BEYOND SANTA MARTA: BI-REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR TANGIBLE ACTION

Concept Note & Agenda

15 YEARS | AÑOS EU-LAC FOUNDATION | FUNDACIÓN

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Concept Note

Context

The relationship between the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) represents today, over twenty-five years after the creation of the bi-regional strategic partnership, one of the world's largest and most diverse alliances. Together, these regions comprise over one billion people –around 14% of the global population–, account for 1/5 of the global economy and 1/3 of UN membership, and around 14% of the global population. Beyond these indicators, both regions rely on and share fundamental values —such as respect for democracy, multilateralism, and human rights— as well as strategic interests in sustainable development and energy transition, security, the green and digital transition, social cohesion, and the building of a fairer and more inclusive global economy. In an international context marked by geopolitical uncertainty, environmental challenges, security hazards and economic tensions, bi-regional dialogue takes on renewed importance as a tool for stability and cooperation.

This strategic partnership dates back to the first EU-LAC Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1999 and has been consolidated through three CELAC–EU summits held in 2013, 2015, and 2023, as well as through numerous coordination mechanisms and bi-regional and sub-regional political and sectoral dialogues. The **IV CELAC–EU Summit** in Santa Marta, represented a key moment to revitalise this strategic partnership. The meeting provided an opportunity to update the common agenda, reaffirm political commitments, and open new avenues of joint work in priority sectors. Key topics include cooperation in innovation and digitalisation, energy security, climate action, the promotion of trade and investment, and the central role of human rights and democratic governance. The declaration adopted at Santa Marta reflects not only the breadth of consensus achieved but also the expectations regarding its effective implementation in the years ahead.

As with any summit of this scale, the main challenge lies not only in the commitments expressed but in ensuring their continuity and translation into concrete action. In this context, the ***EU-LAC International Foundation*** organises this event as a platform for initial reflection on the Santa Marta Declaration and hosts additionally a panel discussion presented by the Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office. Given that only around 30 days will have passed since the summit, the focus will be on analysing early outcomes, identifying potential gaps, anticipating challenges in implementing the agreements, and exploring opportunities for concrete cooperation and governance mechanisms to ensure effective follow-up, involving government actors, the private sector, academia, and civil society in a coordinated manner.

Objectives

To analyse the commitments and outcomes of the Santa Marta Summit through a detailed breakdown of the declaration, identifying areas of consensus as well as points of disagreement.
To identify key opportunities and challenges for strengthening bi-regional cooperation steered towards tangible action between the European Union and CELAC, in response to the evolving global context and shared strategic priorities.
To outline forward-looking recommendations and priority actions that could guide the bi-regional agenda in the inter-summit period, fostering a more effective and results-oriented partnership.

Format

The event will take place in Berlin in December 2025, alongside the meeting of the EU-LAC Foundation's Board of Governors. Lasting half a day and held in person, the event will feature two thematic sessions focused on key topics discussed and highlighted in the summit and its final declaration. Each session will include moderated discussions and Q&A segments to foster interactive dialogue and generate actionable insights for the EU-CELAC partnership.

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8:45 - 9:00 Registration

9:00 - 9:30 Opening Segment

- **Pablo Sader**, Ambassador of Uruguay to the Kingdom of Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, & to the European Union
- **Pelayo Castro**, Acting Managing Director of the Americas at the European External Action Service
- **Alberto Brunori**, Executive Director of the EU-LAC International Foundation

9:30 - 11:00 Session 1 "A Common Agenda for Sustainable Transformation"

Moderator: **Zirahuén Villamar**, Researcher at Minor – Project Office for Education and Research

- **Topic 1**: Economic Innovation, Trade and Investment
  - Speaker: **Orlando Baquero**, CEO of the Association for Latin America (LAV)
  - Commentator: **Diana Montero Melis**, European Commission
- **Topic 2**: Climate Action and Environmental Resilience
  - Speaker: **Carlos Calzadilla**, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's International Climate Protection Fellow at Ecologic Institute
  - Commentator: **Paulo Gustavo Iansen de Sant'Ana**, Minister Counselor at the Embassy of Brazil in Berlin
- **Topic 3**: Care Pact
  - Speaker: **Olga Montúfar**, President of the Network of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Women with Disabilities of Latin America and the Caribbean
  - Commentator: **Christian Burgsmüller**, Head of Division of Americas.1 at the European External Action Service

Q&A Session

11:00 - 11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 - 12:45 Session 2 "Rule of Law, International Security and Global Issues" – *presented by the German Federal Foreign Office*

Opening Remarks: **Annette Walter**, Director for Latin America and the Caribbean at the German Federal Foreign Office

Moderator: **Astrid Bosch**, Head of Project, LAK-FSDRIO, GIZ

- **Topic 1**: Youth at the Crossroads: Security, Rights and Opportunities
  - Speaker: **Sabine Kurtenbach**, President a.i. of GIGA
  - Commentator: **Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia**, Ambassador of Peru to Belgium, Luxembourg, and Mission to the European Union
- **Topic 2**: International Order and Global Challenges
  - Speaker: **Claudia Zilla**, Senior Fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs / Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
  - Commentator: **Holger Dreiseitl**, Head of the Division responsible for Germany's role in the United Nations at the Federal Foreign Office

Q&A Session

05.12.2025

Scan the QR code to view participants' bios.