



Brussels Declaration
Equality, rights and democratic participation for the peoples of Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean
Ahead of the 2nd Summit of Leaders and Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union (EU)

We, the signatory organisations, representatives of NGOs, social movements, associations, platforms and networks of the Latin American, Caribbean and European civil society, within the framework of the global processes defining the new development agenda¹ and ahead of the 2nd CELAC-EU Summit to be held in June 2015 in Brussels:

Whereas

1. Both regions are experiencing processes of increasing inequality and concentration of wealth as a result of a neo-liberal development model, plundering natural resources, trading public assets and based on a growing instability and flexibilisation of working conditions, generating growing social exclusion. Despite the advances observed in some countries, Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole continues to be the world's most unequal region². In Europe, the crisis begun in 2008 has increased the levels of inequality and is far from over.
2. All this generates unequal access to power and resources, which is at the origin of the discriminatory situations persisting in our societies such as gender inequality, centrally, but also those based on sexual orientation, ethnic origin, migratory patterns, religion, age or disability.
3. Financial speculation, illicit flows, tax havens, extractivism and land hoarding, high rates of public and private corruption, State capture owing to business interests and organised crime, adjustment and austerity plans, excessive investment protection including with supranational mechanisms, among other conditions, violate the rights and integrity of the different peoples of the EU and CELAC. Food sovereignty, education, health, decent work, social protection and housing, as well as a healthy environment, inter alia, constitute human rights threatened by the loss of public resources in favour of investment and by the ever decreasing margin for the implementation of public policies aimed at general welfare.
4. Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have promoted the interests of transnational corporations to the detriment of the rights of workers and peoples and generated even more unemployment and social exclusion. Likewise, aid for the financial system in the EU is not reflected in the benefits for the peoples of that region.
5. The United Nations Human Rights Council, taking up the historic demands of the population, states in its resolution of 26 June 2014 that "transnational corporations and other business enterprises have the capacity (...) to provoke negative repercussions for human rights...".
6. Although, in various multilateral spaces for defining positions and decision-taking between world leaders and Heads of State, citizen participation has been gradually recognised as a key factor in advancing democratic life in the countries, it is surprising that many declarations contain few or no references to the role of civil society and significant, effective and inclusive mechanisms facilitating the performance of their role.
7. The forced migration flows in both directions are also a consequence of the same development model and take place owing to the actual exclusion, persecution and criminalisation that deny the migrant population its rights.
8. Civil society is entitled to participate via mechanisms that guarantee the full exercise of human rights individually and collectively, gender equity and the recognition of diversity as well as in policies of sustainability.
9. The State has a duty to ensure policies generating an enabling environment that fosters and is favourable towards the guaranteed role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as political players at local, national and international levels.

¹Post-2015, Conference on Financing for Development - Addis Ababa, COP21 and Beijing+20

²According to the 2014 Human Development Report - UNDP

For all these reasons, ask the EU-CELAC Summit in Brussels:

To build societies that favour socio-economic equality and environmental sustainability

10. To base bi-regional relations on the principle of policy coherence for development and a respect for peoples' autonomy; the EU must implement its binding undertakings to ensure that its internal and external policies – on trade and energy etc. – are coherent with their development goals and aim at eradicating poverty. Concurrently, the CELAC must move forward on these undertakings within the context of SDGs.
11. To implement public policies that guarantee universal social protection and are binding on everyone, so that human rights are the elements, which define and shape social and economic order.
12. To apply migration policies on the basis of unrestricted respect for human rights, banishing the criminalisation of human mobility, creating conditions to facilitate migration and mechanisms that allow the full participation of male and female migrants in the building of society.
13. To embody bi-regional dialogue on gender equity and equality in public budgets and policies that guarantee the human rights of women, including sexual and reproductive rights, which ensure their physical, sexual and economic autonomy and access to effective justice and eradicate all forms of violence towards women and girls, including femicide and slavery. Likewise, to implement monitoring systems, mechanisms for participation of women's organisations and accountability for compliance with the international undertakings on gender equality.
14. To replace the current production model with one that establishes regulatory measures and policies that guarantee the generation of decent work and incorporate the care economy in public policies.
15. To promote a public indebtedness audit process in both regions with the participation of the civil society in order to reject illegitimate debt, guaranteeing an economy that serves the people; to renegotiate the terms and conditions thereof and suspend payments until its conclusion.
16. To establish a tax on international financial transactions that inhibits speculation and whose receipts are directed towards promoting sustainable development and reducing the enormous economic gaps in existence. Within the framework of respecting the rights of nature, the democratisation of access to natural resources, to guarantee the repair of ecological systems.
17. To establish brave, fair and progressive fiscal policies that enable the genuine redistribution of income, as well as international fiscal cooperation that tackles illicit financial flows, money laundering and tax evasion and avoidance. Multinationals should pay taxes in the jurisdictions in which they obtain their profits. Likewise, to separate investment and savings banking clearly and immediately.

To foster a relationship that promotes human rights and welfare

18. To condemn agreements of any name (such as FTAs, PAs and BITs etc.) that have free trade and investment protection content; and to halt the negotiations in progress – such as TTIPs and TISAs within the framework of bi-regional cooperation and integration. The economic relations of both regions must not be underpinned by free trade and investment protection. To process through the courts and issue penalties to transnational corporations and their actual beneficiaries practising speculation and tax avoidance and any other system of corruption and sacking of public resources.
19. To support the creation of a binding legal instrument that regulates the activities of transnational and other corporations in respect of human rights. European Union Member States must participate unconditionally in the United Nations Working Group³ to this end. To support the implementation of a mandatory due diligence process. In addition, to reject the Investor-State mechanism of the ICSID and UNCITRAL, inter alia.
20. To preserve for the States, the provision of public works and services that, owing to their nature, are counter to the interest of business profit and have a general welfare and social function, rejecting the public/private partnership schemes and other forms of privatisation of State responsibility.

³The United Nations Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations.

21. To overcome extractivism in the focus of major investment and move to productive diversification schemes in accordance with the rights of nature and bearing in mind the serious impacts of climatic change on the rights of persons and peoples. Not to encourage policies that affect the use of natural resources without the prior, free and informed consent of the peoples and communities involved. To recognise and legitimise resistant indigenous struggles for the respect of their autonomy and rights.
22. To ensure that the reduction of emissions complies with the principle of common responsibilities but differentiated on the basis of the national capacities of the countries. We ask that these decisions are made within their own territories and that climatic financing agreements are additional to ODA. Likewise, in view of the International Conference in Addis Ababa, to guarantee and ensure sufficient financial systems for development that reaffirm the central role of public financing.
23. To incorporate the concept of food sovereignty in the food and agrarian policies of both regions with a focus on human rights so that it does not generate negative impacts on any of their peoples; harmonising them with the sustainable development goals.

To promote democracy and citizen participation

24. To urge governments to take all steps to promote peace and demand the eradication of conflicting, discursive, political practices and focuses with respect for the self-determination of peoples as to their political future and territory (as in the cases of Haiti, Venezuela and Argentina, for example).⁴ In this regard, we support the resistance of the people of Greece against the imposition of economic austerity measures subjecting them to a condition of greater deprivation and poverty.
25. To improve and boost effective mechanisms to ensure the opportunity of all people to participate in the design, implementation and social evaluation of public policies and programmes from the local, national and international level, in accordance with the autonomy of civil society.
26. To establish political and financial measures that contribute to recognising and strengthening the abilities of all citizens, organisations and/or communities to claim and exercise their rights and demand that public authorities are accountable by promoting new social audit systems; to develop education programmes for democracy and citizenship.
27. To guarantee the social role of the media as promoters of critical thinking and democratic pluralism within the framework of UNESCO recommendations.
28. To strengthen and revitalise democratic institutionalism in both regions and to establish inclusive effective discussion spaces between the CSOs and authorities of both continents, within the framework of national and bi-regional political dialogue, including mechanisms for assessing impacts on political decisions and maximising the opportunities for participation of the existing CSOs such as the multi-player political dialogue roadmaps of the EU.
29. To encourage a more dynamic, complete and transparent circulation of information on relations and agreements between the EU and CELAC in order to support the proposals of the civil society.
30. To condemn categorically and promote concrete measures by the authorities of the EU and CELAC rejecting all forms of violation of freedom of expression and non-violent action of the CSOs (intimidation, making such action a legal issue and repression etc.) and to guarantee effective protection measures for the defenders of human rights.
31. To grant political and financial support to all forms of democracy promoted by the CSOs of both continents so that they listen to the voices of the poorest and most marginalised sectors in particular, as new social audit systems.
32. To promote the building of alliances and common dynamics between players in the civil society of the EU and CELAC in order to encourage an exchange of experiences and good practice in respect of citizen participation and the promotion of human rights.
33. To fight all forms of discrimination including those restricting all forms of democratic participation.

The undersigned undertake to continue to promote solidarity between the peoples of Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean in order to tackle common problems.

Brussels, 11 May 2015

⁴ CONCORD does not consider the mention of specific cases



CONCORD (European NGO confederation for relief and development), whose members are:

National NGO platforms:

- Austria (Globale Verantwortung),
- Belgium (CONCORD Belgium - CNCD-11 11 11, ACODEV, 11 11 11, NGO-FEDERATIE)
- Bulgaria (BPID),
- Czech Republic (FoRS),
- Cyprus (CYINDEP),
- Croatia (CROSOL)
- Denmark (CONCORD Denmark),
- Estonia (AKÜ),
- Finland (Kehys ry),
- France (Coordination SUD),
- Germany (VENRO)
- Greece (Hellenic Platform For Development),
- Hungary (HAND),
- Ireland (Dóchas),
- Italy (CONCORD Italia),
- Latvia (Lapas),
- Lithuania (LU),
- Luxembourg (Cercle),
- Malta (SKOP),
- Netherlands (Partos),
- Poland (Grupa Zagranica),
- Romania (FOND),
- Portugal (Plataforma ONGD),
- Slovakia (MVRO),
- Slovenia (SLOGA),
- Spain (Coordinadora),
- Sweden (CONCORD Sverige),
- United Kingdom (BOND).

Networks:

- ActionAid International,
- ADRA,
- ALDA (associate member)
- ACT Alliance EU ,
- CARE,
- Caritas Europa,
- CBM International,
- CIDSE,
- EU-CORD,
- Handicap International,
- IPPF European Network,
- Islamic Relief Worldwide,
- Oxfam International,
- Plan Europe,
- Save the Children,
- Solidar,
- SOS Children's Villages International
- Terre des Hommes IF
- WorldVision,
- World Wide Fund for Nature (associate member)



MESA de Articulación de Asociaciones Nacionales y Redes de ONG de América Latina y El Caribe, whose members are:

- ABONG- Asociación Brasileña de Organismos No Gubernamentales.
- ACCIÓN- Asociación Chilena de Organismos No Gubernamentales.
- ALOP- Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción al Desarrollo
- ALIANZA ONG – Republica Dominicana
- ANC- Asociación Nacional de Centros de Investigación, Promoción Social y Desarrollo, Perú.
- ANONG- Asociación Nacional de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales Orientadas al Desarrollo, Uruguay.
- AFM - Articulación Feminista Marcosur.
- ADOC- Alianza Democrática de Organizaciones Civiles, Mexico
- ASONOG – Asociación de Organismos no Gubernamentales Honduras
- CEAAL- Consejo de Educación Popular de América Latina y el Caribe.
- CCONG Confederación Colombiana de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales.
- Convergencia de Organismos Civiles, Mexico.
- COONGCOP- Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas Guatemala.
- Encuentro de ONG para el desarrollo, Argentina.
- FONG – Federación de Organismos no Gubernamentales de Nicaragua
- Latindadd- Red Latinoamericana sobre Deuda, Desarrollo y Derechos.
- MODES – Movimiento de ONGD para el Desarrollo Solidario de El Salvador
- PIDHDD- Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo.
- Pojoaju- Asociación de Organismos No Gubernamentales de Paraguay.
- Propuesta Ciudadana, Peru.
- Sinergia, Venezuela.
- UNITAS- Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social Bolivia

Other signatories:

- CIFCA – Iniciative para Copenhague para Centroamérica y México
- Grupo Sur – Red Europea de Incidencia UE-América Latina y Caribe