



*European Economic and Social Committee
The President*

Santiago de Chile, 27 January 2013

Staffan Nilsson's Intervention at the EU-CELAC SUMMIT

Seul le texte prononcé fait foi

Check Against Delivery

Presidents, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, first of all, to say how happy I am to be here today, the first time that the EU heads of state or government have met their counterparts since the CELAC Community was set up. The creation of a community of this kind bears witness to the ongoing commitment of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to move forward towards integration at continental level, a commitment that we, as civil society representatives, can only commend and encourage.

First and foremost, I should like to thank the Chilean government, our host, who invited me to speak to address you today.

I am here as the representative of the institution representing European organised civil society, the European Economic and Social Committee. The EESC is a consultative body for the EU institutions, with a role in the legislative process that make it possible for the voice of economic and social organisations to be heard in European decision-making.

And I am also here as a spokesperson for Latin American civil society organisations, who have given me the honourable task of bringing our joint recommendations - civil society recommendations - to our heads of state or



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government. We produced these recommendations at the 7th EU-Latin America meeting of organised civil society that we held here, in Santiago, in December last year.

We are convinced of the importance for civil society to be at the centre of EU-Latin America relations. Participation is crucial in order to secure more transparent relations and increased ownership of political and trade exchanges, and also to ensure the more efficient implementation of policies.

I would like to briefly outline the issues that we, as civil society from both continents, have identified as key problems, and some recommendations that could contribute to the work of the heads of state or government over these two days. I have summarised them in a few points:

1. First of all, we call for the strategic European-Latin American relationship to be based on mutually beneficial trade, respect for human rights, social and environmental standards and participatory democracy, so as to become a model for others.
2. Following the Central American model, we call for the real and effective participation of civil society organisations in the Association Agreements between the EU and Mexico and Chile, in the Multiparty Agreement between Colombia, Peru and the EU, and possibly between Mercosur and the EU.
3. We consider that the final declaration of this summit should explicitly support and recognise civil society organisations, whose involvement is crucial in order to make bi-regional relations more open and transparent and to boost regional integration processes.
4. We ask the heads of state or government to conclude a Framework EU-Latin America and Caribbean Social Security Convention, similar to the one in force in the Ibero-American Community in this field and to those existing in Mercosur, the Andean Community and in the European Union; we strongly support the proposal made at the summit in this regard by the Chilean government.



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5. We ask the summit to ensure that the various agreements between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean, include a chapter on social security rights in relation to mobility and on respect for human, social and labour rights.

6. We as civil society organisations welcome the establishment of the EU-LAC Foundation and call on the heads of state or government to promote a work programme for the Foundation that includes a strong element of real and effective cooperation with the institutions representing civil society organisations from both continents.

7. Echoing the European Parliament, we ask that the EU's new development cooperation policy for Latin America should not exclude Ecuador, Colombia and Peru from the list of this policy's beneficiary countries, and that cooperation with countries classified as "middle income countries" should include sectoral and thematic programmes, while maintaining the benefits of the GSP+.

8. We suggest that a policy of investment in innovation be promoted, based on the sustainable development of countries where the investment is made, showing due regard for the ILO principles and fundamental labour rights, consumers' and users' rights, and greater social equality.

9. We consider that when promoting investment, governments should take account of the need to create an investment-friendly climate and to offer legal certainty. Investments should be based on ethical criteria, for instance promoting safety and quality of goods and services.

10. Investments in the public sector should facilitate the access to public services and social protection systems, promote the employment of young people and women, promote cooperatives and other forms of the social economy and support access to land for farm workers. It would also be important that these investments aim at diversifying the energy matrix with renewable energy sources and complying with ILO Convention No 169 on the use of natural resources in indigenous areas as well as implementing the ILO agenda for decent work.

In general, all kinds of investments, whether they are private or public, should include an important environmental and social dimension in order to be sustainable.



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I sincerely hope that this summit will take due account of the proposals we are putting forward. I wish you every success in your work, and I thank you for your attention.

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