EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

SUSTANAIBLE AND INCLUSIVE CITIES AS MOTORS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Opinion Articles

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

Latin American and the Caribbean cooperation: setting the way forward for the cities of tomorrow

Corina Crețu

Commissioner for Regional Policy of the Directorate General of Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) of the European Commission.

Cities are the economic engines of our economies, and the places where citizens, businesses and the research community can reach their full potential, while providing key services for surrounding areas. Cities help to promote economic and social change, which is essential for maintaining economic competitiveness. Over the longer term, this provides a sound basis for growth and job creation, which in turn underpins the provision of key services necessary for regional, urban and social cohesion. In order to exploit fully the potential of cities, we need to understand current and future urbanisation challenges. In particular, cities are at the forefront of global efforts to find models of economic development and social progress that are sustainable in environmental terms.

For the EU, these intense challenges are taking an increasing importance in the political agenda. They are of multi-dimensional nature including demographic change, economic restructuring, pollution, climate change and the accelerating depletion of the world's limited resources. The policy response to these challenges is critical for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive societies. This is, indeed, what governments across the world have signed up to do under the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, including the New Urban Agenda agreed in 2016. It is what the EU aims at under the Urban Agenda for the EU agreed in 2016.

The EU has launched many initiatives to support cities to bring their own vision on public policy on sustainable development and contribute to design and implement actions to improve the quality of life in urban areas. This is very much the aim of

the EU Urban Agenda, which seeks to bring an integrated and coordinated approach to dealing with the urban dimension of EU and national policies and legislation. It focuses on 14 priority themes, helping to bring focus to urban development programmes. Moreover, the actions provide opportunities for cities to come together and to network around the priority themes and to identify together best practices and solutions. This Urban Agenda should result in more effective regulation, more targeted funding and improved knowledge in areas such as transition to sustainable energy, circular economy, sustainable use of land, and the fight against urban poverty and deprivation.

Most importantly, at Habitat 3 in Quito, 2016, I undertook the specific commitment to use the EU Urban Agenda, which is supported by the resources of the EU's structural and investment funds, in order to advance the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations on European soil.

The experience of the EU urban development policy, gained over more than two decades, has attracted much interest outside the EU, including in Latin-America and the Caribbean (LAC). Under our successful exchanges between the EU and LAC countries over the past decade on regional and urban development policy and practice, we are seeking to influence economic and social transformation and help our LAC partners to support more sustainable and inclusive cities.

As part of the EU's ongoing dialogue with LAC countries, we have agreed to work in a more organized and systematic way

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

on these issues. This is reflected in the Conclusions and Action Plan that was agreed at the summit of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the EU held in Brussels in 2015. The most concrete outcome was the development of the EU's International Urban Cooperation (IUC) programme, which is financed by the Partnership Instrument. LAC is one of 5 global zones covered by the IUC, which itself has three distinct components.

One component of the programme seeks to strengthen EU-LAC city-to-city cooperation on sustainable urban development, working with cities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Peru. Some 20 EU and LAC cities are involved into city-to-city pairings over the period 2017-2019. Together they will develop some 40 local action plans, leading to joint development of pilot projects, new business and new contacts. This component of IUC is specifically intended to promote cooperation on the themes of the New Urban Agenda.

Another IUC component seeks to strengthen EU-LAC cooperation on local and regional climate change action, building upon the European Covenant of Mayors initiative, involving cities in 20 LAC countries.

And the third component is specifically targeted on LAC countries seeking to strengthen EU-LAC region-to-region cooperation on innovation for local and regional development, notably in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. While the region is the target level for cooperation, given the major role of cities in the innovation process it is inevitable that they will play a role in this component.

The partnerships and learning exchanges established through the IUC programme introduces a new chapter into international cooperation on urban development. At present, the cities are at different stages in the development of their collaboration. In the case of Galati (Romania), working with Colima (Mexico), both cities have engaged in multi-stakeholder cooperation covering key themes including urban mobility, climate adaptation and strategic urban planning. Following two successful Learning Exchanges, the cities are now working together to develop concrete objectives and in the form of specific Local Action Plans. Turin (Italy) is cooperating with Grande ABC (Brazil), to improve urban mobility and to make their cities healthier. This

will help uncover new ways to shift mobility towards greater sustainability, leading to cleaner air and more pleasant urban spaces. In the case of Madrid and Buenos Aires, exchanges concern urban regeneration, enabling both cities to open new markets and better position themselves internationally. More concretely, together, these cities aim to regenerate their central avenues, including re-modelling the Gran Via in Madrid and Corrientes Avenue in Buenos Aires.

As a result, cities have now become key players in international diplomacy. I am confident that this marks a new and more effective method for addressing the challenges we face in Europe and in Latin America and the Caribbean and I look forward to a successful outcome to the partnerships we are now building on both sides of the Atlantic under IUC.

This is a work of course for mutual benefit, but above for the benefit of the planet as a whole.

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

Culture for the sustainable development of cities.
The urban turn to sustainable development

Svetlana Hristova
Urban sociologist and Associate Professor at the Faculty of Arts of the South-West University, Bulgaria.

During the 1980s, and especially after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the spring of 1986, sustainability became a universal concern. Two benchmark texts appeared: the Ulrich Beck's sociological forecast, signalling the beginning of a new stage of the late modernity, producing more risks than benefits, i.e. the risk society[1] ; and the Brundtland report commissioned by the UN, with the meaningful name "Our Common Future", recognizing the fact that the whole human development, including the "present efforts to guard and maintain human progress, to meet human needs, and to realize human ambitions […] are simply unsustainable – in both the rich and poor nations" [2].

Our Common Future offers three far-reaching visions concerning the urban developmental path. First, it suggests resetting the direction of urbanisation, by "taking the pressure off the largest urban centres and building up smaller towns and cities, more closely integrating them with their rural hinterlands"[3]. Second, it offers the vision of good city management based on the decentralization of "funds, political power, and personnel to local authorities, which are best placed to appreciate and manage local needs"[4] Third, the report contains the insight of participative urban cultures which will constitute new forms of urban governance: "The sustainable development of cities will depend on closer work with the majorities of urban peripheries who are the true city builders, tapping the skills, energies, and resources of neighbourhood groups and those in the 'informal sector'"[5] . More than 30 years since their publication, the validity of these prophetic warnings and insights is confirmed by the critical developments in both, the social reality and the natural world: the global financial crisis of 2008 spread precariousness around the globe and afflicted even the middle classes, considered until recently the pillar of society; the global warming is affecting the whole socio-ecosystem, changing daily routines and production processes; the mass urbanisation taking place mainly in the developing world turned cities into majour arenas to challenge the problems of economic, ecological and social unsustainability.

The search for more sustainable solutions lead to the creation of new alliances and networks among cities such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Resilient Cities, Green Cities, Slow Cities and much more. The European cities are among the pioneers of the urban struggle for a more sustainable future by signing in 1994 the Aalborg Charter of European Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability as a direct response to the appeal of Agenda 21 for support from local authorities. However, the Aalborg Charter moves beyond both, the Brundtland Report and Agenda 21, by proposing a more contextual understanding of urban sustainability and adding a European dimension to it[6]. Broadly defining sustainability as the process of changing lifestyles, production, consumption and spatial patterns, led by the long-term goal "to base our standard of living on the carrying capacity of nature," the Charter is the first public document recognising the city as the proper entity to tackle the problems of sustainable development, being "both the largest unit capable of initially addressing the many [. . .] imbalances damaging our modern world and the smallest scale at which problems can be meaningfully resolved in an integrated, holistic and sustainable fashion".

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

Nowadays, in the same vein, new complex participatory approaches are tested in search of holistic nature-based solutions to systemic unsustainability problems. Urban living labs, for example, are proliferating in Europe and beyond, trying to bridge the gap between urban innovations and the market and to enable their wide implementation by involving directly the users and other urban stakeholders into all stages of this process - from the conceptualization of the product until its final use. It is considered that this approach better corresponds to the specific institutional and cultural contexts, reflecting the true needs and tastes of local communities and unleashing their creative potentia[l 7]

Another instructive example is the rise and global spread of circular economies, an idea that fluctuates from bigger to smaller scales and finally lands down in the form of circular neighbourhoods as self-sustained places where material reuse and recycling, energy renewal and ecological regeneration go hand by hand with revitalization and social integration of local communities[8]). There is an interesting example coming from Bulgaria, included now in the programmes of Plovdiv and Matera ECoC 2019, connected with various multiple uses of bread making – as an intangible heritage, a symbolic act and an artistic practice; as a tool for social integration of different groups whose circle is continuously growing – starting from kids and ending with migrants and refugees; as a therapeutic instrument and an educational means. The project was initiated by the anthropologist Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova who decided to give a second life to her grandfather's house in the town of Gabrobo by transforming it into a Bread House, i.e. a community bakery, as a part of Bulgarian network of national cultural centres called "chitalishte" (literally "reading houses" with 200-year tradition). That happened in 2009, but the idea turned contagious and soon an international Bread House Network appeared uniting more than 50 countries from six continents, including Europe, North and Latin Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia[9]

However, culture with all its possible functions as a leader, creator, enabler and facilitator of innovative solutions for sustainable development often remains almost invisible in the present political agendas towards sustainability, or if recognised, not taken into consideration as an autonomous field of action. Such is the place of culture even in the most recent UN Resolu-

tion adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where culture is mentioned only once in article 36:

"We pledge to foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility. We acknowledge the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development".

Still, the question remains open: how to enable with the means of public policies culture to become a true generator of sustainable development? By now, the interplay between local and global initiatives seems to contain enormous and still untapped potential.

NOTES:

1 Beck 1987

2 WCED 1987, introduction, ¶ 25

3 WCED 1987, introduction, ¶ 73

4 Introduction, ¶ 74

5 Idem

6 Hristova 2015

7 (https://timreview.ca/article/1088)

8 http://www.urbanos.nl/en/portfolio-items/circulaire-wijk-in-dordrecht-2/

9 see http://www.breadhousesnetwork.org

REFERENCES:

Aalborg Charter (1994) Available at: http://www.sustainablecities.eu/fileadmin/content/ JOIN/Aalborg_Charter_english_1_.pdf [Accessed 25 January 2014].

A circular neighbourhood in the city of Dordrecht. Retrieved on August 28, 2018 from: http://www.urbanos.nl/en/portfolio-items/circulaire-wijk-in-dordrecht-2/ .

Beck, U. (1992) [1986] Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity. New Delhi: Sage. Trans- lated from German Risikogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne, 1986.

Hristova, S. (2015) We, European cities and towns: The role of culture for the evolving European model of urban sustainability. In: Hristova, S., Dragi?evi?-?e?i?, M. and Duxburry, N. (eds.) Culture and Sustainability in European Cities: Imagining Europolis. New York: Routledge.

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

Steen, K. and Buerren E. van (2017) The Defining Characteristics of Urban Living Labs. Retrieved on August 28, 2018 from: https://timreview.ca/article/1088 .

UN (2015) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the UN on 25 September 2015: A/RES/70/1.

WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development) (1987) Our Common Future. Report of the Brundtland Commission. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

The linkage between urban security, sustainability and development

Antônio Sampaio
Associate Researcher for Security and Development at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), United Kingdom.

Latin America is the most urbanised region of the developing world, with approximately 80% of its population living in cities.[10] This is far more than in Africa and Asia, where the proportion is still below 50%. Unfortunately, it is also the most violent in terms of urban criminal violence, with 42 locations in the list of 50 most violent cities in the world compiled annually by a Mexican think tank.[11] This means that any sustainability strategy for Latin American cities will have, inevitably, to reckon with the limitations, dangers and policy challenges associated with armed violence.

Lists and percentages tell only part of the story, of course. Something that is not always clear from the numbers and the media coverage of Latin American violence is how connected it is to regional (and global) efforts towards socio-economic development and governance. Criminal violence directly harms development policies and the efforts to build institutions in impoverished peripheries and slums. This linkage has become increasingly clear as countries and international organisations have pursued the goal of global development in a rapidly-urbanising world. The development agenda for 2030, agreed by all UN member states, establishes a specific goal for urbanisation: 'to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'.

Insecurity in Latin American cities is often linked to organised crime, a category that includes a wide range of armed groups from transnational cartels such as Brazil's First Capital Command (PCC) to the local neighbourhood cells of youth gangs such as Central America's Mara Salvatrucha. These criminal actors matter a lot for Latin America's current and future work on development and sustainability. To start with, these groups often exert power over areas, usually peripheries, where the hardest, most fundamental sustainability challenges and needs are located.

Slums, where 20% of Latin America's urban population live,[12] are characterised by 'poor housing and provision of basic services, and no effective regulation of pollution or ecosystem degradation'.[13] The chaotic environment in some of these peripheral areas 'breeds the small disasters that constantly terrorise metropolises', including toxic rubbish deposits and contaminating industrial activity.[14] Sustainability and development policies, if they are meant to have any significant impact, will have to intervene and 'retro-fit' better and more sustainable systems of housing, waste disposal, sanitation and energy, to name but a few. But a significant dimension of the challenge is also a security one: the same conditions that make slums so unhealthy and environmentally degrading also facilitate the encrusting of illicit armed groups.

The term 'disputed territories' describes the territorial control of gangs over urban areas – even large and vibrant conurbations such as Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), San Salvador (El Salvador) and, in the past, Medellín (Colombia).[15] In Rio, for instance, the host of the 2016 Olympic Games and Brazil's second-largest city, heavily-armed gangs such as the Red Command control hillside slums (known as favelas) and clash with each other for control. Permanent state presence has been an elusive goal

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

for Rio authorities, with resilient criminal groups being able to undermine policing projects such as the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs), a strategy to combine permanent police bases and developmental projects in crime-ridden slums. The impact on public policy has been not only the reduction in the presence of police forces but also that of public and civil-society actors who had been working to increase services, jobs and education.

The changing global climate has also been highlighted by several governments and international organisations such as the European Union and the United Nations as a facilitator or accelerator of security threats such as organised crime, terrorism and other non-state armed groups that tend to cluster in cities.[16] The United States Department of Defence has also highlighted the increased vulnerability of Latin America to organised crime in a changing and more disaster-prone climate. For instance, the increased incidence of hurricanes, droughts and food shortages can overwhelm government response structures, increasing the potential for criminal control and exploitation of vulnerable populations and emergency supplies.[17] Furthermore, on the medium to long term, climate change, land degradation and pollution increase the pressure on rural populations to migrate to cities – likely heading to informal settlements (i.e. slums) where criminal actors are most active.

Rio, Medellín, and a gradually expanding list of cities in Latin America have adopted strategies to link public security goals to broader socio-economic issues. For instance, the term 'citizen security' has often been used in Colombian cities, such as Medellín, as a policy framework to combine the priorities and well-being of marginalised communities with the security goals of police forces. This has also been the focus of Rio's UPP strategy, even though the implementation of the developmental and infrastructure projects has fallen way short of the expectations set when the project in the slums was launched in 2008.

This expansion of the understanding of what urban security means offers hope for an equivalent increase in public policy coordination, which would allow the linkage of security, development and sustainability agendas. These three broad areas of public policy, even though they feature as priorities in many Latin American cities, have often worked in isolation from each other. This is partially because they compete for the bureaucratic attention and resources of their political masters, instead of being integrated into comprehensive strategies (in Europe, this is often known as 'whole-of-government' strategies). Civil society actors, particularly academia, the private sector and NGOs, also play a role in influencing their governments on the linkage between these issues. For instance, academia and some companies have been farther ahead than many governments in understanding the linkage between investment in sustainability and long-term growth. Examples such as Rio, imperfect as they are, show that security authorities have started to get the message, although there is still a long road ahead.

NOTES:

10 '2018 Revision of World Urbanization Prospects', UNDESA, 16 May 2018, https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html

11 'Las 50 Ciudades Más Violentas del Mundo 2017', Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad Pública y la Justicia Penal, March 2018, http://www.seguridadjusticiaypaz.org.mx/biblioteca/download/6-prensa/242-las-50-ciudades-mas-violentas-del-mundo-2017-metodologia.

12 'Population living in slums (% of urban population)', World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS

13 Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum and Carlos Corvalán, 'Climate Change and Developing-Country Cities: Implications For Environmental Health and Equity', Journal of Urban Health, Vol. 84, No. 1, 2007, p. 111.

14 Mike Davis, 'Planet of Slums', London: Verso, 2006, p. 129.

15 Antônio Sampaio, 'Security in the Urban Century - A New Research Stream at IISS', IISS, 23 March 2017, https://www.iiss.org/en/iiss%20voices/blogsections/iiss-voices-2017-adeb/march-8a0c/security-in-the-urban-century-0deb

16 'Insurgency, Terrorism and Organised Crime in a Warming Climate: Analysing the Links Between Climate Change and Non-State Armed Groups', Climate Diplomacy, October 2016, p. III.

17 Angelika Albaladejo and Mike LaSusa, 'The Perfect Storm: How Climate Change Exacerbates Crime and Insecurity in LatAm', Insight Crime, 25 September 2017, https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/perfect-storm-climate-change-exacerbates-crime-insecurity-latin-america-caribbean/

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

Territorial planning experiences in medium-sized cities

Christien Klaufus

Assistant Professor at the Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA), The Netherlands

A 2012 UN report about the state of the Latin American and Caribbean Cities announced that the region was on the verge of a 'new urban transition'[I]. Referring to the 'first' urban transition that took place during the twentieth century as a consequence of massive rural to urban migration, this publication suggested that a new dynamics was on its way. The first urban transition had resulted in the rapid growth of the region's primary cities. This process has more or less ended; megacities continue to grow but only for demographic reasons. With 80% of the region's population now living in urban areas, the most notable spatial dynamics are now taking place in so-called medium-sized or intermediate cities. Defined as cities with up to 500.000 residents[II], or even up to one million residents, medium-sized cities are numerically relevant in Latin America and the Caribbean since half of the urban population and almost 40% of the region's total population lives there[III]. This new urban reality has shifted the scope of urban researchers and policy makers alike.

On the one hand, medium-sized cities continue to grow relatively fast and in a sprawling mode, occupying valuable peripheral agricultural lands. On the other hand, smaller cities are considered key in attempts to turn the tide of unsustainable urban expansion. Such cities still hold out a promise for a more balanced, coherent and sustainable urban future[IV]. However, without a strong urban planning commitment of local and national administrations, urban growth and development are accompanied by problems similar to those of large cities. In other words, "their intermediate size does not, in and of itself, guarantee them a bright future"[V]. Latin America's intermediate cities are attributed a pivotal role in steering the region's urban future, aspiring a new kind of transition – one that battles social exclusiveness and unsustainable sprawl.

One of the programmes that offer technical assistance to intermediate cities to strengthen sustainable planning is the Emerging and Sustainable Cities program of the Inter-American Development Bank. Cuenca in Ecuador and Quetzaltenango in Guatemala were two of the first participating cities in 2013. In both cities, an initial IDB action plan resulted in concrete policy measures to stimulate compact urban growth. Cuenca approved a land Use Plan in 2015 and designed an urban mobility system based on a tram route traversing the historical city centre. Quetzaltenango approved a Land Use Plan (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial) in 2017, which is currently being revised. Progressive as these plans might seem, they were controversial inside and outside both cities. In Cuenca, mismanagement of the tram project resulted in an implementation delay and an increase of costs. The disproportionate policy attention for Cuenca's Historic Centre and its new tram system was paired by a political neglect of the continuing sprawl, and of the related environmental and mobility problems in peri-urban areas[VI]. In Quetzaltenango, corruption and a myopic programmatic focus on the city territory per se frustrated the process of concerted territorial planning in Quetzaltenango's rural areas. This aggravated the existing urban-rural divide and feed the general mistrust for territorial planning among rural communities[VII]. Sprawl in Quetzaltenango, however, continues with the rapid construction of gated communities on agricultural land. In both cases, the lack of realistic peri-urban planning projects

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

hampered the process of a controlled and sustainable growth of the urban footprint.

The experiences with internationally supported action plans to improve local urban and territorial planning systems in medium-sized cities such as Cuenca and Quetzaltenango seem to point out two things. First, due to the dominance of the compact city model in planning policies, most policymakers focus on the densification task in central city areas, turning a blind eye to the fact that cities continue to grow anyway, planned or unplanned. Political priority for policies that can effectively control urban expansion is often lacking. Second, even if a realistic growth scenario is developed, urban growth into appointed expansion areas only pushes forward the urban footprint, without acknowledging the social, cultural and territorial diversity of the peri-urban rural zones. One main task in planning strategies for the controlled growth and development of medium-sized cities is to acknowledge the socio-cultural and territorial differences between urban and peri-urban zones in order to strengthen the quality of urban-rural linkages instead of denying these linkages.

NOTES:

I UN-Habitat, 2012

II Satterthwaite, 2006

III Satterthwaite, 2006; UN-Habitat, 2012)

IV Klaufus, 2010; Satterthwaite, 2006

V CEPAL, 2000: 11

VI Municipalidad de Cuenca, 2015a: 165-167; 2015b

VII expert meeting, CUNOC, 11 July 2018

REFERENCES:

CEPAL (2000) From Rapid Urbanization to the Consolidation of Human Settlements in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Territorial Perspective, CEPAL, Santiago.

Klaufus, C. (2010) 'Watching the city grow: Remittances and sprawl in intermediate Central American cities', Environment and Urbanization 22(1): 125-137.

Municipalidad de Cuenca (2015a) 'Plan de Desarrollo y Ordenamiento Territorial del cantón Cuenca'. Available at: http://www.cuenca.gob.ec/?q=system/files/PDOT_Completo_2015.pdf

Municipalidad de Cuenca (2015b) 'Plan de movilidad y espacios público'. Available at: http://www.cuenca.gob.ec/?q=content/plan-de-movilidad

Municipalidad de Quetzaltenango (2017) 'Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial Quetzaltenango'. Available at: https://issuu.com/georgearriola/docs/plan_de_ordenamiento_territorial_de_b8a2738f37c8c9

Satterthwaite, D. (2006), Outside the Large Cities: the Demographic Importance of Small Urban Centres and Large Villages in Africa, Asia and Latin America, Discussion Paper Series, Urban Change 3, IIED, London.

UN-Habitat (2012) State of Latin American and Caribbean Cities: Towards a New Urban Transition. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

Towards sustainable urbanisation in Latin America and the Caribbean

Manuel Fuentes and Rebecca Brandão

Project managers of the International Cooperation Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean

The change in the geographic organisation of the population increased the pressure for urban services and for natural resources. The problem is this process does not necessarily occur with due attention to the specific environmental demands of the region for urban spaces to become sustainable. A sustainable urban development then becomes a challenge and an objective of national and local governments and the international agenda. So, instead of being sources of environmental impacts, cities are propellers of sustainable urban development.

The International Urban Cooperation Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean (IUC-LAC) stands in this scenario. It is part of the International Urban Cooperation Programme that the European Union has launched as part of its long-term strategy for the implementation of the international climate agenda, such as the New Urban Agenda. The project in Latin America and the Caribbean will last until 2020 and seeks to promote the learning of the best international practices in sustainable urban development issues. Specifically the IUC-LAC Programme is the interdisciplinary platform for action between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.

For all that, a unique opportunity for cities to contribute to curbing the impact of climate change, establish ambitious goals, form lasting partnerships, test new solutions and promote their international profile.

The IUC-LAC Programme follows three lines of work. At the local level, we work on two axes: cooperation between cities in Latin America with European cities and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. At the regional level, international cooperation between innovation regions for local and regional development.

The cooperation between cities aims to provide knowledge exchange helping to drive smart, green and inclusive growth. Working as partners with a common philosophy, the best methods to plan, finance, develop, regulate and manage cities will be promoted.

The cities are chosen in specific calls that consider the characteristics of each country. The selection is based on a choice of complementary pairs in relation to a common challenge and that considers regional balance, urban comparability, commitments, resources and availability of best practices, size, socio-economic structure, location, level of urban development or existing links, etc. The common interest guides the cooperation. It is guaranteed that the process of selection and evaluation of the cities is neutral and democratic, with representatives of associations of municipalities and other organizations under the coordination of the IUC-LAC.

Some themes chosen by the cities are: urban renewal, solid waste management, sustainable tourism, renewable energy, support for entrepreneurs, smart city, rehabilitation of river banks, urban mobility, urban green areas, water and flood control.

In the development phase, that is to say, once the association has been announced, the teams of both cities and the

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

programme share information and begin the process of understanding the problem and the needs of the counterpart. The cities develop local action plans for sustainable urban development on the priority of knowledge exchange identified. The Local Action Plans must include economically viable pilot projects and activities that can be carried out in the short term and that encourage research, business and the local community.

Even in the local action of the IUC-LAC Programme, the cities of Latin America can be involved with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, a global initiative to address climate change based on the action of cities and subnational localities. It is the largest coalition of local managers, with more than 7,100 committed cities around the world. Agents of change and leaders in climate action address three main issues: mitigating climate change, adapting to adverse effects and universal access to safe, clean and affordable energy. Its own action plans will be launched, awakening the creative potential of economic and political actors. The mayors and local officials working from this agreement framework have the key to contribute to the Paris Agreement. The promotion of the participation of cities in Latin America, the support to carry out the plans and reach the defined goals are one of the objectives of the IUC Programme.

At the regional level, cooperation between regions serves as a growth driver in innovation and sharing of knowledge with clusters, global value chains and smart specialization strategies. Something relevant for Latin America, where governments are trying to diversify their economies based eminently on the commodity market. Part of the solution is to cooperate closely with the private sector, helping to gather companies inside and outside the EU, as well as involving small and medium-sized companies.

Already in its development phase, the project presents many of its advantages and contributions towards a sustainable urbanization. The technical visits between cities and between regions, the articulation of the joint action plans and the regional and national governance of the Pact follow a path of significant positive impact on the reality of the region.

Already in its development phase, the project presents many of its advantages and contributions towards a sustainable urbanization, such as the increase of the subnational participation of cities to address climate change, especially in their commitment and actions related to the Global Covenant of Mayors and in their cooperation in the themes of sustainable urban development. In addition, technical visits between cities and between regions, the continuation of the articulation of the joint action plans and the regional and national governance of the Pact follow a path of significant positive impact on the reality of the region.

This progress must lead to the achievement of the objectives proposed by the project, as well as to the creation of a reference base for other future experiences. The cities and regions that have already started their cooperation should become cases of recognized good practices. It is expected that these cases of good practices will turn into show case cities and that the solutions thought will be shared and implemented in other places. In addition, another perspective of the project is to keep the regionalization of the Covenant of Mayors so that the reports continue to maintain the cities in the path of sustainability.

Local communities are the places where the impacts of climate change are most felt. They are, therefore, natural and powerful agents in that struggle.

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

Sustainable and inclusive cities, a common challenge for Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean

Catherine Paquette Vassalli

Urbanist, researcher at the French Institute of Research for Sustainable Development (IRD).

Due to the high level of urbanisation in Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe (in Latin America in particular, the urban population is already 80%), the future of societies in these two regions will be determined to a large extent by the type of development that will be achieved in the cities. We know that the issue of environmental sustainability has become more relevant. Although much remains to be done in this area (on topics as sensitive as air quality or the impacts of climate change), we can consider that significant progress has already been realised in many cities. The theme is a priority and is generating more and more forums and reflections around the world, integrating a growing number of actors from different horizons, which is encouraging. On the other hand, the problem of social inclusion, that is, the social side of the sustainable city, is often less discussed. However, in order to achieve a viable transition of cities towards greater sustainability, "without leaving anyone behind", as proposed by the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito by the United Nations just two years ago, we know that progress will have to be made both socially and in the ecological and economic dimensions.

To address urban sustainability with emphasis on the social sphere, the EU-LAC Foundation and the Institute of the Americas, together with the French Development Agency, organized in Paris in late May 2018 the International Colloquium "Sustainable Cities, engine of social transformation in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean". The event included the participation of speakers from both regions, coming from very different perspectives: academics, experts, elected officials, development banks, and representatives of civil society. In particular,

three key issues were identified as levers to achieve a transformation towards more sustainable and inclusive cities: access for all to basic urban goods and services; employment and shared economic prosperity; and culture in a broad sense, as a vector of social cohesion, which promotes coexistence and allows the participation of all in the co-production of the city.

Urban issues are presented differently in both regions. The incidence of poverty and social inequalities (and as a consequence, socio-spatial inequalities) is, for example, higher in Latin America and the Caribbean, as recalled by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Alicia Bárcena, who participated in the opening session of the event. However, there are shared problems between the two regions and the exchange of experiences can be very fruitful. The colloquium showed that progress can be made in the formulation of common guidelines for public policies towards the construction of more inclusive cities.

One of them is undoubtedly the guiding role of culture in a broad sense. This issue is not usually associated with the problem of the sustainable city. However, it has a great potential to transform cities and make them more inclusive, as shown by the experience of the Houses of Culture installed by the Mayor of Barranquilla in its low-income neighbourhoods, with the aim of involving marginalized youth.

Another key issue debated during the colloquium is the issue of the social and solidarity economy as a generator of shared economic prosperity, as well as the new business models linked to the sustainable city and its potential to create jobs.

EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

The existence of an important field of possible experimentation in this matter is evident, as evidenced by the examples of Madrid and Bilbao, the one of some Brazilian cities, as well as the case of Paris, in relation to its new climate action plan.

On the other hand, access to essential urban services remains a necessary condition to guarantee urban inclusion. As could be seen through the exposition of the cases of the city of Hamburg and its municipal companies, and the account of the experience of several cities in Bolivia, there is not a single "good" model of management in the matter (private? public?). The existence of strong political will on the part of governments to act in favour of access to these goods and services appear as the key determinant.

The book that is currently in the process of elaboration from the colloquium will allow the development of these themes along with others that emerged as key elements for the construction of sustainable cities that are also inclusive and that generate opportunities for all.

EU-LAC Foundation's Activities

Cooperation Agreement

The Foundation formalises partnership with the ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen).

[...]

Books presentation in Havana, Cuba

The Foundation launched the publication about the Caribbean together with the study on Food Security.

[...]

Presentation of the publication "Latin America- The political year 2017"

The Foundation in cooperation with the CERI- Science Po Paris and the GIGA Institute organised the presentation of the publication in Berlin.

[...]

Satellite event "Port cities in globalisation - Barranquilla and Hamburg"

The Foundation in cooperation with the Universidad del Norte and the OEI organised a satellite event in Bogota, Colombia.

[...]

International Conference "Port Cities - Doors of Continents Barranquilla and the ports of Northern Europe: past and present"

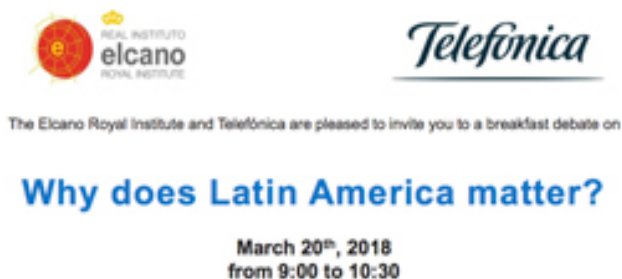The Foundation supported and participated in the International Conference held in Barranquilla, Colombia .

[...]

Presentation of the Report "Why does Latin America matter?"

The Foundation participated in the presentation of the Elcano Royal Institute Report "Why does Latin America matter?", in Brussels.

[...]

Reflection Forum 2018

Representatives from the Foundation Members, academics and practitioners gathered for a dynamic dialogue in Bruges about "Why should the EU be of relevance for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)? And why should LAC be of relevance for the EU?".

[...]

Conference: Coffee Worlds

The conference of the historian Christiane Berth was organised by the Instituto Cervantes of Hamburg with the support of the Foundation and the Honorary Consulate of El Salvador in Hamburg.

[...]

Conference: States-Nation, History and Universities. What history is learned in universities in Latin America and the European Union and what stories should be encouraged?"

The Conference was organised by a consortium between the University of Alcalá of Spain and the Autonomous University of Chile and co- financed by the EU-LAC Foundation [...]

Long Night of the Consulates 2018"

The EU-LAC Foundation participated for the sixth consecutive year in this event in Hamburg.

[...]

The EU-CELAC agenda in times of global interregionalism

The event was organised by the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) and co- funded by the EU-LAC Foundation.

[...]

MAY 23 – 26, 2018 • BARCELONA, SPAIN

XXXVI International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association

The EU-LAC Foundation was one of the main institutional sponsors of the LASA2018 Congress.

[...]

International Colloquium IdA- EU-LAC Foundation: Sustainable Cities in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean as a driver of social transformation

The Colloquium was co-organised by the Institute des Amériques (IdA) and the EU-LAC Foundation in collaboration with the French Development Agency (AFD).

[...]

II EU-LAC Youth Days: Meeting of organisations that aim to promote youth volunteering between the EU and LAC

This event was organised by the EU-LAC Foundation and the Government of Aragon, Spain.

[...]

Seminar: Latin American and the European Union Relations: A renewed political alliance?

The event was organised by the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste Foundation and supported by the EU-LAC Foundation and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB).

[...]

II EU-LAC Awards Ceremony

EU HR/VP Mogherini and Minister Castaneda of El Salvador present the EU-LAC Awards to celebrate bi-regional relations.

[...]

Seminar: Local alliances for global challenges

The event was organised y the Euro-Latin American Alliance for Cooperation between Cities (AL-LAs), the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities and the Complutense University of Madrid and co- funded by the EU-LAC Foundation.

[...]

Programme for Junior Diplomats from Central America & the EU

The programme had the participation of representatives from 18 Central America, Mexico, Haiti and the EU countries.

[...]

Young Researchers

-
Mario Ortiz Bonilla

Use of virtual reality and reference systems for the process of designing solutions to urban mobility

The process of designing solutions to urban mobility is costly and can be difficult to carry out. Furthermore, only in a few cases the process is focused in the final user, which compromises the acceptance and success of the solution.
To incorporate the users and receive their opinion during the early stages of the process, it is necessary to collect their views on the solution. The opinion given must be based on the direct interaction between the user and the object or service proposed.

One way of creating this interaction is by using a prototype or human scale model of the solution. However, it is not always possible to build these devices due to their size and high costs. These obstacles is particularly evident when talking about grand scale solutions, such as urban spaces, or big objects, such as planes.

There are companies that use virtual reality to develop the design of their products. For example the PSA group and Airbus use VR to facilitate the process of product conception, while capturing the opinions of the end-users to ensure the success of their projects. This research proposes to enhance the use of virtual reality technology in processes of design with the use of reference systems to analyse the information captured through virtual simulations. The use of both tools facilitates the creation of classification algorithms and, finally, the recognition of recommendations for the simulated solutions.

The objective of the research is to explore the existent literature and develop fieldwork using virtual reality and reference systems through tools such as Unity 3D and the HTC Vive virtual reality helmet.

The result of the work is a methodology for the "use of virtual reality and reference systems to improve the process of designing solutions to urban mobility". The methodology consists of 5 steps to improve the process of design by identifying the user, conducting a simulation or direct interaction with the product, and capturing the user's experience. The information retrieved from these steps is then analysed and recommendations are drawn for the people responsible of the design to facilitate their decision-making process.

The design of the Gare de Nancy is used as a case study and it is examined to show the strengths and reach of prototypes in virtual reality.

A platform was developed to connect all the steps of the methodology: user identification, virtual simulation and a survey according to the analysed solution.

The selection of the Young Researcher project is done through a call published on the EU-LAC Foundation networks and website.

[...]
The selection of the Young Researcher project is done through a call published on the EU-LAC Foundation social networks and website.

Publications

EU-LAC FOUNDATION

EU-LAC Foundation. (2017)
Vademecum on EU- Cooperation Programmes with LAC. EU-LAC
EU-LAC Foundation, Hamburg.

U-LAC Foundation, CERALE, Institut des Amériques (2017)
The Internationalisation of Latin American SMEs and their Projection in Europe.
EU-LAC Foundation, Hamburg.

Botella Rodríguez, E., James Heredia, J., Velasco, G. K. (2017)
Food Security in the European Union, Latin American and the Caribbean: The Cases of Cuba and Spain
EU-LAC Foundation, Hamburg.

Sánchez, F. & Hernández Nieto, R. (2017)
Institutional and regulatory foundations for the establishment of the European, Latin American and Caribbean Area for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.
EU-LAC Foundation, FLACSO Spain and University of Salamanca.

EU-LAC Foundation. (2017)
The Caribbean in the EU-CELAC Partnership.
EU-LAC Foundation, Hamburg.

EU-LAC Foundation (2018).
Forging Bonds with Emigrants: Challenges for Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean,
EU-LAC Foundation, Hamburg.

EU-LAC Foundation & ECLAC (2018).
The European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean: Convergent and sustainable strategies in the current global environment.
ECLAC, Santiago de Chile.

Pinto de Villechenon, F. [et al.] (2018)
Latin American SMEs, and training programmes for their internationalization,
EU-LAC Foundation, Hamburg. Available in French.

Events of the Foundation

September- December

Latin American and the Caribbean Fall Festival 2018
Hamburg, Germany

12-13 September

Seminar "Labour market inclusion of young women in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union: From good practices to innovative policies"
Mexico

17-18 September

Conference: Across the Atlantic– trade between the EU and Latin America
Hamburg & Berlin, Germany

18 September

 Inauguration of the Latin American and the Caribbean Fall Festival
Hamburg, Germany

3- 4 October

International Conference: Crisis of Governability? The politics of migration governance in Latin America & Europe
Buenos Aires, Argentina

20 October

The LACalytics 2018 Conference
Hamburg, Germany

25 October

Conference: Present and Future of the Barranquilla Ports
Hamburg, Germany

The EU-LAC Foundation is not responsible for the content or reliability of any other website, publications or events to which we provide a link and do not endorse the views expressed within them. External contributions to the newsletter are independent and do not represent the views of the EU-LAC Foundation and its Members.

The EU-LAC Foundation is financed through voluntary contributions of its Member Countries and in particular the European Union.