



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



**Declaration by the Co-Presidents of  
the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat)  
of 13 December 2019, Panama City, Panama**

The Co-Presidents of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), the President of the Latin American Parliament, Jorge Pizarro, and the Member of the European Parliament, Javi López, pursuant to Rule 18 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure and on the occasion of the 12th Ordinary Plenary Session of the Assembly held on 12 to 13 December 2019 in Panama City (Panama) declare the following:

1. Democracy, peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot defend themselves alone and protecting, consolidating and building or developing them requires constant and dedicated work by the public authorities, political parties, civil society organisations and the people. The only way to strengthen our democracies is to accept the democratic rules laid down in the respective constitutional frameworks based on the values of democracy, the separation of powers and public freedoms, the independence of the judiciary and on respect for political pluralism and human rights.

Disinformation and fake news are being used to undermine institutions in countries the world over. These new circumstances call for global strategies and joint measures and action.

2. We express our firm belief that there is a need to promote solid institutional frameworks, to consolidate and boost democratic development on both continents and to achieve truly inclusive institutions that are based on respect for the constitutional order, the integrity and transparency of electoral processes, the rule of law and human rights.
3. We believe that, in light of increasing signs that climate change is accelerating, the international community must redouble efforts to combat it by making firm commitments. We therefore consider that COP25 in Madrid should mark a decisive turning point in this fight. We reiterate our firm support for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and we therefore deeply regret the recent withdrawal of the United States from the Agreement. Furthermore, we greatly appreciate the recent call by the European Parliament for the European Union to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest, and to set an emission reduction target of 55% compared to 1990 levels by 2030, and call on both regions to strengthen their strategies to combat climate change with the same level of ambition.

4. We also call for the swift and complete implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at international, national, regional and local level, to implement programmes designed by all levels of the public administration to ensure inclusive and sustainable development.
5. We note that inequality remains one of the major problems of our societies and the main challenge confronting our democracies, both in Europe and in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to this, democracies are weak, the separation of powers blurred and there is corruption, insecurity, a failure to respond to the problems faced by the public and a lack of future prospects, which has created distrust in the political class and the democratic system and amplified populist and nationalistic political rhetoric. We believe that we must continue to strive to close the inequality gap, address authoritarian tendencies and find solutions to the political situations that have led to waves of refugees both in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. This will, in turn, improve economic and social life in both regions.
6. We call on the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean to redouble efforts to reduce social inequalities and improve living standards, an issue which remains one of the priority areas for us where decisive action is needed to achieve tangible results. We believe it is necessary to strengthen long-term public policies to tackle inequality and promote social cohesion as well as access to essential public services, such as education, health and justice, of a high quality. There is a need to progress towards industrial economic development models based on innovation and the circular economy that can depend on progressive collection systems and programmes to combat tax fraud and money laundering. Our governments must continue to pursue these objectives by means of an agreement, while constantly upholding the overall principles of democracy, human dignity, human rights and ILO standards. We advocate the further development of EU programmes such as Eurosocial, Cosme and Erasmus.
7. Violence and insecurity are extremely sensitive issues that affect many areas of Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, especially the most vulnerable sectors of society. We undertake to promote cooperation in developing public security policies which scale back the alarming incidences of violence, elevate democratic principles and nurture respect for human rights and a culture of peace and cohabitation.
8. We reiterate our desire to strengthen bi-regional cooperation mechanisms at the highest level to boost our common agenda. To that end, we call on governments to resume the EU-CELAC summits as soon as possible. The ultimate goal of achieving a true Bi-regional Strategic Partnership is more relevant than ever, and we therefore welcome the Joint Communication entitled ‘The European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean: joining forces for a common future’ which proposes a strengthening of the political association of the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean.

9. We reiterate the need to step up our work on gender equality and to develop appropriate legislation and programmes combating gender violence. Greater participation of women in political, social and economic life as well as the elimination of violence against women are shared priority objectives of both regions. The EuroLat Assembly has influenced bi-regional policies in this area by contributing, inter alia, to the formulation of the gender chapter in the CELAC-EU Action Plan and to the inclusion of a gender chapter in the future EU-Chile Association Agreement.
10. We demand that the physical and moral integrity of minority and vulnerable social groups, such as LGTBQ+, indigenous and Afro-Latin communities, be respected in our countries and that they enjoy full and effective political, economic, social and cultural rights. We call on the EU and LAC countries to launch equality awareness-raising campaigns, to develop equal-opportunity action plans to effectively protect minority and vulnerable groups, to prosecute the perpetrators of any violation of the rights of these groups and to support their victims.
11. We stress the central role played by civil society in public life in ensuring the development of democracy, social justice, respect for human rights and environmental sustainability. We are of the view that civil society is key to promoting transparency, accountability and good governance, in particular in the fight against corruption, authoritarianism and violent extremism. We stress the need to ensure that the political opposition and social, political and environmental leaders can work freely and safely, and we condemn any act of bullying, harassment, threat or criminalisation, stigmatisation or defamation of political representatives and representatives of civil society organisations.
12. We express our firm commitment to strengthening a rules-based, just, open, transparent, multilateral trading system, based on WTO rules. We note with concern the growing tensions arising from protectionist measures and trade wars. We underline the need to work together to ensure our trade agreements meet the highest social, environmental and food-security standards. Decent working conditions must be guaranteed and strengthened, as must the rights of indigenous and Afro-Latin communities, while deforestation and desertification must be combated. The objectives of the Paris Agreement should be included in all our agreements and constitute their main guiding principle.
13. We welcome the process of negotiations in which our nations are engaged with a view to adopting new agreements, modernising existing agreements or extending them to other countries in our regions. These agreements are an important element of our strategic partnership which will strengthen our links. With that in mind:
  - ) We welcome the agreement in principle reached on 21 April 2018 between the EU and Mexico with a view to modernising the Global Agreement between the two parties and call for its swift ratification.
  - ) We also welcome the agreement in principle reached on 28 June 2019 between the EU and the Mercosur member states: Argentina, Brazil,

Paraguay and Uruguay, after more than 20 years of negotiations. We stress the overriding importance of the provisions on sustainable development set out in the agreement's chapter on trade and sustainability, and the need to ensure that they can be made applicable. This is an agreement that will apply to 780 million citizens and will strengthen the close political, economic and social ties binding the EU and the Mercosur member states. We invite all parties to the agreement to debate, consider and ratify it swiftly and to respect their commitments to the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

- ) We fully support the ongoing process of modernising the EU-Chile Association Agreement, the negotiations on which have entered a crucial phase, and call on the negotiators of both parties to reconcile their positions with a view to a final agreement.
- ) We call on the governments and parliaments of the Member States which have not yet done so to ratify without delay the EU-Central America Association Agreement concluded in 2012.
- ) We take note of the signing on 12 December 2016 of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) between the EU and Cuba, and its provisional entry into force on 1 November 2017, following ratification by 27 of the 28 EU Member States. The full and effective implementation of the ADPC should contribute towards establishing political dialogue, cooperation and economic and trade relations with the EU and its Member States, on the basis of respect, reciprocity and equality and in compliance with both the rules of international law and the principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

14. We express our deepest concern at the intensification in migration in both regions and the wider world, owing to multiple factors such as climate change, natural disasters, wars and political conflicts and, chiefly, by the social injustice afflicting vast swathes of society who suffer food insecurity, unemployment and violence, and must eke out a living in precarious subsistence economies away from the eyes of the state. The difficult situation affecting Venezuela, with 4.6 million emigrants according to UNHCR-IOM, and the several million more migrants in Haiti, Mexico and Central America, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the migratory flows from Africa to Europe are representative of the complexity of the problem. We consider that the governments and parliaments of the European Union and CELAC countries should address the challenges of migration through a political dialogue that remedies the situation and which takes a comprehensive and coordinated approach through a Strategic Alliance. We acknowledge that, given the current migration and refugee crisis in both regions, financial and budgetary support needs to be mobilised for the worst affected countries and vulnerable communities, as well as to ensure greater visibility and awareness of the political causes of the situation.

15. We express concern at the alarming rise in organised crime and the complex international networks behind it, as well as the enormous capacity it has to corrupt officials at all levels, bribe consciences and ensure it takes place with impunity. The various practices of organised crime, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling, illegal arms trafficking and others, are becoming ever more interwoven in a complex web that exceeds the capacity of individual states to react.
16. We welcome the bi-regional cooperation in response to the production of illegal drugs, drug trafficking and associated crime, most recently exemplified by the 21st High-Level Meeting of the EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs, held in Paramaribo in June this year. We welcome the work of COPOLAD II, which is the EU-funded programme to provide support to LAC countries in relation to the drugs problem, and hope that its potential is realised to the fullest extent.
17. We express our concern at the problem of missing children. We reiterate the need for a systematic international register and a DNA database of all cases of missing children, and the establishment of procedures to allow their immediate investigation. Furthermore, we believe that there is a need for a dedicated international, regional and national preventive alert system for cases of missing children. We strongly encourage the promotion of inter-institutional cooperation and the exchange of best practices between the two regions.
18. We express our concern at the increase in illegal mining, which is taking place away from the eyes of the relevant governments, causing grave social, environmental, economic and health problems, and systematically exterminating indigenous populations. River pollution, deforestation, the impact on indigenous communities and the attendant proliferation of criminal gangs are just some of the other effects of this criminal practice, as well as some mining activities that fall below environmental standards. We urge the EU and LAC countries to develop joint strategies to implement strict controls on artisanal mining and on the multinationals that benefit from these resources – with a view to restricting the use of environmentally toxic inputs such as mercury, cyanide and arsenic – and to run development programmes in communities which have no other option but to become involved in illegal activities.
19. We note with concern the degree to which criminal organisations have penetrated state institutions, perverting national economies by laundering money from illegal activities such as drug trafficking, thereby decisively jeopardising stability and development. These criminal activities not only affect individual countries but also compromise the stability of the region as a whole. These threats must be neutralised by means of concerted action led by the international community in support of the countries concerned.

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