

Mexico's Parliament and other political institutions

SUMMARY

The United Mexican States is the third-largest country in Latin America, with the second-largest economy and population. It is a federal republic, composed of 31 states plus Mexico City. The country is an electoral democracy with universal suffrage, a presidential system of government and separation of powers. The executive power is vested in the President of the Republic, the legislative power in the bicameral Congress of the Union and the judicial power in the Federal Courts of Justice. States are headed by a governor and have unicameral legislatures.

Mexico has always had a multilateral vocation, maintaining a wide presence in global and regional organisations. It has close historical and cultural ties with the EU, with which it shares fundamental values. Mexico was the first Latin American country to sign an economic partnership, political coordination and cooperation agreement (a 'Global Agreement', which has just been modernised) with the EU, and is – alongside Brazil – a strategic partner to the EU in the region.

Relations between the European Parliament and the Mexican Congress of the Union are mainly maintained through the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), made up of delegations from both sides. The European Parliament and the Congress of the Union also work together at the bi-regional level in the framework of the Euro-Latin America Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat).



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Introduction

With 1 964 375 km² and over 128 million inhabitants, [Mexico](#) is the only Latin American country situated in North America, and a country that shares a [3 000 km border](#) with the US. It is the second-largest Latin American democracy (after Brazil, and the first Spanish-speaking one) in terms of population numbers and size of the economy.¹ Although Mexico became a [federal republic](#) in 1824 (three years after its independence from Spain), it did not become a constitutional republic until the Mexican Revolution, with the drafting of the [1917 Constitution](#) (*Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*), which is still in force. From 1929 to 2000, Mexico was ruled uninterruptedly by the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), until a shift in power was finally achieved in the 2000 presidential elections, after the [electoral reform](#) of 1996. Since then, there has been regular alternation of power, which shifted to the left with the election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (commonly known as [AMLO](#), [MORENA](#) party) as president in 2018.

Figure 1: Mexico's political timeline



Source: Mexico country profile – [BBC News](#).

Mexico's institutional framework

Mexico, officially called the [United Mexican States](#), is [organised](#) as a 'representative, democratic, secular, federal, Republic, made up by free and sovereign States in everything related to its domestic regime, but united in a federation'. It is composed of 31 states plus [Mexico City](#) (formerly known as the Federal District). The country is an [electoral democracy](#) with universal suffrage and a presidential system of government. Both the federal government and the state governments follow the principle of separation of powers, and have executive, legislative and judicial branches. In the case of the federal government, the executive power is vested in the President of the Republic, the legislative power in the bicameral Congress of the Union and the judicial power in the Federal Courts of Justice.

Each state has its own constitution and the right to legislate and levy taxes other than interstate customs duties. The state executive is headed by a governor, who is directly elected by a simple-majority vote for a six-year term and cannot be re-elected. [State legislatures](#) are unicameral, with deputies elected for a three-year term. The state judiciary is headed by a Supreme Court of Justice. Mexico City has a mayor, local courts and a Representative Assembly, which elects the mayor.

Mexico's local level of government comprises [2 481 entities](#) (2 465 municipalities + 16 [territorial demarcations](#) in Mexico City). Municipal governments are elected for a three-year term and are headed by a mayor (*regente, alcalde* in Mexico City territorial demarcations and a municipal council (*ayuntamiento, alcaldías* in Mexico City). These governments are responsible for a series of public services (such as water, sewerage, street lighting and park maintenance), and assist the state and the federal governments in the provision of other services (education, emergency fire protection and medical services). They can collect property taxes and user fees, but rely mainly on transfers from higher levels of government.

Figure 2: The functioning of the United Mexican States

	Federal level	State level	Local level
Territory	The entire territory of Mexico	31 states + Mexico City	2 465 municipalities + 16 territorial demarcations in Mexico City
Executive power	1 president (no vice-president)	1 governor	1 mayor (<i>regente/alcalde</i>)
Legislative power	500 federal deputies (300 elected in single-member constituencies by relative majority + 200 elected in 1 national constituency by proportional representation), three-year mandate 128 senators (64 by relative majority, 32 by proportional representation and 32 by first minority; six-year mandate)	21-75 deputies in each state assembly, 1 113 in total	Municipal/district councillors
Judicial power	Federal Justice	State Justice	

Source: [Inegi](#) and [SRE](#) websites (author's own elaboration).

The executive

Mexico's [executive power](#) resides in the [President of the Republic](#), who is directly elected by a relative or simple majority of registered voters in the 31 states plus Mexico City for a six-year term, and cannot be re-elected. He/she is the chief of state, head of government and commander in chief of the armed forces. There is no vice-president: if the presidential office falls vacant during the first two years of the term, Congress designates an interim president who must call a presidential election to complete the term. If it occurs during the last four years of the term, Congress designates a provisional president until the term's end.

The president has a wide appointing authority: he/she may freely appoint and dismiss cabinet officials and most employees of the executive branch. He/she appoints ambassadors, consuls general, Supreme Court magistrates as well as many other mid-level offices. Between the 1930s and the time the PRI fell from power, it was customary for presidents to choose their successor. Due to its traditionally huge powers, some critics have pejoratively called the presidency '[the six-year monarchy](#)'. President López Obrador's [big plans for Mexico](#) have been compromised by the current [coronavirus pandemic](#) (whose effects he initially [under-estimated](#)). His [austerity measures](#) have also been criticised, and his abandonment of Mexico's traditional [energy policy](#) in favour of promoting a bigger role of the state is a matter of concern for some of his international partners.

The judiciary

[Judicial power](#) is shared between the [federal](#) and the [state](#) levels. The [Supreme Court of the Nation](#) (Article 94 of the Constitution) is Mexico's highest court, and is charged, among other things, with defending the constitutional order (experts consider it a [genuine Constitutional Court](#)), keeping the balance among the different powers and government areas through judicial resolutions, and solving matters of great public importance. It has 11 magistrates, appointed by the President of the

Republic and confirmed by the Senate or the Permanent Committee. These magistrates are appointed for 15 years (non-renewable) and can be impeached by the Chamber of Deputies.

The Supreme Court of Justice is divided into two chambers:

- First Chamber, dealing with civil and penal affairs, with five members;
- Second Chamber, dealing with administrative and labour affairs, with four members.

Court rulings are decided by majority opinion, and the full court can overturn the ruling of its separate chambers. The Supreme Court of Justice cannot apply its rulings beyond individual cases.

In the [federal system](#), there are also:

- Collegiate Circuit Courts, with three magistrates each;
- Unitary Circuit Courts, with one magistrate each;
- District Courts, each with one judge.

The following bodies are also part of the federal judiciary:

- the [Electoral Court](#) of the Judiciary Power of the Federation, responsible for solving disputes on [electoral matters](#), protecting the political-electoral rights of citizens and imparting justice in the electoral sphere;
- the [Federal Judicial Council](#), which appoints circuit and district judges for a six-year term and deals with matters of administration, supervision and discipline for Mexican federal judges, except for judges of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation;
- the State and Federal District Courts, in the issues set out in article 107, XII, of the Constitution, and in other cases where they must act to help the Federal Justice.

A [reform of the judiciary](#) has recently been approved by the Chamber of Deputies, aimed at strengthening its institutions to improve the administration of justice and the fight against corruption.

The legislature

The legislative branch of the Mexican government consists of a bicameral parliament, the [Congress of the Union](#) (Congreso de la Unión), made up of a [Senate of the Republic](#) (upper chamber, 128 senators) and a Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber, 500 deputies). Both chambers are responsible for the discussion and approval of legislation and the ratification of high-level presidential appointments. Parliament shares the power to introduce a bill with the executive, although in practice it is the executive that initiates most of the legislation (around 90 %). The powers of the Congress include the right to pass laws, impose taxes, declare war, approve the national budget, approve or reject international treaties and conventions and ratify diplomatic appointments.

The Congress holds two ordinary sessions per year: from 1 November to the end of December, and from 15 April to 15 July. Legislative responsibilities during recesses are assumed by a [Permanent Committee](#) consisting of 18 senators and 19 deputies, although the president may call for extraordinary sessions of Congress to pass important legislation. All 629 members of the Congress of the Union were elected on 1 July 2018. For the first time, current MPs will be able to opt for [re-election](#) (up to a maximum of [12 consecutive years](#)) without having to give up their [seats](#) beforehand.

The Congress and Covid-19

In July 2020, Mexico's Congress adopted a legal reform allowing the Mexican Government to buy medicines directly on international markets without the intervention of private intermediaries. Furthermore, the reform has authorised the government to guarantee medical supplies (including a Covid-19 vaccine) in the country at fair prices. The country's opposition voted against the reform.

On 9 December 2020, The Mexican Congress also approved a legal reform to regulate telework,

Sources: [Agencia efe](#), [Televisa News](#), [Senate website](#).

Matters of common interest in the Mexican Parliament are discussed in [bicameral committees](#) or joint working committees representing both Chambers of Congress. There are currently five such bodies. Both Chambers of Congress meet in [joint sessions](#): 1) to declare open the periods of ordinary sessions; 2) to receive the oath of the President of the Republic at the start of his/her mandate; 3) to receive the annual presidential report; 4) to elect the alternate or interim president when the President of the Republic cannot temporarily or permanently exert their functions; and 5) to hold solemn sessions. The Mexican Congress of the Union also holds informal meetings with other assemblies through [parliamentary friendship groups](#) and more formal [interparliamentary meetings](#) with third countries. Regarding its relations with [International Parliaments](#), it participates as a permanent observer in the Parliamentary Assembly of the [Council of Europe](#) and the Central American Parliament ([PARLACEN](#)), and as a member in the [Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum](#) (APPF); and maintains relations with the European Parliament through the Mexico-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee and the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly ([EuroLat](#)).

The Chamber of Deputies

The [Chamber of Deputies](#) has [500 members](#): 300 are directly elected for a three-year term in single-member constituencies, by simple majority vote; the remaining 200 are elected in one multi-member nationwide constituency through proportional representation from regional-party lists (in large plurinominal districts). The majority party cannot hold more than 300 seats (or 315, provided it has won more than 60 % of the popular vote). Seats which become vacant between general elections are filled through by-elections if there are no substitute members, except deputies elected by proportional representation, who are replaced by the 'next-in-line' candidate from the same party list. The last elections were held on 1 July 2018. The Chamber is [governed](#) by a [Directive Bureau](#), a [Political Coordination Board](#) and a [Conference](#) for the Direction and Programming of Legislative Works. The preparatory work of the Plenary is carried out by [45 ordinary committees](#) (down from [56 in the previous legislature](#)).

Figure 3: Chamber of Deputies - ordinary committees LXIV legislature

-Attention to Vulnerable Groups	-Budget and Public Accounts
-Cattle Farming	-Civil Protection and Disaster Prevention
-Communications and Transports	-Constitutional Points
-Culture and Cinematography	-Economy, Trade and Competitiveness
-Education	-Energy
-Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Natural Resources	-External Relations
-Federalism and Municipal Development	-Fisheries
-Gender Equality	-Governance and Population
-Health	-Housing
-Human Rights	-Hydraulic Resources, Drinking Water and Sanitation
-Indigenous Peoples	-Infrastructure
-Jurisdictional	-Justice
-Labour and Social Welfare	-Metropolitan and Urban Development, Territorial Planning and Mobility
-Migratory Affairs	-National Defence
-Navy	-Northern Border Affairs

-Parliamentary Regime, Regulations and Practices	-Public Safety
-Radio and Television	-Rights of Childhood and Adolescence
-Rural, Agricultural Development and Conservation and Food Self-Sufficiency	-Science, Technology and Innovation
-Social Development	-Social Economy and Promotion of Cooperative structures
-Social Security	-Southern Border Affairs
-Sports	-Surveillance of the Superior Audit of the Federation
-Tourism	-Transparency and Anti-Corruption
-Treasury and Public Credit	-Youth and Sexual Diversity

Source: [Chamber of Deputies](#) website.

Apart from the bicameral and ordinary committees, the Chamber can also create temporary [investigation](#) and [special](#) committees, as well as working groups, which can also be bicameral.

The Federal Senate

The [Senate of the Republic](#) represents the interests of Mexico's federal entities so as to guarantee the territorial balance of the Union. All states have identical representation, regardless of their surface or population. It has a total of 128 senators, elected for a six-year term (which coincides with that of the President). Of these, 96 seats are filled by applying the majority system in 32 three-seat constituencies (the 31 states and the federal district). Some 64 of these seats are allocated to the two candidates from the party with the highest number of votes in each state, and 32 seats to a candidate from the party with the second-largest number of votes in each state (minority senators). The remaining 32 senators are elected in a single national constituency with proportional representation.

Similarly to the lower chamber, the Senate has a [Directive Bureau](#), charged with organisational matters; a [Political Coordination Board](#), representing all [political groups](#); and 46 [legislative committees](#). The committees make the preparatory work for the [Plenary](#), which discusses and eventually adopts the legislative work. The Senate also has [special committees](#) and participates in the [bicameral committees](#) of the Congress.

Women in Parliament

The Mexican Parliament currently achieves [gender parity](#). Mexico is placed [number five](#) in the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) ranking of women in national parliaments, with 241 women (48.2 %, up from 38 % in 2014) in the Chamber of Deputies and 63 (49.2 %, up from 33.6 % in 2014) in the Senate, and [number six](#) in the OECD women in politics ranking. The Chamber of Deputies is presided by a woman ([Dulce María Sauri Riancho](#), PRI). By way of comparison, in the [European Parliament](#) the percentage of women MPs currently reaches 40.4 %, and among the EU countries only Sweden (47 %) and Finland (46 %) have a similar ratio. In Latin America, only the Cuban and the Bolivian parliaments have a higher percentage of women (around 53 % each) than Mexico. [Women](#) were first allowed to vote in Mexico in 1955. In 2014, Mexico introduced [new measures](#) to promote [gender parity](#) in politics, which require that women make up at least 50 % of all candidates presented by each party. There are also [8 women](#) among the 17 ministers that make up the Mexican Government.

Main political groups and parties

In the 2018 elections, nine political parties participated, grouped in three coalitions that supported the main candidates for the presidential elections. Of these, eight are currently represented in Congress and two have lost their entries in the national party [register](#). There were also some

independent candidates. The overwhelming victory of López Obrador's MORENA party is considered by some experts to mark the [end](#) of the 'transition political regime' initiated in 2000 and characterised by the predominance of three main parties (Institutional Revolutionary Party, National Action Party and, to a lesser extent, the Party of the Democratic Revolution).

1. Forward for Mexico ([Por México al Frente](#)) coalition, grouping the following parties:

a. **Party of the Democratic Revolution** (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*, [PRD](#)). President of the Interim Directive Board: [Arturo Prida Romero](#). A social-democrat, left-wing party originating in the PRI's Democratic Current, founded in 1989 by [Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas](#) with the help of smaller left-wing parties. The party's 2012 presidential candidate was Andrés López Obrador, and it is affiliated to the [Socialist International](#), the [Progressive Alliance](#) and the [Foro de Sao Paulo](#).

b. **National Action Party** (*Partido de Acción Nacional*, [PAN](#)). President: [Marko Antonio Cortés Mendoza](#). This conservative, right-wing political party was created in 1939 by former Autonomous University of Mexico Rector Manuel Gómez Morín and leaders of the National Union of Catholic Students. The party won the 2000 and 2006 presidential elections, with candidates [Vicente Fox Quesada](#) and [Felipe Calderón](#), respectively. It belongs to the [Centrist Democrat International](#) (CDI) and the Christian Democrat Organisation of America ([ODCA](#)).

c. **Citizens' Movement** ([Movimiento Ciudadano](#), MC). National coordinator: [Clemente Castañeda Hoeflich](#). A left-wing, socialist party registered in 1999 as Convergence for Democracy, and renamed in 2011. It is affiliated to the [Progressive Alliance](#).

2 Together We'll Make History ([Juntos Haremos Historia](#)) coalition, supporting the current President:

a. **Labour Party** (*Partido del Trabajo*, [PT](#)). Founded in 1990 and led by [Alberto Anaya Gutiérrez](#), this left-wing party joined the Progressive Movement coalition in the 2012 elections, and is affiliated to the [Foro de Sao Paulo](#).

b. The **National Regeneration Movement** (*Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional*, [MORENA](#)) was originally created as a civil association to support [Andrés Manuel López Obrador](#)'s candidacy for the presidency in alliance with the PRD, the PT and the MC. In 2014, it officially became a new left-wing nationalist party led by López Obrador, who is the current President of the Republic. It is a member of the [Foro de Sao Paulo](#).

c. **Social Encounter Party** (*Encuentro Social*, [PES](#)). A Christian conservative party, founded in 2006, it was the right-wing exception in this mainly left-wing coalition. In September 2018, and despite obtaining 26 deputies and 3 senators, the party was struck out from the [register](#) for failing to get the required three percent of the vote in all three elections for president, federal deputies and senators. The [PES](#) intends to be [back in the register](#) for the 2021 parliamentary elections.

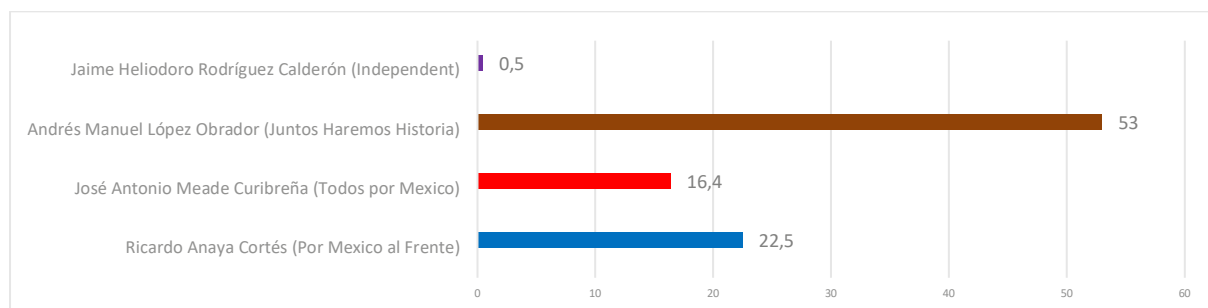
3. Everyone for Mexico ([Todos por México](#)) coalition, supporting the PRI candidates:

a. **Revolutionary Institutional Party** (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, [PRI](#)). President: [Alejandro Moreno Cárdenas](#). Founded in 1929 by [Plutarco Elías Calles](#) to institutionalise Mexican Revolution agreements, it ruled for 71 consecutive years. The party of former President [Enrique Peña Nieto](#), it is centre to centre-left and is affiliated to the Socialist International.

b. **Green Ecological Party of Mexico** (*Partido Verde Ecologista de México*, [PVEM](#)). Leader: [Carlos Alberto Puente Salas](#). Founded in 1986 to promote environmental issues, it is affiliated to the [Global Greens](#) and the Federation of the Green Parties of the Americas ([FPVA](#)).

c. **New Alliance Party** (*Nueva Alianza*, [NA](#)). A centre-right political party, created in 2005 on the initiative of the National Union of Education Workers. The party did not obtain any deputies or senators, and was officially dissolved in September 2018, as it did not get the required three percent of the vote in all three elections for president, proportional representation federal deputies, and senators. It currently aspires to be back in the [register](#) under a different name.

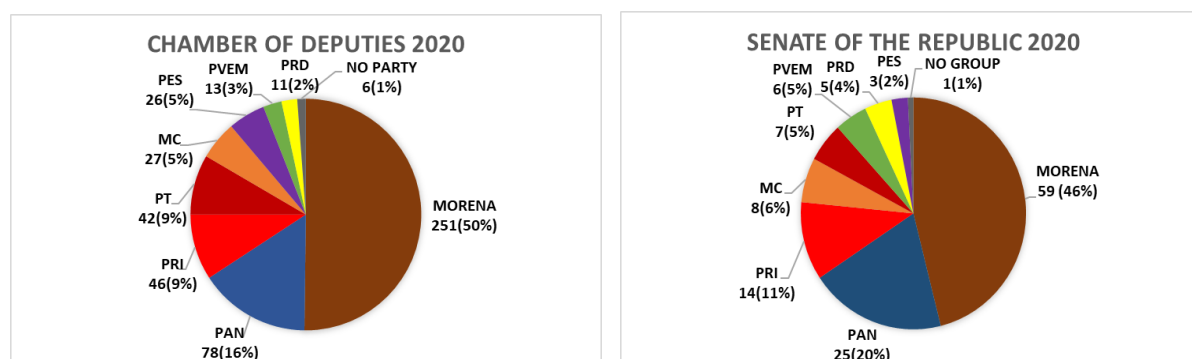
Figure 4: Presidential election results 2018, % of votes



Source: National Electoral Institute ([INE](#)).

4 Independent MPs. The [2014 electoral reform](#) (first applied in 2015), allowed [independents](#), not affiliated to any political party, to participate as candidates in the elections. In 2018, only 40 out of 187 independents were approved as candidates to the lower chamber and 7 out of 55 for the Senate. And a mere 2 out of 46 were given the green light to run for the presidency. There are currently six deputies and one senator not affiliated to any political party. New León Governor [Jaime Rodríguez Calderón](#) participated as independent candidate in the 2018 Presidential elections.

Figures 5 and 6: Composition of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate 2020



Sources: [Chamber of Deputies](#) and [Senate](#) websites.

Mexico, a multicultural and diverse emerging global player

Located between the United States and Central America, and between the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans (including the Caribbean), [Mexico](#) is the third-largest country in Latin America² and has the second-biggest economy³ and population. It also has the largest population of [Spanish speakers](#) and a considerable [cultural influence](#) in the world. It is a nation of contrasts, with deserts, mountains, canyons and tropical rainforests, and one of the world's [mega-diverse countries](#).

Mexico is also a multicultural and pluriethnic country where around over [12 million](#) indigenous people speak over 58 [languages](#). It is a crucible of cultures, an ethnically mixed country where the rich pre-hispanic cultures (Aztec, Mayan, Olmec, Toltec, etc.) merged with the European traditions of the Spanish and the [Asian](#) influences brought by the regular exchanges with the Far East since the XVI century.⁴ Although it is a constitutionally laic country, a majority of Mexicans (around [89 % in 2010](#)) are catholic, with a minority of protestants and evangelicals (8 %), and other biblical faiths (2.5 %), and only 0.2 % professing other religions.

One of the longest-running uninterrupted democracies in Latin America (unlike many other countries in the region, Mexico was not ruled by dictatorships in the XX century), the country has suffered some structural problems, such as violence and corruption. Regarding freedom and democracy, [Freedom House](#) ranks [Mexico](#) as 'partly free', with a score of 62 out of 100. It highlights that 'the country suffers from severe rule of law deficits' that limit full enjoyment of political rights (Mexico scores 27 out of 40) and civil liberties (35 out of 60) by its citizens. They consider that among

the most visible of Mexico's governance challenges are 'violence perpetrated by organised criminals, corruption among government officials, human rights abuses by both state and non-state actors, and rampant impunity'.

According to the [Normandy Peace Index](#) 2020 published by the European Parliament's Research Service, Mexico ranks in 69th position of 137 as a moderate risk country, slightly below World average. This is mainly due to violent crime and homicide, which have affected civilians and politicians alike, despite significant efforts made by the authorities. Especially worrying is violence against journalists, with [12 journalists](#) killed since 2018 (3 of them in the first nine months of 2020), and 14 missing; and violence against women – which represented 10 % of all murders in 2019. Violence in Mexico is considered to be closely related to [impunity](#).

[Corruption](#) still poses a serious problem in Mexico, despite the [efforts](#) being made by [López Obrador](#)⁵ to tackle it. According to [Transparency International](#), Mexico ranks 130th out of 180 countries (with a score of 29 out of 100) in its 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index; and according to its [Global Corruption Barometer](#), 44 % of Mexicans thought that corruption had worsened in the country, and 34 % of public service users had paid a bribe in the last twelve months.

Mexico in the multilateral sphere

The United Mexican States has always had a [multilateral vocation](#) and manifested its trust in and commitment with [international cooperation](#), despite a [relative isolationism](#) shown recently by President López Obrador. Thus, Mexico was one of 51 founding countries of the [United Nations](#), of which it has been a member since 7 November 1945. It has actively participated in UN bodies, and in June 2020 was elected by the UN General Assembly to become a non-permanent member of the [Security Council](#) for the period 2021-2022. In the UN framework, Mexico has supported issues such as the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the fight against apartheid, disarmament, or the promotion of the rights of migrant workers, and has backed the [Global Compact on Migration](#), the 2015 [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change and the [2030 Agenda](#) on Sustainable Development. Mexico is also among the [main contributors](#) to the UN Budget.

Mexico has been a member of the [G20](#)⁶ since its creation in 1999, and presided it [in 2012](#). It is one of three Latin American members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#)).⁷ And it also belongs to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum ([APEC](#)) and the [MIKTA](#) group (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Australia). Regarding international trade, Mexico is a member of the World Trade Organization ([WTO](#)), and has 13 free trade agreements ([FTAs](#)) with 50 countries, including the Mexico-EU [Global Agreement](#). Mexico is also a [party](#) to the Comprehensive Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership⁸ ([CPTPP](#), former TPP).

The country is also an outstanding actor at regional level: Mexico has a special relation with the United States and Canada – with which it signed in 1992 the North America Free Trade Agreement ([NAFTA](#)), recently replaced by the United States, Mexico and Canada Agreement ([USMCA/T-MEC/CUSMA](#)). And also with its Central American neighbours – Mexico has regional observer status in the Central American Integration System ([SICA](#)) and has promoted with the UN a [Comprehensive Development Plan](#) to tackle migration from the region. It has established a Joint Commission with the Caribbean Community ([CARICOM](#)). Mexico is also a full member of the Organization of American States ([OAS](#)), the Latin American Integration Association ([ALADI](#)), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States ([CELAC](#)) – of which it held the [Pro Tempore Presidency](#) in 2020; as well as of the [Pacific Alliance](#) together with Chile, Colombia and Peru.

Figure 7: Mexico's priorities in the UN Security Council

- Preserve the dignity of persons
- Privilege mediation
- Protect civilians in armed conflicts
- Defend the Rule of Law
- Incorporate a gender perspective
- Improve the working methods of the Security Council
- Promote International Law

Source: Mexico's Permanent [Mission to the UN](#).

The European Parliament and the Mexican Parliament

The EU has close historical and cultural ties with [Mexico](#) and both parties share fundamental values, such as democracy and respect for the rule of law. They have maintained [diplomatic relations](#) since [1960](#). Mexico was the first Latin American country to sign an Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement ('[Global Agreement](#)') with the EU in 1997, which entered into force in 2000, covering political dialogue, trade (a comprehensive [Free Trade Agreement](#)) and cooperation (including democracy and human rights). It has just been modernised, with a new trade agreement having been reached on [28 April 2020](#).

Mexico is also one of two Latin American countries (the other one being Brazil) to have a [Strategic Partnership](#) with the EU, which enables a broader dialogue and deeper cooperation between the two parties.⁹ Given that Mexico shares similar values and principles with the EU and exerts a growing influence on the global scene, the main objective of the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership is to get Mexico and the EU act as 'global allies in all key multilateral fora and institutions', by enhancing coordination at the multilateral level on global issues (political, security, environmental and socioeconomic) and further developing bilateral relations and initiatives. The Council of the EU adopted a [Joint Executive Plan](#) for the partnership in 2010.

The Strategic Partnership institutionalised the EU-Mexico bilateral summits. The [VII EU-Mexico Summit](#) was held in Brussels on 12 June 2015. The EU also holds high-level dialogues with Mexico, in areas such as human rights, security and law enforcement, economic issues, environment and climate change, science and technology, higher education and culture. The negotiations since 2016 of an upgrade of the Global Agreement, including its political dialogue and cooperation part, has been another opportunity to strengthen cooperation. The EU and Mexico held a [High-level Dialogue on Climate Change](#) in June 2019, and a High-level Meeting on [Multilateral Affairs](#) in November 2019; the [5th Mexico-EU High-level Political Dialogue](#) took place on 15 March 2018 in Mexico City; the 7th EU-Mexico [High-level Dialogue on Human Rights](#) was held in October 2017.

Interparliamentary dialogue

Initially, the European Parliament developed its [relations with Mexico](#) and the Congress of the Union in a wider regional framework, through its Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico, whose remit also included the six Spanish-speaking Central American countries and Cuba. As the 1997 EU-Mexico Global Agreement recognised 'the advisability of institutionalising a political dialogue at parliamentary level', the EP and the Congress of the Union decided to create a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC): in 2004, the European Parliament established its '[Delegation](#) to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee', and the Mexican Congress did the same. The [EU-Mexico JPC](#) met for the first time in September 2005 and has met regularly since then, dealing with all aspects of bilateral relations. Its importance has increased with the 2009 Strategic Partnership and the 2013 decision to modernise the Global Agreement. The JPC has been following the negotiations initiated in 2016, which concluded on [28 April 2020](#). After the signature, the European Parliament will have to give its [consent](#) for the Council to conclude the agreement, which will then be ratified by the [Mexican Senate](#) and EU Member States.

The European Parliament's Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee ([D-MX](#)) is composed of 14 members (there are also 14 substitute members), nominated by the political groups. Apart from participating in the JPC, the EP delegation also holds regular meetings without their Mexican counterparts to discuss relevant issues. The current EP Delegation (9th legislature) was constituted on [9 October 2019](#), and is chaired by [Massimiliano Smeriglio](#) (S&D, Italy). The Mexican Delegation has also 14 members and is chaired by Senator [Citlalli Hernández Mora](#) (MORENA). The two co-chair of the EU-Mexico JPC.

On 4 May 2020, the [co-chairs](#) of the EU-Mexico JPC issued a [Joint Statement](#) welcoming the conclusion of the negotiations on the modernisation of the Global Agreement, and in particular the

progress achieved in key areas such as the fight against corruption, the protection of human rights and cooperation, both at a political level and on development-related issues. They also asked for its rapid ratification by the Mexican Senate and the European Parliament; and stressed the need to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy through the work of the JPC on the basis of the agreement.

The [last \(27th\) meeting](#) of the EU-Mexico JPC was held on 3 February 2020 in Brussels, and the main topics addressed were:

- The political, economic and social situation in Mexico;
- The modernisation of the UE-Mexico Global Agreement;
- The protection and promotion of human rights, combating gender violence in Mexico and the EU;
- Positive experiences and relevant measures on environmental protection, agreeing to step up common efforts in the COP26 that will be held in [Glasgow in 2021](#).
- The JPC also asked for the revitalisation of bi-regional cooperation between the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the resumption of the EU-CELAC summits, paralysed since 2015, in the context of the Mexican Pro Tempore [Presidency of CELAC](#) in 2020.
- MEPs also insisted on the relevance of parliamentary diplomacy in the relations between Mexico and the EU, as well as on the need to provide the JPC with a legal basis in order to strengthen its competencies and working methods and recognise it as an institutional body of the Global Agreement.

Other subjects discussed in the [XXVI meeting of the EU-Mexico JPC](#), held on 7-9 February 2019 in Mexico City, were:

- The achievement of gender parity in the new Congress of the Republic;
- The JPC's commitment with democratic and pluralistic societies defending our common values, such as human rights and fundamental freedoms, the peaceful resolution of disputes, international cooperation, sustainable and fair development, solidarity, social justice and environmental protection;
- The acknowledgment by the EU Delegation of Mexico's geopolitical importance and its influence in the region, in particular in Central America;
- The important role of civil society and the need to resume the dialogue between civil society and government institutions of Mexico and the EU;
- The need for more cooperation at bilateral, regional and multilateral level in subjects such as the fight against terrorism, cyber-crime, climate change, drugs, arms and people trafficking, international migration and the 2030 Agenda;
- The need to deepen bilateral cooperation regarding human rights;
- Streamlining gender equality and combating violence against women;
- Supporting effective multilateralism and reinforcing the capacity of the United Nations to face common threats to peace and security;
- The fight against corruption and its inclusion in the Global Agreement;
- Strengthening bilateral cooperation in the field of education;
- Mitigating climate change and contributing to the implementation of the Paris Agreement;
- Migration as a global, multidimensional phenomenon and the need to coordinate efforts to fight human trafficking, irregular migration, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and all forms of related intolerance and give fair treatment to the migrant community;
- Sharing the values of and recognising the Mexico-Central America [Comprehensive Development Plan](#) as an opportunity to explore and support triangular cooperation projects between the EU, Mexico and Central America; and,

- The importance of the political dialogue at parliamentary level carried out through the EU-Mexico JPC.

The European Parliament and the Congress of the Republic also work together at the bi-regional level in the framework of the Euro-Latin America Parliamentary Assembly ([EuroLat](#)). One of the latest issues raised by its Co-Chairs to be discussed in this Assembly is the [Covid-19 pandemic](#), in order to enhance cooperation on this issue.

The EP highlighted the importance of 'speeding up the negotiations for the updating of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement' in its [resolution of 13 September 2017](#) on EU political relations with Latin America. In a [resolution of 23 October 2014](#) on the disappearance of 43 teaching students in Mexico, the European Parliament expressed its concerns about violence in Mexico.

MAIN REFERENCES

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ The EU has a strategic partnership with Mexico; the only other one in [Latin America](#) is with Brazil.
- ² After Brazil ([8 400 000 sq km](#)) and Argentina ([2 737 000 sq km](#)).
- ³ After Brazil. In 2019, Mexico's GDP was [1 258 286](#) million current US dollars, whereas Brazil's GDP reached US\$[1 839 758](#) million. Brazil is also the most highly populated country in Latin America, with an estimated 211 million inhabitants, followed by [Mexico](#) (nearly 128 million), Colombia (50 million), and Argentina (45 million).
- ⁴ The Manila Galleon connected the ports of Acapulco (Mexico) and Manila (The Philippines) every year from 1565 to 1815, being a precursor of today's globalisation, as it enabled trade between Asia and Europe through Mexico. Thus, already in the XVI century, Mexico was a trade hub between Asia and Europe.
- ⁵ President López Obrador's [National Development Plan 2019-2024](#) makes a priority of the fight against corruption.
- ⁶ The Group of Twenty (G20) is the main forum for international economic cooperation. Its members are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union (EU). Together, they represent 80 % of the world's economic output, two-thirds of global population and three-quarters of international trade.
- ⁷ Together with Chile and Colombia.
- ⁸ [CPTPP](#) is a free trade agreement linking 11 Asia-Pacific economies – Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam – representing around 13.5 % of global GDP.
- ⁹ The other EU strategic partners are Canada, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States.

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