

Promises, facts and challenges: Analysis of EU- LAC summits (1999 - 2015)

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the nine summits that have taken place to date between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean. It is an historical analysis from the first EU-LAC Summit in 1999 to the most recent summit in 2015. It is an analysis of the issues, actions, initiatives and major achievements these summits have accomplished, as well as the challenges the relations between Latin America and the European Union still face. The analysis is based on the direct study of the official statements and documents of each summit.

There is no doubt that Latin America needs the European Union and vice versa. The European Union is Latin America's second largest trading partner, and may even become the largest. The European Union is the main source of foreign direct investment and the largest donor of development aid to the region. For the European Union, Latin America represents a strategically important region with a huge potential market of more than 626 million inhabitants, dynamic growth, positive population growth and a growing middle class. The integration of these two regions could generate more extensive (broader) markets for trade, increase investment opportunities and provide a firmer basis for further dialogue and the consolidation of new instruments adapted to the new international context and the evolution of the global economy.

Keywords: EU- LAC summits, Latin America and Caribbean, European Union, external relations, regional integration, Euro-Latin American relations.

Introduction

The oldest dialogue between the EU, Latin American and Caribbean sub-regional levels, were the Inter-Parliamentary Conferences which were initiated in 1974 between the

European Parliament and the Latin American Parliament, which in 2006 became the EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly. Despite the existence of this relationship between the three regions, it was not until the 1990's that mutual interests began to be emphasized. This change in emphasis was instigated due to major changes on the international scene. On the European side, Spain and Portugal had become Member States of the European Community (1986) and were pressing for greater attention to be focused on Latin America.

The initiative for holding a summit between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union emerged in Chile in 1996, during the Sixth Ibero-American Summit, in which the Spanish Prime Minister, José María Aznar, proposed the creation of a permanent dialogue between Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU. This idea was supported by the European Parliament (Bertens Report, 1997), by the foreign ministers of the EU (1997) and the Rio Group in its seventh ministerial meeting with the EU (1997).

Finally, in June 1999, the first summit between the European Union (EU) and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This summit laid the groundwork for a strategic partnership. Since then, these summits have been held every two years in different countries throughout the three regions.

The EU is the second largest trading partner of LAC and has the potential to become the largest. The EU is a major foreign investor in LAC and a leading donor of development aid to the region. Latin America represents a strategically important region with a huge potential market of more than 626 million inhabitants, dynamic growth, positive population growth and a growing middle class; a region of opportunities for the EU. Further integration between these two regions could generate more extensive markets for trade, increased investment opportunities and a firmer basis for further dialogue and the consolidation of new instruments adapted to the new international context and the evolution of the global economy. The importance of these summits is increasing within the context of the current geopolitical context. They are becoming the drivers of development and the promoters of political, economic and social relations between the two regions.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the nine summits between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean from 1999 until 2015. It analyses the issues, actions and initiatives as well as identifies the major achievements these summits have accomplished and the challenges they still face.

Data was obtained directly from European Union official data. In addition to agreements and strategic partnership documents, official action plans for each summit are available on the EU website. The methodology involved the application of an historical analysis of the relevant documents, as well as the description, analysis, synthesis and comparison of others.

EU- LAC summits

The oldest dialogue between the EU, Latin American and the Caribbean sub regional levels, were the Inter-Parliamentary Conferences which were initiated in 1974 between the European Parliament and the Latin American Parliament, and which in 2006 became the EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly.

1999: Summit in Rio de Janeiro

The Summit took place on 28th - 29th June, 1999 in Rio de Janeiro and was designed to be the starting point for regular bi-regional meetings between the LAC and the EU. With the assistance of 48 heads of state and government, and under the motto "Building a Strategic Partnership", the Rio Summit concluded with a Joint Declaration and Plan of Action ("Priorities for Action"). The content of the declaration was structured around three broad areas: political dialogue; economic and trade relations; and cooperation. Paragraph 7 of the declaration effectively summarizes the overall objective of the newly opened bi-regional partnership, which aimed to provide "the same attention to the three following strategic dimensions: a fruitful political dialogue and, respectful of the rules of international law, solid economic and financial relations based on trade liberalization with a comprehensive and balanced character including the free flow of capital, and more dynamic and creative cooperation in the fields of education, science, technology, culture, both human and social".

The Rio Declaration consisted of 69 items divided into an introduction and three blocks (political, economic, and educational-cultural). The action plan consisted of 55 items divided into the same blocks as the declaration and provides more practical guidance and concrete plans than the latter. Both documents resulting from the Rio Summit focus on the following topics: strategic partnership; strengthening of democracy; strengthening political dialogue; sustainable economic development; international security; cooperation in science, technology, education and culture.

The Rio Summit had, among other things, the positive effect of giving global visibility to the relations between these two regions. It fanned global interest in the Latin American continent and resulted in the initiation of bilateral and multilateral negotiations between the EU, Mexico, Chile and Mercosur. However, despite the historic character of the summit, the final documents were not declarative enough. Deadlines were left out with regards to the achievement of its objectives, including those for the bilateral trade negotiations mentioned above.

2002: Madrid Summit

The Madrid Summit took place three years after the Rio Summit due to delays and defaults on cooperation commitments that had been agreed upon, in particular the "11 Tuusula priorities." The governments of both regions contributed to the delay e.g. the European Commission presented its proposals a year and a half late.

The Second EU-LAC Summit took place in a highly contentious international context. New York and Washington had become the centre of global attention due to the terrorist attacks of 11th September, 2001. There were therefore major security concerns. In addition, the economic crisis in Argentina started in the same year, which altered the functioning of Mercosur.

Against this backdrop, the Madrid Summit was focused on reviewing the partnership started in Rio de Janeiro and putting forward new proposals to give political relations between these two regions new impetus. Not surprisingly, the theme of the meeting was "EU-Latin America and the Caribbean: Advancing the Strategic Partnership for the XXI Century." There were forty-eight heads of state and government from Latin America, the

Caribbean and the European Union present in Madrid, on the 16th – 18th May, 2002. The timing of the summit happened to coincide with the Spanish presidency of the EU. During the summit there were five separate meetings with representatives present from the EU, Mexico, Central America, Mercosur, the Andean Community and Chile. Some of the meetings highlighted the need to work asymmetrically with different countries or sub-regions within the framework of regional relations. This approach was to become the template for all future EU-LAC relations.

The main topics of discussion were: strengthening the multilateral system; democratic institutions and the rule of law; human rights and equality; fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; drug trafficking; corruption and organized crime; economic cooperation; sustainable development; peaceful settlement of disputes between states; culture, education and the information society.

The most important agreements emanating from the summit were the adherence to all international conventions relating to terrorism (it is important to note the influence of 9-11 on the agenda of the summit), the announcement of the conclusion of negotiations on the Association Agreement between the European Union and Chile, the pledge to continue negotiations on an agreement between Mercosur and the European Union, the pledge to start negotiations on association agreements between the EU and Central America and the EU and the Andean Community, and impetus for the approbation of the action plan for higher education between the EU and LAC.

2004: Guadalajara Summit

The third summit came at a crucial time in both regions. On the one hand, the European Union was facing one of its biggest challenges with regards to the integration process i.e. enlargement to a record 25 Member States. The EU, which was seeking to reinforce its position as a political and economic power on a global scale, was also immersed in the development of the legal framework for the European Constitution. At the same time, a significant number of Latin American and Caribbean countries were facing crises in the consolidation of their political and economic progress, which was weakening their roles as international players.

In this context, the Guadalajara Summit set its priorities on seeking progress on the issues of social cohesion and regional integration with the main focus being on the negotiations with Central America, the Andean Community and Mercosur. The summit was held on 28th – 29th May, 2004 and was attended by fifty-eight heads of state and government from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean. This summit had the motto "A New Agenda for Social Cohesion." The main outcome document of the summit was the Guadalajara Declaration. The declaration consisted of 104 points divided into three sections: multilateralism; social cohesion; and regional relationships. The main topics discussed at the summit and expressed in the declaration were: multilateralism; international security and terrorism; human rights; drugs and organized crime; sustainable development; fight against corruption; social cohesion; economy and trade; and regional integration.

In addition to the declaration, the third summit marked progress in trade negotiations and partnership agreements between the two regions. CARIFORUM began negotiations for an economic partnership agreement, in addition to meetings between the EU, Mexico

and Chile. Satisfaction was also shown with the progress made in negotiations on an interregional association agreement between the EU and Mercosur.

2006: Vienna Summit

The meeting of the heads of state and government was held in Vienna, Austria on 11th – 12th May, 2006. It was the first such summit to be held outside Latin America or a Spanish speaking nation. The theme of the summit was “Strengthening the Bi-regional Strategic Association”, the agenda being strongly influenced by issues both at home, abroad and globally for both regions. Latin America faced growing internal polarization, divided into two distinct ideologically blocks, whereby foreign policy either oriented towards a country’s pragmatic interests (Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Central America, Uruguay, Chile and Brazil) or towards ideology (Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba). Venezuela decided to withdraw from the Andean Community of Nations, further weakening the possibility of promoting a partnership agreement with the EU. On the other side of the ocean, the European Union arrived at the summit with four major internal problems: the uncertain future of the draft constitution which had failed referendums in France and the Netherlands; the accession negotiations with Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Turkey; the political leadership crisis during the integration process and in countries like the UK, France and Italy; and energy supply problems which were derived from negotiations with Russia and issues this raised in countries such as Poland.

The Vienna Declaration consisted of 59 points which tackled thirteen specific issues of dialogue between the two regions: strengthening the bi-regional partnership strategy; democracy and human rights; strengthening of multilateralism; terrorism, drugs and organized crime; environmental protection; energy; partnership agreements, regional integration and trade (including the successful implementation of the association agreements between the EU, Mexico and Chile); growth and jobs; fight against poverty, inequality and social exclusion; development cooperation; migration; knowledge sharing; and human development.

The Vienna Summit brought major developments in the bi-regional strategy. This included: the official launch of negotiations for an EU- Central America Association Agreement; the creation of a Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly; the application of the extraterritorial provisions of the Helms-Burton Act as rejection of unilateral coercive measures; and the continuation of negotiations between the EU and the Forum of Caribbean States (CARIFORUM). In addition to what was embodied in the declaration, it is noteworthy that the Vienna Summit was also able to incorporate new players into the official dialogue with the celebration of the first EU-LAC Business Summit.

The summit emphasized the importance of the bi-regional strategy for negotiating association agreements including free trade areas (negotiations between the EU and Central America began accordingly), and of the progress made in the negotiations between the EU and Mercosur, and the EU and CARIFORUM.

2008: The Lima Summit

Between the 2006 Vienna Summit and the 2008 Lima Summit, there was some progress, especially in relation to trade negotiations. Negotiations began on Association

Agreements between the EU and the Andean Community (in the Andean Presidential Summit in Tarija in June 2007) and between the EU and Central America (at a high level meeting in Brussels between the European Commission and Central America a few days after the previous), and continued on the balanced and ambitious Association Agreement between Mercosur and the European Union. Held an Association Agreement between the EU and 15 CARIFORUM States, and is institutionalized Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EUROLAT).

The goals of the Lima Summit, according to the communications of the European Union, were to strengthen the links between the two regions through political dialogue at the highest level and to strengthen cooperation on the key issues established at the Vienna Summit: poverty, inequality and exclusion; sustainable development; environmental protection; climate change and energy.

Under the slogan "Together Responding to the Priorities of Our People," sixty heads of state and government from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean gathered in Lima, Peru from 15th – 16th May, 2008. The final document of the summit includes the Lima Declaration and the so-called "Lima Agenda". In the first part (of the declaration), the leaders showed their willingness to "give renewed impetus to the process of building the strategic partnership" and reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and values, through the progress of the negotiations on the different association agreements, which focus on the promotion of the welfare of the region's citizen, the deepening of regional integration, the successful conclusion of the Doha Round of the WTO, international security and the eradication of hunger and poverty.

The leaders also showed their satisfaction with the implementation of the association agreements with Mexico, Chile, and the EU, hailed the successful conclusion of negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and CARIFORUM, and welcomed the start and relaxation of negotiations between the EU and Central America and the Andean Community for bi-regional association agreements, while claiming to have made significant progress in the regional integration of these sub-regions. They also emphasized the importance of an ambitious and balanced association agreement between Mercosur and the European Union, and they committed themselves to bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion as soon as conditions permitted.

For its part, the Lima Agenda focuses on the following topics: poverty and hunger; inequality; trade and economy; employment; social inclusion; migration; sustainable development; environment and climate change; and energy.

In addition to the aforementioned progress in negotiations on association agreements with different countries, there was also the noteworthy launch of the EUroCLIMA programme for cooperation on climate change mitigation and the decision to create a EU-LAC Foundation as a bi-regional institution capable of serving as a link between the two regions and providing more stability to their relations.

2010: Madrid Summit

The sixth summit, which took place in Spain in May 2010, focused on new issues on the international agenda and saw the completion of bilateral negotiations with Peru, Colombia and Central America. It also revived negotiations with Mercosur and saw the adoption of the Agenda for Development and Innovation (ADI) with Chile. Among the

main contributions of the Madrid Summit was the adoption of the Action Plan 2010-2012, which included specific initiatives and results-oriented capacity development in the following areas: science; research; innovation and technology; sustainable development; environment; regional integration and interconnectivity to promote integration and social cohesion, including: migration; education and employment.

2013: Santiago Summit

On 3rd December, 2011, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was launched. From this point onwards CELAC would represent the entire region in its dialogue with the EU regarding the issues discussed at EU- LAC summits. For this reason the summits were renamed EU- CELAC summits.

The Santiago Summit (the seventh EU-LAC summit; or first EU-CELAC summit), was held in Santiago, Chile, on the 26th - 27th January, 2013. According to official information from the EU, the meeting addressed a partnership for sustainable development through the promotion of investment in social and environmental quality. During the summit, the leaders adopted a political declaration and an action plan, thereby expanding the bi-regional cooperation previously adopted at the Madrid Summit of 2010.

At the summit, the Pacific Alliance reached an agreement that would fuel powerful internal trade among its members. The Pacific Alliance aims to form an area of deep integration within the framework of the Latin American Pacific Rim, to encourage regional integration and increase growth, development and competitiveness. The project aims to be a Latin American integration system to counterbalance the Mercosur bloc which is currently the largest economic bloc, most populous, economically powerful and best integrated in the region. The Pacific Alliance leads in exports and foreign trade in Latin America. It consists of four countries: Chile, Colombia, Peru and Mexico.

The Santiago Declaration provides, among others things, a commitment to adopt policies that promote trade and investment between CELAC and the EU, in the belief that it will help ensure sustainable development and can promote economic growth and employment generation, particularly among young people, in both regions.

2015: Brussels Summit

The second EU-CELAC Summit was held in Brussels on the 10th – 11th June, 2015. The discussions at this conference focused on bi-regional and global issues. It was an opportunity to highlight the importance of EU-CELAC cooperation and revitalize the relationship in a complex and rapidly changing world. The summit also agreed to intensify cooperation on three major global issues: climatic change; development agenda after 2015; and the fight against drugs.

The summit saw the continuation of work on the agreement between the EU and Mercosur, and the expansion of the EU-CELAC action plan, including chapters on higher education and public safety. The completed EU-CELAC Action Plan 2015-2017 was later adopted in full. Finally, there was an announcement of a EUR 25 million contribution from the EU to improve transatlantic broadband connectivity between Latin America and the EU through a new direct fibre optic cable.

Analysis

There are many authors who have analysed each of the summits, but few have done a comparative and historical analysis. Among those that have are Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez and Traiana Aybar (2013)¹, who did a comparative analysis of EU-LAC summits from 1999 to 2010. The authors note, that as early as 2010, probably as a result of the international economic crisis, Latin America was interested in having the European Union as a strategic partner. However, this premise later changed and it is now the interests of the European states that continues to maintain and strengthen the relationship with Latin America.

The authors highlight the ability or inability of countries, particularly developing countries, to implement programs and projects that arise as a result of subsequent summits and ministerial meetings. They suggest that this is the biggest problem the region faces and that despite the progress made, integration has become a challenge that threatens the welfare of the consecration of this process.

According to Celestino del Arenal (2010)², the main weakness lies in the omission of an overall strategy, which has led to progress in some areas and stagnation in others. According to Jaime Ensignia (2008)³, who analysed the EU-LAC summit in 2008, the importance of globalization and the growing interdependence among nations is immersed in phases of profound transformations, such as the European Union and the processes of integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to Jose Angel Sotillo (2009)⁴, a set of circumstances exists that prepares us for the conversion process of Euro-Latin American relations, gradually built on a series of actions that need to be articulated in a stronger way. The author understands these relationships not only as an option but as a necessity for both regions, whereby frictional elements complement each other and therefore become active partners in the definition of a new international architecture.

Legler (2013)⁵ uses four approaches (neoliberal institutionalism; power dimensions (realism); constructivism; and the political economy of regionalism) to explain the current situation of the summits. He speaks about the important role they have as a forum for engagement and dialogue. Maria Garcia (2012)⁶ talks about the imperial qualities and aspirations which can be observed in the EU's penchant for inter-regionalism whilst the transformative power of the EU remains limited.

¹ RODRIGUEZ, S., AYBAR T., 2013. Análisis de las Cumbres Unión Europea – América Latina y Caribe. Santo Domingo. Editorial Funglode, Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo, pp. 51-61.

² DEL ARENAL, C., 2010. "Balance de la asociación estratégica entre la Unión Europea (ue) y los países de América Latina y el Caribe (alc)", Fundación Carolina. Foro Eurolatinoamericano de Centros de Análisis. Madrid 2010.

³ ENSIGNIA L., J., 2008. Las Relaciones entre la Unión Europea, América Latina y el Caribe. Impactos de las cumbres en la perspectiva de Lima 2008. Page 2.

⁴ SOTILLO LORENZO, J.A., 2009. Las Cumbres Unión Europea - América Latina Y Caribe: Encuentros Y Desencuentros Eurolatinoamericanos] (2009) Revista de Derecho Comunitario Europeo, 13 (33), pp. 541-566.

⁵ LEGLER, T., 2013 The Rise and Decline of the Summit of the Americas. Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research, Volume 19, Issue 2, 2013, Pages 179-193

⁶ GARCIA, M., 2012. The European Union and Latin America: 'Transformative power Europe' versus the realities of economic interests. Cambridge Review of International Affairs – 2012, pp. 1-21.

For Sanahuja (2013)⁷, the support for integration and regionalism is one of the hallmarks of EU-LAC political dialogue and cooperation. For him, the biggest barrier in this association is the lack of internal cohesion among Latin American regional groups and the problems of coherence to EU policies that have subsequently limited their impact and effectiveness.

According to Roj (2013)⁸, who analysed the Santiago Summit, the integration of these regions runs contrary to the agreed dialogue due to the financial crisis in Europe, the multiple paths followed in this integration process, as well as the slow evolution of Latin American sub-regional integration.

In order to summarize and analyse the summits for ourselves, an historical, objective overview was required.

The first EU-LAC Summit was held 16 years ago in Rio de Janeiro in 1999. It is a strategic alliance between the 27 member states of the European Union and the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. At this summit, they established the three pillars that defined the structure and purpose of all bi-regional summits and agreements between the European Union and Latin American countries, namely: political dialogue; trade and financial relations; and cooperation.

The bi-regional summit process started in Rio de Janeiro in 1999 was ratified in Madrid in 2002 when the EU began negotiations with Chile and Mexico. In 2004 the Guadalajara Summit took place at which the main topics related to social cohesion and integration. In 2006, at the Vienna Summit, negotiations with Central America were officially launched. The fifth EU-LAC Summit in Lima in 2008 saw the conclusion of a free trade agreement with Peru and Colombia. In 2010, the Madrid Summit sought to improve cooperation with Chile in terms of technology. The Agency for Development and Innovation (ADI) was established, with the aim of promoting technological cooperation between neighbouring countries such as Peru and Argentina. The Madrid Summit implemented an action plan based on the axes of science and technology, education, climate change and the environment, regional integration, migration and drug trafficking. This action plan articulates the relationship between the pillars of the political dialogue, trade and financial relations, and cooperation between the European Union and Latin America. As a result of this work CELAC was created.

The first EU-CELAC Summit (seventh EU-LAC Summit) was held in Santiago, Chile, in January 2013. The summit was dedicated to further developing cooperation on trade and the promotion of investment, as well as social and environmental quality. At the Santiago Summit, leaders adopted a joint political declaration and action plan that extended to bi-regional cooperation.

The most recent EU-CELAC Summit took place in Brussels in June 2015. The discussions at the summit focused on bi-regional and global issues. It was an opportunity to highlight the importance of EU-CELAC cooperation and revitalize that relationship in a complex and rapidly changing world.

7 SANAHUJA, J. A. 2013. Towards a new framework of relations between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. *Investigación y desarrollo*. Vol 21. No.1. June 1013. ISSN: 2011-7574, pp. 155-180.

8 ROY, J., 2013. La integración regional en Europa y América Latina [Regional integration in Europe and Latin America]. In J. Roy (Ed.), *Después de Santiago [After Santiago]* (pp. 9–22). Miami, FL: University of Miami.

To date, the most important achievements in the relationship between Latin America and the European Union are the following:

- EU - Central America Association Agreement and the ratification thereof;
- Support for the Regional Security Strategy of Central America and its implementation;
- Free Trade Agreement between the EU, Colombia and Peru;
- Strategic Association: EU- Mexico;
- Creation by the EU of the Latin America Investment Facility (LAIF);
- Relaunch of negotiations between the EU and MERCOSUR;
- Conclusion of negotiations and adoption of the Joint EU - Caribbean Partnership Strategy and the establishment of the Caribbean Investment Facility to support investments in the Caribbean;
- Joint EU - CARIFORUM Partnership Strategy for Climate Change;
- Ratification of the EU - Andean Community Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement;
- Establishment of EUROLAC as a tool to strengthen the foundation of the strategic partnership;
- Establishment of new investment mechanisms through the Latin America Investment Facility (LAIF);
- Pacific Alliance;
- Establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee Programme for the United Nations Environment Programme;
- Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation, with regards to regional research, development and innovation;
- Establishment of the EU- LAC Foundation;
- Expansion of the EU-CELAC Action Plan (inclusion of chapters on higher education and public safety);
- Discussions on lines of action proposed in the EU strategy on citizen security in Central America and the Caribbean;
- Update of existing EU agreements with Mexico and Chile;
- Continued efforts to finalize an agreement between the EU and Mercosur that is balanced, comprehensive and ambitious.

Conclusions

A lot of work remains to strengthen bi-regional cooperation and improve the coherence and effectiveness of development cooperation policies. There are some problems which persist in hindering a real 'strategic partnership.' It is no coincidence that after the Madrid Summit the only Latin American countries that have not signed EU association agreements, or the like, are Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia. Ecuador is currently in negotiations.

In order for the summits to achieve better results, the EU made a tremendous shift in its negotiating policy with Latin America. They opted for a bilateral approach, leaving negotiation requirements to sub-regional integration bodies. There were many dissenting voices when this step was taken, with many warning that it would complicate Latin American integration. However, it should be taken into account that:

- the bilateral commitment demonstrates great respect for those Latin American countries who wished to negotiate with Europe and could not;
- the measure does not exclude sub-solutions, as and when they are possible, as seen in the cases of CARIFORUM and Central America,
- the only countries responsible for the success or failure of regional integration in Latin America are the countries themselves.

It is also important to note that integration in Latin America has many barriers, including the slow evolution of their sub-systems and many institutional issues. The creation of CELAC, not only establishes a formal change but also the opportunity for a more balanced regional dialogue owing to the fact that the two regions are now represented at the institutional level.

While this process of integration has been quite advanced, true integration is being postponed by the addition of new chapters. As each summit seeks to build on the last, more topics, like climate change, drug safety, higher education, public safety are added to each successive summit. While these are important topics worthy of discussion, when we consider the lack of integration between Latin American countries and their individual institutional problems, perhaps it would be better to focus on strengthening their foundations first in order to stimulate true integration across the regions.

At present, we are facing a time when Latin America and the Caribbean need the European Union and vice versa. Europe needs to recover economically from the recession whilst Latin America and the Caribbean need technology and need to industrialize.

The summits provide an opportunity to deepen the political dialogue on initiatives between both regions and strengthen relationships. These summits are the main forum for dialogue and cooperation between the European, Latin American and Caribbean countries and will remain so in the future. They have demonstrated that they can produce positive results, but that a lot of work still lies ahead.

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