The **Elcano Royal Institute**, the **EU-LAC Foundation** and the **Polish Institute of International Affairs** (PISM) are pleased to invite you to a **public debate** titled

Strategic Partners in Uncertain Times:

Towards a Broader EU Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean

Date and time: Thursday, 16 October 2025, 12:30-14:15

Venue: Business and Science Poland, Rue Belliard 40, 5th floor

*** Apologies for cross-posting if you have received this invitation also from our partners. ***

Two years after the **EU-CELAC Summit** restarted after a long hiatus, leaders of the bloc's members will convene again in Santa Marta, Colombia, **on 9-10 November 2025**. The stakes are high as the world is going through a period of upheaval. China and Russia double down on their efforts to transform the global order, while the U.S. presidency – manifestly loath to defend it – focuses on extracting economic concessions from any country considered an ally or not. Faced with growing instability, the EU strives to deepen alliances around the world to prop up the rules-based international order and diversify its network of economic relations. Boosting cooperation with CELAC partners will be important for the success of this strategy. From the EU perspective, one challenge is to be a partner of choice for Latin America and the Caribbean in times of increasing uncertainty in international relations. Yet while both sides express support for the strengthening of multilateralism, enhancing economic ties, and cooperation in the realm of sustainable development, their perceptions of priorities, the ways to address challenges, and the very modalities of cooperation - at times - diverge. The protracted negotiations of the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement are a case in point.

In which ways could the geopolitical context constitute an opportunity to revisit the main obstacles to cooperation and to find innovative solutions to address them?

How can the mutually beneficial character of cooperation be enhanced?

And, in this regard, which role could play those states who have traditionally been less engaged in the EU-CELAC strategic partnership?

These guiding questions will constitute the central axis of the debate convened by the Polish Institute of International Affairs, Elcano Royal Institute, and the EU-LAC Foundation.

Agenda:

12:00-12:30	**Arrivals. Sandwich lunch available.**
12:30-12:35	**Welcome and opening remarks** Luis Simón, Director, Brussels Office of the Elcano Royal Institute Melchior Szczepanik, Head of Brussels Office, PISM
12:35-13:00	**Keynote session** Pelayo Castro, Acting Managing Director for Americas, European External Action Service (tbc) Anyurivet Daza Cuervo, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of Colombia to Belgium and the EU
13:00-13:40	**Panel Discussion** ***The Stakes and Expectations Ahead of the EU-CELAC Summit*** Anna Barrera, Director of Programmes, EU-LAC Foundation Ernesto Talvi, Senior Fellow, Elcano Royal Institute Bartłomiej Znojek, Latin America analyst, PISM
13:40-14:15	**Exchange of views with participants**

To confirm attendance and for any inquiries, please send an email to brusselsoffice@pism.pl by 10 October 2025.

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