EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

IV EU-LAC Journalists Forum:

'Bi-regional Context and the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Investigative Journalism'.

Concept Note

Organisation: EU-LAC Foundation

Partners: Gabo Foundation

Moderation: EU-LAC Foundation

Date and time: July 25-27, 2025

Venue: Bogota, Colombia

Format: In person

Background

The European Union - Latin America and the Caribbean International Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation) is an intergovernmental organisation created in 2010 by the 33 Latin American and Caribbean states, the 27 member states of the European Union (EU) and the EU itself. Its objectives are to strengthen the bi-regional partnership and promote the participation of the respective civil societies, including academia, the public and private sectors, in political, economic and social relations between the two regions.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the commitment to freedom of the press has been endorsed at the highest level in accordance with paragraph 7[1] of the 2023 EU-CELAC Summit Declaration, as one of the shared values underpinning the bi-regional partnership.

Consequently, the EU-LAC Foundation has held three editions of the EU-LAC Journalists Forum where the following topics have been addressed: the relevance of both regions from a journalistic perspective; the construction of common spaces to create a bi-regional narrative; as well as the opportunities and challenges of the digital transformation for journalism.

Context

Media professionals, both globally and in the bi-regional environment, play a key role in generating information that benefits civil society and decision-makers alike. Their reflections and reporting can also spark meaningful debates, including on the relevance of bi-regional relations, and bring them to the forefront of international discourse.

[1] 7. We reaffirm the shared values upon which our partnership is based remain unchanged: resilient, inclusive and democratic societies, the promotion, protection and respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, democracy, including free and fair, inclusive, transparent and credible elections and media freedom, inclusive multilateralism and international cooperation, based on the principles and objectives of the UN Charter and International Law, including the principles of sovereignty, self-determination, non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against territorial integrity.

Journalism, being in the public interest, is considered a common good. According to the latest UNESCO Report on World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development, 'like other common goods, journalism plays a crucial role in promoting a healthy civic space'.

At the global level, the World Press Freedom Index 2024, composed of five context indicators[2], highlighted among its findings that the political indicator suffered a 7.6% drop. This indicator assesses three components: the degree of media support/autonomy in the face of pressure from state and non-state actors; the level of acceptance of a diversity of journalistic approaches; and the support media receive in their role of demanding accountability in the public interest.

In this vein, the importance of investigative journalism is central. According to UNESCO, 'investigative journalism is the task of revealing issues covered up deliberately, by someone in a position of power, or accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of data and circumstances that make understanding difficult. It is an activity that requires the use of both public and secret sources and documents'.

On the other hand, 2024 was the scene of an enormous global election turnout. According to the UNDP, 3.7 billion people in 72 countries were called to the polls, the high number of elections accentuated disinformation trends linked to the unregulated use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) or the heightened public control of social media and the internet in certain environments.

To the socio-political context that frames investigative journalism, it is essential to add the technological ecosystem, particularly the influence of AI that cuts across the journalistic exercise. In the Reuters Institute for Journalism's 2025 report, in which 326 industry leaders in 51 countries and territories were interviewed, 87% say that newsrooms are being fully or partially transformed by generative AI, while its impact on tasks such as fact-checking, data journalism and investigations reach 73%.

At the same time, investigative journalism's coverage of AI-related issues has increased significantly as the technology becomes embedded in broader segments of society. Topics such as the ethical implications of AI, its impact on privacy, the biases of algorithms, and the accountability of AI-incorporated decision-making are increasingly covered.

Faced with the global scenario, it is necessary to look at the bi-regional environment. In Latin America and the Caribbean, of the 24 countries in the region analysed in the World Press Freedom Index 2024, 79% of the press freedom context is classified as problematic, difficult or very serious, while in the remaining 21% it is categorised as predominantly good. The region replicates the global trend of a deterioration linked to the decline of the political indicator. Meanwhile, countries that have improved their regional ranking have done so thanks to the ability to mitigate polarisation and the implementation of public policies to create a safe environment for journalism.

In relation to the EU, 67% of the countries are classified as environments where press freedom is good or tends to be good, while 33% are reported as problematic contexts. The same ranking indicates that, although the European position is positive, the region does not escape political pressures that negatively impact independent journalism.

[2] Each country or territory's score is evaluated using five contextual indicators that reflect the press freedom situation in all of its complexity: political context, legal framework, economic context, sociocultural context and safety.

Regarding the topics covered by investigative journalism on both sides of the Atlantic, on the one hand, there are thematic synergies in issues such as corruption, human rights violations or the environment. On the other hand, there are also differences depending on the specific context in each region. In addition to the topics mentioned above, in LAC, investigative journalism covering issues such as illicit economies, inequality/poverty, or the state of press freedom stand out, while in Europe topics such as disinformation, surveillance/privacy or corporate accountability are highlighted.

Investigative journalism is essential to expose complex facts that directly affect societies. In the current scenario, characterised by the proliferation of misinformation, a challenging media environment and increasing restrictions on press freedom, it is crucial to provide journalists with spaces that foster the exchange of knowledge, that positively impact their professional skills to address issues in depth while maintaining rigorous ethical standards, thus guaranteeing the quality and credibility of the journalism they do.

In this context, the IV EU-LAC Journalists Forum is conceived as a learning space in which bi-regional dialogue between journalism professionals can enrich their skills in investigative journalism and promote collaborations between LAC and the EU, based on a dual approach, incorporating a component where the environment in which investigative journalism is developed in each region is discussed; and a second component, linked to the impact of technology, in particular AI, both in the methods for conducting investigations and as a generator of new topics of interest that unravel its use in matters of public interest.

The 2025 edition of the EU-LAC Journalists Forum has as its strategic partner the Gabo Foundation, whose mission is to train and encourage journalists to develop an ethical model of journalism that generates a well-informed citizenry. The framework of the meeting will take place at the 13th Gabo Festival, considered the main meeting for Ibero-American journalism, which will be held in Bogota, Colombia, from 25 to 27 July.

Objective

To enhance the agency capacity of investigative journalists in a space where they can share techniques and methodologies of analysis, addressing the bi-regional context of journalistic practice; as well as case studies, where advanced methodologies, tools, lessons learned and the best experiences of investigative journalism are shared among colleagues from both regions, with a focus on the impact of technology and AI.

By connecting journalists with diverse experiences but common problems, the aim is to promote a more rigorous investigative journalistic practice, capable of unravelling complex dynamics at the bi-regional level, contributing to a direct impact on the quality of information received by the societies of Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Format and Methodology

The event will be in a face-to-face format and it will consist of two components:

- **Panel.- Challenges of investigative journalism in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.** The socio-political and technological ecosystems, in particular AI, that frame and impact investigative journalism on both sides of the Atlantic will be discussed, as well as the strategies developed by journalists to develop their investigations despite these challenges.

The panel will have a duration of 90 minutes, in which specialists/journalists from Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU will be represented, and will be moderated. There will be two rounds of interventions, a question-and-answer session, and a concluding section. In the first round, experts will discuss the context of investigative journalism in each region, emphasising the challenges posed by the socio-political and technological environment. In a second round, the main strategies adopted by investigative journalists to overcome these challenges will be discussed. This will be followed by a question-and-answer session, closing with a final intervention by the panellists who will give their concluding remarks.

- **Learning exchange - Investigative journalism and Artificial Intelligence.** It is an invitation only learning space addressed to journalists. Three case studies from Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU will be presented, illustrating the technological impact on investigative journalism, with emphasis on AI, the challenges it imposes and the benefits it brings to journalistic activity, as well as tools for reporting and unravelling the impact of AI systems and their incidence on decision-making and the implementation of public policies.

  This space will last two hours and will feature an expert on artificial intelligence issues who will address the general context of the impact of AI on investigative journalism. Afterwards, the three case studies will be discussed, followed by a dialogue with the journalists in attendance to learn about their own experiences and incorporate their knowledge in the field. At the end, the speakers, based on the exchange of experiences, will make recommendations that will be useful both for those who practice investigative journalism and for decision-makers in LAC and the EU to nurture the bi-regional dialogue in this area.

Expected Results

- Exchange of experiences on the context of investigative journalism in LAC and the EU.
- Shared knowledge on advanced methodologies and lessons learned in investigative journalism.
- Enhanced collaboration between press professionals from both regions, promoting bi-regional journalism projects.
- Conclusions and recommendations that can feed the agenda of the EU-CELAC 2025 Summit.