

A stronger partnership between the European Union and Latin America

European Parliament resolution on a stronger partnership between the European Union and Latin America (2005/2241(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the declarations issued by the three summits of Latin American and Caribbean and European Union Heads of State or Government held to date in Rio de Janeiro (28 and 29 June 1999), Madrid (17 and 18 May 2002), and Guadalajara (28 and 29 May 2004),
 - having regard to the Luxembourg Declaration adopted at the EU – Rio Group 12th Interministerial Meeting, held in Luxembourg on 27 May 2005,
 - having regard to the Commission’s strategy communication to the Council and the European Parliament entitled ‘A stronger partnership between the European Union and Latin America’, submitted in anticipation of the Fourth EU-LAC Summit, which will take place in Vienna on 12 and 13 May 2006 (COM(2005)0636),
 - having regard to the Final Act of the 17th European Union – Latin America Interparliamentary Conference, held in Lima from 14 to 16 June 2005,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2001 on a global partnership and a common strategy for relations between the European Union and Latin America¹,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Development (A6-0047/2006),
- A. whereas at the three above-mentioned summits the Heads of State or Government of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean decided that their ultimate strategic goal was to establish an EU-LAC bi-regional strategic partnership,
- B. whereas current relations still fall short of the expectations implicit in a genuine strategic partnership, whether as regards the political and security aspects or as regards trade, social and budgetary aspects,
- C. whereas Latin America, with which it shares a common commitment to human rights, democracy and multilateralism, is an especially close partner of the Union, which is seeking to consolidate its position as a global player and has become the main foreign investor in Latin America, the principal donor to the region and the leading trading partner of many countries, in particular those belonging to Mercosur,

¹ OJ C 140 E, 13.6.2002, p. 569.

- D. whereas the EU is the biggest development cooperation and humanitarian aid donor in Latin America,
- E. whereas according to figures compiled by ECLA (the UN Economic Commission for Latin America), the economies of the Latin American countries have recorded growth for three years running, gross domestic product (GDP) having increased by 4.3% in 2005,
- F. whereas per capita GDP in Latin America varies in the region of EUR 2 800, in other words treble that of China; whereas because of its growing ties with Asia, especially China, and its abundant human resources and raw material stocks, Latin America is a highly important market for the Union; whereas, despite the currently uneven trading patterns, the Union is emerging as a partner with a key role to play in Latin America's economic, industrial, scientific, and technological development, since it is helping to promote diversification in the region, which also has very close ties with the United States,
- G. whereas at present some 45% of Latin America's population are still living in poverty and are afflicted by blatant social inequality, discrimination and neglect, the main victims being indigenous populations, women and children, a situation which could obviously undermine democracy and cause societies to fragment, as well as jeopardising economic growth and fuelling social unrest and political instability,
- H. acknowledging the substantial efforts made by certain Latin American countries within whose societies significant progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals,
- I. greatly welcoming the activities of those countries under South-South solidarity and cooperation programmes, which are having significant effects in the fields of healthcare, education and action to combat disability,
- J. whereas a number of reports on truth and reconciliation have been produced in different Latin American countries in the aftermath of dictatorial regimes with recommendations which still need to be implemented in order to establish justice as a basis for the development of democratic societies,
- K. whereas a world economic system which is more sensitive to the needs of the least-developed countries is required if governance and social cohesion are to be improved,
- L. whereas the strategic relationship consequently needs to be reactivated, especially within the bedrock of core areas such as the moves to make relations between the partners truly multilateral, support for regional integration processes and social cohesion in Latin America, migration and improvements to the institutional machinery of the partnership,
- M. whereas the Fourth EU-LAC Summit, to be held in Vienna in May 2006, will afford an excellent opportunity to revitalise relations and, as far as the Union is concerned, a new opportunity to draw up a self-contained, coherent and comprehensive strategic framework to impart ongoing orderly momentum to the Union's relations with Latin America and constitute the mainstay of its external action aimed at that region,

- N. having regard to the additional institutional and development-cooperation support to be derived from the setting-up of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) at the 15th Ibero-American Summit (held in Salamanca in October 2005) - a body with its own legal personality which is designed to support the Ibero-American Conference,
- O. whereas it is likewise essential to revitalise the parliamentary dimension of the strategic partnership; and whereas the best way to do so would be to take a decision without further delay, in Vienna, to set up a Euro-Latin American Transatlantic Assembly to strengthen and rationalise the parliamentary dialogue,
- P. whereas it is vital to provide budgetary resources commensurate with the priorities deriving from a revitalised bi-regional strategic partnership,
1. Congratulates the Commission because, ten years on and on the eve of the Vienna EU-LAC Summit of Heads of State or Government, it has submitted a new strategy communication that serves to identify and assess the challenges and extraordinary opportunities likely to arise as a genuine bi-regional strategic partnership is translated into reality;
 2. Expresses its satisfaction at the constructive interinstitutional climate which the present Commission, showing the political awareness, sense of expediency and leadership so vitally needed at this time, has thus helped to bring about; particularly applauds the quality and conscientiousness of the excellent technical groundwork evidenced by the above-mentioned Commission communication;
 3. Endorses the Austrian Presidency's resolute commitment to strengthening EU-LAC relations, as reflected in the fact that the Presidency has made the Fourth Summit a high point of its programme;
 4. Reaffirms its intention of playing a constructive role in support of the Commission and the current Presidency and to do its utmost to help make the forthcoming Vienna Summit a real success for all the partners;
 5. Supports the role of the SEGIB as the organiser of the Ibero-American summits and recommends that a flexible mechanism be established to prepare and monitor EU-LA summits, including the participation of the Council Presidency, the Commission, the Senior Officials' Group and the SEGIB, so as to utilise and coordinate the synergies created by the various partners involved and prevent duplication of resources;

A comprehensive approach to the bi-regional strategic partnership

6. Repeats that it is absolutely essential to have an overall strategic vision of the partnership, which, ranging beyond isolated proposals or measures, should pursue the ultimate goal of establishing a genuine political, social, cultural, environmental and security partnership, bringing a Euro-Latin American area of global interregional partnership into being in the medium term, and launching a real partnership in the social field and in the spheres of knowledge and joint action to bring about sustainable development;
7. Endorses the Commission's aims and the reasons it sets out for strengthening relations, although it would have preferred the ultimate objectives of the Commission's proposals

and recommendations to be spelt out more explicitly along the lines of the preceding paragraph;

8. Supports the Commission's proposals for stepping up and focusing political dialogue, but repeats that a stronger political and security partnership must be built in addition on a Euro-Latin American Charter for Peace and Security, to enable practical expression to be given, under the terms of the United Nations Charter, to policy, strategy, and security proposals of interest to the two regions, on the work of a bi-regional conflict prevention centre and on new institutional machinery, including
 - (a) a Euro-Latin American Transatlantic Assembly, whose membership should be drawn in equal numbers from Members of the European Parliament on the one hand and, on the other, from the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino), the Central American Parliament (Parlacen), the Andean Parliament (Parlandino) and the EU-Mexico and EU-Chile Joint Parliamentary Committees;
 - (b) a Euro-Latin American Permanent Secretariat to encourage partnership activities between summits;
 - (c) updating of the ministerial-level political dialogue, including frequent meetings of the Defence, Justice and Internal Affairs, Social Affairs, Environment and Development Ministers, etc.;
 - (d) systematic attempts to seek a Euro-Latin American consensus in the various international organisations and negotiations, first and foremost in the United Nations and the World Trade Organization;
 - (e) a regular bi-regional dialogue between local and regional governments under the auspices of the Committee of the Regions;
 - (f) a regular bi-regional entrepreneurial dialogue established on an official footing and appropriate involvement of trade-union organisations and civil society in monitoring the agreements;
9. Supports the Commission's recommendation that the political dialogue be adjusted in line with the needs of the different partners at bi-regional, subregional, or bilateral level and that it be confined to a limited number of topics, including reform of the United Nations and peacekeeping; also considers that the dialogue needs to be broadened to cover other subjects of mutual interest such as respect for human rights, democratic governance and the fight against poverty, terrorism and drug trafficking, and that specific dialogues on social cohesion, the environmental aspect of sustainable development, social justice and workers' rights and migration and human interaction are also essential;
10. Supports the Commission's proposal that a political dialogue on conflict prevention and crisis management be placed on the new political agenda, but suggests that the dialogue should also encompass European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) matters as a whole and be organised around the Euro-Latin American Charter for Peace and Security and the work of a bi-regional conflict prevention centre to be set up in Latin America, since this would be the best way to exchange shared experiences and bolster and coordinate efforts

involving the countries and regional bodies concerned, including in particular the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Rio Group;

11. Considers that, if there is a delay in reaching agreement on the abovementioned Euro-Latin American Charter for Peace and Security - as occurred with similar ventures in other geographical areas - efforts should be made to ensure that the other measures and objectives under the strengthened partnership are not held up by the failure to reach agreement;
12. Considers that the purpose of the bi-regional conflict prevention centre should be the early detection of causes of potential violence and armed conflicts, with a view to preventing such conflicts or their possible escalation at an early stage;
13. Reiterates its belief that dialogue between the two regions paves the way for tackling a common challenge, strengthens and bolsters multilateralism in global politics and at the same time increases Latin America's political weight in international fora and organisations;
14. Reaffirms its belief that the internal stability of many Latin American partner countries continues nonetheless to depend on reform of state structures and specifically on modernisation of representative machinery, institutions, and political parties, on the integration of groups such as indigenous peoples into decision-making procedures and on greater democratic governance;
15. Applauds the Commission for coming out in favour of setting up the Euro-Latin American Transatlantic Assembly at the Vienna Summit, since this will help to consolidate democratic governance and strengthen the parliamentary dimension of the partnership; calls on the Fourth Summit to provide expressly in the Final Act or 'Vienna undertaking' for the setting-up of the Assembly as proposed by the Euro-Latin American joint parliamentary bodies, with the membership being drawn in equal numbers from the Members of the European Parliament on the one hand and, on the other, from the Parlatino, the Parlacen, the Parlandino, the Mercosur Joint Parliamentary Committee and the EU-Mexico and EU-Chile Joint Parliamentary Committees;
16. Proposes that the Euro-Latin American Transatlantic Assembly (EUROLAT) be made the parliamentary body of the strategic partnership and be provided with the following advisory and review powers:
 - (a) a parliamentary forum to debate and scrutinise matters related to the strategic partnership, which the Assembly should support in order to consolidate and develop it;
 - (b) supervision and parliamentary control to be brought to bear on association agreements already in force or being negotiated or revised, allowing the joint parliamentary committees provided for in the agreements to be involved wherever appropriate;
 - (c) adoption of resolutions, recommendations and acts addressed to EU-LAC summits and the various joint ministerial bodies, including the Rio Group and the San José process;

17. Calls on Latin American partner countries specifically to enter into explicit commitments designed to strengthen the direct legitimacy of all joint regional parliamentary assemblies by seeking as quickly as possible to enable their members to be elected by direct universal suffrage;
18. Proposes enhancing the role of local and regional governments in promoting public decentralised cooperation initiatives which are aimed at people at grassroots level and designed to improve their welfare; also proposes strengthening instruments intended to build on experience acquired through bi-regional links and exchanges undertaken to date;
19. Renews its call for a proper role for civil society (NGOs, business, associations, universities, trade unions, etc.), since this will enable society as a whole to be more fully involved in monitoring the activities and benefits resulting from a stronger partnership;
20. Considers it essential, if the partnership is to run smoothly, that a Euro-Latin American entrepreneurial forum, consisting of representatives of employers' organisations and of European and Latin American small, medium-sized and large enterprises, should work to promote trade and encourage investment of every kind in the two regions;
21. Repeats its proposal for a Euro-Latin American area of global interregional partnership to be set up in the medium term, proceeding in two stages:
 - (a) the negotiations on the EU-Mercosur association agreement should be concluded in Vienna; negotiations on individual association agreements with the Andean Community (CAN) and Central America should begin; the new Generalised System of Preferences (GSP 'plus') should be applied to all parties concerned and utmost benefit should be derived from its advantages, until such time as the above agreements have entered into force, and existing EU-Mexico and EU-Chile agreements should be strengthened to enable their potential to be tapped to the full;
 - (b) a comprehensive interregional association agreement should be secured by 2010 in order to provide a legal basis and full geographical scope for the different aspects of the bi-regional partnership and to pursue the ultimate goal of gradual reciprocal liberalisation, on a bilateral preferential basis, of trade in every category of goods and services (subject to the restrictions appropriate to economic services of general interest) within the bi-regional bloc, in accordance with WTO rules;
22. Endorses the Commission's recommendations aimed at creating a favourable climate for trade and investment flows between the two regions by consolidating the WTO multilateral trading system, strengthening the existing agreements with Mexico and Chile, negotiating association and free-trade agreements with Mercosur, the Andean Community (CAN), Central America and the Caribbean countries, and facilitating access to the European market for Latin American exports by applying tariff preferences and exemptions from duty under the GSP 'plus' system;
23. Believes that the conclusion of the European Union-Mercosur agreements and the opening of negotiations with CAN and Central America at the forthcoming Vienna Summit will help make the summit more successful and give a significant boost to relations between the European Union and Latin America;

24. Points out that, in view of the disappointing outcome of the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, 'WTO conditionality' has become irrelevant for the purposes of the present brief to negotiate with Mercosur and even more so for the purposes of the future briefs for the negotiations with CAN and Central America; maintains that in the current circumstances it is instead more feasible to finalise an agreement with Mercosur containing an agricultural chapter compatible with the timetable and the 2013 cut-off date agreed in Hong Kong, which allow transitional periods to be laid down by mutual agreement;
25. Calls for the briefs to negotiate the new association agreements with the Andean and Central American communities to omit any clause whereby conclusion of the agreements would depend on completion of the WTO round negotiations, notwithstanding the guarantee that the future free trade area would in the end be fully compatible with WTO provisions; calls on the Commission and the Council to consult Parliament on the negotiating directives before they are finally approved by the Council;
26. Recommends that the bilateral and interregional agreements currently in force or in the process of negotiation be placed within an overarching multilateral context with a view to promoting regional integration and internal trade so as to enable their provisions to be incorporated in due course into the proposed comprehensive bi-regional association agreement;
27. Restates its belief that, as well as on the economic and trade aspects of the future agreements, emphasis should likewise be laid on the qualitative importance of their political, social, and cultural components, and those linked to migration and sustainable development; considers it essential to take the steps required to establish a suitable relationship between free trade and social cohesion;
28. Advises the Summit to ensure that the strengthening of relations between the two regions in the transnational business sphere takes into account the sensitivities which certain practices may awaken in given areas and sectors, and to favour ethically-based investment;
29. Supports the Commission's proposal that the stronger EU-LAC strategic partnership should be deemed to encompass the entire body of relations by which the Caribbean countries are linked to the Union and to their Central and South American partners under the series of Lomé Conventions and the successor Cotonou Agreement, and in particular through CARIFORUM (the Forum of Caribbean States) and by virtue both of the fact that CARICOM (the Caribbean Common Market) belongs to the Rio Group and of their attendance at the EU-LAC summits; urges the Commission to explore this avenue further in its forthcoming communication;
30. Considers that the Commission has produced particularly apt proposals to promote the role of European high-tech sectors in the development of Latin America and the Caribbean under the research and technological development framework programmes, including the expanded '@LIS' information-society programme and the 'Galileo' navigation system, which will have a particular impact on maritime and air safety;
31. Repeats its proposals intended to achieve a genuine partnership in the social field and in the spheres of knowledge and joint action to bring about sustainable development, employing various measures and resources, for example:

- launching a resolute, generous development cooperation policy focusing on the common objective of attaining the Millennium Development Goals by 2015;
- purposefully opening up EU markets step by step, in keeping with the aims laid down in the association agreements;
- setting up a bi-regional solidarity fund and a ‘Latin America facility’;
- adopting a specific legislative framework to regulate the Union’s cooperation with Latin America according to a differentiated approach;
- widening the scope of EU vocational training, education, cultural, health and migration-related programmes, so as to enable Latin American countries to benefit therefrom;
- promoting scientific and technical cooperation programmes and exchange programmes for scientists, engineers and students;
- supporting institutional and fiscal reform programmes;
- allocating financial support for the launch of the Andean Bio-Diversity Institute called for at the 17th EU-LA Interparliamentary Conference;
- promoting regional markets and fair trade projects;
- allocating budget resources commensurate with stated ambitions;

considers it vital, as regards the last point, that in its future budget proposals the Commission should put forward ambitious options that will not invariably oblige Parliament to battle with the Council in order to raise the initial draft budget;

32. Considers it essential to give a generous new boost to the Union’s development cooperation policy towards Latin America, in which poverty eradication and measures to combat social inequality should become a key element; stresses the importance of placing the emphasis on developing fiscal policies and promoting social cohesion alongside determined action to promote basic education and health (which are key elements in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals), especially where vulnerable groups such as women and children, ethnic minorities and indigenous groups are concerned;
33. Stresses that the cooperation and development aid policy should have a targeted approach taking into account the various economic and social conditions and level of development of the countries of Latin America; considers it vital, however, to support middle-income countries in the region in combating poverty, promoting social cohesion and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, through all means available, including economic cooperation in areas of mutual interest;
34. Agrees that aid should be tailored to the needs of the countries concerned; notes, however, that certain proposed cooperation sectors, such as the fields of migration, counter-terrorism and combating illicit drugs, constitute areas of more urgent priority to

- donors than to beneficiaries; insists that cooperation in such areas must not be to the detriment of poverty-focused measures;
35. Points out that poverty and hunger are complex and multidimensional problems and that all countries share a responsibility for combating them; also urges governments to adopt direct measures to eliminate them by stepping up employment and income generation programmes, thereby supporting sustainable economic growth which allows for more efficient social security systems offering secure and higher pensions;
 36. Emphasises the need for greater cooperation with Latin American countries which have not only succeeded within their own societies in progressing towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals but are also playing a leading role in generating extensive South-South cooperation and mutual support;
 37. Points out that budget support is most effective when targeted at specific sectors; insists that minimum conditions of public finance management be a prerequisite for all budget support and that accompanying measures be invariably included;
 38. Applauds the Commission's proposal that an 'EU-LAC common area of higher education' be established as a matter of priority, but regards as insufficiently ambitious the aim of welcoming no more than about 4 000 Latin American students and teachers to European universities in the period from 2007 to 2013; maintains that, to produce a real impact on the cultural and political mores of such a vast region, the above figure should be at least trebled; stresses that special attention must also be paid to basic education, in order to meet the needs of the poorest sectors of Latin American society;
 39. Strongly supports the Commission's proposals to intensify the transfer of knowledge and good practice regarding cultural cooperation between all the partners involved, and to organise a 'Europe Week' centring on 9 May in all the Latin American countries, aided by the work of the Commission delegations and in close collaboration with the embassies of the Member States;
 40. Considers it essential to take additional steps to foster much more exhaustive mutual understanding, for instance by improving the information on the Commission web page and disseminating it in Spanish and Portuguese, including newsgroups and electronic bulletins on the page, and by providing more active support to centres and institutes which are involved in the study of EU-LA relations (OREAL, CELARE, the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation, the Institute of Ibero-American and Portuguese Studies, etc.) or which could play an important role in raising awareness of the true picture in the two regions (the Biarritz Forum, the Goethe-Institut, the Instituto Cervantes, the Carolina Foundation, the British Council, the Alliance Française, etc.);
 41. Proposes that a Euro-Latin American foundation be set up to foster dialogue between the partners across the public-private divide, modelled on those existing for other geographical areas - Asia and the Mediterranean, for example - and calls on the Commission to draw up a specific proposal to enable this idea to be translated into practice;
 42. Considers it essential to substantially improve the information capacities of the network of Commission delegations, undoubtedly one of the most effective and best informed external services in the world, with a view to deepening the above-mentioned mutual

understanding; undertakes to ensure that parliamentary diplomacy will play a more important role as an additional tool, using its network of standing parliamentary delegations and ad hoc delegations to interparliamentary conferences; proposes that parliamentary liaison units staffed by European Parliament officials be set up within the main Commission delegations in the region;

43. Points out that the growing rise in the production, trafficking and use of drugs – and especially cocaine – all over the world and in Europe itself, with its familiar consequence (namely the spread of organised crime, illegal arms trafficking, corruption and money-laundering) is severely damaging all the Euro-Latin American partners and demands a resolute strategy to tackle its pernicious effects through encouragement for alternative crops, although without penalising small-scale farmers manipulated by drug traffickers;
44. Endorses the Commission's aim of continuing to help Latin America fight drugs and seeking to strengthen security and stability on both sides by pursuing an approach based on shared responsibility in all areas and bodies where drug enforcement is concerned;
45. Supports the work done by the Co-Presidencies of Costa Rica and Austria under the EU-LAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs, in a joint effort to strengthen its role as a catalyst for initiatives, programmes and projects to prevent and reduce the consumption, production and illegal trafficking of drugs, on the basis of the principle of shared responsibility between the two regions;
46. Reiterates the need for the action plan designed to ensure cooperation with specific projects under the mechanism in relation to the priorities of the Panama Plan and its main elements to be as efficient as possible;
47. Supports the Commission's proposal to promote good financial, fiscal, and judicial governance by means of financial incentives to be laid down under specific agreements with the Latin American countries; calls on the partner countries to adopt sound, effective policies on democratic governance, social issues, public finances and taxation, with a view to increasing social cohesion and reducing poverty, inequality and marginalisation;
48. Repeats its proposals to complement the action mentioned above with specific practical measures to combat drug trafficking, organised crime and small-arms trafficking through new training and exchange programmes for members of judicial and law enforcement authorities (EuroLatinFor), and programmes to encourage the approximation of laws, so as to ensure that the offences in question are actually prosecuted, without in any way encroaching on the sovereignty of the countries concerned (EuroLatinLex);
49. Calls on the Commission, to that end, to include the European Code of Conduct on Arms Exports in the 'political dialogue' chapter of the bi-regional agenda;
50. Strongly supports the Commission's proposals to promote sustainable development in both regions, including a specific dialogue on the environmental aspects thereof, preparatory meetings of Environment Ministers to be held before summits, and in-depth consultations in the different international forums, focusing in particular on climate change and sound management of water resources;
51. Invites the parties to rigorously apply the international conventions on the environment, climate change and biodiversity;

52. Calls on the Commission to vigorously enforce its instruments for preventing the plundering of natural resources in the case of Latin America, including the FLEGT programme (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade), in order to prevent in particular the importation of illegal timber;
53. Calls on the Summit to draw up joint strategies and emergency, warning, and preparedness measures to reduce the vulnerability of all the partners to the natural disasters caused by climate change and the various related phenomena, including volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and floods, which in 2005 in Latin America alone claimed a toll of thousands of lives and over six billion dollars' worth of damage, according to ECLA figures;
54. Urges the Commission to ensure that the social-issues agenda includes discussions designed to bring about an improvement in working conditions, especially for farm workers, in keeping with the international labour standards disseminated by the International Labour Organization, and to treat this as part and parcel of sustainable development in Latin America;

The Vienna Summit: revitalising the bi-regional strategic partnership

55. Recommends that the Vienna Summit make a limited number of verifiable clear-cut commitments serving to lend new impetus to the strategic partnership in four main areas: joint action to bring about effective multilateralism; a decisive boost to regional integration processes in Latin America; and specific commitments regarding social cohesion and migration and human interaction;
 - A) *Joint action to bring about effective multilateralism*
56. Maintains that a genuine strategic partnership must be based on realistic aims and common agendas shaped by the shared advocacy of multilateralism which informs the external action of the Euro-Latin American partners (the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, the fight against the death penalty and against terrorism, the central role of the United Nations system, etc.);
57. Points to the excellent opportunities for joint action afforded in multilateral forums regarding matters such as reform of the United Nations, monitoring of the agreements reached at the 'Millennium +5 Summit' held in New York in September 2005, the proceedings of the new Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons, the information society and Internet governance, the new configuration of the international financial system, including reform of the IMF, the WTO Doha Development Agenda, or strengthening the UN's humanitarian response capacity;
58. Points out that effective multilateralism requires continental-scale players speaking with one voice to determinedly assert their values and interests in a globalised world and that at present the role of the two regions on the international stage is not commensurate with their political and economic weight; looks, therefore, to all the partners to make a much more purposeful effort to harmonise their positions among themselves and in relation to the outside world;
59. Reaffirms the commitment made at Guadalajara (consistent, moreover, with European

security strategy) to strengthening regional organisations, this being an essential means of achieving the true multilateralism which lies at the heart of Union external action and of its inception and *raison d'être*;

60. Considers that the relationship must continue to be viewed as a unified whole so as not to undermine the intrinsic nature of the strategic partnership or destroy or slow the momentum of the regional integration processes; advocates variable dialogue arrangements to allow for the circumstances in the different partner countries without impairing the overall vision implied in regional integration;
 61. Points out that the association agreements in force or about to be concluded offer exceptional opportunities for intensifying relations of every kind between the Union as such and its Latin American partners; recognises that Member States can give priority to their relations with certain Latin American partners, provided that this is done on a purely bilateral basis without in any way infringing or breaking faith with Union policy and powers;
 62. Considers it essential for the two regions to play an active part in the collective international security system organised within the United Nations;
- B) *A decisive boost to regional integration processes in Latin America*
63. Welcomes the fact that the Commission is continuing to view regional integration as a priority area for development assistance to Latin America, and supports its proposals aimed at strengthening regional integration processes whereby the negotiations on the association agreement with Mercosur are to be concluded without further delay, at the Vienna Summit, and negotiations are to open immediately on individual agreements of the same type with CAN and Central America;
 64. Notes that the prospect of an association agreement with the Union has in itself already been instrumental in inducing the Andean and Central American countries to press ahead with the various aspects of economic integration, especially where the customs union and customs procedures are concerned; believes that these advances will gather pace when the future agreements are being negotiated and that the agreements will thus constitute tangible and decisive support for regional integration in Latin America;
 65. Calls on the Commission to keep a close watch on the possible accession of new members and changes in the make-up, or convergence, of the distinct subregional integration systems in Latin America; maintains that any changes in the shape of subregional machinery must be aimed in every case at fostering closer regional integration as opposed to undermining the existing arrangements;
 66. Proposes that the Vienna Summit move forward with a longer-term strategy aimed at achieving a comprehensive interregional association agreement and establishing a Euro-Latin American area of global interregional partnership in the medium term; recommends accordingly that a feasibility study on both initiatives be put in hand at Vienna;
 67. Points out that the European experience shows that regional integration contributes decisively to economic growth and modernisation of production systems, trade expansion, international market penetration, social cohesion and, in the final analysis, political stability;

68. Backs the Commission's proposals intended to support territorial integration in Latin America and interconnection of its various infrastructure networks, especially where energy, water, transport, telecommunications, and research are concerned; urges the European Investment Bank (EIB) to provide substantial aid under the heading of the 'Latin America facility' referred to below;
69. Calls on the Commission to draw up a broader strategy to promote integration above and beyond trade commitments, laying emphasis also on non-trading aspects such as regional security and democratic governance, movements of persons and workers, joint management of ecosystems and river basins, and physical integration and infrastructure;
70. Considers cross-border cooperation to be a clear necessity where regional integration processes are concerned, as has been shown in the EU, and consequently recommends that means be put in place to support this type of practice;
71. Calls on the Commission to launch a multi-annual programme for cooperation with the SEGIB, funded by the necessary budget, in order to tap the full potential to be gained from mutual cooperation by pursuing institutional cooperation, technical assistance, exchange and training programmes relating to regional integration, and policies concerning development cooperation, preparations for summits and permanent local follow-up thereto;

C) *Specific commitments regarding social cohesion*

72. Unreservedly endorses the Commission proposal to encompass the aim of social cohesion in an ongoing, coherent and practical fashion within all the initiatives undertaken in partnership with Latin America; maintains that the Euro-Latin American partners are engaged in a common project in which a market economy and social cohesion should not be opposing forces but should complement each other; insists that relevant action be focused on the reduction of social inequalities and the inclusion of groups that are currently marginalised from mainstream society and excluded from opportunities, with particular attention being paid to the needs (of whatever kind) of indigenous peoples;
73. Points out that, in Latin America, democratic governance and social cohesion are closely linked, as can be inferred from the report on democracy in Latin America compiled by the United Nations Development Programme in 2004 and from that year's annual report of the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
74. Supports, therefore, the Commission's recommendations for a specific dialogue to be established on social cohesion; for social cohesion to be treated as a priority in development cooperation; for cooperation with international institutions to be intensified; for the different stakeholders involved to be encouraged to participate; and, in particular, for a forum for social cohesion to be held every two years and attended by government authorities, civil society, the private sector, and international organisations, with a view to addressing, among other things, the high degree of urban sprawl and the related social and security problems;
75. Calls on the partners to pursue joint initiatives and to hold more frequent social forums bringing together the business world, workers, consumers and civil society, on the one hand at the level of the EU and Latin America as such and on the other within the different countries; calls on the European Economic and Social Committee to intensify its

activities in this area and to pass on its experience to the Latin American partners; in this connection, welcomes the positive contributions made by the Civil Society Forums meeting alongside the Summits;

76. Recommends that the growing revenue from oil and other resources should, as a matter of priority, be channelled into sustainable long-term training and infrastructure programmes with a view to improving competitiveness and the employment situation;
77. Repeats its proposal for the setting-up of a bi-regional solidarity fund for the purpose of managing and financing sector-based programmes relating initially to the eradication of social exclusion and extreme poverty and to health, education and infrastructures in the countries and regions where per capita income is lower and social inequalities are greater, and subsequently covering the Latin American countries as a whole;
78. Is of the opinion that a modest injection of funds for Latin America, to be contributed from, or reallocated from within, the Union budget and not constituting an additional allocation, could act as a catalyst which, if combined with the budgetary resources earmarked by other bodies (the EIB, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Andean Development Corporation, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, the World Bank, etc.) and the countries concerned, could provide the budgetary support needed to create sufficient critical mass to help alleviate the problems;
79. Recommends that the above-mentioned fund be coordinated by the Commission (or, where appropriate, the SEGIB) in collaboration with donor bodies and countries and that it also include a 'Latin America facility' based on exclusively financial contributions from the EIB and other institutions concerned; calls on Latin American financial institutions to support territorial integration and infrastructure interconnection in Latin America in sectors such as energy, water, transport, telecommunications and research;
80. Renews its call on the Commission and the Council to encourage the bodies mentioned above to act to set up the solidarity fund; calls on the Vienna Summit to support the project and to launch the necessary feasibility study without delay;
81. Recommends that the Latin American countries concert their planning with a view to interconnecting the above infrastructure and set up 'energy rings', drawing whenever necessary on European experience with the trans-European networks;
82. Reaffirms the Guadalajara commitment to strengthening the decentralised approach forming the basis of the European development cooperation programmes (URB-AL, AL-INVEST, @LIS, ALFA, ALBAN); also urges that local and regional governments be encouraged to take part in the EUROsociAL initiative, a regional programme for social cohesion in Latin America;
83. Recommends that the Commission support the introduction of mechanisms to correct disparities in social and territorial cohesion (to be incorporated into Latin America's regional integration agreements) and that it promote action to combat corruption and to encourage tax and fiscal discipline;
84. Points out that the dialogue and the social cohesion programmes must pay heed to the gender inequalities clearly apparent as regards access to employment, access to education and women's participation in decision-making;

85. Calls upon the Vienna Summit to condemn trafficking in human beings and the murder of and violence against women, and to promote and uphold all relevant national and international law; proposes a comprehensive priority-action programme for children and teenagers in Latin America, modelled on UNICEF activities;
 86. Proposes that the partner countries and the various bilateral and multilateral creditors devise generous, imaginative ways of dealing with the debt issue; in this connection, draws attention to the initiatives concerned with converting debt by means of social and educational investment which have been aired at Ibero-American Summits;
- D) Verifiable clear-cut commitments regarding migration and human interaction*
87. Points again to the need, as regards relations between the partners, to pursue innovative migration policies, respecting fundamental rights, in accordance with the international agreements in force, and human dignity, and fighting discrimination, racism and xenophobia, without encroaching on the sovereignty of the countries concerned;
 88. Considers migration and human interaction to be a key area of the Union's relations with its Latin American partners; maintains that the approach to be adopted should be balanced, comprehensive and coherent, encompassing policies to combat illegal migration and at the same time, in collaboration with the countries concerned, emphasising the advantages of legal migration, and that it should arise from dialogue and fair-minded cooperation suited to the circumstances of each country involved and be backed by sufficient budgetary resources, in keeping with the conclusions reached at the Brussels European Council of 15 and 16 December 2005;
 89. Deplores the Commission's failure to produce specific proposals for the Summit; proposes that, proceeding from the Commission Communication of 30 November 2005 entitled "Priority actions for responding to the challenges of migration: First follow-up to Hampton Court" (COM(2005)0621) and as part of the long-term process initiated by the Hague programme to respond to the opportunities and challenges arising from migration and of the decisions taken at the informal Hampton Court meeting, the Council should, as soon as possible, adopt specific priority measures for Latin America along the lines of the conclusions reached at the above-mentioned Brussels European Council as regards Africa and the Mediterranean;
 90. Reaffirms that the above measures should cover a range of matters, for example regulation of migration, by strengthening bilateral agreements and including the fight against illegal migration and the mafias that exploit it and against people-trafficking, especially where vulnerable groups are concerned, in particular women and children, joint migration management, temporary immigration policies, the introduction of a special short-stay travel visa for entrepreneurs, university teachers, researchers, students, journalists and trade unionists involved in the partnership, the use of immigration to foster development in countries of origin (assistance for immigrants' projects in their countries of origin etc.), integration policies to be launched in host countries for the benefit of legal immigrants, and, lastly, funding and monitoring of the measures undertaken;
 91. Proposes that the partner countries take suitable action in order to reduce the current excessive costs incurred by emigrants in transferring remittances;

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92. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the European Union Member States and of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and to the Latin American Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the Andean Parliament and the Mercosur Joint Parliamentary Committee.