

IV EU-LAC SUMMIT
(Vienna, Austria, 12 May 2006)

DECLARATION OF VIENNA

STRENGTHENING THE BI-REGIONAL STRATEGIC ASSOCIATION

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and of Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Vienna on May 12th 2006, reiterate our commitment to further promote and strengthen our bi-regional strategic partnership agreed at the previous Summits held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1999, Madrid in May 2002 and Guadalajara in May 2004.
2. We express our satisfaction with the positive results achieved at the IV EU-LAC Summit, which will contribute to the strengthening of our comprehensive, firm and mutually beneficial relationship. We will expand and deepen EU-LAC cooperation in all areas in a spirit of mutual respect, equality and solidarity. Building on our special historical and cultural links, we are determined to maximise the potential for joint action between our regions.
3. We recall the Declarations of the previous Summits in Rio de Janeiro, Madrid and Guadalajara and we remain committed to the pledges made therein. In particular, we reaffirm our commitment to the shared fundamental principles and values that underlie our bi-regional relationship and are enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

We strongly believe that democracy, the rule of law, the respect, promotion and protection of human rights, poverty eradication, social and economic development and respect for international law are essential for peace and security. We further reiterate our shared commitment to a strong and effective multilateral system, to which end we are committed to advancing the multilateral agenda as a cross-cutting issue and as a priority for our bi-regional relations.

We will intensify our efforts to define common positions and joint actions between the two regions within the various UN bodies and at major UN conferences.

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

4. We reaffirm that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. We also reaffirm that while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy, that it does not belong to any country or region, and reaffirm the necessity of due respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right of self determination.

We stress that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and are basic principles of our strategic bi-regional partnership.

We welcome the decision of the 2005 World Summit to create a Human Rights Council and the land-mark decision of the General Assembly to make it operational. Both regions attach great importance to the convening of the new Council on 19 June 2006.

We will cooperate closely in strengthening the policies, mechanisms and instruments of the United Nations for the effective promotion and protection of human rights. We will also reinforce the promotion and protection of human rights in our national policies.

5. We will work towards full gender equality paying special attention to the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and their further advancement, reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Beijing Plus Five Declaration and outcome document. We will ensure the respect and implementation of the rights of the child as well as due consideration of the needs of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

We will continue to advance in the promotion and protection of the rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples at the local, national, regional, and international levels. The full exercise of these rights is essential for their existence, welfare and integral development and for their full participation in society.

We will also continue to advance the rights and fundamental freedoms of persons belonging to minorities at all levels.

6. We hold that racism is incompatible with democracy and we will spare no effort to fight racism, all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, ensuring full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.
7. Individuals, organisations or institutions working for the promotion and protection of human rights, including human rights defenders, shall be provided with coherent and effective support and protection, in accordance with international law and UNGA resolution 53/144 on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
8. We take note with interest of the proposal of the XVII EU-LAC Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Lima, Peru, 14 to 17 June 2005) to establish a Euro-Latin American Assembly.
9. We welcome the holding of the III European – Latin American – Caribbean Civil Society Forum which took place in Vienna between March 30th and April 1st 2006.
10. We welcome the holding of the Fourth Meeting of European Union – Latin American – Caribbean Civil Society Organisations which took place in Vienna between April 5 and 7, and take note of its conclusions.

STRENGTHENING THE MULTILATERAL APPROACH TO FOSTERING PEACE, STABILITY AND THE RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW

11. Recalling the United Nations World Summit 2005, we reaffirm our commitment to a strong and effective multilateral system, based on international law, supported by strong international institutions and with the United Nations at its centre. We reiterate our commitment to a comprehensive reform and revitalization of the UN reinforcing its democratic nature, representativeness, transparency, accountability and efficiency.

In particular, we welcome the establishment of a Peace Building Commission to advise on and propose integrated and coherent strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, focussing attention on the national reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and laying the foundation for sustainable peace and sustainable development.

We will give due consideration to representation from all regional groups in the overall composition of the Organisational Committee.

We fully support the system of collective security enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We express our support for all Peacekeeping Operations mandated by the United Nations, and emphasise the need to ensure full respect for Human Rights in all peacekeeping operations.

12. We express our support to MINUSTAH and the Group of Friends of Haiti. We welcome the progress made in improving political, economic and social conditions. We commit ourselves to continue our support and call upon the international community to ensure and increase cooperation with Haiti. In this respect, we welcome the International Ministerial Meeting to be held in Brasilia, May 23.
13. We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of United Nations, we reaffirm our decision to support all efforts to uphold sovereign equality of all States, to respect their territorial integrity and political independence, to refrain in our international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, to uphold resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law.
We firmly reject all coercive measures of unilateral character with extra-territorial effect that are contrary to international law and the commonly accepted rules of free trade. We agree that this type of practice poses a serious threat to multilateralism. In this context, recalling UNGA resolution 60/12, we reaffirm our well-known positions on the application of the extra-territorial provisions of the Helms-Burton Act.

14. We will continue to promote compliance with international law and reinforce commitment to an international rules-based order. Today, more than ever, universal adherence to the rule of law and trust in the system to prevent or to take punitive action against violations of rules are preconditions for lasting peace and security. We recall the obligation to settle disputes peacefully and encourage all States to make greater use of international dispute settlement institutions, including the International Court of Justice. In addition, we fully support the International Criminal Court and the States parties call on those countries which have not done so to ratify or accede, as applicable, to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and to cooperate with the Court.
15. We are committed to a multilateral approach to address today's disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control challenges, in particular regarding nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. We therefore pursue the implementation, universalisation and strengthening of disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms, reinforcing the role of the UN.

We stress that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament under Article VI. We recognise the right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination in accordance with the Treaty's provisions.

We will continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT. In this regard, we also reaffirm the importance of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as a part of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery constitutes a growing threat to international peace and security. The international community shares the responsibility for actively preventing this risk. To this end we undertake, in accordance with our national legal authorities and legislation and consistent with international law, to collaborate in preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials.

16. We take note of the establishment of the Iberoamerican General Secretariat (SEGIB), which can contribute to enhancing the bi-regional presence on the international scene.
17. We acknowledge the progress achieved by the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) through political dialogue, cooperation, consultations, and coordinated actions in the fields of trade, sustainable tourism, transportation, and natural disasters, by which relations between the EU and the Greater Caribbean Area can be deepened and consolidated.

TERRORISM

18. We firmly condemn all terrorist acts, as well as the financing and supporting of terrorism, and the incitement of terrorist acts. We undertake, through mutual cooperation, to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomever committed. We express our solidarity with its victims and their families. Acts of terrorism negatively affect the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, constitute a direct threat to the rule of law and undermine economic and social development.

States have the duty to protect their citizens. However, when combating terrorism, we must not destroy what we defend. Human rights, international humanitarian law, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law must be fully respected when fighting terrorism. We declare our full support of the implementation of all commitments under the UN legal instruments against terrorism and UN Security Council Resolution 1373, 1566, 1624 and other relevant resolutions.

19. We urge all States to deny safe havens and to duly investigate and prosecute alleged terrorists or give prompt consideration to requests for extradition of persons suspected of having committed terrorist acts, in conformity with domestic and applicable international law, including bilateral agreements.

We urge all States to become parties to the thirteen international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, and emphasize the importance of implementing those instruments.

We support efforts for the entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Further, we stress the need to make every effort to reach an agreement on and conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism during the 60th session of the General Assembly, and we will support work on the development of a counter-terrorism strategy by the UNGA, taking into account the report of the UN Secretary General.

DRUGS AND ORGANISED CRIME

20. We reiterate our commitment, in accordance with the principle of shared responsibility and on the basis of a global and integrated approach to the world problem of illicit drugs, to strengthening cooperation and to make full use of existing schemes for dialogue and cooperation between the two regions, mainly through the EU-LAC Mechanism for Coordination and Cooperation on Drugs and the EU-Andean Community High Level Dialogue on Drugs. In particular, we reiterate our commitment to promote initiatives on the sharing of criminal intelligence on drug trafficking, and on alternative development, including preventive alternative development, in interested countries, as a means to generate cost-efficient and long lasting structural changes in areas prone to illicit crop cultivation.
21. We therefore welcome the Vienna Declaration issued on 7 March 2006 at the conclusion of the VIII High Level Meeting of the EU-LAC Mechanism for Coordination and Cooperation on Drugs. In this context, and with the purpose of developing and strengthening this Mechanism, we endorse the proposal to conduct by the end of 2006 a full review of the Panama Action Plan agreed in 1999 and the Lisbon areas for action.
22. We welcome the entry into force of the UN Convention against Corruption (Mérida Convention) and we underline the need for those States that have not already done so, to sign, ratify and implement it effectively.

We underline the importance that those States that have not already done so, consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (Palermo Convention) and its additional protocols.
23. We are committed to continuing our support for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. To this end we will strengthen bi-regional cooperation and we will participate actively in the UN Conference to Review Progress made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons to be held in New York from 26 June to 7 July 2006.

ENVIRONMENT (INCLUDING DISASTER PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS)

24. We recognise that the long term prosperity of our regions is largely dependent on sustainable management of natural resources and ability to ensure development that comprises all aspects of sustainability. To this end, the EU and LAC will launch a dialogue at a political level to exchange views on environmental issues of mutual interest.

Special attention will be given to cooperation in areas such as climate change, desertification, energy, water, biodiversity, forests and chemical management.

We recognise the need for more efficient environmental activities in the United Nations system, with enhanced coordination, improved policy advice and guidance, strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation, better treaty compliance, while respecting the legal autonomy of the treaties, and better integration of environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level, including through capacity-building, we agree to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework to address this need, including a more integrated structure, building on existing institutions and internationally agreed instruments, as well as the treaty bodies and the specialised agencies.

25. We welcome the Joint Declaration on the Implementation of the LA-EU Strategic Partnership for Water Resources and Sanitation signed during the 4th World Water Forum (Mexico 16-22 March 2006). We recognise the contributions of this forum to the implementation of the policies adopted by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

26. We reiterate our strong commitment to tackling climate change. We welcome the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and urge those States which are not yet parties to accede without delay. We welcome the outcome of the Montreal Conference on Climate Change (December 2005). We will increase our cooperation towards implementing its results, including through the consideration of commitments of developed country Parties under the Kyoto Protocol for subsequent periods, and through pursuing a forward looking dialogue on action to tackle climate change in the context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. We will also cooperate on enhancing our knowledge on the impact of and vulnerabilities to climate change and building up adaptation capabilities as well as facilitating the transfer of technologies for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and strengthen our cooperation on the Clean Development Mechanism.

27. An unprecedented effort is also needed to achieve a significant reduction of the rate of biodiversity loss at all levels by 2010. We therefore welcome the outcome of the Curitiba Conference on Biological Diversity (March 2006) and are committed to increasing our efforts to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and of the Biosafety Protocol by its Parties. In this framework and in line with our decisions in Curitiba, we are also committed to continuing the elaboration and negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing with the aim of effectively implementing the three objectives of the CBD, namely the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources, and to implementing the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas.
28. We recognise the high degree of vulnerability of some regions to natural disasters, as well as their increased occurrence and severity. We will cooperate in strengthening disaster preparedness and prevention through the exchange of experience and the rapid dissemination of emerging good practices, particularly in the area of monitoring and early warning, local capacity-building and response. This should strengthen action for an integrated natural disaster management approach for disaster risk reduction in the wider Caribbean Basin, in the context of sustainable development.

ENERGY

29. In view of the rapid transformation of global parameters for energy policies, we recognise the need for closer regional and international cooperation in the energy sector. We confirm our commitment to promote energy efficiency and to increase the use of renewable energy sources as an important step towards secure, stable and competitive energy supplies, as well as sustainable development.

We will further strengthen bi-regional dialogue and cooperation notably regarding renewable energy.

We welcome efforts to promote initiatives on energy integration in Latin-America and the Caribbean.

We welcome the holding of the first meeting of experts between the European Union and the Latin American and Caribbean countries on Energy which took place in Brussels on 20 and 21st April 2006.

30. While acknowledging the sovereign right of countries to manage and regulate their natural resources, we will continue and strengthen our cooperation with a view to establishing a balanced trade framework and more compatible regulatory regimes. We underline the importance of developing and investing in the necessary energy infrastructure in order to ensure availability and access to reliable and affordable energy systems. Efforts shall be maintained and cooperation increased to accelerate the development of environmentally sustainable energy technologies.

**ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS; REGIONAL INTEGRATION; TRADE;
CONNECTIVITY (INVESTMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, INFORMATION
SOCIETY)**

31. We welcome the successful implementation of the EU's Association Agreements with Mexico and Chile which underline the importance of a bi-regional strategy for the negotiation of Association Agreements, that include free trade areas.

We take note of the progress of the negotiations between Mercosur and the European Union towards an Interregional Association Agreement, and we attach utmost importance to the objective of reaching an agreement which is both ambitious and balanced. This agreement should reinforce the political, economic, commercial and cooperation relations between both sides, while taking into account different levels of development.

The concerned parties welcome the result of the Ministerial Meeting held in September 2005 and instruct the negotiators to intensify their efforts to move the negotiation process forward.

Recalling the common strategic objective of the Guadalajara Declaration and taking into account the positive outcome of the joint assessment exercise on regional economic integration carried out with Central America, we welcome the decision taken by the European Union and Central America to launch negotiations for an Association Agreement, including the establishment of a Free Trade Area.

Central America confirmed its commitment to implement as planned the decisions taken by CA Heads of States on 9 March 2006 in Panama, as well as to seek ratification of the CA Treaty on investment and services and to develop a jurisdictional mechanism that could secure enforcement of regional economic legislation throughout the region.

We welcome Panama's involvement in the process. The parties recognize that active participation in the negotiations will follow a formal decision on its joining the economic integration process in Central America, SIECA.

The concerned parties share the objective of concluding a comprehensive Association Agreement and look forward to a rapid process of negotiations, as well as an effective implementation of the future Association Agreement. In this respect, the parties recognize the value of the preparatory work undertaken in the context of the Joint Assessment for the negotiation process.

Recalling the common strategic objective established in the Declaration of Guadalajara, we welcome the decision adopted by the EU and the Andean Community to initiate during 2006, a process leading to the negotiation of an Association Agreement which will include political dialogue, cooperation programmes and a trade agreement.

To this end, the Andean Community and the EU agree to hold all necessary meetings prior to 20 July 2006, to clarify and define the bases of the negotiation which would allow for the full and beneficial participation of the parties.

We also welcome the progress made in the negotiations between the EU and the countries of the Caribbean Forum of ACP States (CARIFORUM) on an Economic Partnership Agreement.

32. Regional integration is a key element for stability, economic growth and investment and for increasing the weight of both regions on the world stage. We affirm the principles of cooperation and solidarity as a basis of our integration processes. In this context, we encourage and strongly support Latin American and Caribbean countries to proceed with their respective regional integration processes.

We salute new initiatives such as the creation of the South American Community of Nations and the entry into force of the CARICOM Single Market in the continuing programme for the establishment of the Single Market and Economy (CSME).

33. We reiterate our full support for the multilateral trading system and endorse the commitment undertaken at the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference for a successful conclusion in 2006 of the negotiations launched at Doha. We stress the central importance of the development dimension in all aspects of the Doha Work Programme, as reiterated in the Hong Kong Declaration. We acknowledge that an ambitious and balanced outcome in all areas under negotiation is decisive for creating opportunities for all WTO members in particular by further enhancing the effective integration and full participation of developing countries in the multilateral trading system, and a safe, stable and equitable environment for trade and investment, bearing in mind that contributions must be consistent with the principle of special and differential treatment. Therefore, in the coming months, we need to address all issues and commit to continue to negotiate within the framework of the Single Undertaking. We will continue taking into account the special concerns of small, vulnerable economies and Least Developed Countries.
34. We encourage European and Latin American and Caribbean financial institutions to support physical integration by means of interconnectivity, network infrastructures, notably in the fields of energy, transport, telecommunications and research. The promotion of interconnectivity is an integral part of effective regional integration.

In this context, we recognise the special characteristics of Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States which deserve an appropriate approach.

We welcome the European Investment Bank's support for Latin American and Caribbean countries.

GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT

35. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting equitable and sustained economic growth to create more and better jobs and to fighting poverty and social exclusion. We also recognise the need to promote responsible public policies conducive to a better distribution of wealth and of the benefits of economic growth. We underline the importance of setting adequate social protection and fiscal policies to promote equitable economic growth with social justice conducive to quality and productive employment and to seek to incorporate the informal sector into the formal economy. We believe that the generation of decent work is a key element for sustaining economic and social development, paying special attention to the issue of youth employment, among others through creating technical capacity through education and vocational training policies. We commit ourselves to promote and facilitate dialogue in the context of labour relations at the national, sub-regional, and bi-regional levels.

THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND EXCLUSION

36. We underline our commitment to eradicating poverty, inequality, social exclusion and all forms of discrimination to improve the living conditions of all persons and groups, consolidate democratic governance and achieve greater social justice and sustainable development.

We recognise the need to adopt comprehensive, integrated strategies and public policies to ensure greater equal opportunities and better living and working conditions for all, as well as greater access to education, health, and employment, while mainstreaming gender equality, and giving priority to the most vulnerable populations, including the disabled. We recognise the need to generate specific public policies for the protection of children and youth and to break the cycle of poverty. These strategies shall respond to social and economic needs and the priorities of each country.

We welcome the progress made in increasing access to education and health and we underline the need to further improve their coverage, and equal access for all including through fair financing quality and efficiency. We recognize the importance of promoting corporate social responsibility, fostering social dialogue and the participation of all relevant actors, including civil society, and to respect ethnic diversity, to build more cohesive societies.

37. We underscore that social cohesion, which constitutes the foundation of more inclusive societies, remains a shared goal and key priority of our bi-regional strategic partnership. The promotion of social cohesion is intended to build more inclusive societies by giving everyone the chance to have access to fundamental rights and employment, to enjoy the benefits of economic growth with equity and social justice and thereby play a full role in society. We will continue to give social cohesion a high priority in our bi-regional cooperation and assistance programmes such as EurosociAL and will also continue to promote exchanges of experiences between our countries and regions.
38. We welcome and support the outcome of the High Level Conference on “Promoting Social Cohesion: the EU and the LAC experiences” that took place in Brussels in March 2006.
We welcome the initiative of periodically organising Social Cohesion Fora to stimulate dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean on equality, eradication of poverty and social inclusion.

DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

39. We reiterate our determination to ensure the timely and full realisation of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, as agreed at the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Consensus and the 2005 World Summit Outcome as well as in the Doha Development Agenda.
40. Special efforts must be promoted at national, international and bi-regional levels with the objective of ensuring full realization of the Right to Development by all individuals and peoples, as established in the UN Declaration on the Right to Development.
41. We welcome the Joint EU Statement on "The European Consensus on Development" which puts poverty eradication at the core of EU Development cooperation, in the context of sustainable development, including the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and which applies to all developing countries. We acknowledge the new ambitious EU commitments taken to increase the quantity, the quality and the effectiveness of its development assistance. In particular we acknowledge EU Member States' commitments to collectively reach an ODA/GNI ratio of 0.56% by 2010, and to undertake to achieve the target of an ODA/GNI ratio of 0.7% by 2015, while Member States which joined the EU after 2002 will endeavour to increase their ODA/GNI ratio to 0.33% by 2015. We call on all development partners to join this European initiative and to follow this lead. We welcome the continuing support to middle-income countries through economic and development cooperation, including the implementation of poverty eradication strategies, taking account of their role in political, security and trade issues.

We also acknowledge LAC countries' efforts in attaining the MDGs through public policies aiming at social integration and human sustainable development.

42. We acknowledge that the accomplishment of the MDGs is furthered by additional resources. We welcome therefore the recent developments of the Action against Hunger and Poverty, and the willingness of several countries to explore and start implementing, on a voluntary basis, innovative financing mechanisms for development such as an air ticket solidarity levy, the International Finance Facility and the pilot International Finance Facility for Immunisation, all of which were discussed at the Conference on Sources on Innovative Financing Mechanisms held in Paris, last March.
43. We acknowledge that HIV/AIDS and other pandemics are a continuing major threat to the future of our nations and to sustainable human development, and pledge to increase our collaboration in responding to pandemics.
44. We consider that the importance of EU -LAC relations must be reflected in the allocation of resources to the region.
45. We attach great importance to addressing the problem of debt, faced by a number of countries and which requires continued engagement of the international community, in order to find durable and equitable solutions, emphasizing that creditors and debtors must share responsibility for preventing and resolving unsustainable debt situations in a timely and efficient manner.

We value the benefits of the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) and support its full implementation for eligible countries. We take note of the approval by the Paris Club of the Evian approach that addresses the treatment of the debt of countries not eligible for the HIPC initiative, and reiterate the need to endeavour to maintain and promote their access to international financial markets.

46. We acknowledge initiatives, on a voluntary basis, to provide aid to some LAC countries, such as debt swaps for development, including for education and conversion programmes of ODA loans and commercial credits.
47. We will continue to promote steps to improve the decision-making process, governance and functioning of international financial bodies, and to enhance participation of developing countries in IFIs in order to better reflect their interests and to have more effective tools for the prevention and resolution of crises. In this respect we welcome initiatives taken by the International Monetary Fund, such as the Exogenous Shocks Facility, to provide financial assistance to low income countries facing such shocks.

48. We take note of the conclusions of the III Meeting of the Regional Integration Parliaments EU-LAC that took place on 24-25 April 2006 in Bregenz, Austria.

MIGRATION

49. We recognise the need to enhance the benefits of migration for both regions as well as for the migrants themselves. We therefore commit ourselves to take forward our comprehensive dialogue on migration by further enhancing our cooperation and mutual understanding of migration in all its dimensions in both regions. We underscore our commitment to effectively protect the human rights of all migrants.

We welcome the holding of the second Meeting of Experts between the European Union and the Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Migration which took place in Cartagena de Indias on 1 and 2 March 2006.

We welcome the recommendations for joint follow-up as regards the treatment, rights and integration of migrants: the facilitation of the transfer of migrant remittances, which are of a private character, and the reduction of related costs; new approaches to migration policies; joint efforts to address irregular migration; and strengthening the fight against the smuggling of and trafficking in human beings, taking into account the rights and the special vulnerability of persons subjected to these crimes.

50. The High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which will take place in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006, will offer an excellent opportunity to discuss this important issue in all its aspects on a global basis

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING: HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, CULTURE

51. We recognise the role of Information and Communication Technologies to support social cohesion, regional integration and the competitiveness of our economies. We attach great importance to working together towards their further development in our regions, and towards the promotion of universal, equitable and affordable access to ICTs, notably through comprehensive strategies addressing the new challenges and opportunities of technological convergence.

We welcome the outcome and the declaration adopted at the IV EU-LAC Ministerial Information Society Forum "An alliance for social cohesion through digital inclusion" held in Lisbon in April 2006. We acknowledge the encouraging achievements of the on-going bi-regional activities in this field and consider that it is important to maintain the political and financial support to initiatives that consolidate the ICT-based scientific collaboration space.

52. We attach priority to the creation of the EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education, geared towards mobility and cooperation. In that context, we welcome and encourage the decisions adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Mexico in April 2005 and the most recent recommendations of the "ALCUE Follow up Committee". We also welcome the European Commission's initiative to substantially step up its programme regarding exchanges.
53. We recognize the importance of S&T for the sustainable, economic and social development of our countries, including poverty alleviation and social inclusion. We take note of the Meeting of EU-LAC Senior Officials held in Salzburg from 1st to 3rd of February 2006 and endorse its conclusions.
We welcome the strengthening of EU-LAC platforms for S&T, aimed at reinforcing the EU-LAC partnership promoting the EU-LAC Knowledge Area, conceived as a common area for science, technology and innovation. We instruct our S&T EU-LAC Senior Officials to promote the design, implementation and monitoring of joint research and development, mobility, innovation and public awareness of science activities in agreed areas of mutual interest for both regions, with a view to encouraging mutual participation in research activities such as the 7th Framework Programme and other bi- and multilateral programmes.
54. We recognise the importance of cultural diversity as a factor of development, growth and stability, as illustrated by the adoption of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in October 2005. We support its prompt ratification and implementation.

We recognise that cultural cooperation is essential in fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. In addition, we reaffirm our conviction that cultural activities and industries play a significant role in safeguarding, developing and promoting cultural diversity. We are committed to finding means to enhance both EU-LAC and intra-LAC cooperation and exchanges of expertise and good practices in this area as well as to enlarging EU-LAC cooperation in UNESCO.
55. We agree to commemorate the bicentenaries of various historic and cultural events, with the aim of contributing to closer ties between our peoples.

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS

56. We greatly appreciate the report about the various meetings and activities which have taken place in the bi-regional context between the summits in Guadalajara and Vienna. This report highlights the continued strengthening of our strategic association.

57. We welcome the holding of the 1st EU-LAC Business Summit in Vienna on May 12th 2006 under the theme "Bridging the two Worlds through Business and Culture". It brought together important representatives from the business communities of both regions, providing them with a platform for discussing trade relations, investment, services and business perspectives. The conclusions and recommendations of the Business Summit were presented to us during the closing plenary session of the IV EU-LAC Summit.
58. We gratefully accept the invitation of Peru to hold the Fifth EU-LAC Summit in 2008.
59. We express our gratitude to the Government and people of Austria for their hospitality and support which helped to assure the successful outcome of the Vienna Summit.
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