

Beat: Politics

## EUROPEAN LEADERS THRILLED WITH THE EU-CELAC DISCUSSIONS AMID PARTNERSHIP

### JUSTICE TRANSITION JOINT COMMUNIQUE

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**USPA NEWS** - The exceptional two days high level Summit, was held called the EU-CELAC, at the European Council, in Brussels, after eight (8) years of absence (2015). As a matter of fact, it was in 2010, that CELAC a regional bloc of thirty three (33) Latin American and Caribbean states, was launched. It aims to unite these states to strengthen the region's political dialogue and social and cultural integration, improve quality of life, stimulate economic growth and advance the well-being of all of its people. The EU-CELAC, since the first summit took place in Santiago (Chile) in 2013, focusing on trade collaboration and the promotion of investments of social and environmental quality.

EU-CELAC leaders agreed to consolidate and strengthen their partnership on justice and security and to combat organised crime in all its forms, as well as corruption and money laundering. They have also, committed to advancing work on the local manufacturing of vaccines, medicines and health technologies. They will also work together to strengthen the resilience of health systems to improve prevention, preparedness and response to public health emergencies. The leaders agreed on a digital transition cooperation, and released a Joint Statement, to promote a responsible, human-centric, values-based and inclusive digital transition. We publish the full text of the Joint Communique, as it was delivered, at the EU-CELAC Summit of 17-18 July, in Brussels.

#### INCLUSIVE DIGITAL TRANSITION TO PROMOTE HUMAN CENTRIC, VALUED BASED

EU-CELAC leaders stressed the importance of promoting a responsible, human-centric, values-based and inclusive digital transition. In this regard, they highlighted the need to protect privacy rights, increase digital connectivity and cybersecurity, close digital gaps and contribute to trust in the digital economy.

In the margins of the summit, a joint declaration on a digital alliance was also agreed, with the aim of boosting cooperation on digital matters to the benefit of citizens.

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The European Union (EU) and Argentina, The Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay have agreed to deepen our partnership by establishing an EU-LAC Digital Alliance.

The EU-LAC Digital Alliance is an informal, values-based framework for cooperation, open to all Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries and EU Member States who may participate through their respective governments and agencies related to the digital agenda. The EU participates as Team Europe with Member States and their development agencies, European financial institutions and the LAC branch of the Digital4Development Hub. The Alliance will also provide for the participation of other stakeholders, such as the private sector, research and academic networks, and other social actors from both regions, as appropriate.

The EU-LAC Digital Alliance provides a forum for regular bi-regional dialogue and cooperation on digital matters for the benefit of our citizens. It creates a strategic framework to foster future cooperation, as well as for the substantial EU-LAC digital cooperation that is already ongoing and which includes EU Member States' cooperation and EU-supported infrastructure in the LAC region like the BELLA programme, Copernicus Centres, the LAC Cyber Competence Centre, and other specific projects, for example on cybercrime under the EL PAcCTO programme.

The EU-LAC Digital Alliance promotes cooperation on a wide range of digital issues, including digital policy dialogue, internet governance, data governance, infrastructure, connectivity, security, data protection, artificial intelligence and other new emerging digital technologies, skills development, technology, entrepreneurship and innovation, digital trade, and space-related activities such

as Copernicus Earth observation data and Galileo/EGNOS satellite navigation applications and services. In this regard, the Alliance will explore cooperation with the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency (ALCE). Knowledge transfer and exchange on digital citizenship, digitisation of public services and registries, digital identity, electronic signatures and related interoperability will also be pursued.

The Alliance will also serve as a forum for developing a bi-regional Investment Agenda in the digital domain underpinned by the Global Gateway initiative, among other sources of funding.

Given the highly dynamic nature of the sector, priorities will be revised regularly and new areas included, as per mutual agreement, in line with changing needs and opportunities.

The partners of the Alliance will meet regularly at different levels, including a periodic High-Level Policy Dialogue, regulatory dialogue and other meetings at technical level as appropriate. These meetings will serve for a free exchange of information and the identification of joint priorities.

#### OUR SHARED VALUED

The EU-LAC Digital Alliance is based on a common human-centric vision of the digital economy and society in which the design, development, governance, and use of technology are guided by universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. This vision encompasses the rule of law and democratic principles, transparency and accountability, high levels of cybersecurity and the protection of privacy and personal data, as well as solidarity, inclusion, security and environmental sustainability. To uphold these values, we will cooperate in the fight against online disinformation.

The participating EU-LAC countries agree that digitalisation must first and foremost benefit people, not least by harnessing the potential of the data economy for sustainable development in the context of ongoing digital transformation. This approach should encourage investment while recognizing the relevance of data as a tool for the socio-economic prosperity of developing nations.

By forming this Digital Alliance, we signal our shared intention to develop basic digital competences of all citizens so that they can engage with and access digital technologies in a safe, confident, critical and responsible manner, with a special focus on women and girls. We also encourage individuals to safely acquire specialized digital skills, notably through education and digital literacy, to facilitate their equitable and meaningful participation in the digital economy and society.

We are strongly committed to closing digital gaps and divides, promoting social cohesion, gender and racial equality, youth empowerment and an inclusive digital society and economy that leaves no-one behind. This includes providing secure, universal, and meaningful digital connectivity to every citizen and strengthening citizens' and businesses' trust through a democratic governance model based on high levels of privacy, data protection and security. We strive to develop a prosperous, inclusive, sustainable and responsible digital economy and local digital industry that fosters innovation on a level playing field, and which is founded on open and fair markets.

We recognize that the same rights enjoyed offline by our citizens must also be protected online, especially for children and youths, in keeping with relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions, international conventions and domestic laws. This perspective is also reflected in the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade and the eLAC Digital Agenda 2024. Both of these serve as references for a digital transformation that is people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented, and respects people's universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

A periodic dialogue to exchange information and best practices on digital policy, with a view to reinforcing and converging digital policy and regulatory frameworks on issues of common interest between the EU and LAC countries, will include data protection and data flows with trust, cybersecurity, interoperability, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, satellite data and signals. The dialogue will involve governments, intergovernmental and regional organisations, non-governmental organisations, private stakeholders, civil society and academia in its implementation, as appropriate. Modalities for the work on these dialogues will be defined jointly. This regional framework and current digital agendas will be of strategic value in bringing together national and regional regulatory entities to engage in dialogue and promote the convergence of digital policy and the closing of digital gaps.

To promote connectivity, inclusion, innovation and the digitalisation of public services and business, the EU-LAC Digital Alliance will support the digital projects of our Investment Agenda, which are to be agreed upon by the two regions, and in particular, a number of Global Gateway flagship initiatives. In 2023, cooperation will include the following activities, among others:

- a) the extension of the BELLA fibre-optic cable to interested countries, building secure digital backbone connectivity and bringing the research communities of the EU and LAC closer together;
  - b) the implementation of a regional Copernicus Strategy including two regional Copernicus data centres in Panama and Chile; and
  - c) the establishment of an EU-LAC Digital Accelerator aiming to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration between EU and LAC corporations, SMEs and innovative start-ups. The objective is to facilitate and accelerate at least 40 joint ventures for bi-regional innovation and digital transformation.
- We will review progress on an annual basis." Source: European Union

**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-23152/european-leaders-thrilled-with-the-eu-celac-discussions-amid-partnership.html>

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