

EU-CELAC Business Summit
eucelac-bizsummit2015.eu
Concept Note & Agenda

The European Union (EU) – Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC) Heads of State and Government Summit will take place in Brussels, Belgium, on Wednesday 10th and Thursday 11th June 2015.

On **Wednesday 10th June 2015**, European Commissioners Elżbieta Bieńkowska and Neven Mimica will host the **EU-CELAC Business Summit** under the theme *"Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean: Promoting inclusive and sustainable growth by enhancing the role of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises"*.

The outcome of the Business Summit will be submitted as a formal recommendation to the EU-CELAC Heads of State Summit on the way forward to increase EU investment and business cooperation in Latin American and Caribbean countries

The Business Summit aims at attracting more than 500 high-level participants of the business community, financial institutions and policy makers from across EU and CELAC Member States. The meeting will take place at the European Commission premises (Charlemagne building, rue de la Loi 170, Brussels).

1. Background

The European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have enjoyed privileged relations since the first bi-regional Summit held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1999, which established our strategic partnership. Latin American countries are natural partners to the European Union linked by strong historical, cultural and economic ties.

Witness of this privileged partnership is the EU-LAC cooperation relationship at bilateral and regional levels that is ongoing for several decades, to which the European Commission has largely contributed in different matters (from Small and Medium-sized Enterprises development to education, health, climate change, governance, amongst other), in order to tackle poverty and increase economic and social well-being. Programmes such as AL-Invest¹, or more recently, Latin America Investment Facility (LAIF)² have developed ties amongst the different partners from both LAC and EU countries, and enabled investment, in order to reduce poverty and increase sustainable growth. A political will has been shown by both parties to increase the engagement of the private sector in the achievement of these objectives.

Since 2010, with the launching of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), a regional mechanism for dialogue and cooperation has been established, encompassing for the first time all 33 LAC countries. The CELAC rotating Presidency in the second semester of 2014 was held by Costa Rica - with Ecuador taking over in the first semester of 2015.

The European Union is committed to develop an ambitious and comprehensive partnership with the CELAC region. Both the EU and CELAC countries have a genuine interest in increasing bilateral

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/latin-america/al-invest-regional-aid-programme_en

² http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/latin-america/al-invest-regional-aid-programme_en

trade, investment and market integration through mutually beneficial relations.

Private sector has a key role in enhancing sustainable development and sustainable growth and creating quality jobs at a global level (also noted in the Commission Communications on private sector and development³ of May 2014 and on a global partnership for poverty eradication and sustainable development after 2015, of February 2015), and acknowledged by the EU-CELAC Seminars on Corporate Social Responsibility.

A common challenge for both CELAC and Europe remains to consolidate sustainable and inclusive economic growth, create jobs, improve the business climate and the internationalisation of companies, in particular SMEs.

Building on the recommendations of the 2013 EU-CELAC Santiago Business Summit, the 2015 EU-CELAC Business Summit is an opportunity to build momentum and to enable Europe's entrepreneurs and industry representatives and their Latin American and Caribbean counterparts to work together towards further investing in the industrialisation of their economies, promoting job creation, in particular for the youth, skills development, tertiary and technical education and spurring innovation and economic growth. The 2015 EU-CELAC Business Summit is also a unique opportunity to bring together European and Latin American and Caribbean political and business leaders, companies, investors and financial institutions interested in deepening cooperation on business, investment and innovation.

2. Business Summit Format

2.1. Opening Session

The opening session will feature welcome speeches by **Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission** and by **Mr. Rafael Correa, President of Ecuador** (Ecuador holding the rotating Presidency of CELAC in 2015). The high profile of speakers at this opening session will be a clear signal to participants of the importance given by both the EU and CELAC to the Business Summit and their willingness to engage the private sector in mutually beneficial enhanced cooperation. The Business Summit may indeed contribute to making concrete proposals including innovative solutions to enhance such cooperation. The speakers are expected to convey the vision that the EU and CELAC are proactively seeking to engage the private sector, and in particular SMEs, as a key element to pursue sustainable and inclusive development objectives in Latin America.

Then, **Ms. Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Member of the European Commission responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs**, and **Mr. Neven Mimica, Member of the European Commission responsible for International Cooperation and Development** will set the scene for the discussions and deliberations.

2.2. Morning Plenary Session

Ms. Laimdota Straujuma, Prime Minister of Latvia will open the Plenary session.

The plenary session will allow influential European and Latin American and Caribbean political and business leaders to debate general issues of importance to develop EU-CELAC business relationships, focusing on specific issues of interest to the business community and would-be investors. Key-note speakers will attract the interest of the business community and the press, both in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean: **Ms. Emma Marcegaglia, President of BusinessEurope; Mr. Ingo**

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A52014DC0263&qid=1400681732387&from=EN>

Plöger, President of the Business Council of Latin America; Mr. Roman Escolano, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB); Ms. Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC/CEPAL); Mr. Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB).

The topics considered for the plenary session are the following:

- Business, Trade and Investment Policies and Opportunities. Promising Sectors for Innovation and Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Access to Finance. Towards a New Partnership between Public and Private Finance Providers.
- Ongoing and forthcoming economic cooperation projects - incorporating European SMEs in their development.

Mr. Temistocles Montas, Minister of Economy, Planification and Development of the Dominican Republic (next CELAC Pro-Tempore Chair) and Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, President of the EU-LAC Foundation will conclude the morning plenary session.

2.3. Afternoon Workshops

In order to focus the Business Summit and its recommendations, thematic parallel workshops will be set up according to the interest of the business community. Our aim is to have a private sector representative or business group to lead and steer the debate in each workshop and present recommendations. Each workshop will bring together about 100 participants who will be encouraged to intervene. Observers from the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) will be allowed to take part.

The workshops should also take into account the longstanding EU-LAC cooperation in the area, existing networks and/or structures (i.e. AL-Invest 5.0, The European and Latin America Business Services and Innovation Network (ELAN) programme, Latin American Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) helpdesk, Enterprise Europe Network in Latin America, Caribbean Export Development Agency, Foreign Partnership Instrument (FPI) projects, other relevant projects) and contribute to identify how and where to further increase SMEs cooperation between the two regions.

Regarding access to finance and financial instruments, the experience of the execution of the mechanism enabled by LAIF - Latin America Investment Facility, and the Caribbean Investment Facility (CIF) could be shared. And similarly experiences on clusters, where several projects were or are executed with the involvement of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) or the Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF).

The topics suggested for the workshops are the following:

- SMEs: how to better integrate them in trade and investment opportunities?
- Sustainable business cooperation.
- Access to finance and financial instruments.
- Ongoing and forthcoming cooperation projects - incorporating European SMEs in their development.

2.4. Conclusions

Mr. Daniel Calleja, Director General of Directorate-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs; Mr. Michl Ebner, Vice-President of EUROCHAMBRES and Mr. Fernando Frutuoso de Melo, Director General of the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development will draw the conclusions of this event together with CELAC representatives and business leaders.

3. Structure of the debates

3.1. Success stories

Concrete, practical business cooperation, trade and investment success stories will be showcased (including those supported by the regional cooperation in favour of Latin America), notably illustrating the impact of innovative approaches to private sector support in the LAC region. Initiatives to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth will be underlined.

3.2. Business-to-Business match-making event

An EU-CELAC event will take place in the margins of the World Expo 2015 in Milan on Friday 12th June 2015 under the theme "Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life". The specific industrial sectors related to the Expo theme which are targeted for this match-making event are agro-food manufacturing, packaging, bio economy, creative industry, space application to agriculture and environmental management.

4. Advocacy

The Business Summit should be viewed as the ideal place for businesses and their representatives to raise awareness on issues directly related to foster greater EU investment in Latin America and enhanced trade relations with the EU, investment and business cooperation in CELAC countries. It should highlight the opportunities to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth for human development in both regions through closer and deeper business relations.

The Business Summit should build on the recommendations of the 2013 EU-CELAC Santiago Business Summit, take stock of achievements and areas where efforts should still be made, define some core elements of the bi-regional economic relationship and build upon these.

It should also provide impetus towards the political deciders meeting at the Political Summit for improvements in policies and actions by the European Union and LAC Governments and business deciders.

The submission of Business Summit conclusions to the Heads of State and Government is of paramount importance. These conclusions will be complemented by technical reports which will be prepared, published and disseminated after the Business Summit takes place.

5. Contacts

For information on the Business Summit, contact:

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