

# **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

## **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA**

**Summary of activities during the Fifth Parliamentary Term (1999-2004)**

**Brussels, 1 July 2004**  
LMG/nal

## **1. The European Parliament's delegations**

Rule 168 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure is concerned with interparliamentary delegations, including the nature and the composition thereof.

Of the 21 interparliamentary delegations in existence during the fifth parliamentary term, two were responsible for relations with Latin America. These were:

the Delegation for relations with the countries of South America and Mercosur  
and  
the Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico.

The two delegations had 24 and 23 members respectively.

The Delegation for relations with the countries of South America and Mercosur covers relations with the Andean Community countries (Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru), the Mercosur countries (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) and Chile.

The Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico covers relations with Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama and Cuba (even though this last country - unlike its Caribbean neighbours - is not yet a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement).

## **2. Composition of the Delegations' Bureaus**

The Delegations' Bureaus - each comprising a chairman and two vice-chairmen - were appointed at the start of each half of the parliamentary term.

### **2.1. Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico**

*first half (1999-2002)*

Chairman: Antonio SEGURO (PSE)/María CARRIHO (PSE)  
Vice-chairmen: José Manuel GARCÍA-MARGALLO (PPE)  
Wolfgang KREISSL-DÖRFLER (PSE)

*second half (2002-2004)*

Chairman: Raimon OBIOLS I GERMÀ (PSE)/Ana MIRANDA DE LAGE (PSE)  
Vice-chairmen: Peter LIESE (PSE)  
Mariotto SEGNI (UEN)

### **2.2. Delegation for relations with the countries of South America and Mercosur**

*first half (1999-2002)*

Chairman: Antonio DI PIETRO (UEN)  
Vice-chairmen: Rolf LINKOHR (PSE)  
José Ignacio SALAFRANCA SÁNCHEZ-NEYRA (PPE)

*second half (2002-2004)*

Chairman: Rolf LINKOHR (PSE)  
Vice-chairmen: Pedro MARSET (GUE)  
Fernando FERNÁNDEZ MARTÍN (PPE)

### **3. The Delegations' objectives**

The interparliamentary delegations' main objective is to establish, focus and promote parliamentary dialogue with the partner countries' legislative institutions and also with the parliamentary institutions concerned with integration at regional or subregional level. Such objectives are achieved by means of regular gatherings at Parliament's places of work and in Latin America, during which topics of mutual interest in the national, bi-regional and international spheres are discussed. Such gatherings also include working meetings at party or political-group level.

Any information gathered is forwarded to Parliament's other Members by means of regular reports or reports drawn up by the chairman after each visit or interparliamentary meeting, preferably via the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy. The reports are submitted to that committee at the latter's request and they frequently give rise to European Parliament resolutions.

### **4. The Delegations' activities**

#### **4.1. Meetings at the European Parliament's places of work**

During the parliamentary term, each of the delegations held separate monthly meetings at which organisational matters were discussed, together with current social, economic and political issues relating to the region covered by the delegation. Meetings frequently concentrated on discussing the situation in a given country or region with political, diplomatic, trade-union or civil-society representatives from that country or region.

Hence many eminent persons attended the meetings, the generally open nature and the topicality of which aroused considerable interest amongst MEPs who were not actually members of the delegations and amongst the general public as a whole.

The European Parliament's places of work were also the venues for interparliamentary meetings with countries or regional groups which were Parliament's cosignatories to the political declarations stemming from such meetings: Mercosur (12 June 1996), the Central American Parliament (25 June 1997), Mexico (26 November 1997) and Chile (1 June 1998). The agenda was decided in advance and by common agreement between the parties.

As a general rule the various aspects of the relations between the parties involved were analysed under three thematic headings: politics, economic affairs and social issues. The first of these also included international current affairs and matters relating to regional integration. In the Final Declarations, emphasis was often placed on the need for the parties involved to adopt a common position in the various multilateral spheres and forums. The trade, cooperation and political-dialogue agreements signed by the EU and Mexico (in Brussels on 8 December 1997) and by the EU and Chile (in Brussels on 18 November 2002) raised the level of the interparliamentary relationship by incorporating provisions (Article 9 in the case of Chile and the Final Act Joint Declaration on Parliamentary Dialogue in the case of Mexico) which provide for the establishment of Association Parliamentary Committees (APCs). The APC provided for in the EU-Chile agreement was set up in Valparaíso (Chile) on 28 October 2003.

Similarly, the association agreement with Mercosur (which is currently under negotiation) and the recently negotiated cooperation and political-dialogue agreements with Central America and the Andean Community provide for the establishment of interparliamentary dialogue structures.

## **4.2. Meetings outside the EU**

### **4.2.1. Working parties**

As provided for in Article 18 of the implementing provisions governing the work of delegations, both delegations responsible for relations with Latin America may - since they cover a number of countries - divide themselves into working parties and visit one or more countries. During the parliamentary term the delegations customarily undertook one trip per year, although the state of affairs in certain countries or the political-dialogue commitments entered into by the two regions prompted the body responsible (the Conference of Presidents) to authorise additional trips on a number of occasions.

The programme for such visits generally included meetings with members of the executive and the legislative and of political parties, and with businessmen, trade-unionists and representatives of civil society, in particular organisations involved in protecting and promoting human rights. The programmes also included working meetings with the accredited ambassadors of the EU Member States and visits to projects financed by the European Union.

In virtually all the countries concerned the delegations were received by the highest authorities (generally the President) of the country visited.

#### **4.2.1.1. Delegation for relations with the countries of Central American and Mexico**

Members of the delegation sat on working parties which visited:  
Mexico in 2000;  
El Salvador and Cuba in 2001;

Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua in 2001;  
Panama and Mexico in 2002;  
Costa Rica and Guatemala in 2003;  
Mexico in 2003;  
Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras in 2004.

#### **4.2.1.2. Delegation for relations with the countries of South America**

Members of the delegation sat on working parties which visited:

Argentina and Brazil in 2000;  
Bolivia and Chile in 2001;  
Colombia and Venezuela in 2001;  
Paraguay and Peru in 2002;  
Brazil in 2003;  
Chile in 2003;  
Ecuador and Colombia in 2004.

#### **4.2.2. Ad hoc delegations**

If a third country is experiencing serious political, economic or social difficulties or has been struck by some kind of natural disaster, the Conference of Presidents may - pursuant to Article 19 of the implementing provisions governing the work of delegations - authorise the setting up of an ad hoc delegation and shall define the latter's terms of reference, composition and responsibilities.

It is customary that amongst those involved in the activities of ad hoc delegations there should be some members of the relevant delegation.

During the 5th parliamentary term the Conference of Presidents authorised the following ad hoc delegations:

Venezuela, in the wake of a natural disaster (2000);  
Argentina, on account of its social and economic situation (2002);  
Venezuela, on account of its political situation (2003);  
Bolivia, on account of its political situation (2004).

During the last three of the above-mentioned visits the delegation's presence not only enabled the tasks with which the delegation had been commissioned to be carried out; it also enabled the point to be made at all meetings held with the parties in attendance that crises had to be solved by democratic means, through the channels provided for in the Constitution and in current legislation. In no case did the means of resolving an issue (as followed by the respective governments or advocated by the Opposition) differ from the means promoted by the delegation.

#### **4.2.3. Election observation**

In recent years, election observation by the EU institutions has gradually developed on the basis of acquired experience and it has enabled a set of rules to be adopted which provide for more extensive operations, greater effectiveness and a higher profile. Those rules are laid down in Parliament's resolution of 15 March 2001 on EU election assistance and observation (A5-0060/2001).

Pursuant to Article 21 of the implementing provisions governing the activities of delegations the Conference of Presidents may, on a proposal from the election-coordination group and subject to approval by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, authorise the setting up of an election-observation delegation, provided that the terms and conditions laid down in the abovementioned article are satisfied.

On a proposal from the political groups the election-observation delegations thus approved are usually constituted - at least in part - members of the delegations responsible for relations with the countries in question.

Election observation has been carried out in close cooperation with, and with the support of, EU election-observation missions, the most recent of which have been chaired by an MEP.

During the fifth parliamentary term the Conference authorised the following election-observation delegations:

##### **4.2.3.1. Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico**

Mexico (2000);  
Nicaragua (2001);  
Guatemala - participation in the first and second rounds (2003).

##### **4.2.3.2. Delegation for relations with the countries of South America**

Peru - participation in the first and second rounds (2000);  
Colombia (2002);  
Ecuador - participation in the first and second rounds (2002).

#### **4.3. Interparliamentary conferences**

Every two years since 1974 - alternating between Europe and Latin America - the European Parliament has held an Interparliamentary Conference attended by members of the two delegations responsible for relations with Latin America and members of the Latin American Parliament. Such events normally attract

approximately 25 MEPs and 80 parliamentarians from Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC).

This is undoubtedly the most important general forum for dialogue between the two regions.

During the fifth parliamentary term the following Interparliamentary Conferences were held:

Fifteenth EU-LAC Interparliamentary Conference in Valparaíso, Chile (2001);

Sixteenth EU-LAC Interparliamentary Conference in Brussels, Belgium (2003).

In addition to enabling a dialogue between the two regions to take place, the Interparliamentary Conferences provide a framework for meetings between the European Parliament delegations and the subregional parliamentary bodies of Central America, the Andean countries and Mercosur.

The substance of, and the topics to be discussed at, the Interparliamentary Conferences are agreed in the course of two preparatory meetings attended by the members of the bureaus of the Latin American Parliament and the delegations for relations with Latin America. The debates held at the Interparliamentary Conference focus on three topics and conclude with a Final Declaration, which covers both the general debates and the urgent matters which have been dealt with.

In the last three Final Declarations (issued in 1999, 2001 and 2003), messages were sent to the EU-LAC Heads of State and Government who would be attending the first, second and third summits held in Rio de Janeiro (1999), Madrid (May 2002) and Guadalajara [Mexico] (May 2004).

The following topics were dealt with during the Interparliamentary Conferences and were presented by a rapporteur from each region.

#### Fifteenth Conference

- *Democracy in the era of the information society*  
European rapporteur: Wolfgang KREISSL-DÖRFLER (PSE);
- *Globalisation: risks and effects*  
European rapporteur: José Manuel GARCIA-MARGALLO (PPE);
- *Drug trafficking and organised crime*  
European rapporteur: Mariecke SANDERS ten HOLTE (ELDR).

### Sixteenth Conference

- *Prospects for the European Union and Latin America in the 21st Century*  
European rapporteur: Raimon OBIOLS I GERMÀ;
- *Trade-integration processes in the EU and Latin America: European and LAC perspectives*  
European rapporteur: Pedro MARSET CAMPOS;
- *Migration and population movements*  
European rapporteur: Fernando FERNÁNDEZ MARTÍN.

#### **4.4. EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summits of Heads of State and Government**

The European Parliament was not invited to attend the first EU-LAC Summit of Heads of State and Government, which was held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1999.

Parliament's President was invited to both the second and the third summits, which were held in Madrid in 2002 and in Guadalajara (Mexico) in 2004.

At the Madrid Summit the President delegated the task of representing him to the Vice-President Alejo VIDAL-QUADRAS and at the Guadalajara Summit he delegated the same task to the chairman of the Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico (Ana MIRANDA de LAGE).

Alongside the two summits, Parliament's delegations with responsibility for relations with Latin America have engaged in activities of increasing interest and substance.

At the time of the second summit a meeting was held in Madrid between the bureaus of Parliament's two delegations (the one for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico and the one for relations with the countries of South America) and those of the Latin American regional-integration parliaments: the Latin American Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the Andean Parliament and the Mercosur Joint Parliamentary Committee. The participants adopted a Final Declaration.

During the third summit a **Meeting between European, Latin American and Caribbean parliamentarians** was held in Puebla (Mexico). The meeting was attended by approximately 20 MEPs and 80 parliamentarians from Latin America. It should be pointed out that the official 12-member delegation approved by the Conference of Presidents was accompanied by a further eight Members, following a decision taken by the political groups.

At the meeting the discussions revolved around three main topics presented by European and Latin American rapporteurs:



*Relations between the EU and the LAC within the globalisation process*  
European rapporteur: Pedro MARSET CAMPOS;

*Poverty and migration*  
European rapporteur: Fernando FERNANDEZ MARTÍN;

*Political issues*  
European rapporteur: Carles-Alfred GASÓLIBA I BÖHM;

and a Decalogue addressed to those attending the third summit was adopted unanimously.

#### **4.5. Activities proper to each of the delegations**

Since the start of the **San José process and the Rio Group dialogue**, Parliament has closely monitored the processes and has taken part in the various stages thereof. Parliament's president traditionally delegates the task of representing him at San José Group meetings to the chairman of the Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico and the task of representing him within the Rio Group to the chairman of the Delegation for relations with the countries of South America.

Parliament's interest in the format of such meetings lies in the fact that its President's representative makes an introductory speech in which he or she describes Parliament's priorities as regards the Latin America sub-region. The topics mentioned in recent speeches include support for the conclusion of association agreements with the various Latin American regions and for the integration and strengthening of Latin America's joint institutions, in particular the regional parliaments.

Both delegations maintain very close relations with the sub-regional parliaments.

Each year the Delegation for relations with Central America and Mexico holds interparliamentary meetings with the Central American Parliament - an institution which from the start (it was set up under the Esquipulas agreement which brought the wars in Central America to an end) has enjoyed the European Parliament's support. The chairman of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico and the President of the Central American Parliament have dealings with each other on a number of occasions in the course of each year.

The European Parliament's President is regularly invited to the inauguration of the Central American Parliament's Bureau, although he normally delegates the task to the chairman of the Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico.

The Delegation for relations with the countries of South America has regular dealings with the **Andean Parliament** and the **Mercosur Joint Parliamentary Committee**. Dealings with the latter have increased in recent months as a result of the impetus which the Presidents of the Mercosur member countries (in particular Argentina and Brazil) have given to integration.

## **5. Conclusion**

In the course of the parliamentary term which has just ended, relations between the EU and Latin America have gained in importance, undoubtedly on account of the stable democracy which currently prevails on the Latin American subcontinent. This has resulted in the signing of 'fourth-generation' agreements covering trade, cooperation and political dialogue with Mexico and Chile, and soon with Mercosur. In the case of the countries of Central America and the Andean community, the lower level of regional integration is reflected in slower negotiations which are nonetheless intended to lead to the conclusion of agreements of an equivalent rank.

The purpose of all of these agreements is to establish frameworks for joint parliamentary dialogue which, as they take shape and gradually develop will lead to ever-closer interparliamentary relations.

With this in mind, Parliament adopted on 10 March 2004 a resolution pursuant to which relations with Latin America during the sixth parliamentary term will be conducted via five delegations:

- Joint Parliamentary Committee with Mexico;
- Joint Parliamentary Committee with Chile;
- Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America;
- Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community;
- Delegation for relations with the Mercosur countries.