



**Asamblea Parlamentaria Euro-Latinoamericana
Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée Parlementaire Euro-Latino Américaine
Assembleia Parlamentar Euro-Latino-Americana
Parlamentarische Versammlung Europa-Lateinamerika**



Message of the Co-Presidents of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly to the EU and CELAC Foreign Ministers

Brussels, 16 and 17 July 2018

The Co-Presidents of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), President of the Latin American Parliament Elias Castillo and Member of the European Parliament Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, state the following pursuant to Article 17 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure:

1. The postponement of the third CELAC-EU Summit – initially planned for October 2017 in San Salvador – in response to a request from a number of Latin American countries and given the political situation in Venezuela, has effectively put on hold the bi-regional dialogue that had been conducted at the very highest level since the first summit of Latin American, Caribbean and European Union Heads of State and Government was held in Rio de Janeiro on 28 and 29 June 1999. We urge the governments to solve the political problems that have led to this suspension, with a view to returning as soon as possible to the regular schedule of summits between Latin American, Caribbean and European Union Heads of State and Government, which drive forward and direct the activities and programmes of the Strategic Partnership.
2. The general framework of EU-CELAC relations, alongside the strategic political partnership between the two regions, seeks to forge closer economic, commercial, financial and business ties between us, fostering the development of our countries. On the parliamentary side of the EU-LAC Bi-regional Strategic Partnership, we reiterate our support for political links between our continents and are committed to obtaining, as a result of those links, sustainable economic growth to generate decent employment, which in turn makes it possible to reduce inequality and improve living standards and welfare for the public. We urge our governments to continue pursuing these aims by means of the agreement, whilst always upholding the general principles of human dignity: human rights, ILO standards, gender equality, corporate social responsibility, etc.
3. Agreements between certain countries and groups of countries in Latin America and the EU lay down a sound network of relations between the two regions. We welcome the negotiation process in which our countries are involved for the purpose of modernising those agreements and extending them to cover all the States that make up our partnership. We take the view that those negotiations must be as transparent as possible and involve civil society, as well as the relevant sections of society, to the greatest possible extent. When it comes to the implementation of the agreements, this will pave the way for broader acceptance and a wider social consensus. With that in mind:

- 3.1. We welcome the agreement in principle reached on 21 April 2018 by negotiators from the EU and Mexico with a view to the modernisation of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement. We would like to see the agreement ratified by the European Parliament before the end of the current parliamentary term in May 2019.
 - 3.2. We fully support the ongoing process of updating and modernising the EU-Chile Association Agreement and call on the negotiators on both sides to reconcile their positions as soon as possible, and, if possible, to ratify the agreement before the end of the current term of the European Parliament.
 - 3.3. We are extremely pleased at the way in which the Multi-Party Agreement between the EU and Colombia, Peru and Ecuador is working, and take the view that the societies involved are benefiting a great deal from it. With that in mind, we would point out that accession to the Agreement is also open to Bolivia, if the authorities there wish to enter into the relevant negotiations.
 - 3.4. We reiterate our full support for the Association Agreement signed back in 2012 by the EU and the countries of Central America, the economic and trade provisions of which (Part IV) have been in force since 2013. We note with regret, however, that the Association Agreement has not been implemented in full because some EU national parliaments have still not ratified it. The Parliamentary Assembly respectfully calls on the parliaments of those countries to ratify as soon as possible.
 - 3.5. We note with satisfaction the provisional application, as of 1 November 2017, of the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, which has become the legal, political and institutional basis for relations between the two parties, and which not only paves the way for an increased commercial and cultural profile for the EU in Cuba, but is also geared towards meeting the aspirations of the Cuban people.
 - 3.6. Over the past few months negotiations between the EU and Mercosur with a view to concluding an association agreement have entered a decisive phase. We take the view that it is vital for the EU and Latin America to reach a comprehensive and balanced agreement that takes account of both sides' interests and places the necessary emphasis on their relations as regards politics, economics and trade, as well as in other areas, and we very much hope the agreement will be concluded as soon as possible, with the best possible terms for the parties.
 - 3.7. The Pacific Alliance is a market of 220 million people, with Chile, Peru, Colombia and Mexico among its members. Although the EU already has its own bilateral agreements with all four countries, and has observer status within the Alliance, our EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly recommends that the EU should take on a higher profile within the Alliance, as a specific expression of its commitment to multilateralism and an open trade policy. The EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly also recommends closer regional cooperation frameworks between the various Latin American countries.
4. Migration management requires the adoption of innovative policies to regulate migration – a social reality – within the supranational sphere whilst ensuring at all times that human rights are upheld in full. There is also a need to combat human trafficking. We welcome the UN's New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants of September 2016, and the

establishment of a comprehensive refugee response framework based on the principle of responsibility-sharing at international level. The UN Intergovernmental Conference to be held in Morocco on 10 and 11 December 2018 with the aim of adopting a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration is therefore going to be particularly important.

5. The 2015 Paris Agreement signed by 195 countries as part of the UN Framework Convention on combating climate change now needs our support more than ever. The EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly calls on the European and Latin American governments to spearhead global efforts in this field, to deliver in full on the commitments made, and to encourage involvement right across the board, including from the USA, which has regrettably opted out of the agreement.
6. The EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly calls on the international community, and on the EU-CELAC countries and the UN in particular, to come up with new solutions to the problems of drug trafficking and organised crime. Among those new solutions, the EuroLat Assembly supports the creation of a Latin American Criminal Court for the prosecution of those accused of offences relating to drugs trafficking and organised crime, etc.
7. The main instrument for the defence and protection of human rights in the Americas is the American Convention on Human Rights, which is interpreted and applied by the Inter-American Human Rights System, comprising the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly is extremely keen to see progress with regard to the System's funding mechanisms, in order to ensure that the institutions concerned have the material and human resources they need. With that in mind, we emphasise how important it is that all the countries involved in the System – an important institution – should continue to provide it with financial backing and ensure its resolutions are complied with.
8. We reaffirm how important it is to prioritise gender issues in the context of bi-regional relations, and therefore fully support Chapter 7 of the EU-CELAC Action Plan. We express our support for the implementation of the recommendations on the eradication of violence against women set out in Chapter 7, and call for monitoring by the secretariats of the organisations chiefly responsible for this area in Europe and Latin America: the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), and the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem do Pará Convention).
9. The EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly expresses concern at the corruption scandals that have been reported and investigated by the courts in a number of countries. Corruption undermines the rule of law, democracy and the competitiveness of the economy, and in some cases puts human rights at risk. The Bi-regional Partnership has to improve its mechanisms and practices to combat corruption, imposing sanctions on individuals and countries committing serious corruption offences.
10. The Assembly is concerned about the serious social impact that the economic recession has had in most of our countries over the past few years. With that in mind, it reiterates the need to improve conditions for workers, especially as regards their pay, and to intensify public policy aimed at redistribution and social protection, in three areas in particular: education, health and social welfare, as systems to provide social balance and equal opportunities.

11. The EuroLat Assembly considers that advances have generally been made in the exercise of democracy, but it is still deeply concerned about the emergence of dangerous actions and conditions which are harmful to democratic governance and the rule of law in some Strategic Partnership countries. Consequently, it urges the relevant governments and international, regional and sub-regional organisations to work together with a view to protecting the core features of democratic coexistence, placing emphasis on strengthening the rule of law and stepping up freedom, human rights and integration as the best possible avenues towards holistic and sustainable development conceived with the common good in mind.