



Information on the EU-Latin America Summit

The 5th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean took place in Lima on 16 and 17 May. The following day, bilateral meetings were held with the countries and sub-regions. An agreement was signed with Mexico and Chile, and negotiations are currently under way with Mercosur, the Andean Community and Central America.

The Summit ended with a Declaration in which, under the title "Joint Answers to Our Peoples' Priorities", they set out a two-year agenda for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable economic growth. Also approved was Euroclima, a joint programme to combat climate change and global warming. The European commission, the EU's executive body, has set aside €5 million (\$7.7 million) for the initial actions under the new programme.

The Lima Declaration takes a global view of emigration and enhanced coordination in the fight against drugs. The Declaration acknowledges and values the rights of immigrants and the value they contribute to host societies, and proposes to fight the illegal human trafficking, xenophobia and racism, all within the framework of the principle of shared responsibility.

In Lima the participants also agreed to "actively pursue" negotiations leading to the signature of association agreements, but in the bilateral meetings it became clear that there is still an obstacle with regard to Mercosur, the main EU partner. In addition, differences of opinion emerged between the four member countries of the Andean Community. While Bolivia and Ecuador want the trade chapter to exclude entire sectors that they consider sensitive, Peru and Colombia - which have already signed free trade agreements with the United States - also want to sign similar agreements with the EU individually if no progress is made in the negotiations as a group.

Some European leaders agree with this approach, especially German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The EU has maintained the position of negotiating with groups of countries, albeit pending compliance with the commitment to finalise negotiations in 2009.

The most positive aspects of the Declaration include bolstering integration processes and affirmations that "social policies and social protection systems must be based on public policies, especially fiscal policies which are streamlined and fair, enable improved redistribution of wealth and ensure adequate levels of social expenditure." The Declaration also states that other aspects are essential, such as the dialogue with unions, collective

bargaining, civic participation, legal certainty for investments, elimination of the underground economy and corporate social responsibility.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) submitted the conclusions of the Fourth EU-LAC Trade Union Summit (Lima, 16 April 2008) to the Fifth Summit of Heads of State and Government. The conclusions reiterate the proposals made by European and Latin American trade unions in favour of social cohesion and regional and sub-regional integration, and call for the negotiations to conclude with agreements based on fair trade with a social dimension.

ETUC will suggest to TUCA and ITUC that the Lima Summit agreements be analysed in depth to determine what actions the unions need to take.

Encl.: Declaration (press release on ETUC public website)

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