexico and the European Union. Bearing in mind the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in EU-Mexico relations, they request that the EU-Mexico JPC be recognised as an institutional body in the new Global Agreement, responsible for parliamentary monitoring of implementation of the Global Agreement, as a representative of European and Mexican citizens.

26. Both delegations express support for civil society to be more included in the Global Agreement, and for the fora for the dialogue between civil society and Mexico's governmental institutions, held between 2001 and 2012, to be resumed.

27. Both delegations still believe that a modernised trade pillar should aspire to promote and facilitate: trade, based on the World Trade Organisation's Trade Facilitation Agreement; a greater exchange of information and best practice; clear rules of origin; greater access to goods, services and investment markets (including public contracting); a high level of protection for investment and intellectual property rights; greater economic integration; increased competition; the removal, reduction and implementation of unnecessary non-customs related measures and barriers; strengthened dialogue; transparency; regulatory cooperation (including on sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures to protect consumer safety and health, animal wellbeing and plant health in both parties' territories); better administrative practices for more coherent regulation; and disciplines on the protection of competition and mergers that are applicable to all businesses and the fight against tax evasion, money laundering and corruption. They consider it vital that the new agreement helps to promote sustainable development, human rights and environmental protection.

#### **Involvement of European and Mexican civil society in trade and sustainable development**

28. Both delegations highlight the importance of the involvement of civil society in all areas of public life and reiterate their recognition of civil society's important role in building more democratic and inclusive governments.

29. The European and Mexican delegations newly subscribe to the importance of civil society's involvement in EU-Mexico relations to strengthen democracy and good governance, and to promote respect for human rights in both regions. This should be done through spaces such as the Forum of Dialogue between Civil Society and Institutions of the Mexican Government and the European Union, and through EU-Mexico human rights dialogue. They also emphasise that the involvement of civil society is an objective of the Sustainable Development Goals, as signed by the EU countries, Mexico and the rest of the international community through the United Nations. As these objectives set out, collaboration between economic, political and social stakeholders is also vital in order for the new 2030 sustainable development agenda to be effective. Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all is another objective of that agenda, along with creating alliances between governments, the private sector and civil society.

#### **Results and strengthening of the EU-Mexico Sectoral Agreement on Science and Technology**

30. Both delegations believe that the EU and Mexico must continue to explore new areas of cooperation, particularly in science, technology and innovation, which would have a

positive impact on fields such as energy, information and communication technology, the environment, climate change and food security, among others. They note that sectoral dialogue is particularly helpful in this regard.

31. The European and Mexican delegations also believe that the participation of Mexican universities and researchers in EU research and development programmes, such as Horizon 2020, should be supported in the area of scientific and technological research. The focus should be on priority sectors for the Strategic Association, which could include climate change mitigation and adaptation, with the aim of agreeing common positions and sharing knowledge and technology. They also want to design better mobility schemes for students, academic and researchers, continue promoting student and teacher exchanges, and encourage the planning of specific masters degrees to be completed on both sides of the Atlantic.

32. The European and Mexican delegations newly welcome the results achieved under the EU-Mexico Sectoral Agreement on Science and Technology. These include joint initiatives such as the EU-Mexico Fund for Science and Technology Cooperation (FONCICYT). This aims to strengthen the Mexican scientific and technological sector to contribute, among other things, to environmental and socio-economic solutions, and the participation of Mexican institutions and researchers in the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2007-2013), and in the current EU programme to finance research and innovation projects: Horizon 2020 (2014-2020). In that context, they welcome the results of the 8th meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Steering Committee on Science and Technology, held in Brussels on 27 May 2016. In it, the National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT) confirmed its commitment to keep financing Mexican institutions and researchers to participate in Horizon 2020 calls for proposals. It also reported that the evaluation process for the CONACYT-H2020 cofinancing mechanism has been simplified to enable that participation.

33. The European and Mexican delegations are aware of the importance of strengthening scientific and technological capacity in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in guaranteeing sustainable models of production and consumption, and access to affordable, safe, sustainable and modern energy for all. They also urge the European Commission and Mexican Government to continue investing resources in that area with a view to achieving these objectives through close and effective cooperation.

### **Final considerations**

34. The delegations of the Mexican Congress and the European Parliament agree to send this Declaration to the members of the Association Council. They repeat their request for

the Co-Chairs of the JPC to be invited to observe future committee meetings and set out their position on the discussions about modernising the Global Agreement.

35 With a view to strengthened and inclusive parliamentary control, the European and Mexican delegations repeat their request for the renewed institutional framework of the Global Agreement to incorporate clear parliamentary dialogue, on a six-monthly basis. This applies particularly in relation to its interaction with the Joint Council and Committee, with the aim of contributing to implementation of the decisions adopted and the success of the objectives of the EU-Mexico Strategic Association.

36. The European and Mexican delegations highlight the need for modernisation of the Global Agreement to include the creation of a Joint Consultative Committee for civil society organisations from both parties to monitor the Agreement.

37. Both delegations agree to hold their next meeting in Mexico, preferably during the first half of 2017.

Brussels, 18 October 2016

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European Parliament delegation

**Teresa Jiménez Becerril MEP**

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Delegation of the Congress of the  
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**Senator Rabindranath Salazar  
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