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# BUILDING BACK BETTER

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# Opinion Articles



## JOIN FORCES FOR A SUSTAINABLE RECONSTRUCTION

**Leire Pajín Iraola**

President of the European Union - Latin America  
and the Caribbean Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation)

We live in complex times, of uncertainty and increased vulnerabilities. The magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis has shaken the foundations of global security, hitting every region on the planet hard. Surely the world has never felt interdependence in such an abrupt way as it does now: global challenges affect everyone and cannot be tackled unilaterally or in isolation. The security and well-being of our societies depend on the protection of human life against all threats, be they sanitary, economic, alimentary, environmental, or social. No person will be safe if the planet as a whole is not. This situation naturally influences global governance, and political, commercial, and international relations dynamics.

In this context, the commitment to strengthening the relations of The Other Transatlantic Relationship between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union - in the words of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell - acquires even greater relevance. In addition to our deep-rooted historical and cultural connections, we are united by the shared principles of freedom, democracy, equality, and solidarity; values that underpin the essence of our identities as a whole, in which diversity and plurality are also common characteristics. A valuable potential to add the opportunity to strengthen our cooperation to overcome this unprecedented crisis.

Maria Zambrano, a brilliant philosopher and freethinker who lived her life on both sides of the ocean, used to say that “a catastrophe can be truly catastrophic, if something does not

emerge from it that rescues and surpasses it, something that transforms the experience into knowledge and, hopefully, into purpose”. The commitment of both regions in the defence of multilateralism and the 2030 Agenda, constitutes a solid foundation on which to reinforce our alliance and build, by sharing learnings and experiences, an ambitious and transformative agenda that incorporates the lessons learned, to guarantee an inclusive and sustainable recovery that transcends the catastrophe through knowledge and will.

Unfortunately, this crisis also leaves us with the paradox that represents the more than probable halt in the efforts, already insufficient in themselves, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a circumstance that aggravates the social disaster with the increase and worsening of global inequalities. The impact of this crisis on broad sections of the population whose precarious living conditions prevent them from complying with health security measures, accessing a health system with guarantees, or benefiting from some type of social protection is very worrying. So is the impact on women, most of whom are at the forefront of the health and care response, who have seen increases in their lack of protection, inequality, and gender violence.

All of this shows the structural shortcomings of our global development model, which is having serious consequences in Latin America and the Caribbean. Different agencies and organisations have been warning in recent months about the negative evolution of the pandemic in the region, which is



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home to a third of the infected people in the world. In addition to this epidemiological situation, there is a deep economic recession with high unemployment, reduced exports, and high indebtedness, with a high risk of a financial crisis. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), for the region the year 2020 was the one with the lowest economic growth in the last four decades, with per capita income that has fallen more than 4% in the last six years.

In this context, the levels of poverty, housing precariousness, or the risk of food insecurity increase alarmingly, coupled with limited access to sanitation and adequate basic health care. We cannot ignore that these deep inequalities in health have their origins in disinvestment. According to the Pan American Health Organisation (OPAS), the region's GDP would need to increase by 2% more to guarantee this assistance. Reducing inequalities in health should be a priority and one of the challenges of recovery for all countries in the region, regardless of their income and development levels.

In this sense, health cooperation offers a broad coverage framework to strengthen health systems, including public health aspects such as prevention, mitigation, and preparation for future challenges such as this crisis. Unfortunately, the current context has demonstrated in the worst possible way the urgent need to strengthen our preparedness and rapid response capacities to epidemic outbreaks, environmental crises, and other global challenges, connecting the best knowledge and advances in digital technology of the two regions.

Along the same lines, health systems will be able to reduce the gaps, as long as they guarantee the universality and quality of services, taking into account territorial and community aspects that incorporate social determinants. Moving in this direction implies integrated universal social protection systems that guarantee this universality of access. Maintaining this broad view of health, connected to social protection, is key to breaking the circles of disease, exclusion, and poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean.

However, this crisis also leaves us with important lessons on

the greater effectiveness of joint and coordinated responses. Proof of this is the determined global commitment to the connection between health and science, which, supported by political will, has mobilised all available capacities and resources and has managed to produce a vaccine in a very short time. A vaccine that must be accessible to all the inhabitants of the planet, if we want, in addition to responding to minimum ethical values, to achieve sufficient and effective immunisation. This is where the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean should join efforts to achieve this.

In terms of management, we have also been able to verify how political leadership based on public health recommendations has been reinforced with rigorous scientific criteria and institutional coordination at all levels.

Regarding restriction or mitigation measures, we cannot ignore that, in a region with high labour informality and low incomes, home confinement has compliance limitations for sheer survival. In addition, inequality increases the digital divide in households and prevents both telework and remote education, limiting future opportunities for the most vulnerable children.

Added to job insecurity and social vulnerability is the overload of care, both in social and health systems and in the home, where confinement measures entail greater exposure to gender violence. These issues are part of the common agenda of the EU and LAC for gender equality, making use of their leadership capacity and influence in multilateral forums. This is another area of cooperation and exchange between both regions, sharing experiences and joining forces to exercise international leadership that contributes to mitigating gender inequalities.

Latin America is also facing a serious mobility crisis that currently has a dual focus. On the one hand, forced displacement and on the other, economic and climatic migration. At this time, these migrants are doubly vulnerable, having to face the added risk of contagion from COVID. There is an urgent need for a new migration policy with a global approach based on respect for fundamental rights, landing on concrete measures that contribute to the development and



inclusive growth, with solidarity and shared responsibilities among the regions and countries of the world.

Finally, I would like to highlight another of the relevant challenges for Europe and Latin America, and the Caribbean: the fight against climate change. It is an unquestionable reality that has devastating effects that generate humanitarian emergencies and negative effects on the health of people and the economy of the region. Phenomena such as cyclones in the Caribbean are the consequence of carbon emissions and deforestation, the impact of which is especially tragic in the Amazon. In this sense, our two regions are working together on a common strategy to achieve a “global green deal” that can catalyse leadership at the upcoming Conference of the United Nations on Climate Change (COP26).

In short, the “re-founding” of a welfare state in the region also involves improving global governance with more participation and transparency. No progress will be possible without political and social pacts that incorporate the demands of a citizenry that has been claiming other models of development with universal, redistributive, and solidarity public policies. Other models capable of offering an inclusive

response to democracy and its rights, integrating economic, social, and environmental concerns in public policies and their legal frameworks, with special attention to the most vulnerable groups, and incorporating the gender perspective and cultural diversity.

Despite the severe blow that the global crisis caused by the pandemic has brought to the expectations of global development, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals continue to constitute the best possible roadmap to, through cooperation between regions, make this new model of an inclusive, sustainable and egalitarian society a reality, capable of preserving common public goods as a guarantee of well-being and global human security.

From the EU-LAC Foundation, a space for plural and diverse dialogue, we want to join these challenges by following the collaborative example proposed by the 2030 Agenda. We will work to incorporate new actors and perspectives within the framework of our goals and with the aim of strengthening our bi-regional strategic relationship, to help overcome the obstacles that we may encounter in fulfilling our firm commitment to sustainable development.



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## A COMMON AGENDA

### Paulo Neves

President of the Institute for the Promotion of Latin America and the Caribbean (IPDAL) and Member of the Portuguese Parliament

In the coming months, the European Union and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean will face the great challenge of finding and strengthening a common agenda that includes the fight against the pandemic and the economic recovery of the two regions. We should take advantage of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union to put pressure on all the Member States of both Regions for this necessity. The great objective is to find an Agenda of Common Interests since our challenges are mutual even if they have different intensities. We must therefore be united, but above all united in these challenges.

In fact, the impact of this pandemic on our economies is devastating. We are talking about a very clear decline in all the countries of the two regions, not only from an economic point of view but also very much from a social point of view. The figures show that in 10 months many of our countries have gone back 10 years. Some institutions even speak of a “lost generation”. We must be able to counter this dreadful trend. It is our duty.

There are major differences between our countries and our Regions in economic recovery and access to vaccination. Countries that export raw materials are recovering faster but those that depend more on services, tourism, and remittances from their emigrants are suffering much more. Millions of citizens of Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean have returned to poverty; millions of young people have left school; millions of young girls, children, and women have become even more fragile victims of violence.

We are going through risks or doubts that we must face, such as the evolution of the pandemic and the availability of vaccines for all. Up to date, 75% of the vaccines have gone to 10 countries; 130 countries in the world have not yet received any vaccine. We must never forget that only when a large part of the entire world population is vaccinated can we say that we are free from this planetary pandemic that has brought so much poverty to the world. This is why institutions such as the EU-LAC Foundation and IPDAL - the Institute for the Promotion of Latin America and the Caribbean (based in Lisbon) have a fundamental role in the awakening of Common Agendas.

Moreover, our two Regions - Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe - should strengthen trade relations through Free Trade Agreements that respect environmental and workers' rights. Good Agreements are waiting in the drawers and others that must be updated quickly. We will all gain from the approval of new Free Trade Agreements. Other aspects that we should pay attention to are those related to the end of monetary and fiscal stimulus measures and measures to support people and companies in both Regions. Some of these stimuli - which are fundamental to curb company bankruptcies and unemployment - are diminishing or even ending. The Multilateral Banks play a fundamental role here, such as the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) in the implementation of large structural public works. We must also pay great attention to informal workers, who number in the hundreds of millions in Latin America and who are the poorest amongst the poorest,



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without any social protection but forced to live in confinements that are synonymous with hunger.

Other great common challenges that we have are the following: regional integration, increased productivity; poverty reduction; a commitment to methods of good governance and a huge fight against corruption; the strengthening of State institutions such as parliaments and regulators; making justice more credible; strengthening free media; security forces loyal to the citizens; safety of people and their goods; better

public services; better support for social security; a commitment to health; a commitment to education; legal security for investments; fight against tax evasion; environmental protection; a commitment to a green and circular economy.

In brief, this is about the defence of Human Dignity in both Regions; a dignity that should not choose peoples, countries, or regions. We all have the right to that Dignity. Because, after all, we are all born equal.



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## JOINING FORCES TO BUILDING BACK BETTER: VIEWPOINTS FROM THE CARIBBEAN

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Executive Director of the Caribbean Community  
Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)

If crises build the character of nations, Caribbean states, faced with two ongoing and unprecedented crises, are full of character, even if shaken. The COVID-19 pandemic and the escalating and adverse impacts of climate change have caused unparalleled socio-economic disruptions that have upended our lives and eroded the Region's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Caribbean states are struggling to save lives and livelihoods in the face of a persistent and worsening pandemic and the ongoing onslaught of climate-related hazards that include stronger hurricanes, increasing droughts and forest fires, floods, sea-level rise, and coastal erosion. The pandemic is expected to cause losses equivalent to 5.4%<sup>1</sup> of the Region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with some individual Member States realising losses of over 17% of GDP in 2020<sup>2</sup>. Employment is projected to decrease by 8-9% across the entire Region<sup>3</sup>. These pandemic-related losses, coupled with the annual climate-related losses equivalent to 2-3% of the Region's GDP<sup>4</sup>, which masks the devastation that the three Category 5 hurricanes caused in the Region between 2017-2019, demonstrate that the Region must join forces with partners to recover from the pandemic and become more climate-resilient. Building back better will

require regional governments to (i) prioritise investments in the public health system and social protections, (ii) utilise Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as blueprints to stimulate low-carbon climate-resilient development, and (iii) scale-up investment in the digital ecosystem to harness the power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enable recovery and growth.

### **Investment in public health systems and Social protections key to recovery**

There will be no recovery in the Region without a global and regional effort to curtail the COVID-19 pandemic that has already resulted in over 460,000 cases and over 6726 deaths in the Caribbean.<sup>5</sup> Governments, despite the limited fiscal space, must find innovative ways to invest in the public health systems to respond to pandemic's challenges, while at the same time ensuring that they expand the social protection systems to protect the most vulnerable in our societies (women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities). These investments in the public health system (e.g., expanded testing and contact tracing, Personal Protective Equipment - PPE), must continue even as the countries continue to find ways to procure sufficient vaccines to inoculate their populations. With the number of SARS-COV-2 variants increasing, Caribbean States must remain steadfast in prioritising investments in the health system.

1 ECLAC. The Caribbean Outlook: forging a people-centered approach to sustainable development post-COVID-19 (LC/SES.38/12), Santiago, 2020.

2 CARICOM Business. <https://today.caricom.org/wp-content/uploads/CARICOM-Business-29-January-2021.pdf>

3 ECLAC. "Recovery measures for the tourism sector in Latin America and the Caribbean present an opportunity to promote sustainability and resilience", COVID-19 Reports, Santiago, July 2020

4 IMF 2019. Building Resilience in Developing Countries Vulnerable to Large Natural Disasters.

5 CARPHA. Tracking COVID-19. <https://www.carpha.org/Portals/0/Images/Dashboard-TrackingCOVID19-CARPHA.jpg>.





## **Nationally Determined Contributions as Blue Print for Climate Resilient Growth**

Caribbean governments must resist the temptation to return to a pre-pandemic economy by seizing the opportunity to build back better. Investments that are climate resilient and aligned to sustainable development priorities must be prioritised and pursued. The NDCs can serve as blueprints to catalyse recovery efforts across the Region. The timing is most opportune now as the majority of Caribbean countries are currently in the process of articulating their enhanced NDCs for submission to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.<sup>6</sup> The NDCs should contain ambitious targets to make key sectors, such as health, energy, transport, agriculture, forestry, technology, and water more resilient to climate change. Channelling national and international investments to these key areas will stimulate growth, provide jobs, reduce systemic vulnerabilities while improving climate resilience.

While the NDCs can serve as blueprints for recovery and building back better, the financing of the NDCs will remain a serious challenge, especially as the Region is reeling from the increasing debt levels, disappearing fiscal space, and the reallocation of scarce resources to protect lives and livelihoods, and annual climate-related disasters. In short, the Region will need significant help. The Prime Minister of Barbados called for a restructuring of debt or debt moratorium in the region to “prevent a ‘disorderly unravelling’ that will create crises within our countries and the global financial system.” The UN Secretary-General recently called on International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to “do all we can to prevent what could be a devastating debt crisis with disorderly defaults”<sup>7</sup> and explore new arrangements and management options to tackle short and long-term recovery. Thus, a coordinated debt sustainability strategy is a sine qua non of any sustained recovery efforts to build back better. While debt will continue to be a stranglehold on many Caribbean states, governments can rely on a combination of

national mechanisms (e.g., contingency funds, risk-transfer instruments) and international instruments (e.g., debt for climate swaps, green and blue bonds, and other ex-ante financial instruments with disaster-linked clauses) to finance NDCs implementation.

Already, international development partners (IDPs) are earmarking significant resources to fund NDCs. The political leadership must resist the temptation to pursue short-term strategies that may undermine long-term resilience. Countries with clear, concise, and ambitious NDCs will be able to provide donors, lenders, and investors with a coordinated and transparent envelope of resilient recovery needs to channel climate finance to the Region. Concomitantly, IDPs, particularly donors, must recognise that the current climate finance architecture requires an overhaul to meet the NDC and SDGs needs of Caribbean states. The current finance flow arrangements to the Region are too slow, too little, and too bureaucratic. Accordingly, new NDC funding envelopes must utilise new fit-for-purpose arrangements and instruments to allow countries to recover from the pandemic, make progress on their SDGs and improve their climate resilience by building back better.

## **Prioritize Investments in the Digital Economy and ICTs**

Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) continue to prove indispensable during the pandemic. Bolstering the digital ecosystem in the Caribbean to increase in broadband penetration can increase GDP growth by 1.9% for every 10% increase in broadband penetration, while also providing significant employment,<sup>8</sup> and enabling the provision of e-services such as e-health, e-commerce, e-education, and remote work opportunities that will be critical for sustained recovery.

The dual crises of climate change and COVID-19 pandemic have presented the Region with unprecedented challenges; yet there are opportunities to join forces to recover, build back better, become more climate-resilient while advancing our progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We must seize them!

6 As of January 2021, Among Caribbean countries only Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, and Suriname have submitted their revised NDCs to the UN-FCCC;

7 United Nations, [https://peru.un.org/sites/default/files/202006/un\\_policy\\_brief\\_on\\_debt\\_relief\\_and\\_covid\\_april\\_2020.pdf](https://peru.un.org/sites/default/files/202006/un_policy_brief_on_debt_relief_and_covid_april_2020.pdf)

8 ITU 2019. <https://digitalregulation.org/wp-content/uploads/D-PREF-EF.BDT-AM-2019-PDF-E.pdf>



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## THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: FROM AN OPPORTUNITY TO A NECESSITY TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

**Sebastián Nieto Parra**

Head for Latin America and the Caribbean, Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) ended 2020 facing a historic health, social and economic crisis. The effect of the COVID-19 crisis is greater than in any other emerging and developing region, with practically a general recession in all countries of the region and a significant increase in poverty (OECD 2020)<sup>9</sup>.

Faced with this unprecedented scenario of the pandemic and the adopted containment measures, the role of new technologies for consumers, students, workers, and companies has grown substantially. Thus, this crisis reminds us that digital transformation is not an opportunity but a necessity for further development in the region.

The spread of the Internet and the adoption of digital technologies have been crucial to maintaining a certain continuity in economic activity thanks to e-commerce, in the labour market thanks to teleworking, and in education thanks to online education from home. However, the digital divide in terms of access, use, and skills has prevented many, especially the most vulnerable families, students, workers, and companies, from benefiting from these solutions.

The COVID-19 crisis may precisely drive the moment to adopt the necessary reforms that ensure the benefits of digital

transformation for all. Based on the joint report of the Development Centre of the OECD, the ECLAC, the CAF, and the European Commission, Latin American Economic Outlook 2020 (LEO), this article summarises areas of action in five specific fields: at the level of companies, households, workers, students, and public institutions. This note concludes with the need to more effectively integrate digital agendas into development strategies and to promote the role of international cooperation as a facilitator for digital transformation (OECD et al., 2020)<sup>10</sup>.

The countries of the region have been characterised by a high and growing productivity gap compared to developed economies. The digital revolution should be the driving force behind productivity growth, especially for micro and small businesses that are lagging behind. To take advantage of the digital revolution, indispensable and complementary dimensions are necessary, such as a comprehensive digital ecosystem, adequate infrastructures, including telecommunications and transport infrastructure, and widespread digital skills at a company level.

Digital transformation influences the quality of life of households, labour markets, and education. In addition to the considerable improvements recorded in recent years, there are still gaps between different socio-economic groups in terms

9 OECD (2020), COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional socio-economic implications and policy priorities, OECD Publishing, Paris, [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=129\\_129904-k3xp17fqbl&title=COVID-19-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean-Regional-socio-economic-implications-and-policy-priorities](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=129_129904-k3xp17fqbl&title=COVID-19-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean-Regional-socio-economic-implications-and-policy-priorities).

10 OECD / CAF / UN ECLAC / EU (2020) Latin American Economic Outlook 2020: Digital Transformation for Building Back Better, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/20725140>.



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of skills and also disparities in terms of access and use. For example, when entering the COVID-19 crisis, less than half of Latin Americans had enough experience in using computers and digital tools for basic professional tasks, so in reality more than half of the population of the region was excluded from remote activities (OECD et al., 2020). In the labour market, new technologies bring opportunities, but they also present challenges. Two out of every ten jobs are at high risk of automation in several Latin American and Caribbean countries, while another four could experience significant changes in the tasks involved (OECD et al., 2020). But new job opportunities are also emerging. In the case of workers in declining industries, policies to support the transition to new job opportunities are essential. All segments of the population, and especially women, must acquire digital skills at an early age and throughout life. It is not enough to provide disadvantaged students and educational centres with greater access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), since programs are required to also enable students and teachers to acquire the appropriate skills. Policy actions must help speed up the digital transformation, guaranteeing greater social cohesion and well-being.

Digital technologies can help restore trust in public institutions by making them more credible, efficient, inclusive, and innovative. For example, the digital transformation of governments can favour the achievement of more inclusive public services, especially relevant in the context of COVID-19, through open data policies and services in education or health through electronic media, in addition to facilitating interaction with interest groups and citizen participation in decision-making (OECD et al., 2020).

Thus, the digital transformation encompasses a series of public policies that must be included in national development

plans through a coordinated approach, with a direct link to digital agendas. According to an exercise in text mining of development plans, the topics with the greatest representation in the national development plans of the region are Internet access and its use, the communication infrastructure, and the future of work (OECD et al., 2020). Attention paid to the development of the digital economy remains scant, as only a small number of proposals were identified regarding the promotion of e-commerce, open banking, or financial technology companies. Regional integration is important for the bulk of countries, but few countries consider regional digital integration as part of their overall goal of achieving a competitive and innovative economy. A fundamental element is that digital agendas are increasingly integrated into the development strategies of each country and their implementation is promoted.

Given that digital transformation poses challenges and opportunities that transcend national borders, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, it is essential that LAC coordinates its digital policies at the international level. The region can benefit from international and innovative alliances if these promote and facilitate nationally sponsored processes and place countries on an equal footing to exchange knowledge on digital inclusion policies that guarantee digital skills for all. They should also build on existing capacities and create new ones that stimulate national and international reforms.

Multilateral cooperation has never been more important. For example, the difficulties posed by the digitisation of the economy in fiscal matters require international coordination of the different countries. The region should play an active role in the international debate, on an equal footing, to reach consensus and also solutions through facilitating multilateral cooperation for digital transformation (OECD et al., 2020).



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## CARE AND CERTIFICATION OF LABOUR COMPETENCIES

### Francesco Maria Chiodi <sup>11</sup>

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As in other economic crises, the one we are experiencing in Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of COVID-19 shows the strategic value of human capital for a society to better cope with adverse events. Also, from the perspective of recovery, it is essential to invest in the strengthening of human capital, that is, in the set of capacities, competences, knowledge, and abilities of people.

Given this premise, if women are being particularly affected by the economic recession, among other reasons because they are mostly located in the worst-hit sectors (tourism, manufacturing, commerce, etc.) and low productivity occupations, it will be important that the improvement of their job skills becomes a priority. This would help them to reintegrate into the labour market and improve their conditions of participation in it.

Among women, there is a subset that has been identified for its high vulnerability. These are women who work in private homes. There they carry out the tasks of domestic service and/or the care of dependent people (children, elderly, or people with disabilities), and it is often quite difficult to distinguish the former from the latter. This sector, which in the region is characterized by low levels of remuneration and a high rate of informality, has experienced large job losses in 2020. The interannual variation of those employed in salaried work in households has been -32.2% (weighted average, 2nd quarter of 2020)<sup>12</sup>.

According to data from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the proportion of women in the household sector as domestic workers affiliated with or contributing to the social security system is barely 24%<sup>13</sup>. As long as informality persists, for these women, not only access to social protection will remain precarious. It will also be difficult to take advantage of other opportunities linked to formal employment (wage regulation, unemployment benefits, vocational training, etc.).

However, the solution to the problem is far from simple<sup>14</sup>. One of the aspects that can have positive repercussions is the improvement of the levels of employability of the workers of private houses, and with it, open the way so that they can access the market of the care services of dependent people, where employment is more formal and better paid. To this end, what is proposed here is a vast action to certify skills, and train women who are normally employed in the household sector as domestic workers.

lenges”, *Employment Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean*, No 23, United Nations.

13 ECLAC (2020), “La autonomía económica de las mujeres en la recuperación sostenible y con igualdad”, *Informe Especial COVID-19*, No. 5, Santiago.

14 According to the ILO (Salazar- Xirinachs, JM & Chacaltana, J. (2018) *Políticas de Formalización en América Latina: Avances y Desafíos*, ILO), the total informal employment rate (agricultural and non-agricultural) in Latin America and the Caribbean is 53 %, about 140 million people. The formalisation process observed in the first decade of the 21st century was associated in the first instance with the relatively high rates of economic growth of the 2002-2013 period, which were complemented by deliberate policies, which had increasing intensity over time, although with differences between countries. With the change in the cycle towards a slowdown in growth, from 2015 informality increased again.

11 The author appreciates the contributions by Ximena Concha Bañados, also the result of her long career as Executive Secretary of the Commission of the National System of Certification of Labour Competencies, Chile Valora.

12 ILO - ECLAC (2020), “Employment trends in an unprecedented crisis: policy chal-



Several countries in the region have systems for the evaluation and certification of labour competencies that are structured around two main components. On the one hand, a process aimed at identifying and standardising the competences demanded by the labour market in terms of knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes associated with certain job functions; on the other, a systematised process that allows to evaluate a person's job performance according to these same competencies and to give them an official certificate as long as they have proven to be 'competent' in the evaluated capabilities.

The advantages of certifying, especially when this measure is combined with training, could basically be the following five:

1) It would be the first step to greater status and visibility to the role that these women fulfil in society. Although their role has high social importance, they are in the lowest positions of the hierarchy also because their work is not associated with formal recognition or professional career. The foregoing would result in greater self-esteem and appreciation of women employed in these areas. In addition, when certification is linked to training, women learn more about their rights and duties at work, safety issues at work, health, contractual aspects, etc.

2) In principle, the certification of labour competencies becomes a useful tool to better negotiate salaries and working conditions, especially in the presence of other concomitant factors (for example, greater transparency of the demand-supply interaction). It could also allow a person who is an unpaid family caregiver, to professionalise their trade and thereby obtain remuneration through the certification of their skills, as long as they can extend such care work outside their own home.

3) As mentioned above, certification assumes that common quality standards have been set, thereby ensuring that certified individuals who perform these trades are adequately prepared to perform them and meet the required standards. The result of the competency evaluation process allows a person who intends to become certified to know what gaps they have in relation to the standards and, therefore, what they have to improve through training.

4) On the other hand, certification can become a great contribution to social and professional mobility, opening up development prospects. Thus, for example, a domestic employee with experience in care for the elderly could, through adequate training, acquire the necessary skills to obtain certification in jobs such as "caregiver of the elderly", for which more specific knowledge in the field of health, safety, psychosocial support, etc. is required.

5) Finally, societies require more and more care<sup>15</sup>, especially due to the increase in life expectancy. The sector represents an expanding occupational field and an engine of the post-COVID-19 economic reactivation. However, private demand for these services shrinks at times of severe economic recession and in a context of forced social distancing. Hence the importance of public investment to extend the network of care services: along with responding to a social need, new sources of employment would be created which adequately prepared women could take advantage of.

In conclusion, the certification of competencies and the training of women who perform domestic and care tasks could become a key link in a policy that simultaneously promotes the economic autonomy of women and the development of their human capital. Of course, this hypothesis should also be tested in the field.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. De Henau, J., S. Himmelweit and D. Perrons (2017), *Investing in the Care Economy: Simulating Employment Effects by Gender in Countries in Emerging Economies*, Brussels, International Trade Union Confederation.



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## THE BENEFITS OF A CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR THE RECOVERY FROM THE PANDEMIC

**Janja Kreitmayer McKenzie**

Secretary (Senior Counselor) at the Ministry for the Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenia

The COVID-19 crisis has forced us to face unrepresented challenges nationally as well as globally. Moreover, the crisis came at a time when the call for climate action was perhaps at the highest point on the political agenda so far. Today, we already know (and feel) that the excessive use of natural resources and the production of huge amounts of waste and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have resulted in dire problems. These problems affect society and the environment and are also making the economy, as we know it today, less and less competitive.

A vast amount of resources has been allocated to rebuild society and the economy during the pandemic crisis worldwide. This is therefore a unique opportunity to deliver twin benefits for the environment and the economy. Most recovery programmes call for us to build back better and greener, assuring a better resiliency of our economies.

### How do we do that?

Consider that some of the major industrial metals, e.g. silver, copper, zinc, and gold will be gone in the next 10 to 20 years with the current trend of use; and many others will follow. So, several business models will not be able to stay competitive unless they begin to adapt to the new situation. Existing production and consumption models have shown that they are not capable of this adjustment. Economic growth based on the exploitation of natural resources - as if raw material reserves were unlimited -, has led to a resource crisis and a threat to the planet because of waste and other kinds of pol-

lution, with negative impacts on climate change.

So, we need different kinds of economic models. The circular economy model is one that offers solutions for increasing economic competitiveness and growth, while reducing the use of natural resources. The environmental benefits of new circular models result in reduced environmental risks, a better quality of life, better health, and a stimulating working environment. This is also a crucial tool for preserving biodiversity, which, as we know, could prevent the outbreak of other viruses.

The models offered by the circular economy can, despite the growing population, help us to achieve climate goals and preserve the environment while delivering direct benefits to the economy.

A failure to properly handle the natural resources, which provide ecosystem services to most processes in the economy will make manufacturing processes more expensive or even threatened, and issues relating to water, energy, and prices will rise, and, consequently, health and social issues. This will also make the economy less competitive.

At the same time, a circular economy is an opportunity for innovation, new technological solutions, new green jobs, and economic efficiency. It also brings a range of other societal benefits, encourages stakeholder engagement, and a joint search for solutions between governments and sectoral policies.



To recover from the pandemic, circular economy models can steer the green and low carbon investments to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and environmental damage, while at the same time minimising the external costs, ensuring rebuilding, and maximising competitiveness. Circular economy principles can prove to be very useful and efficient tools for helping design the measures of the recovery packages and investments towards green, inclusive, and competitive economies. They should be used wherever possible. National recovery plans are a perfect opportunity. The use of technologies of Industry 4.0 such as the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Blockchain are also an important part of this process.

At the same time, the transition to a circular economy is a process that requires changes in the whole society and all areas - from production and consumption patterns to changes in behaviours, values, to the development of new professions and skills, as well as innovations. Therefore, the involvement of every stakeholder - government, local communities, businesses, academia, all the supporting organisations, and consumers - is necessary.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown us how interdependent we are. Every stakeholder has its own role and responsibility. The real challenge lies in activating everyone, connecting activities and policy measures through partnerships to deliver solutions. Creating and working through partnerships is the most important new form of work. One of the most promising potentials lies in strengthening the cooperation of all parts of society.

However, a general breakthrough in this area will demand an improvement in the systemic approach to promote eco-innovation and green solutions. The role of the governments can be materialised in supporting the conditions for the aforementioned change, by making systemic adjustments, connecting policies to support such development initiatives, and also to offer a framework for linking together the stakeholders and knowledge support to businesses and cities or local communities.

Companies play a key role, both small and medium-sized businesses, that have been pioneers in recognising the opportunity

and have begun to introduce changes in new technologies and materials, as well as in the operation and organisation of new circular business models. These companies are also an excellent indicator of economic effects and other market advantages, as well as measurable environmental effects.

Many companies have already developed new solutions for their production processes, and thereby become examples of good practices of green companies or the transition to circular production models. Slovenia has significant knowledge and numerous highly developed solutions in technology (energy-efficient construction, cooling and heating, materials, and many other technologies), innovations in the field of processing waste into targeted uses (insulation materials), innovations in the field of smart services, development of high accessibility to digital data, e-services, and others. We want to further develop these advantages, both in the direction of marketing knowledge and innovation and in the direction of upgrading technologies, processes, digital solutions, and services.

Besides companies, cities and local communities are just as important for such a transition. They are key ecosystems for green and circular solutions. They have various resources (including waste) and are service providers for citizens with many opportunities to introduce circular models in the field of resource management, energy, closure of material flows, waste management, and with an impact on consumption and human behaviour. Cities and local communities are also environments in which companies thrive, whereby link models of closing material flows can be made. They are therefore an important environment and partner for companies. This transition is largely about implementing policies that are most intensively encountered in cities, as well as the fact that cities have a very strong effect on people's consumption and behaviour.

In this context, both businesses and cities are key partners for a circular transition. In working together, the examples of best practices from both cities and businesses are indispensable for: seeking solutions and designing measures for specific needs in the key sectorial policies, reducing obstacles for green solutions, and more effectively taking into account all elements of green development and make them easier to implement.



**EU-LAC Foundation**  
**Fundación EU-LAC**

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Working together in partnerships, sharing experiences, good practices, and transferring knowledge in the circular economy, is a crucial way to learn and move forward.

In Slovenia, we have decided that the transition to a circular economy is a strategic goal, necessary to maintain the quality of life, to preserve the environment, and competitiveness of the economy. We are grateful to have the chance to cooperate with numerous countries in this endeavour, and we will continue to share and exchange our experiences.

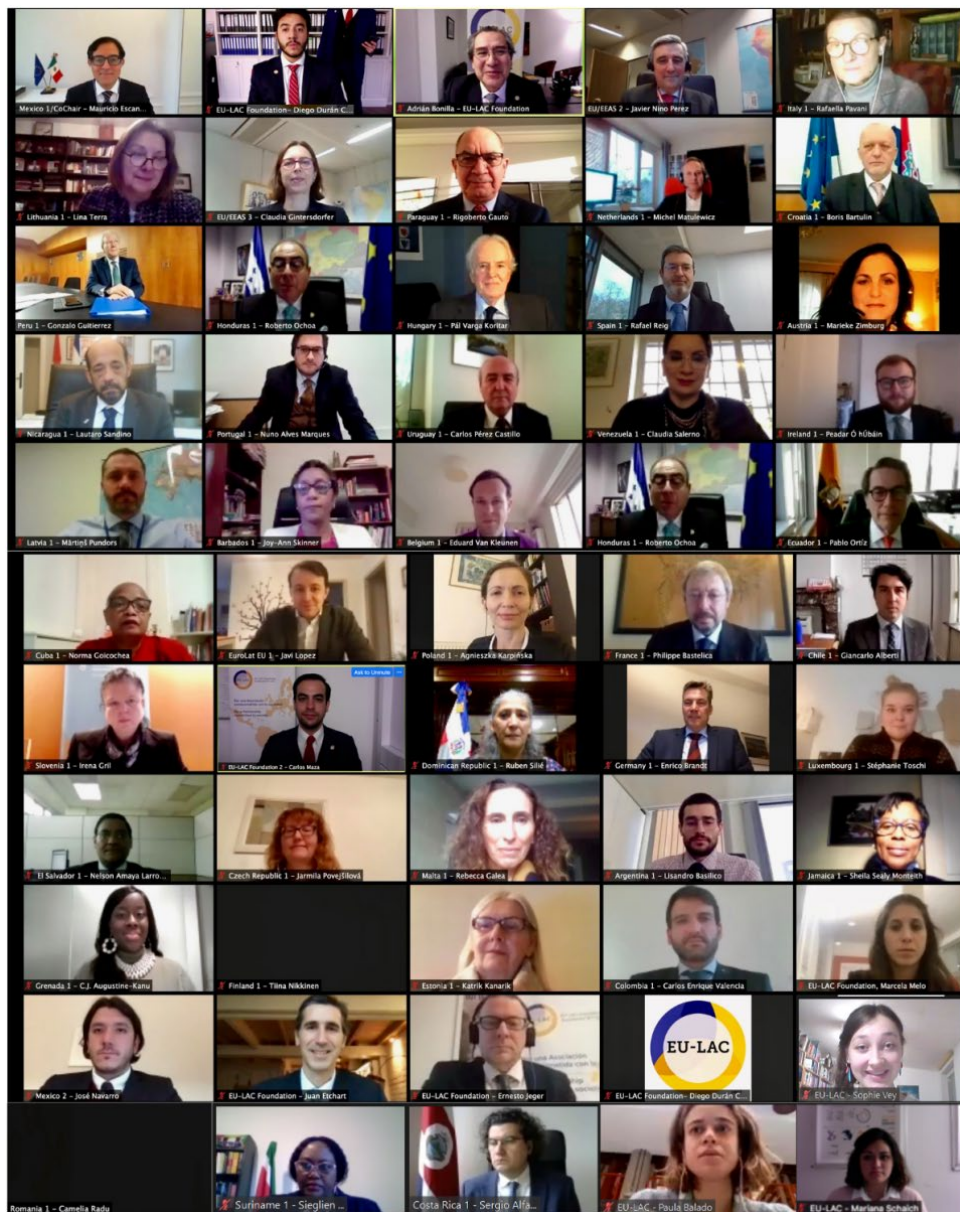


# News

## 3rd Meeting of the Board of Governors

We thank our Co-Presidencies, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Presidency Pro Tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Embassy of Mexico in Belgium and the European Union, as well as the representatives of the 46 countries of the Europe-

an Union, Latin America and the Caribbean who participated in the successful III Meeting of the Board of Governors of the EU-LAC Foundation that took place in a virtual format on November 26, 2020.



## New President of the EU-LAC Foundation



In the framework of the III Meeting of the Board of Governors, Leire Pajín Iraola, of Spanish nationality, was unanimously elected as President of the EU-LAC Foundation for the next 4 years. We wish the President a successful mandate in favour of the bi-regional partnership.

Leire Pajín Iraola is International Development Director of IS-Global, Chair of REDS (Spanish chapter of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network-UNSDSN), and member of UNSDSN's strategic and leadership council.

Before being elected as President of the EU-LAC Foundation, Leire Pajín Iraola served as Senior Advisor at the United Nations Development Program on post-2015 development agenda (New York, 2013-2014) and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (New York, 2014-2017), and as Special Advisor UN Partnerships at the WHO/PAHO (Pan-American World health organization) office at UN New York (2012-2013).

In Spain, she also served as Minister of Health, Social Policy and Gender Equality (2010-2011), as Secretary of State for Inter-

national Cooperation (2004-2008), and Congress and Senate member (2000-2012). She is former President of the non-governmental organization International Solidarity (2000-2004).

Leire Pajín Iraola is expert on Sustainable Development Goals and Social Corporate Responsibility and obtained a Master's degree in Direction of Companies and Organisations in the Knowledge Economy at UOC, as well as a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology at the University of Alicante. She has received the following distinctions:

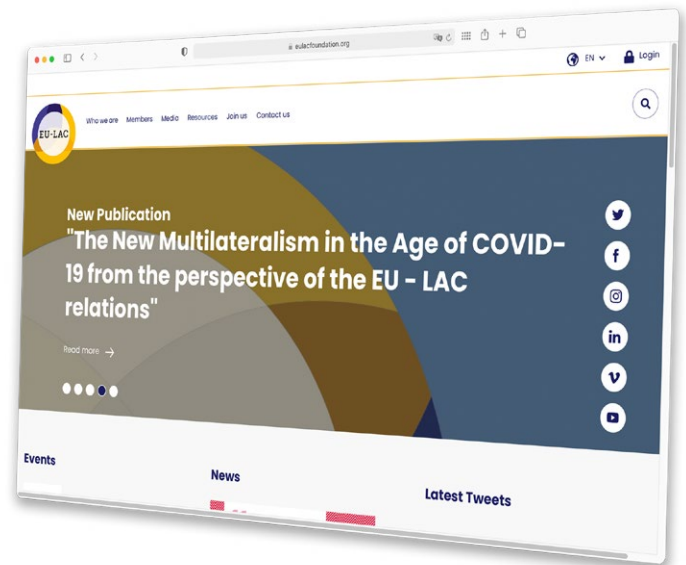
- Gran Cruz de la Real y Distinguida Orden Española Carlos III, 2011 (Royal and Distinguished Spanish Order of Charles III).
- Orden del Águila Azteca, México, 2011 (Order of the Aztec Eagle Award).
- La Gran Cruz de la Orden del Mérito Civil, 2008 (Order of Civil Merit).

## Meeting of the EU27 and Latin America and the Caribbean Foreign Ministers

Our President Leire Pajín Iraola and our Director Adrián Bonilla participated in the successful Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of EU27 and Latin America and the Caribbean, organised by the German Foreign Office in the framework of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, that took place in a virtual format on December 14th, 2020.

During this meeting Marcelo Erbrard, Presidency Pro Tempore CELAC, announced an EU-CELAC Summit for 2021. Ministers affirmed the intention to step up high-level bi-regional political dialogue, sent a signal of solidarity and reflected the high importance attached by the countries of both regions to their long-standing partnership.





### Launch of new website

Just months before the 10-year anniversary in November 2021 commemorating the establishment of the International EU-LAC Foundation, the Foundation follows its aim of giving greater visibility and stimulate interest in the EU-LAC relations by launching its new and improved website. This new page achieves better accessibility on mobile devices, a visually appealing design, and structured and easy-to-find compila-

tion of the Foundation's activities and services. In this newly launched website, you will still have access to our additional services such as the Digital Library the Interactive Map, and out database with bi-regional entities known as MAPEO.

To access the New Website of the EU-LAC Foundation, you can follow the link: <https://eulacfoundation.org/en>

### INTERACTIVE MAP

The interactive map is a visual compilation of relevant actors of the bi-regional association. It contains contact information of our Member States' governments, dates for upcoming elections, their embassies or consulates located near to the EU-LAC Foundation's headquarters in Hamburg and Berlin, and their national library network repository. In addition, all partner organisation of the EU-LAC Foundation from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean are pinned down in this map.

To access to Interactive Map, you can follow the link: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1hSuj8kve-3FaDfp-HoAmwHRRmodlFCZ1M&usp=sharing>

### MAPEO

MAPEO is a database that gathers information from more than 1,500 public and civil society organisations that have an agenda related to the priority issues of the European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean strategic partnership. It is also a digital tool that the EU-LAC International Foundation makes available to public entities and civil society actors interested in collaborating in the framework of this strategic partnership.

Its purpose is to facilitate mutual knowledge and visibility of the work of different organisations in both regions, providing information on opportunities to promote projects, foster alliances and encourage cooperation, especially in the priority areas of the partnership.

In this spirit, MAPEO is also a means of communication through which the Foundation shares, with more than 1,500 entities on both sides of the Atlantic, relevant information for the bi-regional dialogue, thus promoting the interest of the registered organisations to learn more about the opportunities and potential of such dialogue.

If your organisation belongs to one of the following catego-

ries, we invite you to register it by following the steps below. An organisation refers to a legally constituted entity or institution with legal personality.

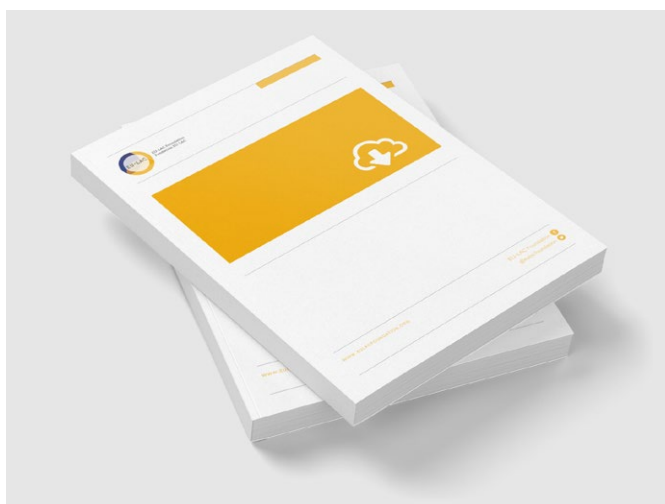
MAPEO is updated regularly. Do not hesitate to contact us in order to put the relevant information about your organisation to date. For its part, the Foundation will contact the entities

at least once a year to ensure that the information is updated and thus make of it a constantly useful tool at the service of the bi-regional partnership.

You can register in the MAPEO database through the following link:

<https://intranet.eulacfoundation.org/en/search/mapeo>

## DIGITAL LIBRARY



The EU-LAC Digital Library is a specialised repository for knowledge on relations between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, especially since 1999 when the bi-regional partnership was formally launched. However, it also holds some older key documents. It offers a one-stop facility for researchers and other actors wanting to find out more

about the bi-regional partnership and the topics discussed within it. The Digital Library contains ca. 3,000 registries, mainly comprised by:

- Articles and other academic publications
- Specialised studies
- Bibliographical references
- Summit Declarations and Action Plans resulting from the bi-regional EU-LAC Summits

The Digital Library is permanently growing and your recommendation is highly appreciated! If you wish to make a recommendation to include a text or reference, we would be happy to hear from you! Please e-mail us [info@eulacfoundation.org](mailto:info@eulacfoundation.org).

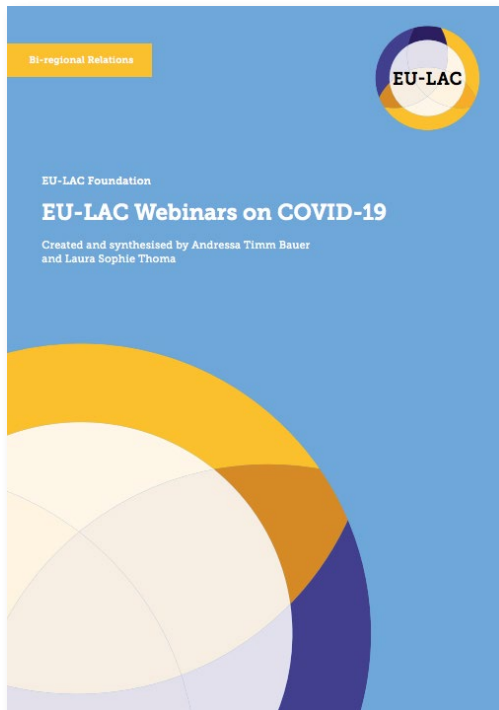
Check out our Digital Library at:

<https://intranet.eulacfoundation.org/en/digital-library>

To access all the Foundation's publications, you can visit our website via the following link:

<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/publications>

# Publications



**Version in English:**

<https://eulacfoundation.org/system/files/en-online-version-buch-eu-lac-webinarios.pdf>

**Version in Spanish:**

<https://eulacfoundation.org/system/files/es-online-version-buch-eu-lac-seminarios-web.pdf>

## EU-LAC WEBINARS ON COVID-19

The publication of this report is the result of the EU-LAC Foundation’s commitment to fulfilling its objective of “encouraging further mutual knowledge and understanding between both regions” and “fostering fruitful exchanges and new network opportunities among civil society and other social actors”. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic are overwhelming for both regions, but they are also an opportunity to further develop the strategic partnership between the regions EU-LAC, by taking advantage of the digital and technological world in which we find ourselves.

In this sense, the content of this report presents a written recompilation of the six COVID-19 webinar series organised by the EU-LAC Foundation that took place from 27th April until 15th June. The objectives were (i) to exchange different perspectives on the challenges faced by the EU and LAC regions in the face of the pandemic, (ii) to reflect on the role and actions of regional organisations and the possibilities for more active cooperation between the EU and LAC and (iii) to identify common elements of a shared action agenda of governmental and civil society organisations for the processing of the pandemic.

The six webinars saw contributions from a group of experts from regional bodies, United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, EU-LAC governments, academia, think tanks, media and non-governmental institutions from the regions of LAC and the EU. This report does not focus on the individual contributions but is organised according to the main topics discussed in each of the webinars. All the information contained here was compiled from the webinars; the link to access the full recording is available at the end of each webinar.

## THE NEW MULTILATERALISM IN THE ERA OF COVID-19 FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION - LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN RELATIONS

The EU-LAC Foundation is pleased to present the publication “The new multilateralism in the era of COVID-19 from the perspective of the European Union - Latin America and the Caribbean relations: I Essay Competition on the Bi-regional Partnership”.

This publication is the product of a call for papers launched by the Foundation in August 2020, whose objective is directly related to the Foundation’s mandate to “contribute to the strengthening of the bi-regional partnership process between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, through the participation of civil society and other social actors”. In this case, the contribution came from young researchers who responded to the call by submitting excellent academic papers that not only increase the visibility of the bi-regional partnership, but also promote mutual knowledge.

The theme selected for the first edition of the competition was framed in the context of the health and economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 and its impact on international relations, specifically in its multilateral dimension.

The competition awarded prizes to the three best essays and an honourable mention to four others. The seven essays collected in this publication were evaluated by a jury formed by the EU-LAC Foundation and independent international experts whom we would like to thank: Dr. Merike Blofield, Director of the Institute for Latin American Studies, German Institute for Global and Regional Studies (GIGA) and Dr. Elsa Llenderozas, Director of the Political Science Department at the University of Buenos Aires.

The approaches of each of the essays offer important analysis and ideas for the current debate on this priority issue on the bi-regional agenda and will hopefully inspire more young people to participate in the upcoming competitions.



### Version in English:

<https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/eu-lac-asociacion-birregional-en-digital%20%281%29.pdf>

### Version in Spanish:

<https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/eu-lac-asociacion-birregional-es-digital%20%281%29.pdf>

### We congratulate the authors of all winning essays:

ALVAREZ María Victoria  
VIDAURRE VALDÍVIA Ana Lucia  
BURGOA TERCEROS Rodrigo  
GATTI Bahía Agustina  
TESTA Valentina  
RODRÍGUEZ TORRESI Lucía  
FABER Jennifer Saskia Nicole  
AGUIRRE AVARIA Juan Carlos  
SALAMANCA CHÁVEZ Débora Jael  
MEJÍA CHUPILLÓN Xenia Grecia

# Webinars and Keynotes Lectures

## Webinars

Following its mandate to promote dialogue on priority issues on the bi-regional agenda, the EU-LAC Foundation is organising a series of webinars to compare and share experiences to face the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 and to discuss the current challenges of the two regions. These webinars have been held since April and are accessible to anyone with just one registration process. In addition, recordings are available on the Foundation's website for those who have not been able to follow them online.

You can access the recordings of the webinars through the following link:

<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/media/webinars>

## 'Latin America and the Caribbean and the Future Horizon Europe Program'

Webinar organised in cooperation with the European Commission, OBREAL Global Observatory, the Argentina-EU Liaison Office, AUCI and Red LAC NCP

**NOVEMBER 23, 2020**

The webinar was opened by Dr. Adrián Bonilla, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation and moderated by Nicolás Patrici, OBREAL - Global Observatory.

The panel of this webinar was composed by Rita Lecbychova, Directorate General for Research and Innovation and International Cooperation of the European Commission; Nicolás Patrici, OBREAL-Global Observatory; Claudia Romano, Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation and NCP Latin American and Caribbean Network; Maria Alejandra Davidziuk, Ministry of Science and Technology of Argentina and NPC of Marie-Sklodowska-Curie and Horizon 2020.

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/b-ostTKVH6o>





## 'Circular Economy in the COVID-19 Era: Challenges and Opportunities'

Webinar co-organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the EU-LAC Foundation

NOVEMBER 24, 2020

 <b>EU-LAC WEBINAR</b> <b>CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN THE COVID-19 ERA:</b> <b>"CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES"</b> Tuesday, 24 November 2020, 15.00 - 17.00 CET				 REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
<b>Welcome Address</b>  <b>Stanislav Raščan</b> State Secretary, MFA Republic of Slovenia   <b>Adrián Bonilla</b> Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation   <b>Ernesto Jeger</b> <i>Moderator</i> Programme manager, EU-LAC Foundation  Previous registration: <a href="https://bit.ly/2ISAEAA">bit.ly/2ISAEAA</a> The Webinar will be held in English without translation	<b>1st Panel : Circular Economy and Global Outreach</b>   <b>Marjeta Jager</b> Deputy Director General, DG DEVCO, European Commission   <b>Ladeja Godina Košir</b> Chair Coordination Group, European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP) & Executive Director, Circular Change Institute for Circular Economy	<b>2nd Panel: National Circular Pathways</b>   <b>Janja Kreitmayer McKenzie</b> Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenia   <b>Linnet Solway</b> Director Circular Economy, EuroChile   <b>Beatriz Luz</b> Founder, Exchange4Change Brasil (E4CB)   <b>Fernando Brites</b> Founder, Kora Paraguay	<b>3rd Panel: Multilateral Platforms</b>   <b>Izabella Teixeira</b> Co-Chair International Resources Panel, Former Minister for Environment, Brazil   <b>Denise Hamu</b> UNEP Brazil Representative	

The Webinar on “Circular Economy in the COVID-19 Era: Challenges and Opportunities” took place on 24 November 2020 and was jointly organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the EU-LAC Foundation within the framework of the LAC days organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia. The seminar was moderated by Ernesto Jeger, Programme Manager of the EU-LAC Foundation. The recording is available on the EU-LAC Foundation’s Website.

The objective of the Webinar was to provide a platform to share experiences and good practices, shed light upon projects and advancements, and to raise awareness on the importance of circularity, which provides an alternative to traditional notions of a linear economy. In particular, the potential of a circular economy for a green recovery post-COVID-19 and the importance of global cooperation were emphasised. The struc-

ture of the Webinar was divided into three panels, which were dedicated to: global outreach, national circular pathways and multilateral platforms global outreach, national circular pathways and multilateral platforms. national circular pathways and multilateral platforms.

Access the **written reports** on the Website of the EU-LAC Foundation:

### Version in English:

[https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/report\\_webinar\\_circular\\_economy.pdf](https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/report_webinar_circular_economy.pdf)

### Version in Spanish:

[https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Reporte\\_Webinario\\_Economia\\_Circular.pdf](https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Reporte_Webinario_Economia_Circular.pdf)

## 'State of Democracy in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe: Analysis and Perspectives in Times of Pandemic and Post-Pandemic'

Webinar jointly organised by IDEA International and the EU-LAC Foundation within the framework of the signing of a cooperation agreement between both entities

DECEMBER 11, 2020



The webinar was opened by Dr. Adrián Bonilla, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation and Dr. Daniel Zovatto, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean at IDEA International, who also moderated the webinar.

In this event participated Dr. Sergio Bitar, Former Minister of State of Chile and Vice President of Board of Idea International; Dr. Maria Hermínia Tavares de Almeida, Senior Lecturer at the University of São Paulo and Senior Researcher at the Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning – CEBRAP; Dr. Claudia Zilla, Principal Researcher of Las Americas Research Department of the German Institute for International Politics and Security; and Dr. Felipe Burbano de Lara, Director of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences-FLACSO Ecuador Headquarters.

The objective of this webinar was to provide a space for a group of experts to share reflections on the challenges of democracy in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, to ad-

dress the complexities posed by the pandemic and the opportunities that open up for the continuous strengthening of the democratic value in both regions.

The **recording** is available on the youtube page of the EU-LAC: <https://youtu.be/lxlliwoRiSQ>

Access the written reports of the Webinar on the Website of the EU-LAC Foundation.

Version in English:

[https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/report\\_webinar\\_democracy\\_lac\\_eu\\_final.pdf](https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/report_webinar_democracy_lac_eu_final.pdf)

Version in Spanish:

[https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/reporte\\_webinario\\_democracia\\_alc\\_ue\\_final.pdf](https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/reporte_webinario_democracia_alc_ue_final.pdf)

## 'Women in Movement'

Series of 3 Webinars co-organised by the Institut des Amériques, Agence Française de Développement, the Ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères and the EU-LAC Foundation

**NOVEMBER 6, 13, AND 27, 2020**

Women in Latin America and in the Caribbean were never docile beings neither submitted to a patriarchal domination. Despite their subordinate position, they developed their action, including a certain empowerment for some of them. This series of webinars analysed through three aspects how this process happened, in a comparative perspective with Europe. The first one was about the different forms of feminine organization, presenting various experiences, either regarding the geographical space than the social profiles of the participants (politics, economy, business and associations).

Secondly, the event part focused on the city as a space experiences by women who, far from being confined to the domestic space, go outside and move on a daily basis. However, urban spaces, conceived and built by men, do not take into account of women's specific needs. Therefore, they accentuate and perpetuate male domination. The concept of inclusive city carries an urbanistic project that is more democratic and egalitarian. The second webinar presented innovative urban propositions and actions which are also groundbreaking regarding the androcentrism in European cities as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, the third part studied a central aspect of the feminist mobilizations during the last decades: violence against women, contemplating women's and public authorities' actions to fight against this scourge. Indeed, the American sub-continent endured a period of exacerbated violence during the second half of the 20th century because of armed conflicts, dictators and authoritarian regimes. Women, present in social movements and in the frontline in defending their territories and their communities, have been a targeted audience within this macho and patriarchal violence. In this context, the mobilization of feminist organizations permitted to put the fight

against women on the agenda. This movement had impacts and Latin American legislations integrate nowadays the concepts of feminicides and gender violence.

<https://www.institutdesameriques.fr/fr/article/annual-meeting-ida-eulac-afd-2020-women-mouvement-latin-america-caribbean-and-europe>

**Guadalupe González**  
‘How does the international reorder  
looks like from Mexico? Implications  
for EU-LAC relations’

**December 17, 2020**

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/PhJNi16vg1s>

The keynote lecture by Dr. Guadalupe González offers an analysis on how the international reordering from Mexico is seen, and its implications, in the projection of its foreign policy and the understanding of the bi-regional relationship: Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe. As a consequence, the lecturer presents a brief historical perspective of Mexican foreign policy, along with a description of the changes and challenges that arise from global issues. In turn, a review is made of the aspirations and potential of Mexico as a middle power, also presenting different data on the perception of Mexico’s role in Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Paulina Astroza**  
‘What to expect of EU-Latin America  
relations in turbulent times?’

**December 17, 2020**

**Video:** [https://youtu.be/LolFrngr2\\_Y](https://youtu.be/LolFrngr2_Y)

The keynote lecture by Dr. Paulina Astroza offers a conceptual reflection on European expectations around the dynamics resulting from the relationship between Latin America and the Caribbean with the countries of the European Union. For this, the lecturer presented some characteristics of the international system that influence the bi-regional and regional spheres, such as, for example, the effects of the presidency of Donald Trump, Brexit and the consequences and possible alignments that are generated in Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe, based on the existing rivalry between the United States and China.

**Susanne Gratius**  
‘Is ‘strategic autonomy’ a response  
to the international crisis?’

**December 3, 2020**

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/J1TkAk7P5pU>

The keynote lecture by Dr. Susanne Gratius addresses the issue of the “strategic autonomy” of Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, a subject that has sparked differing debates in both regions. In order to develop this objective, throughout the talk we try to find points of convergence between the positions that arise in the two regions, in order to reflect, firstly, on whether regional autonomy is the way to obtain advantages in a possible reordering of the international order; and, secondly, on what efforts can both regions make together to have greater visibility, influence and projection in the dynamics of the international system.

**Gian Luca Gardini****‘Geopolitics meets values: EU-LAC relations before and after Covid-19’****November 27, 2020****Video:** <https://youtu.be/iqp3cOobyyo>

The keynote lecture by Dr. Gian Luca Gardini offers a conceptual analysis of the geopolitical configuration of the relationship between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, an issue that is not always structured around the fundamental values and interests that both regions share. In order to achieve this objective, the speaker presents the conditions under which the bi-regional relationship is framed in the international context, in order to reflect, firstly, on costs and benefits of further deepening said relationship; and, secondly, on what proposals can be made to create an agenda that unites values and strategic aspects, which allow the bi-regional relationship to be energised.

**Juan Gabriel Tokatlian****‘Dilemmas and Challenges for Latin America in the Post-Pandemic Period’****November 19, 2020****Video:** <https://youtu.be/J5dWWt5Xr6o>

The keynote lecture by Dr. Juan Gabriel Tokatlian presents the possible effects arising from the changes in the dynamics of the international system, and having consequences in the relationship between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union. In his talk, the speaker exposes the main elements of the global and regional context, in order to reflect, firstly, on what have been the challenges and limitations that Latin America and the Caribbean faced before the pandemic; and, secondly, on which of these problems can be explored in a post-COVID-19 world.

# Upcoming Events

Initiatives for the financing and equitable distribution of vaccines against COVID-19 in middle-income countries of LAC

**Date and Place:** March 23 - 24, 2021; Online.

**Time:** 15:00h CET

[Register here!](#)



The banner features a stylized map of Latin America and the Caribbean on the left and Europe on the right. In the center, the EU-LAC logo is displayed above the text: "EU-LAC Dialogue Sessions: 'Initiatives for the financing and equitable distribution of vaccines against COVID-19 in middle-income countries of Latin America and the Caribbean'". Below this is a "Register Here" button and a Zoom link: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_HKfr1awfSCihLkXZomR9Qw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HKfr1awfSCihLkXZomR9Qw). On the right side, there are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, with the text "Follow us!". Below the icons, a schedule box lists: "March 23th & 24th", "15:00-17:30 hrs (CET)", and "08:00-10:30 hrs (CDMX)".

The EU-LAC Foundation cordially invites to the EU-LAC Dialogue Sessions: **“Initiatives for the financing and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean”**, which will take place on **23-24 March 2021**, under a **virtual format**.

**The global context of the COVID-19 crisis reinforces the interdependence of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union** with an increase in inequality and global human insecurity on both sides of the Atlantic. To cope with the pandemic, **equal and fast access to safe and vaccines** is necessary across the globe.

With this event, the EU-LAC Foundation aims to provide a space for dialogue on the technical, financial and logistical

challenges involved in the procurement and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The event will feature presentations by leading experts from governments, international organisations and initiatives and civil society from the European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Through this approach, the EU-LAC Foundation strives to stimulate the articulation of proposals on how to streamline and improve the public and public-private initiatives and instruments already developed, in order to generate a more effective and comprehensive vaccination strategy and thus strengthen the bi-regional relationship.

## Innovation of teaching-learning processes and quality assurance

[Register here!](#)

**Date and Place:** March 25, 2021; Online.

**Time:** 16:00h CET

**Co-organizadores:**

OBREAL Global and EU-LAC Fundation.



Central American higher education has generally been overburdened, and too focused on content and the use of traditional teaching methods. It has failed to pay due attention to the key competences that people need to be successful as citizens, professionals and decision-makers in the 21st century.

It is argued that society and the world of work are changing rapidly and profoundly, and that the education offered in the region has to change in the same way. Quality assurance and accreditation of higher education can be an instrument for change, inspiring and supporting innovation in teaching-learning processes in the spirit of continuous improvement; Or it can be a bureaucratic burden and a further obstacle for universities. What would be the key to achieve the former and avoid the latter? What international lessons can be drawn from different parts of the world?

This virtual forum will follow up on the HICA and CAN INNOVATE projects (a proposal by CSUCA and OBREAL Global for the E+ programme to develop learning innovation centres in CSUCA member universities). It will aim to exchange views on innovation in learning from different perspectives (from universities, national systems, quality agencies... from Central America and Europe) and explore opportunities for regional and international collaboration in this field.

In the framework of the strategic agreements between the EU-LAC Foundation and OBREAL Global, with the aim of promoting bi-regional relations, a series of virtual forums (webinars) will be held on the thematic axes of the IX Central American University Congress organised by CSUCA in 2021 between March and May 2021.

# Save the date

## Virtual Meeting of Higher Education and Postgraduate Institutions of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean

| 8 April 2021

The EU-LAC Foundation and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), in the framework of their collaboration in the field of knowledge and in the context of the XXVII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, will hold a virtual Meeting of Higher Education and Postgraduate Institutions of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean on April 8th, 2021. The aim of the Meeting is to promote exchange on the question of how to ensure recognised quality standards in online Masters and PhD programmes offered by European, Latin American and Caribbean universities.

## 12th Reflection Forum: “Contributions of the bi-regional strategic partnership: Shaping a greener recovery”.

| 19 -20 April 2021

The EU-LAC Reflection Forums are platforms for open and informal discussions between senior officials from the two regions and experts on specific topics. The objective of these Forums is to take stock, to discuss progress and challenges of the bi-regional relations and to formulate recommendations for future lines of action.

The specific objective of the XII Forum is to facilitate exchange between EU and LAC countries on strategies, national policies and international cooperation to promote greener recovery. This includes measures to enhance climate action to reduce emissions and to increase resilience to climate change impacts. Both types of measures offer the opportunity for sound and long-term investments, beyond immediate considerations, that can recharge economies, create jobs and boost people’s well-being in both regions, as recognised in the EU27-LAC joint ministerial communiqué of December 2020.

## International Colloquium Institut des Amériques (IdA), EU-LAC Foundation, French Development Agency (AFD): Societies, crises and public health in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean in the framework of the Latin America and the Caribbean Week

| 31 May, 1, 2 and 3 June 2021

Once a year, the Foundation collaborates with its strategic partner Institut des Amériques (IdA) and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to organise a Colloquium in the context of the “Latin America and Caribbean Week” in France. The Colloquium is dedicated to a topic of relevance to the EU-LAC Partnership and invites distinguished experts from the EU and LAC to present and discuss recent analytical findings and participate in the formulation of policy recommendations.



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# Tenders

## Results of Call for study on female labour market participation

The proposal from the Anglo American University (Czech Republic) has been selected by the European Union Programme EUROsociAL+ and the EU-LAC Foundation as part of the Call for the study “Progress and Challenges of Policies Promoting Women’s Labour Participation in Latin America, The Caribbean and Europe in the Context of Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery”.

The European Union Programme EUROsociAL+ and the EU-LAC Foundation thank all the institutions that participated in the Call, regretting that other proposals of great value and merit could not be selected for such a study.



**EU-LAC Foundation**  
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