European Union (EU) and Latin America

The European Union and Latin America have enjoyed a Strategic Partnership since the first bi-regional Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1999. They are natural allies linked by strong historical, cultural and economic ties. They co-operate closely at international level and maintain an intensive political dialogue at all levels - regional, sub regional (Central America, Andean Community and Mercosur) and also more and more at bilateral level.

EU policy priorities towards Latin America are defined in the recently adopted Communication "EU-Latin America: Global players in Partnership" 2009 that updates the Communication on a "Stronger Partnership between the European Union and Latin America" 2005 This represents, as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stated: "another visible and tangible step towards the strengthening of our already well established and flourishing relationship". Issues such as macro economic and financial matters; environment, climate change and energy; science, research and technology; migration; and, finally, employment and social affairs figure prominently in bi-regional dialogues.

The regional strategy paper 2007-2013 defines the specific areas for regional development cooperation programmes. For the 2007-2013 period, EU assistance amounts to around € 3 billion, while for the same period the European Investment Bank is authorized to lend up to €2.8 billion.

The EU is the leading investor in the region and the second trading partner of Latin America.

A summit of EU, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) leaders takes place bi-annually, the last one was held in Lima, Peru in May 2008. The next one takes place in Madrid, Spain in 2010.

On alternate years to the EU-LAC Summits, there are meetings at Ministerial level between the EU and the Rio Group. The last EU-Rio Group ministerial meeting took place in Prague in 2009.

Quelle: Das Portal der Europäischen Union