

# Russia's strategy for Latin America

## Strengthening ties in the light of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan (Russia)

### SUMMARY

Since Russia started its war of aggression against Ukraine by illegally annexing the Crimean peninsula, it has been seeking to foster relations with countries in the Global South that are not firmly aligned with the Western world. In 2023, a change in Russia's foreign policy of 2016 placed a greater emphasis on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Africa, where the Kremlin has been building influence since the Soviet era. Russia's strategic goal is to counter the United States presence in the neighbourhood and to ensure that Latin America and the Caribbean remain geopolitically neutral. Russia is also pursuing the goal of building a new multipolar world order.

Russia's longstanding political and security partners in LAC are Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, each under an authoritarian regime. Russia is also trying to strengthen its political ties with other LAC countries such as Bolivia, Brazil and El Salvador. With all LAC countries, Russia works through bilateral agreements and intergovernmental forums, in particular BRICS and the G20.

From an economic perspective, Russia's footprint in the region is very limited: its trade with LAC countries accounts for a mere 2 % of its global trade. Nevertheless, Russia has gained political leverage through its economic ties, especially due to key LAC countries' reliance on Russian fertilisers and diesel.

In addition to political and economic relations, Russia has signed several military cooperation agreements with Latin American countries over the past two decades. Currently, military cooperation is primarily limited to Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Russian arms sales to the region have steadily declined since Russia's invasion of Crimea and are now insignificant. Alongside political, economic and military ties, Russia employs disinformation campaigns to undermine liberal democracies and promote Russian propaganda narratives.



### IN THIS BRIEFING

- Latin America and geopolitical power play
- Russia's political engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean
- A small Russian economic footprint in Latin America
- Insignificant military cooperation between authoritarian regimes
- Russia's disinformation attack on Latin American and Caribbean democracies
- Prospects for EU relations with Latin America and the Caribbean

## EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Author: Marc Jütten; Graphics: Giulio Sabbati

Members' Research Service

PE 762.473 – October 2024



## Latin America and geopolitical power play

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Latin America was not high on Russia's foreign relations agenda. It was only a decade later, at the beginning of the 21st century, that [Russia-Latin America relations](#) started to reawaken. One reason for the renewed Russian interest in the region was the cooling of relations with the United States (US). Additionally, the political moment was favourable to get closer to certain Latin American countries: Russia took advantage of the [pink tide](#) (*Marea Rosa*), the region's turn to the political left. The rise of left-wing governments came along with anti-American discourses of populist leaders such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia. During a visit to the region in 2008, former Russian President Dmitri Medvedev [remarked](#) that Russia had returned to Latin America. Since 2016, Latin America has been an integral part of Russia's [Foreign Policy Concept](#), the strategic document mapping out the principles, priorities and goals of the country's foreign policy.

Russia, China, the EU and other players have been seeking the favour of LAC countries in recent years, attempting to expand their influence in the region. China's [economic presence](#) in Latin America has increased dramatically over the past two decades, especially since the implementation of its Belt and Road Initiative. China is also strengthening its political ties with the region, as demonstrated by the launch of the China-CELAC Forum summits in 2016. CELAC is the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The EU and CELAC have a long-standing strategic partnership and a [network of association and trade agreements](#) in place. After a political lull of several years, the EU revived its interest in the region following the outbreak of Russia's war against Ukraine. Accordingly, on 7 June 2023, the Commission adopted a joint communication setting out a [new agenda](#) for relations between the EU and LAC. After eight years without a regional summit, the [EU-CELAC summit](#) took place in Brussels from 17 to 18 July 2023. The next summit is scheduled to take place in Colombia in 2025.

Also in 2023, Russia [updated](#) its 2016 Foreign Policy Concept, stressing Moscow's increased focus on LAC. One of Russia's [objectives](#) in the region is to prevent the US' presence in its vicinity and to [ensure](#) that LAC maintains a stance of geopolitical neutrality amid Russia's war against Ukraine. Another key objective of Russia's foreign policy is to position itself at the heart of a new world order, which some [experts](#) refer to as a "disorderly world". To challenge perceived US hegemony, Russia is actively engaging with emerging and developing countries in the [Global South](#).

The importance of the region for Russia is evident through [visits](#) from high-ranking Russian politicians, such as Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, most recently in 2024.

Russia's traditional allies in LAC are the three authoritarian regimes: Nicaragua, Cuba (the Soviet Union provided extensive economic and military support to both countries during the Cold War) and Venezuela. The extent of Russia's loyalty to its anti-democratic allies in Latin America was recently once again demonstrated in Venezuela. Russia was among the first to [congratulate](#) Nicolás Maduro, along with China, Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Honduras, following the presidential elections in July 2024. This, despite the fact that the elections did not meet international standards of electoral integrity and were marked by fraud allegations. However, Russia is also trying to strengthen its relations with other countries beyond its traditional allies, particularly with Bolivia, Brazil and El Salvador.

[Analysts](#) point out that Russia's strategy of rapprochement towards Latin American countries covers activities in four main areas: politics, economy and trade, the military sector, and disinformation.

Traditionally, Latin America has taken an independent and neutral approach in geopolitical rivalries. According to the policy of [active non-alignment](#) (ANA), LAC countries do not accept a priori the positions of any of the great powers in conflict. Instead, they act in defence of their own national interest, without giving in to pressures from hegemonic powers. So far, the LAC region has tried to avoid being caught in the global political power play and has pursued an active non-alignment

strategy successfully. Within the framework of the United Nations (UN), most [LAC countries](#) have condemned Russia's war against Ukraine. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted six resolutions related to Russia's war against Ukraine, with LAC countries voting by a clear majority in favour. Of the 33 LAC countries, 26 voted in favour of the latest resolution, titled 'Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine'. Only Nicaragua voted against, while Bolivia, Cuba and El Salvador abstained. Dominica, Grenada and Venezuela did not cast their votes. However, LAC's voting behaviour at the UN does not result in concrete policy actions in the LAC countries' bilateral relations with Russia. An example of this is the refusal of LAC countries to join the international sanctions against Russia. Key countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, neither apply sanctions against Russia nor respond positively to the Western alliance's call to provide weapons to Ukraine. From the CELAC member countries, only the [Bahamas](#) has joined the global sanctions against Russia.

Some [experts](#) believe that Latin America will benefit from remaining a bystander to geopolitical turmoil. According to [others](#), it is increasingly slipping into a polarising logic of geopolitical confrontations similar to those seen during the Cold War.

## Russia's political engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean

Over the past 20 years Russia has established a series of [bilateral agreements](#) with LAC countries to strengthen **political cooperation**, including through strategic partnerships such as the one with Brazil. Political cooperation is complemented by security, trade, energy and military cooperation programmes with several countries in the region, including Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela. However, institutionalised relationships between Russia and LAC countries take place at an incomparably lower level than the one maintained by the [EU](#). The EU has an intensive institutionalised political dialogue with the region at all levels, including through its trade agreements.

Latin America is among the regions that Russia wants to use as a [platform](#) to build the envisioned new, multipolar order. The Foreign Policy Concept outlines plans for promoting and expanding security, military and military-technical cooperation, as well as increasing of mutual trade and investment. The document highlights Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela as countries of specific interest to Russia. Additionally, El Salvador is now garnering more attention from Russia. This country within Central America, a region with which the EU has an association agreement in place (signed in 2013), has [expressed its interest](#) in expanding bilateral relations with Russia.

Although Russia primarily focuses on its bilateral relations with LAC countries, it has also made efforts to strengthen its ties with the region as a whole, for instance, through the Permanent Mechanism for Political Dialogue and Cooperation (the [Russia-CELAC Mechanism](#)), launched in 2015. While the mechanism has not been very active as a platform for policy coordination, Russia remains committed to it, having [announced](#) in 2023 plans to resume its activities.

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov has emphasised the importance of LAC for Russia by completing a four-country tour in the region from 17 to 21 April 2023. He met with the heads of state of Brazil, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba in their respective countries, as well as holding another meeting with Bolivian emissaries in Venezuela. In February 2024, Lavrov once again visited Venezuela, Cuba and Brazil. In Brazil, which is holding the 2024 G20 presidency, he [met](#) with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and participated in the G20 foreign ministers' meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

[Conferences and international organisations](#) are some of the channels through which Russia fosters its foreign policy relations with Latin America. From 29 September to 2 October 2023, Russia hosted for the first time the Russia – Latin America' [international parliamentary conference](#), attended by over 200 delegates from various Latin American countries. Russian President Vladimir Putin [addressed](#) the participants and stressed, among other things, that Russia stands ready to build

bilateral relations as well as work closely with integrational Latin American associations. In particular, Russia would help to ensure that these associations establish practical ties with the Eurasian Economic Union.

[BRICS](#), the intergovernmental organisation comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and, as of early 2024, also Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, is a cornerstone of Russia's foreign policy ambition to create a new multipolar world order. One of Russia's objectives is to [weaken the US dollar](#)-based international financial system and to establish a new, truly sanctions-proof payments system through BRICS. The forum offers Russia the opportunity to strengthen its relations with Brazil and to encourage LAC countries, in particular [Bolivia and Venezuela](#), to join BRICS. As holder of the BRICS rotating presidency for 2024, Russia has [invited](#) representatives of Latin American countries to attend the **BRICS summit that will be taking place from 22 to 24 October 2024 in Kazan, Russia**. Efforts to include – with the 2024 expansion of BRICS – another Latin American key state, Argentina failed, as its new President, Javier Milei, withdrew his country from the planned entry into BRICS.

### Russia's strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean

1) Supporting interested Latin American countries under pressure from the United States and its allies in securing sovereignty and independence, including through the promotion and expansion of security, military and military-technical cooperation

2) Strengthening friendship, mutual understanding and deepening multifaceted mutually beneficial partnerships with the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Cuba, the Republic of Nicaragua and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Developing relations with other Latin American countries, taking into account the degree of independence and constructiveness of their policy towards the Russian Federation

3) Increasing mutual trade and investment with Latin American and Caribbean countries, including through cooperation with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Common Market of the South, the Central American Integration System, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of the Americas, the Pacific Alliance, and the Caribbean Community

4) Expanding cultural, scientific, educational, sports, tourism and other humanitarian ties with the countries of the region

Source: Russia's 2023 [Foreign Policy Concept](#).

Additionally, Russia regularly meets with LAC countries at the G20 intergovernmental forum for international economic cooperation. Its members are the world's major economies, among them Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Comparing the G20 leaders' two latest communiqués, it seems that Russia's diplomatic efforts are paying off in the international fora: While the 2022 [G20 leaders' communiqué](#) contained a reference in which members (according to their national positions) deeply deplored Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the one from [2023](#) did not condemn Russia explicitly. Similarly, the declaration issued at the [2023 EU-CELAC summit](#) was watered down as regards Russia's war against Ukraine on LAC's insistence. It will be interesting to see how this issue will be addressed at the 2024 G20 Rio de Janeiro summit (18–19 November 2024). According to the 'one hand washes the other' principle, Russia supports Latin America in its efforts to achieve greater representation on the international scene and [calls](#) for greater representation of LAC in international fora such as the UN Security Council and the G20.

It can be seen as a diplomatic success for Russia that Brazilian President Lula da Silva confirmed his plans to attend the 2024 BRICS summit in Russia. He also [stated](#) that Brazil, as a signatory of the Rome Statute, would ignore a war crimes arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Russian leader Vladimir Putin if he were to attend the G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro. However, Lula da Silva later had to retract that statement. Additionally the Mexican President, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, [rejected](#) a request from Ukraine's government to arrest Vladimir Putin if he were to attend the inauguration of Mexico's next president in October.

## A small Russian economic footprint in Latin America

Russia's **economic presence** in Latin America is very limited, particularly when compared to China, the US and the EU. For example, the EU has association, trade, investment, political and cooperation [agreements](#) with 27 out of the 33 LAC countries – important instruments that go far beyond their initial purpose. In contrast, Russia does not have a single association or trade agreement in place with any LAC country. [Analysts](#) agree that the negotiation platforms where Russia and LAC countries are present have an extremely weak economic component.

[Trade](#) between Russia and LAC has significantly increased since 2020. Nevertheless, Russia's trade in goods with Latin America accounts for less than [2 %](#) of Russia's global trade. In 2022, only 0.86 % of Latin American [imports](#) came from Russia and 0.34 % of exports were destined to Russia. By way of comparison: [in 2020](#), the US was LAC's leading trading partner (38 %), followed by China (18%) and the EU (11 %).

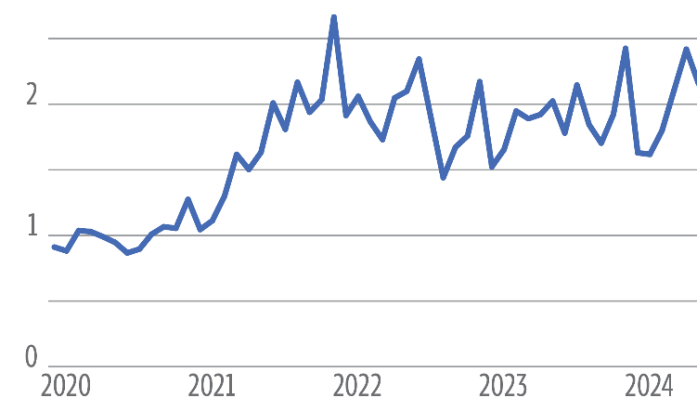
While Russia's military and strategic focus is on Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, when it comes to economic matters it prioritises Brazil and Mexico, followed by Argentina and Ecuador. Trade with these four countries accounts for three-quarters of Russia's total trade with LAC. With Brazil, Latin America's biggest economy, [trade](#) amounted to US\$9.8 billion in 2022. [Trade with Mexico](#), Latin America's second biggest economy was US\$1.12 billion.

As regards foreign direct investment (FDI), Russia's total direct investment in the region hovers around US\$100 million, which is an insignificant amount (excluding FDI stocks from Caribbean islands' tax havens). This is significantly lower compared to the EU, the largest investor in the region, accounting for 36 % of the total (followed by the US and China). The EU's [FDI stocks](#) in LAC amount to €687.5 billion. However, the [true size of Russian FDI](#) stocks in the region are most likely much larger, as Latin American countries are receiving large volumes of FDI from the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Switzerland, which host the trade and investment subsidiaries of Russian multinationals operating outside of Russia. The [Russian presence](#) is mostly concentrated in the oil and gas sectors in Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela.

According to [analysts](#), **the direct impact on Latin America of the proliferation of US and EU sanctions against Russia since 2022 has been limited.** Nevertheless, Russia's war on Ukraine has had an impact on the region. The negative economic effects of this war have been asymmetric and have been felt most acutely by energy and agrifood importers, primarily in Central America and the Caribbean. Low-income households have been [affected](#) the most by increases in global food prices. Prices of the [main commodities](#) exported by Latin America have proved extremely volatile. To mitigate these negative effects, Russia has signed several [bilateral economic cooperation agreements](#) with its traditional allies Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

While Russian-LAC trade is very limited, some LAC countries depend heavily on certain Russian products. These are dependencies that [Russia exploits](#) for political leverage and long-term influence in the region. For instance, Russia is a major exporter of petroleum and its subsidiary products,

Figure 1 - Russia's trade with Latin America (imports and exports, monthly data) for 2020- 2024, (€ billion)



Data source: IMF, September 2024.

fertilisers and coal to LAC, while it imports a sizeable quantity of agricultural products and other raw materials from the region. [Russian oil exports](#) to Latin America have increased significantly since the start of the war in Ukraine, reaching 300 330 barrels per day, representing approximately 5 % of Russia's total oil sales.

Russia, the world's [biggest supplier of fertilisers](#), **covers about 22 % of the region's fertiliser needs**. This gives Russia another powerful tool, besides its energy policy, to counterbalance US pressure on issues pertaining to Russia. Brazil, for example, being a major global supplier of agricultural products, is the largest buyer of Russian fertilisers globally. The country [depends](#) on Russia for a quarter of its fertiliser imports. Many [observers](#) suspect that **Brazil's dependence on Russian fertilisers is one of the reasons why Brazil has refused to participate in any economic sanctions against Russia**. Many other LAC countries, such as Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela are, to a greater or lesser extent, also [dependent](#) on Russian fertilisers. Moreover, since Russia's war against Ukraine, a surge in imports of [Russian oil products](#) to LAC has been reported. In 2023, Brazil overtook Turkey to become the largest buyer of Russian diesel. The country imported 6.1 million tonnes of diesel from Russia in 2023, six times as much as in 2022. Fuel oil imports from Russia grew from US\$1.1 billion in 2022 to US\$5.3 billion last year.

A concrete example of how Russia uses its trade policy with LAC as a geopolitical tool, is the case of Ecuador. In January 2024, when this Andean country considered accepting a [US offer](#) to exchange Soviet-era equipment for modern US weapons, which would then be shipped to Ukraine to help Kyiv, Russia responded by significantly limiting banana imports from Ecuador. One month later, Ecuador's government cancelled the plan.

In the [race for critical raw materials](#), LAC has attracted the attention of geopolitical players, including Russia. Argentina (24 %), Bolivia (15 %), Chile (14 %) and Peru (14 %) collectively hold about two-thirds of the world's proven lithium reserves and produce about half of the global supply. Some of these countries, for instance Bolivia, lack the resources to independently operate lithium-mining projects and therefore form joint ventures with international companies. In 2023, Bolivia, a politically unstable Andean country, home to one of the world's largest lithium deposits, signed a US\$450 million [deal](#) with the Russian state firm Uranium One Group, a subsidiary of Rosatom. This deal granted Russia access to Bolivia's estimated 23 million tons of lithium reserves. In this regard, it will be interesting to follow the European Commission's plan to establish a [critical raw materials club](#) with interested LAC countries.

## Insignificant military cooperation between authoritarian regimes

Russia's military presence in LAC is a key component of its [symbolic reciprocity strategy](#), a reaction to the US-led response to its actions in Ukraine and the US military engagements in the Russian neighbourhood. Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela are Russia's main security partners in LAC. All three countries have signed security and **military cooperation** agreements with Russia [focusing](#) on equipment sales, maintenance support, training, naval and air deployments, and intelligence. It has also been [reported](#) that Wagner Group members were in Caracas in 2019 to provide security for Nicolas Maduro following the protests against him.

While Moscow is largely focused on strengthening military ties with its traditional partners, the 2023 Foreign Policy Concept highlights Russia's efforts to promote and expand security, military and military-technical cooperation with interested Latin American countries. In addition to its traditional allies in LAC, Russia has engaged to some extent with other countries in the region in recent years, concluding [bilateral security and military cooperation agreements](#) with Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, El Salvador, Paraguay and Peru. Recipients of [Russian armaments](#) since 2007 have included Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, Colombia, Nicaragua, Brazil, Peru and Venezuela, the primary recipient of Russian arms in the region. However, Russia's presence in the Latin American arms market has been steadily declining since 2017, which [experts](#) attribute to US sanctions – imposed following the Russian

invasion of Crimea –targeting Russia's military and intelligence sectors, including arms sales. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), there have been no (publicly announced) deliveries of Russian arms and military equipment to LAC countries since 2018. This trend aligns with an overall decline in arms imports in the Americas, which, according to the [latest available data](#) from January 2023, amounted to 7.2 % between 2014 and 2019. Russia held a negligible LAC market share of 0.22 %. The US (accounting for 50 % of the regional total), Brazil (15 %) and Canada (11 %) were the largest importers in the region.

At the sub-regional level, in 2019 France was the biggest supplier of major arms to South America (23 %), followed by the US (14 %) and the UK (12 %). Russia did not deliver any major arms to South America that year. According to [military experts](#), Western countries' massive sanctions against Russia make it extremely difficult for Latin American countries to bear the political costs and financial and technological risks of getting involved in the purchase of Russian military equipment. It is anticipated that the US and EU defence industries' dominance in the Latin American market will continue in the near future.

## Russia's disinformation attack on Latin American and Caribbean democracies

**Disinformation and propaganda campaigns** are a crucial element in Russia's strategy for LAC. In 2014, Russian media outlets, such as the Sputnik agency and the propaganda channel Russia Today (RT), [opened offices](#) in Latin America. Since then, they have steadily expanded their Spanish-language reporting primarily aimed at [undermining](#) the standing of the US, [whitewashing](#) Russia's role in world affairs – specifically in its war against Ukraine – and portraying Russia as an effective alternative political model to liberal democracy.

A [2023 report](#) entitled 'Russian Influence Campaigns in Latin America', supported by the United States Institute of Peace, concludes that Russia successfully uses disinformation, economic coercion, and covert and overt political action in Latin America. By doing so, 'Moscow has sowed anti-US sentiment and weakened democratic institutions while shaping the behaviour of Latin American governments in Russia's favour'. According to the [Atlantic Council](#), Russia is using targeted communications tailored to country-specific topics. In this strategy, ambassadors also play a role by becoming legitimised spokespersons in national media and placing their [op-eds](#) in these spaces, enabling them to articulate the Kremlin's narratives to Latin American audiences.

The US imposed [new sanctions](#) on Russian state media in September 2024, as actions show that the Russian propaganda channels are not only a centre of disinformation but also full members of the Russian government's intelligence and operations apparatus. In its 2020 [resolution](#) on foreign disinformation campaigns during the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Parliament urged the Commission to counter aggressive Russian and Chinese propaganda efforts that are undermining the EU and sowing mistrust towards the EU among the local population. In its resolution of 28 February 2024 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy, Parliament stressed the need to equip relevant EU delegations with appropriate means to increase public diplomacy activities and to develop their strategic communication capabilities to fight against disinformation and propaganda.

However, despite Russian propaganda, Russia's image in Latin America has suffered due to the war of aggression against Ukraine. According to a [2024 report](#) by the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD), there has been a 15 % decrease in positive perception towards Russia in Latin America since the Russian invasion of Crimea.

# Prospects for EU relations with Latin America and the Caribbean

Against the backdrop of the overall geopolitical situation and Russia's efforts to foster relations with Latin America, the EU has more reason than ever to continue strengthening its ties with LAC in the coming years and not allow Russia to expand its still rather limited influence in the region. It is therefore key that Latin America remains high on the EU's external agenda and that both partners enhance their bi-regional relations by following up on the commitments made at the 2023 EU-CELAC summit.

The new [EU-Chile Advanced Framework Agreement](#), which will soon enter into force, is an important step in the right direction. Looking at the two pending trade agreements – with Mexico and Mercosur – the European Parliament emphasised in 2024 that it is time to make progress towards the signing and ratification of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and to finally conclude the agreement with Mercosur.

In light of the Kremlin's media disinformation campaign in LAC, it is important for the EU to counter Russian propaganda. In a February 2024 [resolution](#), the European Parliament stressed the need to provide relevant EU delegations with the necessary means to increase public diplomacy activities and develop their strategic communication capabilities to fight disinformation and propaganda.

## MAIN REFERENCES

Chaguaceda, A., Boersner Herrera, A., 'Russia in Latin America: the illiberal confluence', LSE Latin America and Caribbean Centre, July 2022.

Cimini, F. and Morais, H., 'The new pink tide in Latin America: Can they move further?', Foundation for European Progressive Studies, July 2023.

Farah, D. and Ortiz, R.D., 'Russian Influence Campaigns in Latin America', United States Institute of Peace, October 2023.

Jütten, M., Latin America outlook: Issues to watch in 2024 EPRS, European Parliament, February 2023.

Jütten, M., Strengthening ties: A new agenda for the EU's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, EPRS, European Parliament, June 2023.

Piatakov, A., 'Russia and Latin America in the 21st Century: A Difficult Rapprochement', *Russie.Nei.Visions*, No 119, 2020.

Vladimirov, M./Rueda Orejarena, G./Osipova, D., 'Global Reach. The Kremlin Playbook in Latin America', Center for the Study of Democracy, September 2024.

## DISCLAIMER AND COPYRIGHT

This document is prepared for, and addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament as background material to assist them in their parliamentary work. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of its author(s) and any opinions expressed herein should not be taken to represent an official position of the Parliament.

Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the European Parliament is given prior notice and sent a copy.

© European Union, 2024.

Photo credits: © Gstudio / Adobe Stock.

[eprs@ep.europa.eu](mailto:eprs@ep.europa.eu) (contact)

[www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu](http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu) (intranet)

[www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank) (internet)

<http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)