



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DELEGATION

and Summary of Activities during the 7th Parliamentary Term (2009-2014)



General context

In accordance with Rules 212 and 214 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, the European Parliament may set up standing interparliamentary delegations, Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and Joint Parliamentary Committees. The number of these bodies may vary from one legislature to the other.

The interparliamentary delegations' main objective is to establish, channel and promote parliamentary dialogue with the partner countries' legislative institutions and also with the parliamentary institutions concerned with integration at regional or sub-regional level. Such objectives are achieved by means of regular gatherings at Parliament's places of work and in the counterpart countries, during which topics of mutual interest in the national, bi-regional and international spheres are discussed.

Delegations for relations with Latin America

The European Union and Latin America have enjoyed a Strategic Partnership since the first bi-regional Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1999. EU policy priorities towards Latin America are defined in the Communication on a 'Stronger Partnership between the European Union and Latin America' (2005).

During the 2009-2014 term, five standing Delegations were responsible for bilateral and sub-regional relations with Latin America:

- Delegation to the Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-Mexico¹
- Delegation to the Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-Chile¹
- Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America
- Delegation for relations with Mercosur
- Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community

Information gathered is made available to Parliament's other Members by means of regular reports or reports drawn up by the chairman after each visit or interparliamentary meeting. The reports are usually submitted to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Human Rights Sub-Committee, Development, International Trade and when directly relevant to other Committees. They sometimes give rise to European Parliament resolutions.

Whereas the above also applies to the Joint Parliamentary Committees, it should be noted in addition that each JPC has its own rules of procedure. In general, JPCs meet twice a year in order to examine the implementation of the respective Association Agreement, in addition to discussing issues of mutual interest. If the schedule allows it, JPC meetings are also preceded by meetings of the Bureau. A Joint Declaration is adopted at each meeting of a JPC and sent to the respective Association Council, the Presidency, the European Commission, and the Committees on Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Development.

¹ The establishment of the Joint Parliamentary Committees with Mexico and Chile has been provided for in the Associations Agreements of the European Union with the respective countries and have thus a legal standing of their own.

All these delegations work closely together with the European Parliament's Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (Eurolat).

EU-Mexico bilateral relations: state of play and perspectives for the 8th legislature

Mexico is the eleventh biggest economy in the world and the most important emerging economy after the four BRIC countries. It is a privileged partner for the EU - the only country with which the EU has concluded both an Association Agreement and a Strategic Partnership.

Mexico was the first Latin American country to sign an **Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement** with the EU in 1997 (the 'Global Agreement', in force since 2000). With its three pillars - political dialogue, trade and cooperation -, the Agreement has had a very positive impact on the bilateral relations. Indeed, bilateral trade doubled (237% increase), the total trade volume was some 47 billion EUR, placing the EU as Mexico's second trading partner after the US. Moreover, the average yearly investment flow in Mexico has tripled (EU cumulated investment in 2000-2012 reached some 100 billion USD) placing the EU as the second foreign investor in Mexico in 2012. However, the full potential of EU-Mexico economic relations has not been reached.

The Global Agreement also created a series of institutionalised meetings (bi-annual Summits, annual Joint Councils and annual Joint Committees) which have boosted and deepened the dialogue and cooperation on bilateral, regional and multilateral questions.

The 2008 **Strategic Partnership** reinforced the Agreement by introducing new key policy areas: reinforced cooperation in the multilateral arena; creation of new sectorial dialogues (security, human rights, political dialogue), Joint Executive Plan setting out a long list of actions (international peace and justice, transnational organised crime, human security, triangular cooperation, macroeconomic affairs, sustainable development, police cooperation, education, culture, youth, science and technology, public health, nuclear safety etc.). As a result, EU-Mexico relations are characterized by a high degree of like-mindedness, with excellent cooperation on most matters.

As far as the **Global Agreement** is concerned, some 17 years after its signature and 14 years after its entry into force, a **possible upgrade** is now envisaged and is receiving increasing attention. There have been deep changes on the political side, both in the EU with the Lisbon Treaty and in Mexico with President Pena Nieto's administration in place since December 2012 and its energetic pursuit of a very ambitious and comprehensive reform agenda (known as the 'Pact for Mexico') to address Mexico's key problems, such as high levels of criminal violence, widespread poverty, persistent social inequalities and a loss of economic dynamism and competitiveness. More broadly, in recent years, we have witnessed the confirmation of Mexico as an economic and political power, both at regional and global level. Mexico is currently the 2nd biggest Latin American economy and an important multilateral and global player. Moreover, Mexico's role and weight on the international scene are increasing and the EU's points of view in the international arena have been largely converging with those of Mexico (to name but a few: EU speaking rights in the UN General Assembly, Arms Trade Treaty, Climate negotiations).

On the **trade** side, the review clauses on agriculture, services and investment which are included in the Agreement have not so far been effective to broaden the scope of ambition.

Moreover, the Agreement would need to be broadened to include investment, government procurement, trade facilitation, customs and other issues in order to bring it up to date with respect to other deals recently signed by the EU.

Cooperation on **multilateral issues** remains to be fully developed and though many areas of dialogue/cooperation have been addressed by the strategic partnership, others (such as for example energy, migration, Weapons of Mass Destructions, International Criminal Court, disarmament, terrorism) remain to be developed.

In the period 2007-2013, the Commission's **cooperation** with Mexico focused on three priority areas: social cohesion, economy and competitiveness, and education and culture. The EU's approach to cooperation has however undergone an important transformation. As an upper-middle-income country, Mexico will cease to receive grant-based, traditional, bilateral development cooperation aid from the Commission in application of the 'differentiation' criteria for cooperation in the period 2014-2020. The main instrument for cooperation with Mexico will be the Partnership Instrument with new formulas and priorities for cooperation to be defined, which should reflect Mexico's status as a strategic partner for the EU and aim at developing and promoting the shared interests of Mexico and the EU. Other instruments are also available, such as the regional, sub-regional and thematic schemes of the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the Instrument for Stability, Erasmus for All and Horizon 2020.

Other areas such as relations with **civil society** could be further reinforced. In this sense, the JPC advocated the constitution of an EU-Mexico Joint Consultative Mechanism of Civil Society, which would institutionalise the dialogue between the civil societies and the Mexican and EU authorities.

At the EU-CELAC Summit in January 2013 in Santiago (Chile) Mexican and EU leaders agreed to **explore the options for a comprehensive update** of the Global Agreement. This was followed shortly by a visit of EP President Martin Schulz to Mexico (as well as to Costa Rica and Colombia).

In order to move forward with the process of upgrading the Global Agreement, the EU and Mexico agreed to advance in a coordinated fashion on all three fronts of the process: political dialogue, cooperation and trade. A Joint Working Group started to review the performance and effectiveness of the Agreement to date and to identify the key elements of its possible modernisation and engaged in elaborating a Joint Vision Report, which would pave the way for a decision to open negotiations.

One of the main points of interest for the future EP Delegation to the EU-Mexico JPC and the JPC itself will be to follow closely and to contribute to this updating process and to continue monitoring the implementation of the current Agreement. This should enable it to make recommendations and concrete proposals to the European and Mexican Executives in order to improve the operation of the Agreement in particular and to enhance the bilateral relations in general.

The EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)

The EP attaches particular importance to the parliamentary dimension of the EU-Mexico partnership. In September 2004, the European Parliament and the Mexican Congress adopted

a resolution to establish the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee, composed by 14 Members of the Mexican Congress (Senate and House of Representatives) and 14 Members of the European Parliament. Its work has been of vital importance for the implementation of the Global Agreement and in general for the development of a lively and constructive political dialogue between the EU and Mexico.

The first meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee took place on 28-29 September 2005. In principle, the JPC meets twice a year, once in Europe and once in Mexico respectively, but at least once a year, as is provided for its own rules of procedure (see attached).

Besides the full meetings of the JPC, it is customary for the Bureau of the delegation to meet in advance of the JPC meeting in order to examine the proposals for the draft programme and draft agenda. These meetings also take place alternatively in Mexico and in Europe.

The European Parliament's delegation to the JPC meets at regular intervals in Brussels or in Strasbourg, in order to prepare for the meetings of the JPC, and to keep Members informed on developments in the context of EU-Mexico relations.

The Chairperson of the European Parliament's Delegation in the previous term was first Mr Ramon Jauregui Atondo (S&D, Spain, until 2010) and then Mr Ricardo Cortes Lastra (S&D, Spain, from 2010). The Co-Chairman on the Mexican side was first Senator José Guadarrama Marquez (until 2012) and then Senator Rabindranath Salazar Solorio (since 2012).

A Joint Declaration is adopted at the end of each JPC meeting.

Activities during the 2009-2014 term - chronology of meetings

JPC	Date	Venue
8th JPC Meeting EU-México	30-31 March 2009,	Brussels (Belgium)
9th JPC Meeting EU-México	10-11 December 2009	México City (México)
10th JPC Meeting EU-México	12-15 May 2010	Sevilla (Spain)
11th JPC Meeting EU-México	1-2 December 2010	México City (México)
12th JPC Meeting EU-México	20-21 June 2011	Luxemburg
Bureau Meeting (in the frame of Eurolat)	18 May 2011	Montevideo (Uruguay)
13th JPC Meeting EU-México	25-28 November 2011	México City and Oaxaca (México)
14th JPC Meeting EU-México	23-24 May 2012	Strasbourg (France)
Bureau Meeting (in the frame of Eurolat)	23 January 2013	Santiago de Chile (Chile)
15th JPC Meeting EU-México	2-4 May 2013	Mexico City and Cuernavaca (Mexico)
Bureau Meeting (in the frame of Eurolat)	17 July 2013	Vilnius (Lithuania)

16th JPC Meeting EU-México	19-21 November 2013	Strasbourg (France)
Visit of the Secretary General of the Mexican Senat (Mr Arturo Garita)	23 January 2013	Brussels (Belgium)
Visit of the Vice-Minister of External Relations of Mexico (Mr Carlos Icaza)	27 January 2013	Brussels (Belgium)
17th JPC Meeting EU-México	15-17 April 2014	Strasbourg (France)

(all reports available upon request to the Secretariat)

Overview of the most important issues

Rule 1 of the EU-Mexico JPC rules of procedure reads as follows:

"The role of the Committee shall be to consider all aspects of the relations between the European Community and Mexico, and in particular the implementation of the Association Agreement"

Therefore the implementation of the Association Agreement has been the crucial part of the agenda of every JPC meeting. Members have also used these opportunities to brief each other on the political and economic situation in both the European Union and Mexico.

The attached joint declarations provide an overview of all the issues discussed at each and every meeting of the JPC. Some of the most important issues have been climate change and environmental protection, human rights, migration, social cohesion, integration processes in Latin America and the international financial and economic crisis.

Secretariat (as of September 2014)

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