



European Economic and Social Committee

**SEVENTH MEETING OF EUROPEAN UNION-LATIN AMERICAN CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANISATIONS**

SANTIAGO, CHILE, 4, 5 and 6 DECEMBER 2012

FINAL DECLARATION

The European Economic and Social Committee organised the Seventh Meeting of EU-Latin American Civil Society Organisations in Santiago, Chile, on 4, 5 and 6 December 2012.

The Meeting brought together representatives of civil society organisations from the EU and Latin America, including national and regional advisory bodies.

The participants are appreciative of the support of the European External Action Service and the European Commission, and the hospitality shown by the Senate of the Republic of Chile in connection with this meeting.

At this Seventh Meeting, the participants adopted the following declaration, addressed to the Summit of Heads of State and Government which will meet in Santiago (Chile) on 26 and 27 January.

.....
1. Introduction

This declaration reiterates the participants' commitment to strengthening the political, economic, social and cultural ties between the two continents, within the context of the Bi-regional Strategic Partnership. The Seventh Meeting ratified the proposals of previous Meetings on migration, the environment, climate change, social cohesion, energy resources, decent work and cooperation, and discussed the following themes: the social economy, high-quality social investment for growth, employment and social protection for those travelling between the EU and Latin America for reasons of work.

The participants firmly believe that, in a new world context marked by a widespread economic and social crisis that poses huge challenges and by the environmental problems caused by climate change, the Bi-regional Strategic Partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean is needed more than ever, in order to help resolve these challenges and those problems that affect both societies, on the basis of the shared values of society in the two regions.

The participants welcome the fact that with this EU-Latin America civil society meeting, the delegates representing Latin American civil society organisations have for the first time held a prior meeting in order to exchange points of view on the event's thematic content.

The participants entrust the President of the European Economic and Social Committee with transmitting this declaration to the Summit of Heads of State and Government which will meet in Santiago (Chile) on 26 and 27 January 2013.

DEMANDS FOR THE SUMMIT:

The participants

- 1. welcome the establishment of the EU-LAC Foundation and call on the Heads of State 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;**
- 2. express their hope, furthermore, that negotiations between Mercosur and the EU conclude successfully, in accordance with the premises jointly declared on several occasions by Mercosur's Social and Economic Consultative Forum (FCES) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC);**
- 3. call for the real and effective participation of civil society organisations (CSO) 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 and welcome the fact that such participation is provided for by the EU-Central America Association Agreement and the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and CARIFORUM. Such participation would take the form of establishing, as an integral part of the agreements, a Joint Consultative Committee whose members would come from CSO representative bodies from both sides;**
- 4. welcome the recently adopted EU-Caribbean Strategy and its aim to strengthen regional interaction in order to boost long-term social progress and development in the Caribbean;**
- 5. echoing the European Parliament, call for the new direction of the EU's Development Cooperation policy for Latin America not to exclude Ecuador, Colombia and Peru from the list of this policy's beneficiary countries and for cooperation with countries classified as "middle income countries" to be adapted to include sectoral and thematic programmes, while maintaining the benefits of SPG plus;**

- 6. suggest that a policy of exchanging investment in innovation (I+D+I) be promoted, based on the sustainable development of countries where the investment is made, showing due regard for the principles and fundamental rights of labour of the ILO, and on the principles of the OECD, consumers' and users' rights be promoted, alongside greater social equality;**
- 7. call for the strategic European-Latin American relationship to serve as a benchmark, based on mutually beneficial trade, respect for human rights, social and environmental standards and participatory democracy;**
- 8. consider that when promoting investment, governments should take account of the following needs in order to promote sustainable development:**
 - (i) the creation of an investment-friendly climate, offering legal certainty, social standards and environmental protection;**
 - (ii) access to formal public high-quality education and vocational training;**
 - (iii) fair access to healthcare and social protection systems;**
 - (iv) promotion of the employment of young people, women, people with disabilities, in line with the ILO's agenda for decent work;**
 - (v) promotion of cooperatives and other forms of the social economy;**
 - (vi) reduction in the use of limited natural resources and diversification of the energy matrix with renewable energy sources;**
 - (vii) promotion of industry and trade at the national and regional levels;**
 - (viii) compliance with ILO Convention No 169 on the use of natural resources in indigenous areas;**
 - (ix) implementation of the agenda for decent work;**
 - (x) promotion of investment based on ethical criteria that respect the legal framework of the target country;**
 - (xi) support for access to land for farm workers, in compliance with existing national legislation;**
 - (xii) promotion of safety and quality in goods and services;**
- 9. call for greater recognition and support for the social economy (SE), known in some countries as the solidarity economy:**
 - for companies in the social and solidarity economy to have access to European R+D and development cooperation programmes for Latin America, on an equal footing with other beneficiaries;**
 - call on the Summit, during these times of global crisis, to strengthen business and trade relations between the SE in the EU and LA;**
 - call on the Summit to ensure that any current or future trade agreements, multiparty agreements or association agreements between the EU and Latin American countries or regions promote the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-enterprises, cooperatives, non-profit organisations**

and, more generally, of the SE;

- call for the legal framework necessary for the development of the SE to be established;**

- 10. call upon the Summit to ensure that the various agreements between the EU and LAC, whether already negotiated or under negotiation, include a chapter on social security rights in relation to mobility and on respect for human, social and labour rights;**
- 11. urge the European Union to approve the European Commission's proposal to conclude social security agreements between the EU as a whole and the countries and regional integration processes of Latin America and the Caribbean;**
- 12. ask the Summit to give an undertaking 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, and support the proposal made at the Summit in this regard by the Chilean government;**
- 13. call for this Convention to protect the pension rights of migrant workers, the portability of pensions, equal treatment with national workers and the recording of periods of contributions worked in other countries, and to abolish the double social contributions in both the country of origin and the host country that may be imposed on companies from States that do not have bilateral agreements;**
- 14. call on the Summit to ensure that the States promote the ratification of the United Nations Convention of 12 December 1990 on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and recognise the rights of indigenous peoples;**
- 15. consider that the Summit should express its support for and recognition of civil society organisations, whose involvement is crucial in order to make bi-regional relations more open and transparent and to boost regional integration processes.**

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DISCUSSION

On the social economy

The participants:

- 1.1 consider that the social economy (SE) can contribute to sustainable development, and economic and social cohesion, to promoting the production sector and income distribution, to boosting employment and to securing equal opportunities;

- 1.2 highlight, that social economy enterprises are an integral part of civil society worthy of due recognition under the law;
- 1.3 consider that the SE should be a key element of the economic system;
- 1.4 consider that information on this sector needs to be systematised, in order to give it greater social visibility, and urge SE organisations in Latin America and the EU to provide standardised and reliable statistical data;
- 1.5 note that one task for the SE should be to achieve institutional recognition and conclude agreements and alliances with public authorities on the basis of mutual respect, ensuring their independence from the political authorities;
- 1.6 consider that the concept of the social economy must be clearly distinguished from that of job outsourcing, which sometimes inappropriately goes under the cooperative banner;
- 1.7 call for SE activities to be encouraged as an effective way to formalise the informal economy and increase transparency;
- 1.8 point out that 2012 was designated International Year of Cooperatives by the United Nations.

On sustainable development with high-quality social and environmental investment

The participants:

- 1.9 consider that unless the appropriate measures are adopted, maintaining the current growth model will be incompatible with the goal of sustainable development;
- 1.10 consider that such investments are an important tool to promote sustainable development and, while retaining their economic value, to help cover social needs, increase wellbeing, social cohesion and decent work and protect the environment;
- 1.11 believe that investments are needed in order to promote infrastructure and technological innovation, organic production, energy efficiency, renovation of buildings, sustainable cities and transport networks, and in order to conserve forests and natural areas of particular environmental value. These new areas of social and environmental development should be supported via appropriate fiscal policies, amongst others, and public procurement laws that help protect the environment and social needs;
- 1.12 urge governments, when promoting investments, to take account of the following needs in order to encourage sustainable development:

- (i) formal education and vocational training, and programmes that combine training with in-company placements to gain work experience, which are essential for the development of any country;
 - (ii) fair access to healthcare and social protection systems;
 - (iii) strengthening of social protection systems, such as pensions, unemployment benefit and support for people with disabilities;
 - (iv) promotion of the employment of young people, women and people with disabilities;
 - (v) promotion of cooperatives and other forms of social economy;
 - (vi) reduction of the use of limited natural resources, and diversification of the energy matrix with renewable energy sources;
- 1.13 consider that the abovementioned investments provide, among others, four main benefits: (a) they protect all or significant parts of the population; (b) they create many decent jobs; (c) they act as key "economic stabilisers", particularly in times of crisis; (d) they are essential for sustainable development;
- 1.14 believe that investments must have a sound business environment and the legislative framework needed to ensure legal certainty for businesses and investors, enabling them to put into practice a sustainable development model. The same conditions apply in order to attract direct foreign investment;
- 1.15 emphasise that the management of corporate social responsibility, which encompasses all voluntary actions carried out by enterprises over and above their legal obligations should take account of the social and environmental concerns of the various interest groups;
- 1.16 believe that the quest for profitability must be complemented by a commitment to economic and social development in the recipient countries, with incentives for these to make a greater reinvestment of profits;
- 1.17 believe that this commitment will have to be based on principles which are already accepted internationally, such as the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights, the OECD's Guidelines and the United Nations system for the protection of human rights;
- 1.18 consider that the social economy helps promote the production and widespread use of new technologies and environmental protection. In this respect, there should be increased use of information and communication technologies and environmentally-friendly energy sources, in addition to diversifying the energy matrix with non-conventional renewable sources, with a view to moving towards a sustainable economy.

2. On social protection mechanisms in EU-Latin America relations

The participants:

- 2.1 point out that globalisation has a significant influence on migratory flows. There are an estimated 20 million legally recognised immigrants in the EU, while migration between southern countries is increasing;
- 2.2 believe that the "external dimension" of social security coordination is increasingly important with regard to: (i) the pension rights of migrant workers to/from the EU; (ii) the portability of pensions; (iii) equal treatment with national workers; (iv) recording of contribution periods worked in different countries; (v) double social contributions in origin/host countries to which enterprises from states without bilateral agreements are subject;
- 2.3 note that immigrants and companies from third countries (which generally view the EU as a single entity) are confronted in practice by different social security systems in each country which complicate their establishment and movements in the EU, and exit therefrom;
- 2.4 point out that a series of measures and agreements have been adopted in order to coordinate social security schemes for third-country nationals moving within the EU: (i) association and or/stabilisation agreements between the EU and non-EU countries; (ii) bilateral agreements signed between EU and non-EU countries; (iii) multilateral agreements, such as the Ibero-American Social Security Agreement; support, however, as the best option, the European Commission's proposal to sign social security agreements between the EU as a whole and a country or group of countries;
- 2.5 highlight that the aim of the EU is firstly, to ensure the same treatment for workers and companies from non-EU countries, regarding mobility, as that afforded to workers and companies within the EU, in those situations where this is not currently the case and secondly, to achieve reciprocity for European workers and companies moving outside the EU.