

CONCEPT NOTE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A CARIFORUM-EU CENTRE IN EUROPE

1. ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

The University of the West Indies (The UWI), founded in 1948, is ranked by the Times Higher Education as the number one university in the Caribbean, in the top 3 percent in Latin America and in the top 5 percent of the over 25,000 recognized universities in the world. An important aspect of its high ranking has been its international collaborations and its research.

The UWI with five campuses: Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the Open Campus for online learning has over 50,000 students with faculty and students from more than 50 countries and collaborative links with 160 universities globally. The UWI offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree options in Food & Agriculture, Engineering, Humanities & Education, Law, Medical Sciences, Science and Technology, Social Sciences and Sport.

The UWI encompasses several policy research centres/institutes that focus on specific development including:

- (a) Institute for International Relations
- (b) Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies
- (c) Institute for Sustainable Development
- (d) Institute of Gender and Development Studies
- (e) Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre
- (f) Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services.
- (g) Solutions for Developing Countries (SODECO).

2. CREATION OF THE CARIFORUM-EU CENTRE (CEC)

● CARIFORUM

Relations between the EU and the Caribbean are conducted within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement and the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement signed in 2008. CARIFORUM consists of 15 member states - Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Commonwealth of Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. While the overarching template of the Cotonou Agreement is being revised the framework of CARIFORUM is a permanent feature of relations with the EU and is therefore an appropriate institutional vehicle for future relations with the EU.

- **Rationale for the CARIFORUM-EU Centre**

The UWI is convinced that it is vitally important to establish a CEC to be based in continental Europe. This is necessary because of the important historic relationship between the Caribbean and Europe and the contemporary economic and diplomatic ties. In addition new developments, such as the post Cotonou negotiations and Brexit, continue to define the relationship between the Caribbean and Europe.

In spite of the critical nature of the relationship no one institution of higher education is devoted specifically to policy studies and research of this subject. The relevance and urgency of such an institution is beyond debate. Such a Centre will facilitate the continuation and improvement in the research-based policy advice capacity of The UWI to address the challenges of the Caribbean people.

Its location in a Member States of the European Union (EU) is essential because while the internet has gone a long way to shrinking geographic distances the reality remains that nothing can replace a physical presence and access to opportunities and information in real time. The EU represents a dynamic, fast changing and modernizing environment within which to operate. It is one which takes time to understand and develop the type of relationships which facilitate the building of innovative partnerships, the ability to forge strategic business alliances, establish knowledge sharing networks, identify complementarities in international value chains and construct production platforms. The opportunities for a wide range of different activities and the generation of real results are several but require a high degree of agility to changes in the operating environment and energy in pursuing interests. A robust and meaningful CARIFORUM policy research capacity and outreach presence in Europe has been largely missing.

A Centre in Europe with a focus on CARIFORUM-EU relations has the potential to allow The UWI not only to expand its engagement and outreach in an important theatre and one with compelling historical ties to the Caribbean, but will also contribute in a meaningful way, by allowing for access and proximity to the dialogue on some of the most pressing developmental challenges facing the CARIFORUM countries. Given its over 70 year history of research-based policy advice on regional and international issues, The UWI can help to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of development, and give strong support to the Caribbean by providing technical and intellectual support to the challenges inherent in new policy initiatives. The CEC in Europe will facilitate, bilaterally and multilaterally, a more informed discussion of Caribbean realities and challenges in relation to social and economic goals and thinking, which will result in making European policies and practice in the region more calibrated in meaningful ways.

The EU and CARIFORUM are the longest continuously operating regional economic integration systems. Both CARIFORUM and the EU share the conviction that deeper regional integration forms an important tool for development. The two integration processes have much in common as well as significant differences, therefore comparative analysis of their experiences can enrich both integration processes. The improved understanding can enhance the CARIFORUM-EU relations as they are about to enter the new era of both post-Cotonou and post-Brexit.

The EU has been the largest provider of development aid to the CARIFORUM region and has been an empathetic development partner cognizant of the need to address differences in the level of development and economic size which go beyond development assistance. The CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement is a re-design of trade and economic cooperation under the aegis of the Cotonou Agreement. As the negotiations to build on the acquis of the Cotonou Agreement with a template which represents a recalibration of the partnership between the EU and the ACP proceeds, there will be a need for research and policy advice. The negotiations are building on the foundation of shared values and the goals of peace, democracy and prosperity.

The proposed Centre will also fit into the existing framework of the Erasmus+ Programme which (i) supports the modernization, accessibility and internationalization of higher education in the eligible Partner Countries, including tackling the challenges related to quality, relevance, equity of access, planning, delivery, management and governance; (ii) contributes to cooperation between the EU and the eligible Partner Countries, while promoting people-to-people contacts, intercultural awareness and understanding.

- **Choice of European Partner Higher Education Institution**

The UWI has chosen the European University Institute (EUI) as its partner institute for the CEC. The EUI is an inter-governmental organisation, established in 1972 by the six original members of the then European Communities to operate in the fields of higher education and research, in the framework of the European regional integration process. The EUI has 23 Member States, and hosts an international community of more than 1,100 academic and administrative staff, representing 75 nationalities on campus.

With the support of its Members States and donors including the European Commission, The European University Institute is a unique international centre for doctoral and post-doctoral studies and research. The EUI has earned a reputation as a leading international academic institution with a European focus. Its four departments – Economics, History and Civilization, Law, and Political and Social Sciences – host scholars from different scientific communities.

The EUI also hosts the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS), focused on interdisciplinary, comparative and policy research on the major issues affecting European societies, the Max Weber Programme for Post-doctoral Studies and, since 2017, the School of Transnational Governance, which offers training in governance beyond the state to professionals and masters students (as from September 2020).

Within this mandate, the EUI's main realm for learning and researching is the European regional integration from different angles and disciplines – economy, social and political sciences, law and history – as well as the analysis and definition of policy-relevant solutions to transnational challenges.

The EUI is also home to the Historical Archives of the European Union, which provides unparalleled insight into the integration process and ongoing political relations of the EU.

Over the past four decades, the EUI has established institutional agreements with around 100 partners in Europe and across the world, representing different typologies of stakeholders (i.e. universities, public institutions, international organization, foundations, media, etc.) and with competences in different research areas. Furthermore, the EUI is a strategic research and knowledge partner of the main EU institutions, such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Court of Justice, the European Investment Bank, and several EU specialized Agencies.

The EUI is the kind of academic partner that can respond to the UWI's ambition to establish the CEC, through its unique higher education/research mission related to policy-relevant research for EU policies and programmes, excellent academic reputation and very international outreach in several important dimensions, for example its membership and its partnerships.

- **Objectives of the CEC**

The objectives of the CEC include the following:

- (a) To provide a platform for multi-disciplinary policy oriented research and teaching related to issues of development of CARIFORUM, EU and the world.
- (b) To offer a Double Master's Degree in Integration Studies based on the experience of the two longest successful integration processes, the EU and CARICOM. In part this is intended to train mid-career officials working in regional institutions.
- (c) To inform and thereby enhance the engagement of civil society in the dialogue on CARIFORUM-EU and related issues through publications and seminars.
- (d) To facilitate access to resources such as scholarships, grants, technical assistance and endowments from international bodies and foundations for collaborative research activities.
- (e) To facilitate the exchange of visits of academics, researchers, policy-makers and students to be in residence.

(f) To develop policy advice and policy briefs and training materials for use by government officials, the private sector, and diplomatic personnel in ongoing negotiations.

- **Possible Topics under the Purview of the CEC**

The CARIFORUM-EU Centre would be a visible presence in Europe, demonstrating the importance of the relationship, providing support to the negotiations and ensuring that the region's interests are promoted, projected and championed. The Centre will provide input on a range of issues that need to be addressed urgently, against the backdrop of the Sustainable Development Goals reflected in the UN 2030 Agenda including:

- (a) Nature of the future EU CARIFORUM relations given that the Partnership Agreement will continue to exist is still to be decided.
- (b) The developmental challenges which small countries in the Caribbean face.
- (c) Multilateral trade and SIDS - how to achieve economic growth, employment and macroeconomic resilience, bolstering sustainable development.
- (d) EU development cooperation particularly in relation to middle income SIDS.
- (e) Climate change, disaster mitigation and resilience.
- (f) Food security
- (g) Security and Cyber-Security.
- (h) Foreign direct investment and corporate responsibility.
- (i) Migration, human trafficking, brain drain and international labour standards.
- (j) Economic Citizenship programs and the interface with European Schengen.
- (k) Tax Havens and Corresponding banking de-risking.
- (l) Caribbean, Latin America and European relations in the context of CELAC.
- (m) Energy and the promotion of the Green Economy.
- (n) Environment, biodiversity and Sustainable Development.
- (o) Knowledge, technology and human capital.
- (p) Connectivity, digital communications and artificial intelligence.
- (q) Corruption, money laundering and terrorism.
- (r) Gender
- (s) Data protection and privacy
- (t) Multilateral Trade issues