



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



**Declaration of the Co-Presidents of  
the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat)  
on a comprehensive and bi-regional EU-LAC strategy  
to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,  
of 5 November 2020**

The Co-Presidents of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), the President of the Latin American Parliament Jorge Pizarro and Javi López, MEP, in accordance with Article 18 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure and on the occasion of the 13th ordinary plenary session of the Assembly held from 4 to 5 November 2020 in Brussels, Belgium:

1. Note that the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed nearly one million lives in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean; that it has led to unprecedented economic losses; and that it has a profound negative impact on the employment, education, poverty, health, inequality and living conditions of our citizens.
2. Stress that in some countries health structures were inadequate even before the pandemic and that this has aggravated the effects of COVID-19, rendering the countries concerned conducive to the spread of the pandemic, hitting their already vulnerable and defenceless citizens even harder.
3. Emphasise that strengthening democracy, institutions and the rule of law, as well as safeguarding human rights and maintaining peace, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, will be key for the post-pandemic recovery. Call for the root causes of inequality to be addressed, and highlight the need for measures to ensure social inclusion and equality through universal access to education, food, health and opportunities for all, as key elements in the fight against the rise of xenophobia and the stigmatisation of vulnerable groups.
4. Express their solidarity with and sympathy towards all the victims and their families, as well all those affected by the health, economic and social crises caused by the pandemic; and their appreciation of all health professionals and State law enforcement officials for their joint efforts to save lives and fight the pandemic, as well as of all those working to keep our societies and essential services functioning. Emphasise the importance of public and universal health systems as a means of ensuring a comprehensive response to this pandemic.

5. Stress that the virus knows no borders, ideologies, race or social conditions, although it has undoubtedly hit the elderly and people with existing conditions harder, and that we can only fight it if we work together, globally, promoting multilateral and cross-border solutions in a spirit of solidarity, equality and equity. Stress, moreover, that to respond to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, a strategy and close multilateral coordination and cooperation are needed on the part of the entire international community, which includes strengthening the United Nations system and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in particular. Call for an independent audit report on the WHO's management of the pandemic. Consider it essential also to achieve greater economic, trade and political integration in the Latin American region as soon as possible in order to increase its weight within and influence on the global economy, and to achieve greater protection for workers and the environment through the adoption of common standards and mutual monitoring. Emphasise that people must be at the heart of recovery plans and the economic and social stimulus.
6. Consider that the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean must make a decisive contribution to international efforts to tackle the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences. Call, therefore, on the governments of both regions, on the EU institutions and on Latin American integration bodies to step up bi-regional cooperation and strengthen bilateral cooperation instruments in areas such as development cooperation, humanitarian aid, health, science, research and technology, and social programmes, including by exchanging good practices and technical assistance, in order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, reduce inequality and strengthen public health systems.
7. Stress the importance of coordinated or joint policies to address the dramatic economic, social and psychological consequences of the pandemic and to revive our economies. Welcome, in this regard, the EU package for the global response to COVID-19 and the EUR 20 billion allocated to the fight against the pandemic in partner third countries; request, furthermore, that the distribution criteria for this allocation be updated to reflect the impact of the pandemic. Commend the measures taken by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide financial assistance and external-debt relief to the most vulnerable countries to enable them to address the emergency situation brought about by the pandemic. Call, therefore, for full use to be made of the IMF's lending capacity and to extend the term of the debt moratorium in order to cope with the new wave of COVID-19.
8. Stress the importance of creating the necessary conditions and mechanisms for both businesses and families to have sufficient liquidity to be able to lay the foundations for a level of consumption and production that drives and consolidates a stable and lasting recovery. Emphasise, moreover, the importance of ensuring an adequate fiscal margin to furnish the region with necessary and adequate tools to enable stimulus packages to contain the crisis resulting from the pandemic.
9. Call for a common agenda for reconstruction between the two regions, starting with deepening the regional integration of Latin American markets, implementing strategic cross-border infrastructure projects, simplifying and harmonising rules for facilitating internal trade in the region, and ensuring mutual recognition of

professional certification and validation. Stress the importance of deepening digitalisation to promote better and more inclusive economic integration that fosters an appropriate legal framework to afford a second chance after the pandemic, and which stimulates social investment, bringing about an inclusive economy that has a real impact.

10. Call for cooperation to achieve and maintain an open, secure and interconnected digital world, leaving no citizens behind. Note that the pandemic has showcased the opportunities presented by the digital transition, but also the dangers inherent in falling behind. Draw attention to the fact that it will be necessary to adopt international agreements and to establish standards and norms to fully exploit the opportunities that the digital transition can offer to citizens, businesses and public services, and to uphold fundamental rights. Is of the view that the digital transition should empower all citizens, for which curricula need to be updated so as to include digital skills, and citizens, workers in particular, need to be equipped with new skills and to be afforded the opportunity to broaden their knowledge.
11. Consider that reconstruction in both regions needs to lead to a real transformation of our economies and societies in order to make them more sustainable, resilient and fair, including in the face of the challenges posed by climate change. Stress the importance for this reconstruction of public investment and intervention in sectors that the pandemic has shown to be strategic, such as the medicine production and supply sectors. Call for measures to redistribute wealth through fair tax systems and public policies that avoid the social consequences of cuts to public budgets in the short term and debt from social spending in the medium and long term.
12. Believe that measures to boost the green and digital transition are essential in reinvigorating economies and creating jobs, together with promoting circular-economy models and innovating new methods of teaching, so that our societies emerge stronger from the crisis. Stress the need to harness the post-pandemic economic recovery so as to boost the ecological transition and the decarbonisation of our economies.
13. Highlight, in this regard, the essential role that international and regional financial institutions, including the European Investment Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Latin American Development Bank (CAF) and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), are called upon to play in financing the investments needed for the post-pandemic socio-economic recovery and revival of the manufacturing sector. Recommend, therefore, an increase in capital in particular for the IDB and the CAF to bolster their solvency and resources. Urge the EIB to adopt social and environmental sustainability criteria comparable to those of the European Commission when granting loans and investing in projects, under the supervision of democratic institutions such as the European Parliament.
14. Stress their commitment to the stability of the economy, trade and investment in social services, and call on governments and multilateral organisations to take all measures necessary, including long-term fiscal stimulus, to restore confidence, relaunch and stimulate sustainable growth, and to protect and create quality jobs with

fair wages. Call for joint policies to address the political, economic and social challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, so as to favour a swift recovery; highlight that these challenges include facilitating international trade, avoiding an escalation of unilateral trade measures that jeopardise economic recovery, ensuring a free trade and investment environment – aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals – which is fair, transparent, predictable and stable, thereby ensuring legal certainty for investments. Note, in particular, that it is essential to ensure alignment of trade policy with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, as well as to avoid measures which restrict trade in essential goods, in particular medical products and food.

15. Consider that there is a need to promote sustainable industrial and technological policies (SDG 9), including measures that promote a low-carbon growth path, reallocate informal workers to decent jobs, promote the transition to renewable energy, build capacities in health and digital and green technologies, and reduce vulnerability to new crises. Stress that investment in research and development and cooperation with universities, the scientific community and the private sector are crucial for resilience and recovery.
16. Highlight the importance of preserving natural terrestrial and maritime ecosystems, by preserving biodiversity and more inclusive and sustainable agricultural and forestry systems, geared to local communities and products, and respecting the right of indigenous peoples to their traditional lands. Emphasise the importance of preserving and ensuring the public management of common goods, such as water, in order to ensure universal access to them.
17. Stress the urgent need to revive the EU-LAC Bi-regional Strategic Alliance, to enable it to become an efficient instrument for economic and social recovery, which has been worsened further by the pandemic. Call for an EU-LAC Ministerial Meeting and thematic meetings of Ministers and Senior Officials to be convened on topics such as health, environment, digital agenda, economy, demography, human rights, education, development cooperation, to name but a few (and, as soon as possible, a summit of Heads of State and Government), in order to establish the guidelines and programmes for bi-regional cooperation as soon as possible, so as to address the consequences of the pandemic. Welcome, in this regard, the offer of the German Presidency of the Council to hold an EU-LAC Ministerial Summit in December 2020 in Berlin, and call for further contacts to be made and more intensive work to be carried out in order to make it a reality.
18. Stress that the pandemic, although a threat to everyone, particularly affects our elderly, people with previous and serious conditions, the most economically vulnerable groups with less access to health and education services, informal workers, women, young people, children, refugees, isolated rural populations and indigenous populations, among others, thereby bringing pre-existing levels of inequality to the fore. Draw attention to the fact that the rise in inequality, exclusion and discrimination in the context of the pandemic negatively affect the protection of human rights and democratic progress. Emphasise that border control policies to combat the pandemic cannot run counter to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the right to asylum.

19. Find it essential, therefore, to put in place ambitious social inclusion policies that bolster health systems, the welfare state and the universal provision of social protection, in addition to provide public support to workers and families affected by the crisis. Call for continued efforts to ensure access to education for boys and girls in this context.
20. Recall that women are at the forefront of the response to COVID-19, as health professionals and unpaid carers, and that the digital divide, the underemployment rate and the degree of informal work of women in Latin America are considerably higher than those of men, reaching 80% in some countries, and that women are therefore bearing the consequences of the pandemic much more acutely due to structural inequalities. Call on the EU and LAC countries consequently to promote specific strategies to empower women and assist them financially, such as by providing them with access to credit, financial services, technology, digital empowerment and new markets, while maintaining existing funds and programmes and allocating additional resources to guarantee their rights and meet the needs of women, girls and LGBTI people.
21. Are alarmed that the COVID-19 crisis could lead to a food crisis in some countries, where 'hunger queues' have become a daily occurrence. Urge governments in cooperation with the relevant international bodies, first and foremost the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), to review and strengthen food security programmes. Call for such programmes to include mechanisms to provide all people living in poverty with the means to meet their basic and emergency needs, in order to ensure sufficient and nutritious food for all and to ensure the continuity of food supply chains. Stress that food security is an area of strategic importance for combating the aftermath of the epidemic. Call, similarly, on the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to strengthen programmes which ensure access to basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation. Call, furthermore, for the protection of small producers and short supply chains and for support of the negotiations for a UN Binding Treaty on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights.
22. Stress that legal measures taken to tackle the crisis must be necessary, proportionate and temporary and must always be consistent with human rights and fundamental freedoms. Draw attention to the fact that states of emergency cannot be used as a pretext for repressive actions or as a means of silencing citizens, in particular civil society, human rights defenders, journalists or political opposition, or to diminish democratic involvement, or to curtail fundamental rights and freedoms. Condemn, in this respect, recourse to retaliation, and stress that it is the responsibility of parliaments to exercise in full and when appropriate their role of scrutinising and monitoring government action.
23. Call for the future COVID-19 vaccine to be made accessible, universal and free of charge to everyone and for states and the relevant international organisations to be responsible for its distribution and administration, and stress, accordingly, the importance of establishing vaccination strategies. Stress the need, equally, to

continue to facilitate the provision of all forms of equipment needed to fight COVID-19 by diversifying some of our supply chains in critical areas.

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