



Montevideo Declaration by the Co-Presidents of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat) of 21 September 2016

Pursuant to Article 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, on the occasion of the 9th Plenary Session and meetings of the standing committees and other bodies of the EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly from 19 to 22 September 2016 at the Legislative Palace in Montevideo, Uruguay, the Co-Presidents of the EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly, Senator Roberto Requião and Ramón Jáuregui Atondo MEP, hereby:

On the Colombian peace process

1. Fully support the historic Final Agreement sealed on 24 August 2016 by the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and expect and hope for its approval in the referendum to be held on 2 October 2016. Undertake to support the Colombian Government and civil society in implementing the agreement, ensuring gender mainstreaming at all steps of the process.
2. Reiterate in this regard their appreciation of the trust fund established by the European Commission with EUR 70 million from the EU budget – as well as contributions from multilateral conventions and other LAC countries – to finance socio-economic projects in the areas worst hit by the internal armed conflict.
3. Consider that, as soon as the agreement is approved and its implementation has been consolidated by the definitive and irreversible laying down of weapons, the FARC-EP should be removed from the EU's list of terrorist organisations. Call on the Government and the National Liberation Army-ELN to move forward in negotiations to conclude a settlement for a comprehensive and definitive peace in Colombia, which can only be built on the foundation of respect for victims, truth and justice.
4. Decide that representatives of both the European Parliament and Latin American components of EuroLat will be present in Colombia for the referendum to express the EuroLat Assembly's position in favour of both approving the settlement and the triumph of a 'yes' vote on the peace agreement.

On the negotiations between the European Union and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

5. Consider that the ever-closer economic and trade relations between the EU and LAC, investment flows, multilateral cooperation, economic diplomacy and development projects of joint interest contribute to renewing and strengthening existing links and to readying both regions to tackle challenges such as globalisation, geopolitical instability, climate change and the economic and financial crisis.
6. Reiterate the importance of continuing joint work to support SMEs, research, development and innovation, women's empowerment, young people and vulnerable groups and public-private partnerships fostering productivity and entrepreneurship, especially in the field of advanced technologies.
7. Support the ongoing negotiations between the EU and Mercosur, which have entered a new phase in 2016, Ecuador's accession to the existing Multi-party Agreement between the EU and Peru and Colombia, the updating of existing agreements between the EU and Mexico and Chile and the nascent process of stepping up relations with Cuba, all of which concern not only the economic and trade sphere, but also political and social issues such as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the principles of democracy and the rule of law. Call for gender mainstreaming in all of the aforementioned agreements.
8. Believe it essential that these negotiations give rise to symmetrical agreements that benefit all signatories equally and take account of developing countries' need to implement policies on industrialisation, science and technology and innovation.
9. Stress the need for the resulting agreements to contribute effectively to reducing poverty and inequality in all countries and to be conducive to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, all the while respecting civil liberties and human rights.

On repercussions of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations on EU-LAC trade policies

10. Reiterate their steadfast commitment to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the multilateral agenda; consider that both the European Union and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean should encourage any projects aimed at enhancing competitiveness, boosting sustainable growth, fostering well-being in society, creating skilled jobs and further deepening the relationship between traditional partners on both shores of the Atlantic, who are linked by bonds of all kinds.
11. Believe it crucial that both of the future agreements seek not only to promote and better regulate trade in goods and services and investment flows but also to incorporate provisions on human rights, sustainable development, governance, transparency, the fight against corruption and tax evasion, protection for workers, consumers and the environment, trade facilitation and action to promote SMEs.
12. Take the view that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) could provide a good opportunity for deepening relations between the EU and the LAC countries and yield successful and durable results, but that this is contingent upon unwavering commitment, compliance with the values, principles and objectives enshrined in existing fundamental rules, consideration for the needs and

interests of developing countries and a comprehensive response to the demands of the citizens and institutions.

13. Call for these and previous agreements to contain arrangements precluding the limiting or prohibition of development, industrialisation and innovation policies in the least developed countries.

On relations with China

14. Consider that since China's accession to the WTO in 2001, its financial, economic and commercial importance has made it into a major global player; accordingly welcome China's participation in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums; note the new momentum in trade in goods and investment flows between China and the EU and LAC; stress the importance of attracting, and spreading equitably between regions, investment in the development of infrastructure and transport in LAC, which is crucial for innovation and competitiveness.
15. Believe that China needs to make progress in areas such as compliance with the commitments it made to the WTO, fundamental rights, improving social, working and environmental conditions, transparency, intellectual property rights, e-commerce, public procurement rules, customs arrangements, food and product safety, combating trade in illegal goods and the OECD guidelines on corporate social responsibility.
16. Note Europe's current opposition to awarding China market economy status until such time as it meets all of the obligations incumbent on it; take heed of the differing positions in Latin America on this important topic.

On the EU-CELAC Common Research Area

17. Welcome the creation of the Common Research Area as the start of a new phase of research cooperation between the EU and the CELAC countries, which is focused on three pillars: mobility of researchers, international outreach of research infrastructures; and increased thematic cooperation to address global challenges.
18. Are convinced that the Common Research Area should lead to a significant improvement in the research performance of the EU and the CELAC countries with the end goal being to promote growth and job creation. To achieve this aim, research cooperation should focus principally on boosting innovation.
19. Acknowledge that the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (JIRI) has been an effective driver of deeper EU-CELAC cooperation. Support the initiative to revise the governance of the JIRI in order to set up efficient mechanisms and structures allowing for the implementation of the Common Research Area. Stress that the next Senior Officials Meeting on Research and Innovation expected to take place in October in the Dominican Republic will be an important milestone in this regard.

On the Digital Agenda

20. Call on governments in the EU and Latin America to introduce, as priority public policy, measures for the development of information and communications technologies as a key driver for the advancement of their citizens, undertakings and the state itself, based on the following axes: infrastructure, e-government, production, education and training, technology and legal framework.
21. Recommend making full use of the potential of the Digital Agenda to create growth and jobs, to increase productivity, growth and innovation in the production sectors through the use of ICTs and boost the digital transformation of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to stimulate social and generational inclusion and to address the digital divide through the introduction of new models of interaction in order to include all citizens and give them the right to information, regardless of income, social situation, gender, disability or geographical location.
22. Welcome the construction of a new underwater fibre-optic cable between Europe and Latin America, linking Lisbon (Portugal) with Fortaleza (Brazil), which will bring our continents closer and boost education, research and innovation as well as trade in the two continents.

On the fight against tax evasion, tax avoidance and tax havens

23. Reiterate that the resolute fight against all types of tax offences and tax avoidance in general is a key concern and area of work of the EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly, given that all such practices take vast sums from the public purse of countries, to the detriment of their fiscal and social policies.
24. Call on the EU Member States and Latin American governments to implement measures to tackle these unacceptable practices such as those taken by the European Parliament and the Government of Ecuador's Ethical Compact, because ensuring tax transparency and abolishing tax havens are particularly necessary, among other measures, if we wish to achieve fair and efficient taxation in the world.

On tackling inequality through social cohesion policies

25. Stress the key role that social cohesion can play in reducing inequality and inequity, by helping create jobs and expanding educational opportunities, via income-transfer programmes and by fostering competitiveness, economic growth and sustainable development. Cohesion policy also serves as a catalyst for securing private funding by boosting investor confidence. International cooperation programmes have proved an effective tool for creating favourable conditions and boosting governments' ability to implement policies to improve social cohesion.
26. Acknowledge that the EUROsociAL cooperation programme has contributed to this objective through an exchange of experiences, knowledge and good practice between the two regions. Warmly welcome, therefore, the new phase of the programme, EUROsociAL+, with a budget of EUR 32 billion for 2016-2020 focused on three priority areas: social policies, democratic governance, and gender equality, including issues of justice, regional development, public financing networks, combating corruption and promoting equal opportunities between men and women.

On gender violence

27. Recall the commitments made in the EU-CELAC action plans in 2013 and 2015 on the eradication of violence against women as a fundamental aspect of gender equality; express their concern at the fact that Chapter 7 of both action plans has yet to be implemented. Urge the EU-CELAC Member States and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to work together and allocate the necessary institutional and economic resources to ensure fulfilment of the recommendations on the eradication of all forms of violence against women in both the public and the private sector, in accordance with the standards and rules enshrined in the Convention of Bélem do Pará, the Istanbul Convention, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

On corporate social responsibility (CSR)

28. Consider that, in today's globalised world, ensuring that companies comply with CSR principles is key to achieving sustainable development grounded in environmental stability, the dignity of work and social equity. Add that CSR provides companies with an opportunity to improve their image with investors and consumers and promote their brand. Stress, in this context, the role played by the Member States in fostering the growth of this culture and the formal economy of businesses. Take the view, however, that binding rules on reporting and monitoring CSR are essential to ensure adequate progress in this area.
29. Given that the UN Human Rights Council is considering laying down a legally binding instrument pursuant to Resolution 26/9 of July 2014 on respect for human rights by transnational corporations, believe it necessary and of great interest for the United Nations to adopt an international rule encompassing the Ruggie principles (protect, respect and remedy) through which multinationals undertake to respect the International Bill of Human Rights as a basis for a universal law in all their relations with stakeholders.

On undeclared work

30. Acknowledge that undeclared work has serious repercussions both for workers, who are often forced to accept precarious working conditions, lower wages and little or no social and employment security protection, and for national budgets, undermining the financial sustainability of social security systems and depressing employment, productivity and competition. Warn, furthermore, that making labour law more flexible can lead to similar results.
31. Stress that an integrated, coherent and coordinated approach is essential for a country to make a successful transition to a sustainable formal economy. This should supplement measures to improve the productivity of companies, dissuasive measures, legislative simplification and the various administrative procedures, as well as tax advantages, recruitment subsidies, promoting investment in companies, worker training and temporary contracts, among other initiatives. Call on both regions to step up exchanges of knowledge, experiences and practices, and to take measures to inform and raise awareness among citizens about the benefits of formal work for workers and companies.

On food price volatility and food reserves

32. Recommend adopting, particularly in the context of climate change, a food and nutrition security-based approach to support sustainable agriculture and taking measures benefiting family and community agriculture. Encourage the regional organisations in LAC to set up food banks and develop pilot programmes for food reserves with a view to reducing volatility and keeping food prices at a level that is affordable for all consumers. Acknowledge, further, that too much food is wasted during both the production and consumption phases, and that policies should therefore be drawn up to discourage such wastefulness among producers, vendors and consumers.

On the funding of political parties in the EU and Latin America

33. Take the view that political parties are key institutions within the democratic system and provide a vital public service as instruments enabling the political representation and participation of the people. Consider that the appropriate regulation of their financing (based on strict criteria limiting the influence of economic power and ensuring transparency, oversight and accountability) together with the democratisation of their processes are a matter of urgent necessity for the democracies of Latin America and the European Union, with a view to strengthening the concept of democracy, the rule of law, good governance, and the public's trust in their elected representatives and institutions.

On the protection of human rights defenders

34. Deplore the rising number of attacks on human rights defenders and call for a thorough investigation of all cases of violence against them and for the punishment of those responsible for these hideous crimes. Preventive protection mechanisms to avoid harassment, attacks and assassination of human rights defenders, including defenders of the environment, should be implemented on a national and regional level in agreement with their organisations. They must be protected from reprisals after having informed national and international fora of human rights abuses in their countries.
35. Underline the importance of the active participation of civil society and the engagement of human rights defenders for the defence and the development of democracy and the rule of law. When major investment projects are carried out, HRDs and the communities concerned should be given full information at an early stage and be invited to participate in the decision process. The increasing tendency to misuse the justice system to criminalise HDRs has to be stopped, and governments and parliaments should not admit any law which criminalises peaceful civil protest.

On the armed conflict in Syria

36. Express grave concern at the armed conflict in Syria that has raged for five years, causing untold suffering for its people, in the form of loss of life, damage to property and tragedies of all kinds, including mass displacements of people. Stress that the conflict has destabilised the whole region, with highly negative and complex repercussions for the whole international context; calls on the parties to the conflict and on all stakeholders in

the area to do their utmost to find a negotiated solution as soon as possible so as to put an end to the war.

On the migration crisis in Europe

37. Are dismayed at the loss of life each year in the Mediterranean and elsewhere as a result of the inhumane conditions in which irregular migration takes place. Call, therefore, on the EU and its Member States to introduce arrangements to foster orderly migration, ensuring the reception of refugees fleeing war, compliance with the principles enshrined in international conventions on asylum and refugees in their migration policies, the disbursement of sufficient financial resources and unambiguous policies on solidarity and the prosecution and sentencing of those guilty of racist and xenophobic acts.

On the situation in Venezuela

38. Are concerned at the political situation in Venezuela and the social and economic crisis faced by its people. Call for the Government and opposition to comply fully with the constitutional order and for the use of the dialogue as a democratic instrument for the resolution of political conflicts. Recommend, to that end, supporting the open nationwide dialogue between representatives of the Government, the National Assembly and the political parties, in strict compliance with the National Constitution and with full respect for civil liberties, human rights and the rule of law. Support the ongoing mediation efforts of UNASUR, the Organisation of American States, the Holy See, the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini and the group of former Latin American presidents.

On the situation in Brazil

39. Worry about the political situation in Brazil, where the impeachment process against former president Dilma Rousseff has raised doubts around the world and proved unable to reconcile and unify the country. Condemn the repression of peaceful demonstrations, the undue, politically motivated use of instruments of the necessary fight against corruption, the persecution of members of the former government and the legal harassment of former president Lula. Expect all political movements in Brazil to adopt the mature, measured approach required for the country to get back on the road to development with social justice.