

**November 2022**

The first EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summit took place in [Rio de Janeiro in June 1999](#), establishing a strategic partnership. After its creation in 2011, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) became the entity representing the Latin American and Caribbean region in the dialogue with the EU. The second and latest EU-CELAC Summit was held in [Brussels in June 2015](#).

The parliamentary wing of the strategic partnership is the Joint [Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly](#) ('EuroLat'). It serves as a forum for debate, monitoring and review of all issues relating to the partnership and was established in 2006. Ten years after a 2009 communication [The European Union and Latin America: Global Players in Partnership](#), in a [joint communication](#) published on 16 April 2019 the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy proposed to strengthen the EU's political partnership with LAC, 'setting out a vision for a stronger and modernised bi-regional partnership – in light of changing global and regional realities'. On 27 October 2022, the foreign ministers of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the EU met in Buenos Aires, resuming the [bi-regional dialogue](#) and setting up a [road-map](#) towards an EU-CELAC Summit to be held in 2023.

With more than 1.6 million deaths, the LAC region has been among those worst affected by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), with significant [differences](#) between countries. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has warned that the growth will [slow down](#) to 1.4 % in 2023, from an estimated 3.2 % this year. Moreover, while South America is expected to grow by 1.2 %, the Caribbean is expected to grow by 3.1 %. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), average [inflation in 2022](#) in Latin America and the Caribbean is 14.1 %, varying from 3.2 % in Ecuador to 72.4 % in Argentina and 210 % in Venezuela. Russia's [invasion](#) of Ukraine has impacted the region in various ways. These include an increase in food, fertiliser and energy prices, rising transport costs, supply-chain obstacles, the tightening of global financial conditions (to rein in inflation) and increased financial volatility. These realities are expected to dampen the region's economic growth, and could lead to a [change](#) in the trade and economic models in the region, given that some countries in the region will find difficult to maintain non-alignment between their western allies and Russia. While the whole region is affected, the war is expected to have a greater impact on certain countries in [Central America and the Caribbean](#), which are more dependent on energy and agri-food imports.

Legislative trains**[EU-Mercosur association agreement](#)****[Modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Chile Association agreement](#)****[Modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Mexico Global agreement](#)****[New Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean](#)**

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EPRS publications (*divided into regional- and country-specific*)

Publications covering the region

Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide – Normandy Index 2022

EPRS study, July 2022

Chapters on Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela

EU-Latin America trade relations: Overview and figures

In-depth analysis by Gisela Grieger, December 2019

Owing to its historical, cultural and economic ties with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the EU maintains close cooperation and political dialogue with the region. CELAC countries are jointly the EU's fifth largest trading partner, and the EU has concluded trade agreements with two Latin American groupings (Cariforum and Central America) and some other LA countries (Mexico, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador).

Democracy and human rights in Latin America: Is democratic erosion gathering pace?

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, January 2022

As the 'most democratic emerging-market region in the world', over 80 % of the Latin American population enjoy democracy, a proportion surpassed only in western Europe and North America. However, the tide may be turning for this successful 'third democratic wave' in Latin America, as many countries suffer democratic erosion or even backsliding.

New political dialogue and 2021 elections in Venezuela

'At a glance' note by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, November 2021

The 'Mexico dialogue' between the Venezuelan government and opposition, as well as the latter's decision to run in the November 2021 local and regional elections, revived hopes of a peaceful and negotiated solution to the country's political conflict. However, the Maduro government suspended the third round of negotiations.

After Cotonou: Towards a new agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific states

Briefing by Eric Pichon, September 2021

After 2 years of negotiation, the text of a renewed partnership agreement between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) states was initialled in April 2021. The current partnership agreement ('Cotonou') was due to expire in February 2020.

The informal economy and coronavirus in Latin America

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, May 2021

The pandemic has resulted in Latin America's worst economic and social crisis in decades, with a disproportionate impact on informal workers. The informal economy describes economic activity by workers or economic units that is not or only insufficiently covered by formal legal or practical arrangements. Although it is on the decline in Latin America, the informal economy still accounts for slightly over half of all jobs in the region.

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The coronavirus pandemic in Latin America

'At a glance' note by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, April 2021

Latin America is among the regions of the world worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and its economies, employment and even human rights will suffer gravely. Governments, and regional and international organisations, including the EU, are making efforts to mitigate the consequences, but the results remain uncertain.

Amazon wildfire crisis – Need for an international response

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, November 2019

The Amazon rainforest is the largest ecosystem of its kind on Earth and is shared by eight South American countries. Although wildfires are a recurrent phenomenon that has been going on for decades, some governments' recent policies appear to have contributed to the increase in the surface area burnt in 2019, in particular in Brazil and Bolivia. Worldwide media coverage of the fires, and international and domestic protests against these policies have nevertheless finally led to some initiatives – such as the Leticia Pact for Amazonia – to tackle the fires seriously, at both national and international level.

South-South and triangular cooperation in Latin America

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, March 2019

Over the past few decades, South-South and triangular cooperation among developing countries have been growing in importance as a necessary complement to traditional North-South development cooperation. The United Nations (UN) High-level Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, held in Argentina in 1978, set the basic framework for this form of cooperation with its Buenos Aires plan of action (BAPA). The model was recently modified by the UN 2030 Agenda for Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, together with the Addis Ababa action agenda for financing development cooperation.

The 2018 Ibero-American summit

'At a glance' note by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, December 2018

The Ibero-American Summit of heads of state or government is a unique multilateral forum of 22 countries from Latin America and Europe sharing a common history, values, culture and languages. Two EU Member States – Spain and Portugal – are full members of the summit, and four others are associated observers. The 26th summit was held in Guatemala in November 2018, with a focus on establishing a common road map towards implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

EU security cooperation with Latin America : a priority requiring consolidation

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, November 2017

Although security cooperation is not yet a well-consolidated priority for the EU in its relations with Latin America, it has acquired increasing importance, with the explicit inclusion of citizen security as a new priority area in the 2015 EU-CELAC action plan.

Latin America's informal economy

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, September 2016

Informal employment affects around 130 million workers in Latin America and the Caribbean – at least 27 million young people – and represents nearly half of non-agricultural employment. There are big differences between countries (from 30.7 % in Costa Rica to 73.6 % in Guatemala) and sectors; and informal employment is more common among certain vulnerable population groups. Fighting informality has therefore become a clear objective. Some countries in the region have made serious efforts to reduce informality, applying a mix of specific policies and strategies and obtaining generally positive results; but

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more efforts are needed. International institutions, such as the International Labour Organisation and the EU are also promoting measures to support the transition to the formal economy in the region, and the European Parliament has shown a special interest in this issue.

Country-specific publications

Brazil's economy: Challenges for the new president

Briefing by Angelos Delivorias, October 2022

Relations between the EU and Brazil are multi-faceted: they work together in a number of sectors, and have strong trade relations. Recent estimates show that Brazil's inflation and unemployment are falling, while gross domestic product has resumed growth (albeit remaining low), but many challenges remain, including high income inequality and a rise in poverty.

Brazil's climate change policies: State of play ahead of COP27

Briefing by Henrique Morgado Simões and Angelos Delivorias, October 2022

Brazil was responsible for 2.2 % of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in 2019. Its per capita emissions of 5 tonnes CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂e) were below both EU and world levels. This is one of a series of EPRS briefings on major economies outside the European Union, looking at their climate policies in the run-up to the COP27 United Nations climate change conference of parties being held in November 2022.

Chile: Economic indicators and trade with EU

'At a glance' note by Györgyi Mácsai and Igor Tkalec, May 2022

Trade relations between the EU and Chile are imbalanced not only in terms of trends in exports and imports of goods, but also in the diversity of trade products, and in the countries rankings in each other's list of main trading partners. The EU was Chile's third biggest trade partner in 2021, with a 10.4 % share in Chile's trade with the world. Germany, Spain and the Netherlands are leading the list of Chile's top EU trade partners.

Situation in Colombia ahead of crucial elections

'At a glance' note by Bruno Bilquin, February 2022

Some 5 years after the conclusion of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the political, economic, health and general situation in the country remains fragile, with a divided society, drugs-fuelled conflicts and weak governance. 2022 will be a key electoral year, while economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic remains a challenge. The President of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez, was set to address the European Parliament during the February plenary session.

Haiti's political and humanitarian crisis

'At a glance' note by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, January 2022

Haiti is currently experiencing one of the most difficult periods in its recent history. Just 1 month after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse on 7 July 2021, a devastating 7.2-magnitude earthquake hit the south-west of the country, affecting over 800 000 people and killing over 2 200. As a result, the national and regional elections (scheduled for 26 September 2021) were postponed indefinitely. At the same time, kidnappings and gang violence have increased insecurity; and the repatriation of thousands of Haitian citizens who had migrated to neighbouring countries has complicated the already critical situation.

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Controversial legislative elections in Venezuela

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, December 2020

The mandate of the Venezuelan National Assembly, democratically elected in 2015, comes to an end on 5 January 2021. To renew it, the Maduro government called new legislative elections for 6 December 2020. While the government tightened its grip on power to secure a favourable outcome for itself, including through the appointment of a new electoral council, the opposition-led National Assembly presided by Juan Guaidó insisted on holding free and fair presidential and legislative elections with recognised international observers.

Modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement

Briefing by Gisela Grieger, October 2020

On 21 April 2018, the EU and Mexico reached an agreement in principle on a modernised trade pillar of the EU-Mexico Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement, also known as the Global Agreement, in force since 2000. On 28 April 2020, negotiations were formally concluded after the only outstanding item – EU access to sub-federal public procurement contracts in Mexico – was agreed upon.

Amazon deforestation and EU-Mercosur deal

'At a glance' note by Gisela Grieger, October 2020

After coming to a political agreement on the trade pillar of the three-pronged EU-Mercosur association agreement in June 2019, the EU and the four founding members of Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) reached agreement on the political dialogue and cooperation parts in July 2020. .

Modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Chile Association Agreement

Briefing by Gisela Grieger, September 2020

In November 2017, the EU and Chile launched negotiations on a modernised trade pillar of the 2002 EU-Chile Association Agreement, based on a Council negotiating mandate, the first ever to have been published prior to the start of negotiations with a view to enhancing transparency and inclusiveness.

The trade pillar of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement

Briefing by Gisela Grieger, August 2019

On 28 June 2019, the EU and the four founding members of Mercosur (the 'southern common market') – Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay – reached an 'agreement in principle' on a free trade agreement as part of a wider association agreement. However, spurred by massive destruction of the Brazilian Amazon by large-scale forest fires, EU policy-makers and international environmental groups alike have since become increasingly vocal in expressing concerns about the deal's potential environmental and climate change implications.

Peace and Security in 2019: Evaluating EU efforts to support peace in Colombia

Study by Isabelle Ioannides, May 2019

This study evaluates EU engagement during the 50-year conflict in Colombia, and focuses on peacebuilding since the historic 2016 final agreement between the government and the main armed group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP)

The Venezuelan migrant crisis – A growing emergency for the region

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, December 2018

Although the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has traditionally been a country of destination for migrants, in around 2010 its migratory profile started to change to that of a country of origin. In fact, in the past few years

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migration away from Venezuela has reached massive levels, creating an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the region.

The Trade Pillar in the EU-Central America Association Agreement: European Implementation Assessment

Study by Isabelle Ioannides. October 2018

This study assesses the implementation of the trade and sustainable development chapter of the trade pillar of this agreement during the 5 years of its operation. After briefly outlining the trade interests of the agreement, the study situates sustainable development by explaining its legal foundations in the association agreement and reviewing the ex-ante impact assessment conclusions on the issue. It then focuses on the monitoring mechanisms of agreement, including the European Commission annual reports, Parliament's oversight work, the civil society dialogue, and the results of the meetings of the specialised committee and annual Association Committee and Association Council meetings. Through this review the study identifies strengths and shortcomings in the implementation of the TSD chapter and ends by suggesting a number of ways to enhance efforts to support sustainable development in Central America.

Migration from Central America

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, October 2018

Although not a new phenomenon, migration flows from Central America, in particular from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras (the northern triangle of Central America), have grown exponentially since 2014, with a considerable increase in the number of adults and a huge rise in the number of unaccompanied minors crossing the borders. The 'caravan' of Central American migrants that has recently reached Mexico on its way to the US border has again turned public and media attention towards this silent exodus.

Implementation of Colombia's peace agreement

'At a glance' note by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, February 2018

In the year since the signature of the new final peace agreement on 24 November 2016, the peace process in Colombia has not progressed smoothly. Although the disarmament of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and its transformation into a political party, as well as the reduction in violence associated with the conflict, have been a success, aspects such as reintegrating FARC members into civilian life, legal implementation, and rural reform are lagging behind.

EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, June 2017

Between 1996 and December 2016, relations between the EU and Cuba were governed by the 1996 Common Position, which subordinated cooperation and the conclusion of any bilateral agreement to the achievement of visible progress in the field of democracy and human rights on the island.

The effects of human rights related clauses in the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and the EU-Chile Association Agreement

Study by Isabelle Ioannides. February 2017

In both cases, the monitoring mechanisms of the EU agreements have generally been implemented properly – even if civil society participation in Chile was institutionalised late. These mechanisms have played an important role in nurturing cooperation, but the incentives created have not translated into sufficient pressure for the implementation of human rights-related reforms. Rather than the EU free trade agreements per se impacting on ensuring the respect of human rights in Mexico and Chile, it is the

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cumulative effect of the liberalisation of trade in the two countries, the EU-Mexico strategic partnership, the role of all global players, and cooperation with international donors that have encouraged reform. Ultimately, whether or not reforms in favour of respect of human rights have been adopted and implemented was the result of domestic politics in Mexico and Chile.

Institutions in continental democracies

Argentina's Parliament and other political institutions

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, September 2021

Brazil's Parliament and other political institutions

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, January 2021

Mexico's Parliament and other political institutions

Briefing by Enrique Gómez Ramírez, January 2021

More in the EPRS Graphics Warehouse [external trade section](#):

Overview of main EU-LAC agreements governing trade relations

Trade partner(s)	Agreement containing a trade pillar / Trade agreement	Year of entry into force	(Related) political agreement
Argentina	Framework Agreement for trade and economic cooperation between the EU and Argentina	1990	N/A
Paraguay	Framework Agreement for cooperation between the EU and Paraguay	1992	N/A
Uruguay	Framework Agreement for cooperation between the EU and Uruguay	1994	N/A
Brazil	Framework Agreement for cooperation between the EU and Brazil	1995	N/A
Mercosur	Interregional Framework Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Mercosur	1999	N/A
Mexico	Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Mexico (the 'Global Agreement')	2000	N/A
Chile	Association Agreement between the EU and Chile	2003	N/A
Cariforum	Economic and Partnership Agreement between Cariforum and the EU	2008 (except Haiti)	Cotonou Agreement
Central America	EU-Central America Association Agreement	Provisionally application (2013)	N/A

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Andean Community (Peru, Colombia, Ecuador)	Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru + Protocol of Accession to the Trade Agreement to take account of the accession of Ecuador)	Provisional application: Peru, Colombia (2013), Ecuador (2017)	Joint Declaration political dialogue (1996); to be replaced by the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (2003, not yet in force)
Cuba	Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement	Provisional application (2017)	N/A

Source: EPRS.

EU trade with LAC groups/states and ranking in 2020¹

LAC countries/sub-regional groupings	EU total trade (exports and imports) in goods, value in billion €	Ranking of EU as trading partner
		EU
Andean Community	21,0	3
Central America	10,7	2
ACP-Caribbean	8,8	2
Cuba (2018)	2,4	1
Mercosur	68,6	2
Mexico	50,9	3
Chile	13,4	3

Source: EPRS/Eurostat, DG TRADE; Mercosur excludes data for Venezuela..

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