

EU ADVOCACY ON CENTRAL AMERICA

TRAINING GUIDE

actalliance eu
Formerly APRODEV

CIFCA
Iniciativa de Copenhague
para Centroamérica y México



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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	5
INDEX OF FIGURES AND TABLES	6
INTRODUCTION	7
PART I. THE EUROPEAN UNION, ITS PRINCIPLE INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANS	11
1. THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL	12
2. THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION	12
3. THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (EEAS)	13
4. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION	15
5. THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	15
6. THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (EESC)	16
PART II. EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES ON CENTRAL AMERICA AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS	17
1. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS FOREIGN POLICY	17
2. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	18
3. POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND INSTRUMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION RELATED TO CENTRAL AMERICA	19
3.1 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF EU-CENTRAL AMERICA RELATIONS: THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT (AA)	19
3.2 POLICY AND INSTRUMENTS FOR EU COOPERATION WITH CENTRAL AMERICA	20
3.3 EU STRATEGY ON CITIZEN SECURITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	22
4. EUROPEAN UNION GLOBAL FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS	23
4.1 HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS	23
4.1.1 EU STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY	23
4.1.2 EUROPEAN UNION GUIDELINES ON HUMAN RIGHTS	23
4.2 INSTRUMENTS FOR DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY	23

PART III. HOW TO CARRY OUT POLITICAL ADVOCACY WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION	25
1. WHAT IS POLITICAL ADVOCACY?	25
2. HOW TO CARRY OUT POLITICAL ADVOCACY WITH THE EU	26
2.1 DESIGN PHASE	26
2.1.1 IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM OR ISSUE FOR POLITICAL ADVOCACY	26
2.1.2 DEFINING OBJECTIVES	27
2.1.3 IDENTIFYING THE TARGET GROUPS AND CHANNELS OF INFLUENCE	27
2.1.4 ESTABLISHING ALLIANCES AND TAKE PART IN NETWORKS	29
2.1.5 EVALUATING AND DEVELOPING ADVOCACY MESSAGES	29
2.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	30
2.2.1 LOBBYING ACTIVITIES	30
2.2.2 EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES – CAMPAIGNS	31
2.2.3 COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES	32
2.2.4 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES	32
2.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION PHASE	33
2.4 SYSTEMATISATION PHASE	34

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACT EU	Action of Churches Together (ACT) – Alliance EU
AA	Association Agreement
AFET	European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
CIFCA	Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico
CODEV	Working Party on Development in the EU Council
COHOM	Working Party on Human rights in the EU Council
COLAC	Working Party on Latin America and the Caribbean in the EU Council
DCAM	European Parliament Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America
DEVE	European Parliament Committee on Development
DG DEVCO	European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DG ECHO	European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid
DG TRADE	European Commission Directorate General for Trade
DROI	European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights
EUD	European Union Delegation
ESCA	EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America
EuroLat	Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly in the European Parliament
HR/VP	High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission
INTA	European Parliament Committee on International Trade
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
PICA	ACT Alliance EU Advocacy Program for Central America
MIP	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme
EEAS	European External Action Service
SICA	Central American System of Integration
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
EU	European Union

INDEX OF FIGURES AND TABLES

<i>Figure 1. Membership of ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks in Europe (March 2015)</i>	8
<i>Figure 2. Presence of European members of ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks In Central America (March 2015)</i>	8
<i>Figure 3. The EU: Fundamental institutions</i>	11
<i>Figure 4. Partial graph of the structure of the EEAS (of special interest for Central America)</i>	13
<i>Figure 5. Delegations of the EU in Central America</i>	14
<i>Figure 6. General Structure of EU Delegations in Central American Countries</i>	14
<i>Figure 7. General outline of the definition and approval of the cooperation strategy with a third country</i>	18
<i>Figure 8. Pillars and objectives of the EU-Central America Association Agreement (AA)</i>	20
<i>Figure 9. Priorities for EU cooperation with Latin America and Central America</i>	21
<i>Figure 10. EU budget priorities and allocations for the countries of Central America</i>	22
<i>Figure 11. Phases and components of a policy advocacy plan</i>	26
<i>Figure 12. Preparing a lobbying meeting with the EU</i>	31
<i>Figure 13. Opinion article for the EU-CELAC Summit, example published in EU Observer, June 2015</i>	32
<i>Figure 14. Internal communication mechanisms: Newsletters</i>	32
<i>Figure 15. Components of systematisation</i>	34
<i>Table 1. Format (with illustrative information) for the planning of strategic actions</i>	31
<i>Table 2. Preparatory questions for monitoring and evaluation</i>	33



INTRODUCTION

This training handbook is a product of the joint efforts of the ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks, with the aim of providing our member organisations based in Europe and Central America as well as their partners and other

interested organisations, with an itinerary based on theory and practical experience, on advocacy processes with the European Union related to issues of fundamental importance for Central America.

MISSION AND VISION OF ACT ALLIANCE EU AND CIFCA

[ACT Alliance EU](#) is a network of 14 faith-based development agencies throughout Europe dedicated to promoting justice, peace and poverty eradication through their influence on lawmakers and decision-making processes in the EU. European Union (EU) affecting third countries. Known for its first 25 years as APRODEV, in 2015 it became part of the global coalition Action of Churches Together or “ACT Alliance” and took the name ACT Alliance EU. The Central America Advocacy Program (PICA) of the ACT Alliance EU monitors EU policies in Central America. We aim to contribute to making these policies transparent, based on democratic principles and to ensure the participation of civil society, thus contributing to improving the living conditions of communities and the fulfilment of human rights and gender equality.

[CIFCA](#) (Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico) was created in 1991 and is a pluralistic network of 33 European movements and organisations that promote solidarity among the peoples of Central America, Mexico and Europe. Comprised of non-governmental development and human rights organisations, solidarity committees, independent research institutes and individuals, the network aims to promote the transformation of European policies related to Central America and Mexico so that they respect, protect, guarantee and promote the human rights in the areas of political dialogue, development cooperation and trade and investment

ACT ALLIANCE EU AND CIFCA AS ADVOCACY NETWORKS BEFORE THE EU

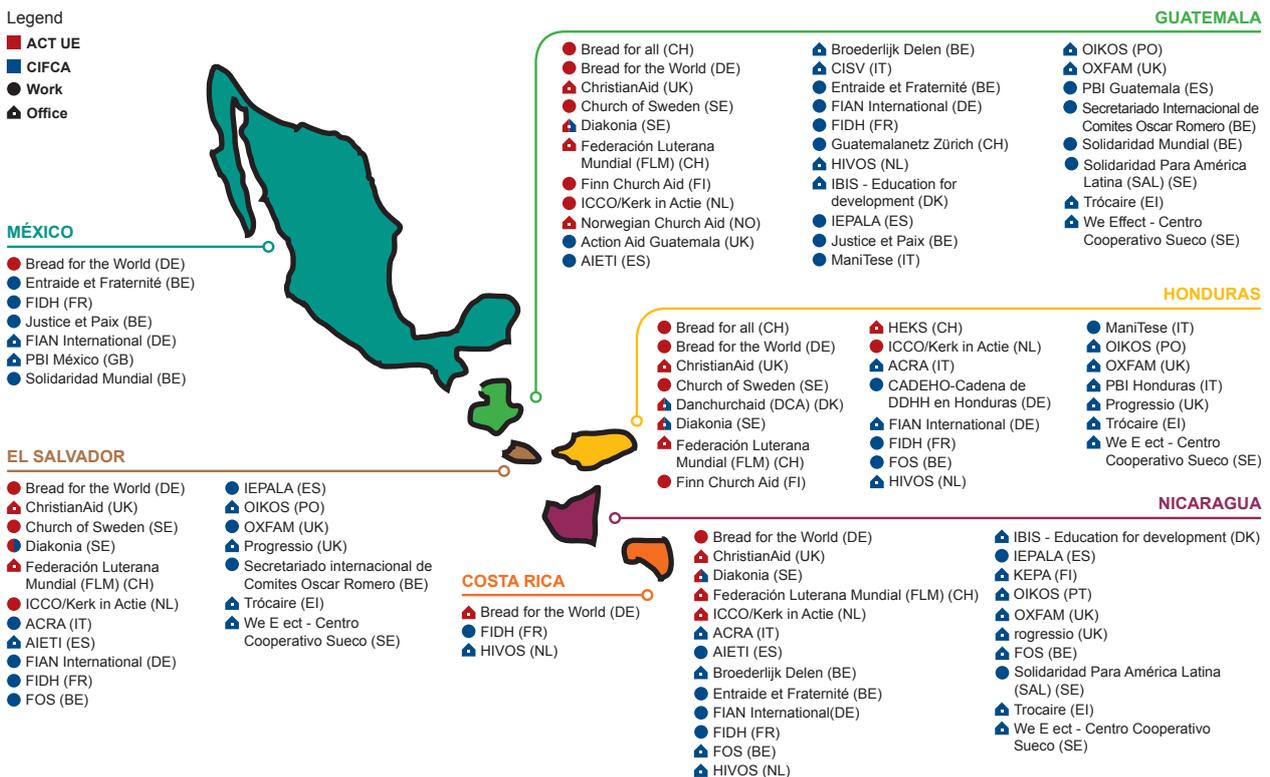
Together, the ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks have a **membership** base in 11 EU Member States.

Figure 1 - Membership of the ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks in Europe (March 2015)



Our European members are present in four countries of Central America and Mexico; some have offices in the region while others do not, and all work with local organisations.

Figure 2 - Presence of European members of ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks In Central America (March 2015)



The ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks have a common aim to help ensure that European public policies and their implementation mechanisms in the areas of political dialogue, development cooperation and trade and investment contribute to the overall respect and fulfilment of human rights, democracy, peace, justice, the eradication of poverty and sustainable and inclusive development in Central America. At the same time, each network develops specific work on certain issues, processes and geographic areas. This corresponds to the diversity of the two networks and their members.

The two networks also share the objective of carrying out advocacy to influence the European Union (EU), a global player with decision-making power that has historically been and continues to be politically and economically relevant in Central America. In order to achieve this shared objective, the Networks carry out strategic monitoring of the policies (understood as political and programmatic priorities) of EU institutions in their bilateral relations with four Central American countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, and of bi-regional EU-Central American relations.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF OUR ADVOCACY WORK WITH THE EU

When we talk about political advocacy carried out **by civil society**, we understand that the legal framework for this falls under the general **right of citizens to participate in public life** in particular, in the field of EU external action, as an act of co-responsibility in the management of public welfare for the achievement of human rights.

The EU has translated these commitments into Article 11 of the TEU, which establishes that *“the institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action”*. Likewise, *“the institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society”*.

In relation to its foreign policy, the Communication from the European Commission to Parliament, the Council and other bodies entitled *‘The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with civil society in external relations’* recognises the role of civil society as a development actor, its relevance for building democratic and pluralist societies and its contributions to more effective policies, and equitable and sustainable development. The Communication also renews the EU’s commitments to civil society actors.

The Treaty on the EU also establishes **the fundamental values** that the EU wishes to promote through its foreign policy, establishing in Article 21 §1 that: *“The Union’s action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and*

enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law”.

These commitments are reflected in the EU’s external action policy, including policies on cooperation, trade and political relations with third countries, which are the subject of monitoring by networks and other civil society organisations, to ensure that these high-level democratic and human rights requirements are met.

CONTENTS OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed as a tool for learning and training for advocacy work in relation to EU policies with Central America. In particular, it consolidates shared information and materials produced during a series of training workshops held in Europe and Central America and during the networks' day-to-day institutional work.

This guide incorporates the practical experience of the Networks, and we have included examples of our actions carried out over the years, to facilitate understanding and the practical application of the contents.

The Handbook is divided into three parts:

In **Part I** - *The European Union, its main institutions and bodies* - we present the target audience for our advocacy work, the European Union, with an emphasis on the institutions and bodies most relevant to work on Central America.

Part II - *The European Union's policies on Central America and other instruments* – is an introduction to the EU's foreign policy on Central America. In the first part, we review the legal framework of the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Subsequently, we present the general framework of the European Union's relations with Latin America. Then, going even closer to our region of interest, EU-Central America relations and the relevant global thematic instruments applicable to Central America are presented in more detail.

Finally, in **Part III** - *How to carry out political advocacy with the EU* - different tools and techniques are presented for political advocacy, specifically focused on our target audience, the European Union.

The **printed version** of this Handbook is supplemented by an online version (available at <https://manualdecapacitacion.wordpress.com> – in Spanish only) which includes access to resources produced by the ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks and other civil society organisations, as well as important links that can be used to increase knowledge on the different issues, presented in such a way as to enable quick access to specialised information on relations between the European Union and Central America.

THE EUROPEAN UNION, ITS PRINCIPAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANS

PART I

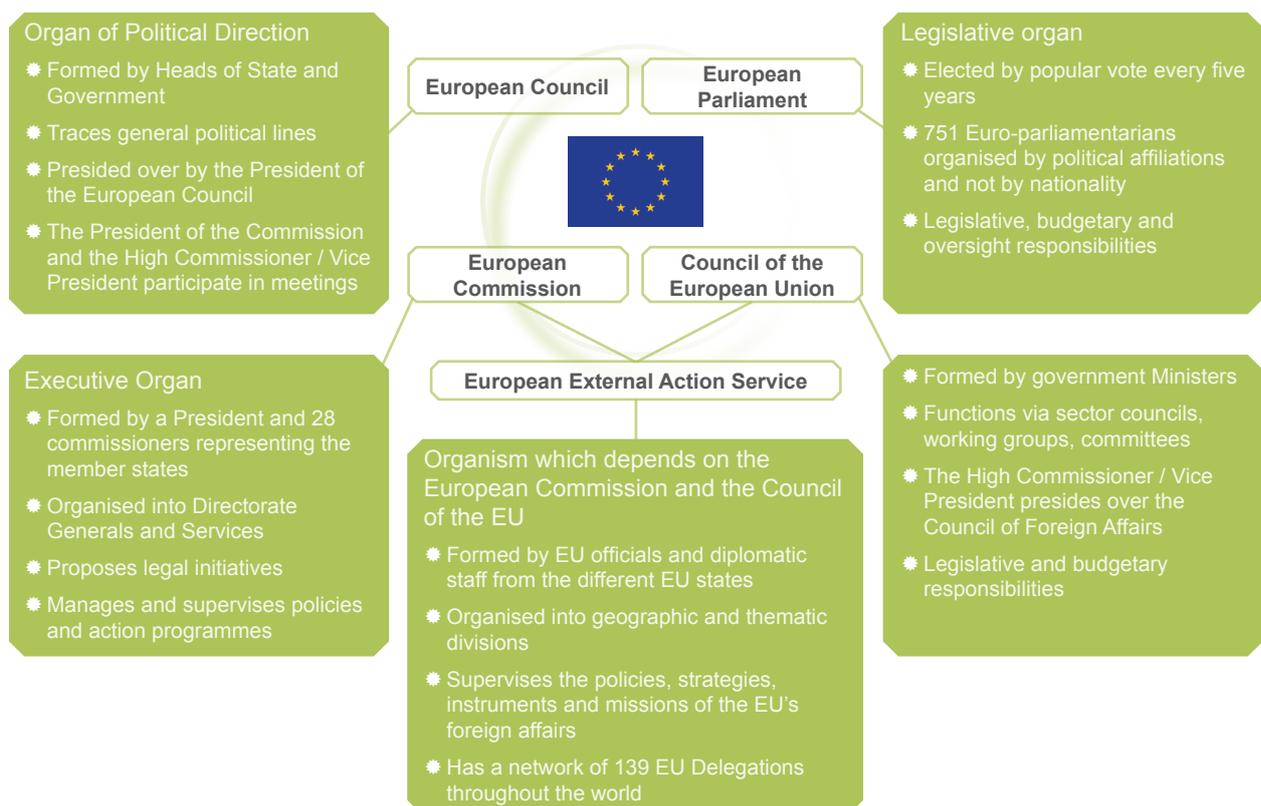
This first section of this Handbook aims to present the [European Union](#), and its basic institutions and fora for advocacy work on Central America. Ways to carry out advocacy work with these institutions will be dealt with in Part III of this Handbook.

The European Union (EU) is an association for economic and political purposes created in 1992, and whose legal framework is contained in the [Treaty on European Union](#) (TEU) and the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) (TFEU). It comprises 28 European states, which together represent some 510 million people. The EU's [precursor](#) initiatives were the European Coal and Steel

Community, created by six states in 1951 and the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community, both created via the [Treaties of Rome](#) in 1957.

The EU has a structure composed of institutions and agencies. For the purpose of our handbook, we pay attention here to six fundamental institutions, in order of the level of their decision-making power over EU foreign policy: (1) the European Council; (2) the Council of the European Union; (3) the European External Action Service; (4) the European Commission; (5) the European Parliament; and (6) the European Economic and Social Committee.

Figure 3. The EU: Fundamental Institutions



1. THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The [European Council](#) consists of all Heads of State and Government of the EU member countries. It is an intergovernmental political steering body representing the interests of Member States.

EXAMPLE

SICA-EU Summit joint press release, June 11, 2015
The Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Central American Integration System (SICA) met on 11 June 2015 with the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, with the aim of reviewing the close cooperation between the two regions, and adopted a joint press release.
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press-releases-pdf/2015/6/40802198715_en.pdf

The Council is responsible for establishing the EU's common foreign and security policy and designates the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP or "High Representative / Vice-President").

EXAMPLE

Declaration of Federica Mogherini following-up on the death of Berta Cáceres in Honduras, March 12, 2016
https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/2824_en

2. THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The [Council of the EU](#) is an institution which fulfils legislative and budgetary functions in close cooperation with the European Parliament. The Member States are represented in this Council through specific ministers according to the theme to be addressed, with the power to vote on behalf of their government. That is why it is also known as the Council of Ministers. On specific occasions it also participates in the definition of policies and coordination initiatives.

DO NOT CONFUSE THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL WITH THE COUNCIL OF THE EU!

The [Council of the EU](#) is organised into different groups (committees or working groups) depending on the subject being discussed. **Committees and Groups** are responsible for preparatory work before issues are discussed in Council meetings. All of these groups are made up of Directors of the European External Action Service responsible for a specific region or theme (such as human rights or trade), as well as expert delegates from EU Member States and the European Commission.

EXAMPLE

The EU strategy on citizen security in Central America and the Caribbean. Document revised and approved by various working groups in the Council of the European Union, including COLAC.
http://www.eeas.europa.eu/lac/docs/elements_for_an_eu_strategy_on_public_security_in_central_america_and_the_caribbean_en.pdf

The main working groups involved in EU relations with and policies on Central America are:

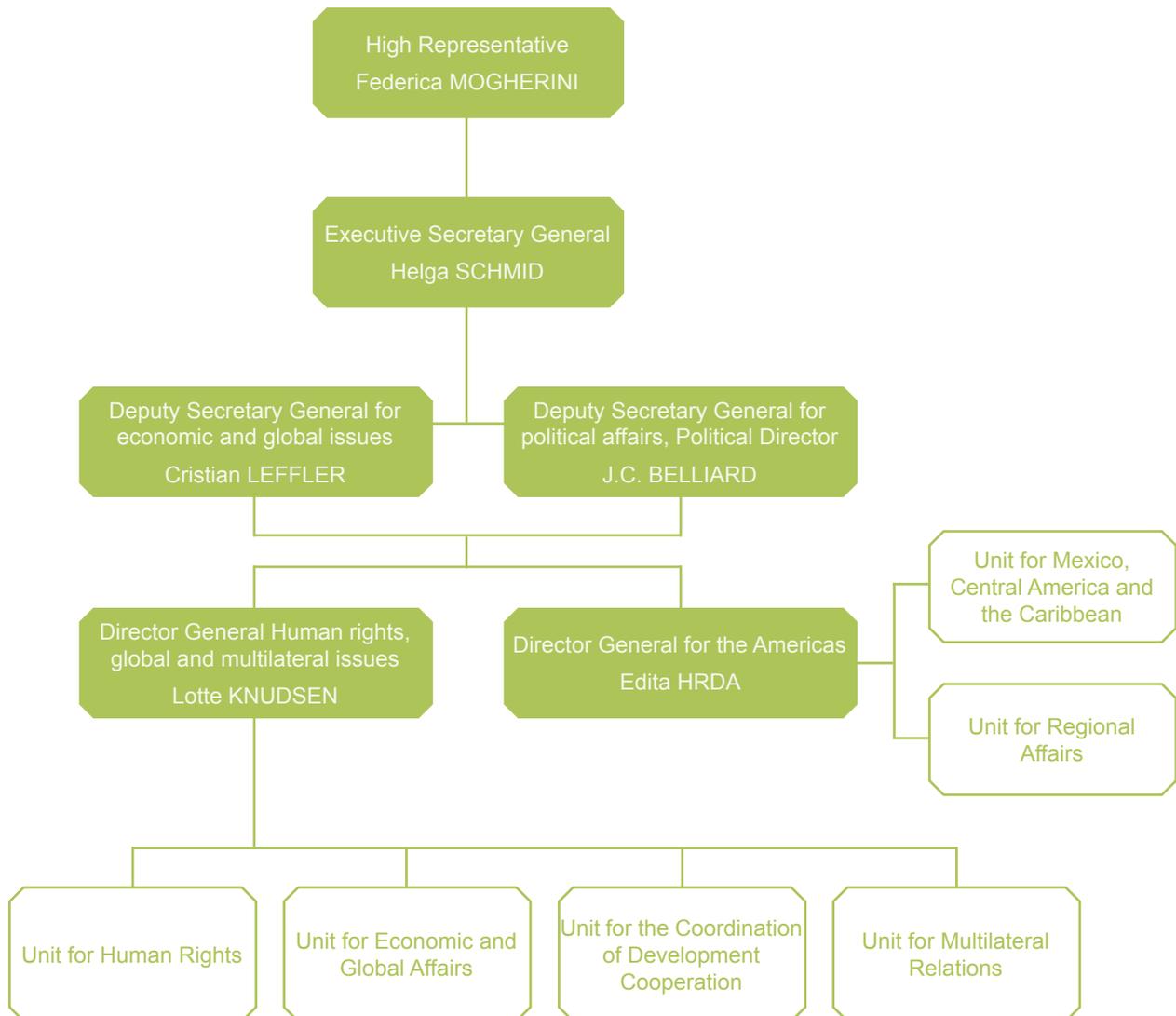
- **COLAC** (Working Group on Latin America and the Caribbean): deals with strategic relations and policies between the EU and regional and subregional organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the [Community of Latin American and Caribbean States](#) (CELAC) and the Central American Integration System (SICA);
- **COHOM** (Working Group on Human Rights): is responsible for human rights in the EU's foreign policy. The group is responsible for the implementation of EU human rights instruments, and for identifying priorities and actions in multilateral human rights fora, such as UN Committees, etc.;
- **CODEV** (Working Group on Development Cooperation): follows up aspects of the European Union's development cooperation policy, including cross-cutting issues related to trade and the environment.

3. THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (EEAS)

The [EEAS](#) was established in 2010 as a body that depends on the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. It is composed of EU officials and diplomatic staff from the various EU

states. The EEAS is led by the Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Union and [organised according to geographic and thematic divisions](#).

Figure 4. Partial graph of the structure of the EEAS (of special interest for Central America)



The EEAS **oversees the policies, strategies, instruments and missions of EU external action**. It has four main objectives: 1) support stability; 2) promote human rights and democracy; 3) seek to expand prosperity and 4) support the implementation of the rule of law and good governance. This is done with instruments ranging from bilateral agreements to guidelines and specific legislation.

The EEAS has a [network of 139 EU Delegations](#) (EUD) throughout the world. These delegations **represent the EU at the international level in matters of common foreign and security policy and other external relations issues** in the countries in which they are located. In Central America, the EU has delegations in [Guatemala](#), [El Salvador](#), [Honduras](#), [Nicaragua](#) and [Costa Rica](#).

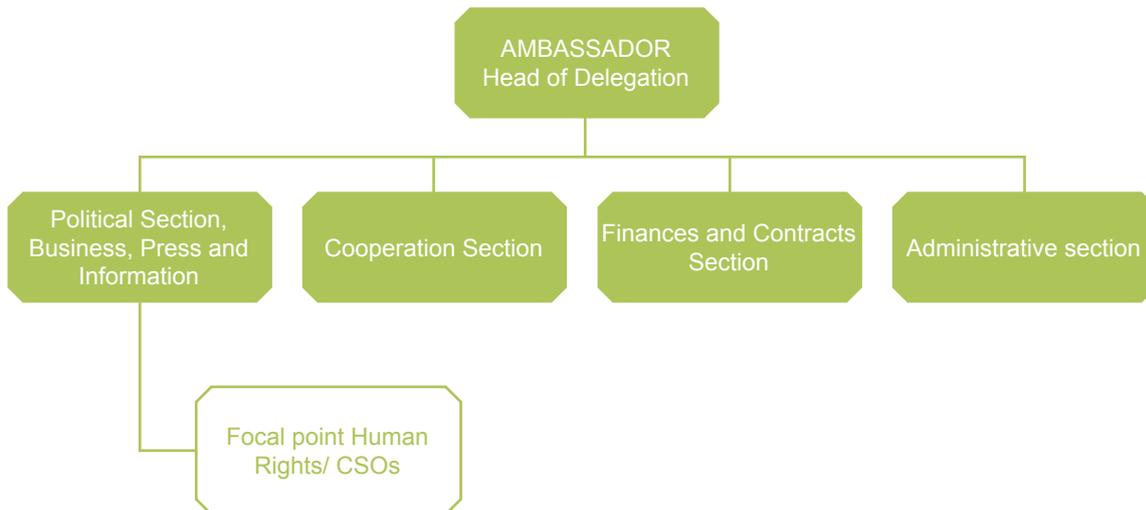
Figure 5. Delegations of the EU in Central America



The majority of delegations have **responsibility for EU relations with a single State**, although some have representation **before several States or a region**. For example, the EUD in Nicaragua also deals with relations with Panama and with the Central American Integration System (SICA). There are also delegations which represent the EU before intergovernmental and international bodies.

EU Delegations have a general organisational structure, although some may present specific variants according to the human resources and funding available.

Figure 6. General Structure of EU Delegations in Central American Countries



For local organisations, EUDs are the first and most important entry point to the European Union. They play a relevant role both in the implementation and also in the definition of development policies and specific instruments for a country (such as Roadmaps, the country human rights strategy, etc.). They can also comment on various issues, through Declarations or local Press Releases.

EXAMPLE

Joint Press Release: *“The EU expresses concern about the difficult situation facing the LGBTI community in Honduras”*, February 17, 2016
 The EU Heads of Mission have expressed their opinion about the situation for the LGBTI community and human rights in Honduras in a press release.
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/honduras/press_corner/all_news/news/2016/20160217_es.htm (only available in Spanish)

4. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The [European Commission](#) is the **executive body of the EU** and operates independently of the member countries, and is therefore considered an institution which **guarantees the general community interest**.

The Commission does not have the capacity to legislate, but the vast majority of legislative initiatives originate in the Commission, as it presents drafts of new laws to the EU. It has responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of legislative decisions. It manages and monitors EU policies and action programs.

It is composed of a [President](#) who is elected by Parliament and a College of 28 Commissioners representing Member States, appointed by the President - in collaboration with the European Council - and approved and invested by Parliament. The Commission is organised into [Directorates-General](#) (DGs).

EXAMPLE

DG DEVCO, *Report on the Evaluation of the EU's Cooperation in Central America*, July 2015
https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/evaluation-central-america-report-volume1_en.pdf

5. THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The [European Parliament](#) is one of the legislative bodies of the EU, together with the Council. Parliament is elected by direct suffrage every five years. It has three main responsibilities: legislative, supervisory and budgetary.

The Parliament's **legislative powers** include:

- a) the [adoption of EU legislation](#) - which is regularly initiated by the European Commission - [currently as a co-decision with the EU Council](#);
- b) decision-making on international agreements, as in the case of Central America, ratification of the EU-Central America Association Agreement;
- c) the approval of the cooperation and humanitarian aid policy, including the approval of multi-year cooperation programs with the countries of Central America;

In terms of European Union-Central America relations, the following DGs are relevant:

- [Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development \(DG DEVCO or EuropeAid\)](#): the body responsible for designing and, once approved, implementing the cooperation programs together with EU Delegations;
- [Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid \(DG ECHO\)](#): responsible for the design and implementation of EU emergency and humanitarian aid programs;
- [Directorate-General for "Trade" \(DG TRADE\)](#): the body responsible for negotiating and implementing EU trade agreements with third countries. In Central America, they work in conjunction with the trade officials in the European Union Delegations.

- d) the review of the work of the European Commission.

Its **supervisory responsibility** includes the democratic control of other institutions, especially the functioning of the European Commission; and its **budgetary powers** include the approval of the EU's [multiannual budget](#) and establishing the [annual budget](#), which it does in coordination with the Council of the EU.

The European Parliament is composed of numerous thematic working groups. They prepare documents that can take the form of resolutions, directives, decisions or others.

The relevant Committees for Central America are:

- [AFET](#): Committee on Foreign Affairs
- [INTA](#): Committee on International Trade

- **DEVE**: Committee on Development
- **DROI**: Subcommittee on Human Rights

These Commissions make legislative proposals, adopt reports, and propose resolutions that will then be approved in plenary, among other activities.

EXAMPLE

In April 2016 the European Parliament issued an *'Emergency resolution on the situation of human rights defenders in Honduras'*. The 751 deputies from 28 EU member countries unanimously expressed their concern about the human rights situation in the country and issued demands to the Honduran government and the EU itself to address the issue. These resolutions can be used in advocacy work with States and / or international regional human rights mechanisms.

Parliamentary delegations are also organised to maintain relations and exchange information with parliaments from third countries. These delegations make visits to the countries which are the focus of their work, receive visits from representatives from Central America, and exchange views on current issues. However, they do not issue resolutions. For Central America, there are:

- **DCAM**: Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America

EXAMPLE

DCAM, *Report of the visit of DCAM to Guatemala and Honduras, February 2015*

In line with the agenda of the visit, the Delegation addressed a wide variety of problems during its visit to Guatemala and Honduras, ranging from economic and social aspects to the situation of social, legal and human rights in both countries.

<https://polcms.secure.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/10667fc1-42e2-4230-8be3-50e246e6bfc9/1067821EN.pdf>

- **DLAT**: Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly

This is the group of MEPs representing the European Parliament in the [Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly](#) (EuroLat). **EuroLat** is the parliamentary institution of the Bi-regional Strategic Association (June 1999), established within the framework of the EU-LAC Summits (between the European Union, Latin

America and the Caribbean). It is composed of 150 members, 75 from the European Parliament and 75 from the Latin American Parliament, including [Parlatino](#) (Latin American Parliament), [Parlandino](#) (Andean Parliament), [Parlacen](#) (Central American Parliament) and [Parlasur](#) (Mercosur Parliament).

EuroLat adopts and submits resolutions and recommendations to institutions, organisations and other groups on issues of interest to Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, it issues communiqués and declarations.

EXAMPLE

EuroLat, *Resolution on trade in raw materials between the European Union and Latin America, 2014*

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/eurolat/assembly/plenary_sessions/athens2014/adopted_docs/raw_materials/1025902en.pdf

6. THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (EESC)

The **EESC** is an advisory body to the European Union, allowing interested organised civil society groups (such as trade unions or business associations) and civil society organisations from European Union countries to express their views on policies. These opinions are forwarded to the European Council, the European Commission and the Parliament.

It is composed of 350 members representing employers, trade unions and various interested groups from EU member states. They are elected for a period of five years and are organised into thematic sections and geographical committees.

The EESC is consulted by the EU bodies mentioned above on general EU issues, including foreign policy, cooperation and emergency policy.

EXAMPLE

The EESC participates, together with civil society organisations, in monitoring the implementation of free trade agreements between the EU and third countries, including the EU-Central America Association Agreement <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.international-trade-monitoring-eu-central-america-eu-dag>

EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES ON CENTRAL AMERICA AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

PART II

The second section of this Handbook aims to present the EU's policies on Central America, starting with the most general, namely EU foreign policy, before focusing on the policies most

specific for Central America, our region of interest. This section also presents the relevant thematic global instruments of EU foreign policy that are also applicable to Central America.

1. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS FOREIGN POLICY

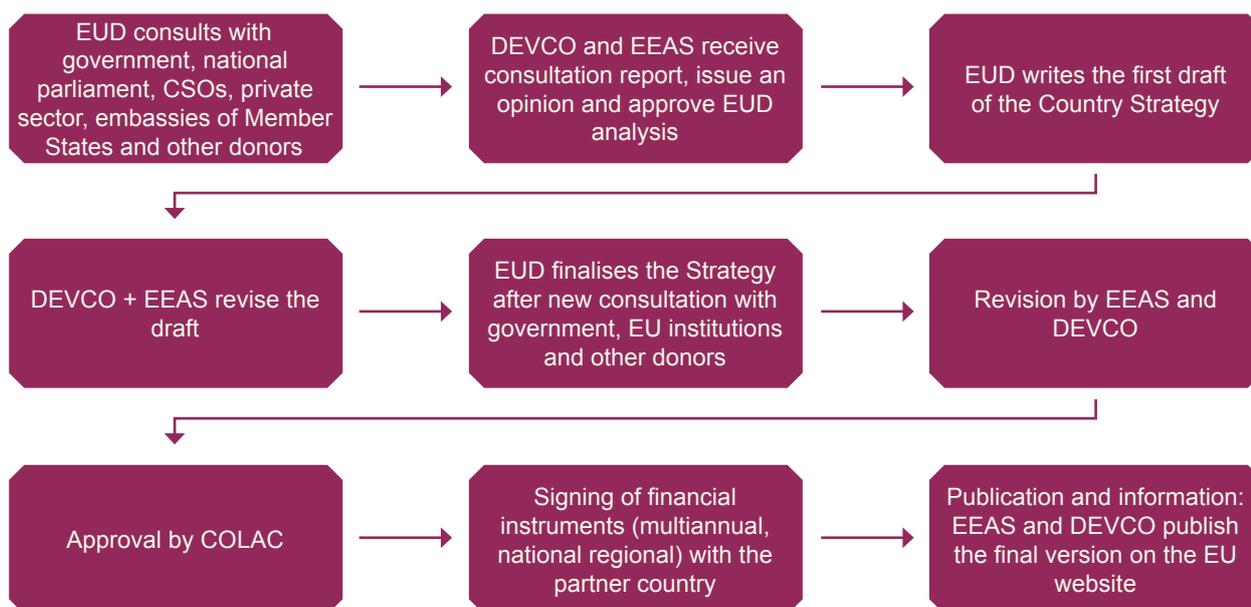
The EU's relations with the rest of the world have been developed on the basis of the principles and values that gave rise to the Union. These are '*democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law*' (Article 21 TEU). This also includes the promotion of political and trade relations with strategic partners, including support for development, cooperation and political dialogue.

The [Common Foreign and Security Policy](#) (CFSP) is defined by the European Council and the Council of the EU and covers all areas of foreign policy, including security. To this end, the CFSP includes a [Common Security and Defence Policy](#) (CSDP) whose objective is to strengthen the EU's external action by developing its civilian and military capabilities in peacebuilding operations, conflict prevention, the management of crises and the strengthening of international security.

The [High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Common Security Policy](#) (HR/VP) is responsible for giving coherence to the EU's foreign and security policy. The High

Representative also serves as Vice-President of the European Commission and chairs the Council of Foreign Affairs of the European Council, composed of the Foreign Ministers of the Member States. In general, in the decision-making process there is interaction between the European Commission, the [European Parliament and the European Council](#), and most foreign policy and security decisions require the consensus of all EU countries. To give an example, the diagram below summarises how the EU defines and approves the cooperation strategy with a third country.

Figure 7. General outline of the definition and approval of the cooperation strategy with a third country



2. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean have evolved in the light of political changes and developments in the interests of both regions. It is worth noting that LAC did not have a single and structured organisation until the creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). This was launched in 2010 as a regional mechanism for political dialogue and cooperation, involving 33 LAC countries.

Bi-regional relations between the EU and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are framed as Summits of Heads of State and Government, which are held every two years. The Summits offer a space for bi-regional political dialogue where priority political positions are adopted between the two regions

and at the multilateral level (i.e. joint positions in global processes). During the period between Summits, meetings are held between senior officials, including in dialogues on specific issues and bi-regional meetings.

Aside from Summits, Free Trade Agreements and Association Agreements are also part of the overall European Union policy, and its policy with Latin America. Since 2000 and 2005, Agreements with Mexico and Chile have respectively been in force. In 2013, the Trade Pillar in the Association Agreement with Central America and the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru came into force. In addition, negotiations for a trade agreement between the European Union and Mercosur were relaunched in 2010.

3. POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND INSTRUMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION RELATED TO CENTRAL AMERICA

Relations with the EU are of particular importance to Central America because the EU is one of its [main trading partners](#) and contributors to [official development assistance](#) (ODA). These relations were strengthened with the negotiation processes to find a solution to the armed conflicts in the Central American countries (San José Dialogue, 1984). Over time, they have been structured around issues of trade, socio-economic development, democratisation and regional integration.

The political dimension of the San José Dialogue gave way to the incorporation of the issue of cooperation, and in 1985 the first Framework Cooperation Agreement (also known as the Luxembourg Agreement) was signed. This was replaced by a new [Framework Agreement](#) that was signed in San Salvador on 22 February 1993 and entered into force on 1 March 1999. This extended the areas of economic and trade cooperation to include issues related to the protection of human rights and democracy. Finally, the [Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement](#) (DPCA) was signed in December 2003, and entered into force on May 1, 2014.

In this section we will present the policies, strategies and instruments that the European Union has in place to implement its policies in Central America.

3.1 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF EU-CENTRAL AMERICA RELATIONS: THE [ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT](#) (AA)

The European Union and Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) signed an Association Agreement (AA) in June 2012, which was ratified by the European Parliament in December of the same year. This agreement is structured around three pillars: political dialogue, cooperation and trade.

The pillar of **political dialogue** is built on the foundations of democracy, the Rule of Law and respect for human rights with the aim of creating a fluid, continuous and permanent dialogue between the two regions. In terms of **cooperation**,

the aim is to consolidate and expand the areas of support by making better use of the EU's aid to the Central American region. The **economic-trade** component of the Agreement implies the establishment of a Free Trade Area that facilitates the exchange of goods and services, serving as an *'instrument for the development of Central America by increasing its production and exports'*.

At present, only the trade pillar is in force, which has been provisionally in force since the ratification of the text of the agreement by the Congresses of the Central American countries in 2013 and the European Parliament. In turn, this provisional application contemplates the creation and implementation of the Association Agreement's institutional bodies.

This agreement is **particularly important because it will represent the legal framework governing EU-Central American relations**, once the pillars of cooperation and political dialogue are approved.

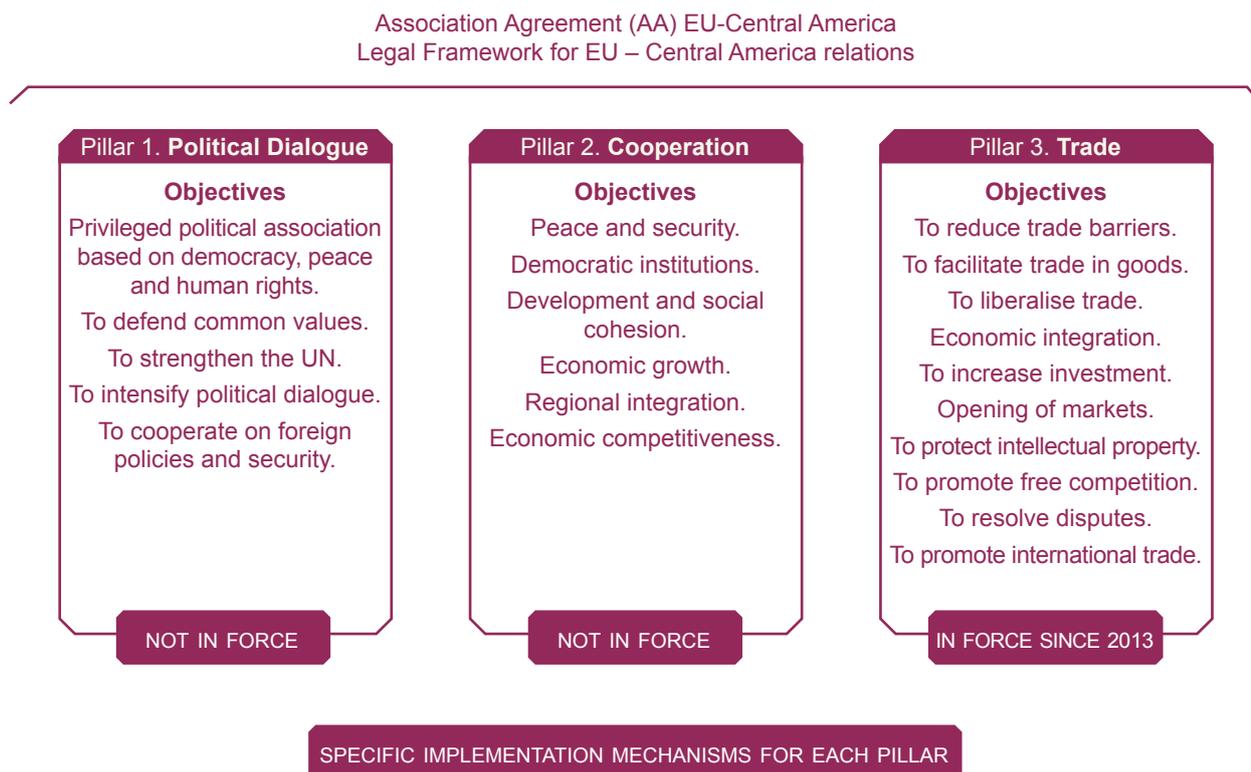
The pillar on trade and sustainable development

The trade pillar of the EU-CA AA contains in Title VIII a number of provisions which set out the parties' commitments in labour and environmental matters (in line with the international commitments assumed by the parties in those areas) and the promotion of Trade to enable the achievement of the Sustainable Development Objectives.

Title VIII of the AA also contemplates the participation of Civil Society. It establishes the participation of all social, environmental and labour stakeholders who are interested in sustainable development, via an open dialogue bi-regional Forum.

Another mechanism is the Advisory Groups (one established by the EU and another by each Central American Republic), composed of economic, social and environmental actors from representative and independent organisations, which advise the Parties on how to achieve the objectives of Title VIII by contributing their assessments and recommendations on issues related to trade and sustainable development, including respect for labour and environmental conventions.

Figure 8. Pillars and objectives of the EU-Central America Association Agreement (AA)



WHAT WAS THE POSITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS?

CIVIL SOCIETY WAS LARGELY AGAINST THE RATIFICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT, GIVEN THE IMPLICATIONS THAT THESE TYPES OF TREATIES USUALLY HAVE IN TERMS OF POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMPACTS, SUCH AS ON HUMAN RIGHTS OR THE ENVIRONMENT.

IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT THE ALREADY EXISTING LACK OF EQUALITY BETWEEN THE EU AND CENTRAL AMERICA WOULD BECOME WORSE, AND THAT THE VULNERABILITY OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN MARKET WOULD BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF, FAVOURING THE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS OF EUROPEAN COMPANIES.

IN ADDITION, FREE TRADE PREVAILED OVER THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN, LABOUR AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS, REFLECTING THE EU'S INCONSISTENCIES IN THIS AREA, AS ALTHOUGH THE AGREEMENT CONTAINS CLAUSES RECOGNISING PROTECTION AND THE NEED FOR THE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS TYPE OF RULES, THE ABSENCE OF A MECHANISM THAT EFFECTIVELY PENALISES VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS RENDERS SUCH STATEMENTS INEFFECTIVE.

3.2 POLICY AND INSTRUMENTS FOR EU COOPERATION WITH CENTRAL AMERICA

The European Union's cooperation policy has as its primary objectives the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development. That is to say, it is governed by the same principles and objectives as the EU's foreign policy (see Part I of this Handbook), which are reflected in the [Consensus on Development](#) (2005). EU cooperation focuses its support on

certain sectors, according to the [Program for Change](#), a strategic document approved in 2011, which aimed to prioritise and target sectors receiving financial support. The EU decided to focus its cooperation on the world's poorest countries and those experiencing conflicts.

In the case of Latin America, where countries are considered as middle and high-middle income countries, EU cooperation has taken a more regional approach. This has meant that the EU has stopped cooperating bilaterally with eight

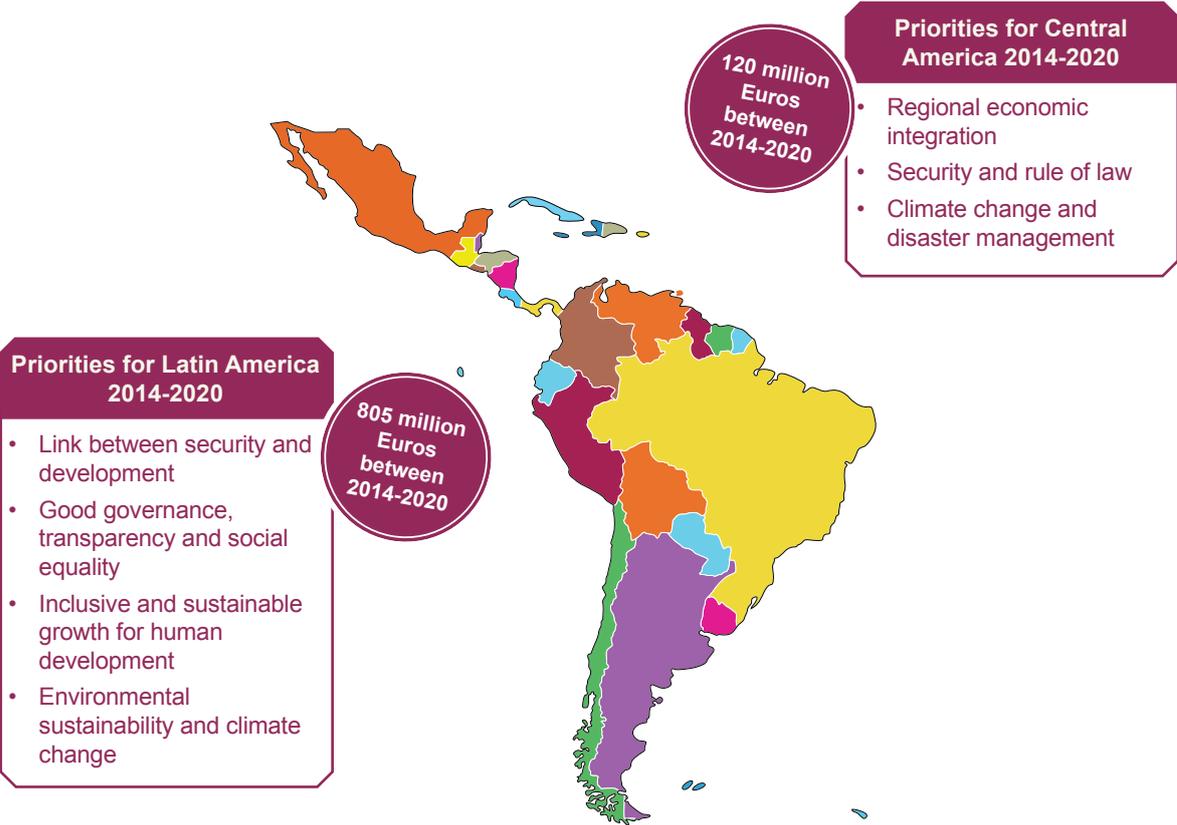
countries in the region. These countries are: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Uruguay.

Development cooperation is implemented by the European Commission and the European External Action Service, through legal and financial instruments which last for several years. The current [Multiannual Financial Framework runs from 2014-2020](#). This includes the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), which covers regional and thematic cooperation with Latin America.

There are three types of cooperation with Latin America: regional and subregional cooperation,

bilateral cooperation and thematic cooperation. The [Regional Multiannual Indicative Program for 2014-2020](#) has a total allocation of 925 million Euros. The priorities for this cooperation are divided into two components: one regional and one subregional for Central America. The latter program has three priorities, in which the EU considers that it offers added value to Central American efforts: (1) support for regional economic integration, including the commitments made in the EU-Central America Association Agreement; (2) support for the Regional Security Strategy; And (3) support for the Regional Strategy against Climate Change and the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management.

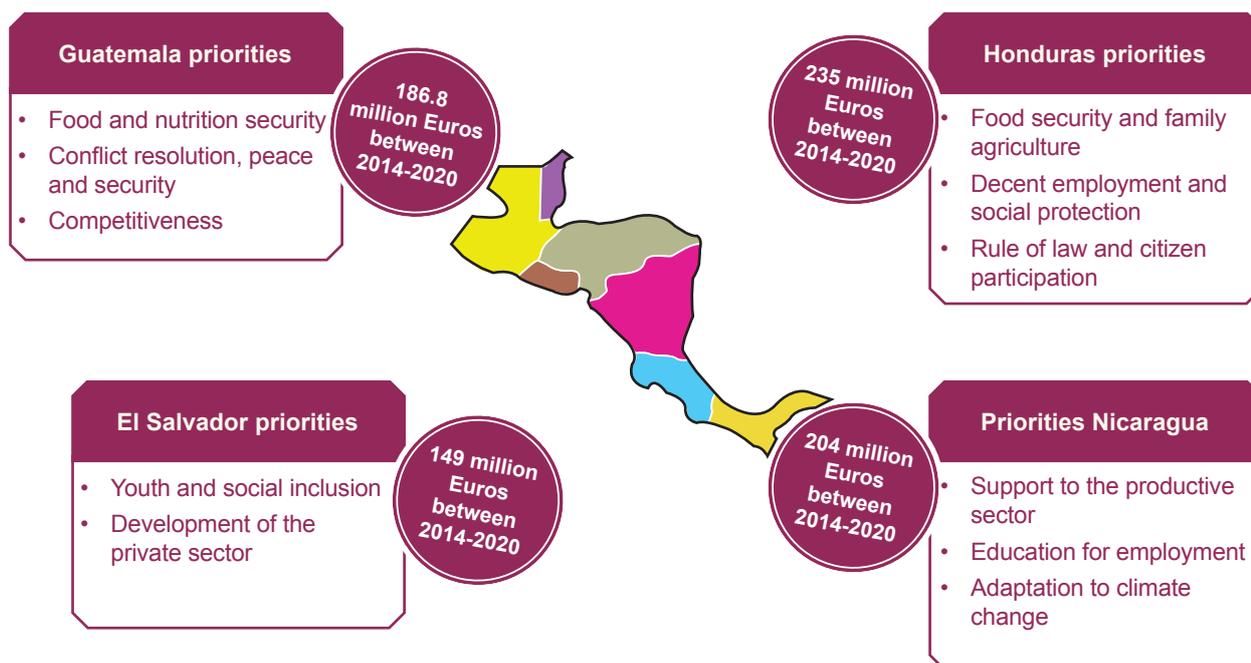
Figure 9. Priorities for EU cooperation with Latin America and Central America



At the same time, the EU engages in bilateral cooperation with four Central American countries: El [Salvador](#), [Guatemala](#), [Honduras](#) and [Nicaragua](#). For each of these, the EU carries out a dialogue and negotiation process to

define its cooperation priorities, in line with the development policies of these countries. These cooperation priorities have been translated into Annual Indicative Programs by country for the period 2014-2020.

Figure 10. EU budget priorities and allocations for the countries of Central America



In terms of thematic programmes, the 2014-2020 CSO-LA programme sets out the priorities to support the actions of civil society and local authorities around the world.

Finally, another cooperation instrument with global scope is also being implemented in Latin America: the [European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights](#) (EIDHR), which aims to support the actions of human rights organisations.

3.3 EU STRATEGY ON CITIZEN SECURITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The persistence of the structural causes of poverty and inequality in Central America, coupled with the existence of weak institutions to ensure a fair and effective application of justice, make Central America one of the most violent and insecure regions in the world. The European Union widely recognises this and has been supporting policies in Central America that address the problem. Thus, both the EU Multiannual Indicative Programmes for the region 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 incorporate citizen security as a relevant challenge and promote support for the Central American Security Strategy (ESCA) as the regional policy that can address this issue in the most comprehensive way.

In addition, the EU has made progress in its political dialogue with the Central American countries with the adoption in June 2014 of the [‘EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean’](#), which is the EU’s overall framework for coordinating all its policies on citizen security in Central America. The objectives of the strategy include:

- (1) developing a common regional citizen security program;
- (2) strengthening the capacity of Governments to address insecurity, while respecting human rights and reinforcing preventive policies;
- (3) addressing the transnational dimension of security threats.

In 2015, during the Summit of EU Heads of State and CELAC, the Parties adopted the [Action Plan for the EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean](#), which includes proposals to move forward in each one of the objectives embodied in the Strategy.

These lines of action include the reform of the justice and security sectors (including the penitentiary sector and policies that promote rehabilitation and alternatives to imprisonment); support in strengthening police capabilities through the provision of training or the exchange of knowledge

and good practice; support for the development of national and regional capacity for compiling and analysing crime statistics; promotion of economic growth, vocational training and entrepreneurship as a means of offering people jobs and alternatives

to crime; assistance to victims of violence, where appropriate, through humanitarian aid; and greater involvement of organisations such as [Europol](#), [Eurojust](#) and [Frontex](#), within their respective fields of competence.

4. EUROPEAN UNION GLOBAL FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS

4.1 HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

4.1.1 EU STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

The promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and the Rule of Law are among the foundational values of the European Union. Over the years, the EU has adopted a significant number of instruments and policies for the promotion of human rights in foreign policy.

In 2012, the EU adopted the '[Strategic Framework for Human Rights and Democracy and its Action Plan for 2012-2014](#)'. This framework seeks to promote the universality of human rights and to give greater coherence and effectiveness to the actions of the EU and its member countries in relation to human rights. To this end, it establishes a series of actions and objectives to be achieved in relation to human rights during the period envisaged. It also creates the role of an EU Special Representative for Human Rights.

In July 2015, a new EU Action Plan "[Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda](#)" was adopted for the period 2015-2019, re-introducing the most relevant lines of action for the EU in the field of democracy and human rights, including the reduction of space for civil society organisations and human rights defenders, gender equality, the promotion of ESCR, etc.

This plan includes general actions with responsibility for implementation by the European Commission and the EEAS, including Delegations in third countries.

4.1.2 EUROPEAN UNION GUIDELINES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

As an integral part of its human rights policy, the EU has adopted a set of [guidelines on different human rights](#). These **guidelines are instruments which gather proposals and suggestions for**

actions for EU Delegations and Member State Embassies in third countries on relevant human rights issues.

These guidelines are not binding, but in practice many EUDs implement them. There are a number of guidelines, including the Guidelines on Violence against Women and Combating All Forms of Discrimination, the Guidelines on Freedom of Expression, against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, among others.

In terms of the actions of the Networks, it is particularly important to highlight the [Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders](#), adopted in June 2004. These guidelines include suggestions for actions to protect, support and strengthen the work of human rights defenders in third countries.

EXAMPLE

EUDs in third countries can monitor and follow up on individual cases of human rights violations, observe trials, use procedures to request particular actions; make public statements condemning human rights violations, visit human rights defenders, and many others.

In addition, the Guidelines suggest preparing Human Rights Strategies at country level, analysing the human rights situation and identifying priorities for action by the EU and its Member States. These strategies are developed by the EUD in consultation with civil society. Generally, these documents are confidential.

4.2 INSTRUMENTS FOR DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The Communication from the European Commission to Parliament, the Council and other bodies entitled '[The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's commitment to civil society](#)

[in external relations](#) recognises the role of civil society as an actor in Development, and its relevance for building democratic and pluralist societies and contributions to more effective, equitable and sustainable development policies.

In addition, in recognition of the closure of spaces for participation, the EU is committed to supporting civil society and to fostering an environment more conducive for the diversity of activities in which it is involved. To this end, the role and actions of organisations at local and country levels is particularly relevant.

Finally, the document proposes the elaboration of ['Roadmaps for EU-civil society engagement'](#) in each country, including an analysis of the environment and the socio-economic context in which organisations operate, priorities, activities and measurement indicators, to achieve consistency and to be able to plan this above-mentioned engagement.

Since 2014, a series of consultations have been held with organisations in [El Salvador](#), Guatemala, [Honduras](#) and [Nicaragua](#) for the definition of these Roadmaps. However, both public access to these tools and progress made in their implementation vary greatly from country to country.

HOW TO CARRY OUT POLITICAL ADVOCACY WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

PART III

This third section aims to present what we understand by political advocacy, and the steps involved in building an advocacy plan with the European Union, including tools and concrete

suggestions for this, using and making links with the content we have presented in Parts I and II of this Handbook.

1. WHAT IS POLITICAL ADVOCACY?

Political advocacy refers to the **collective actions of organised civil society, aimed at exerting influence on those who have powers of decision and/or implementation, in order to generate impacts on public policies and practices resulting from their implementation, to benefit communities using a rights-based approach.**

Political advocacy seeks to generate sustained social change in contexts of poverty, exclusion or state fragility. Advocacy actions are processes that encourage traditionally excluded populations to make their voices heard and express their interests, needs and decisions.

Traditionally, Political Advocacy has been focused on states, but with the globalised development model, political advocacy with the corporate sector and private companies has been playing an increasingly relevant role, given this sector's high level of influence on the state and global decision-making fora.

Although our networks do not carry out advocacy work with the corporate sector or companies, it is important to take this sector into account when creating a power map.

What is NOT political advocacy?

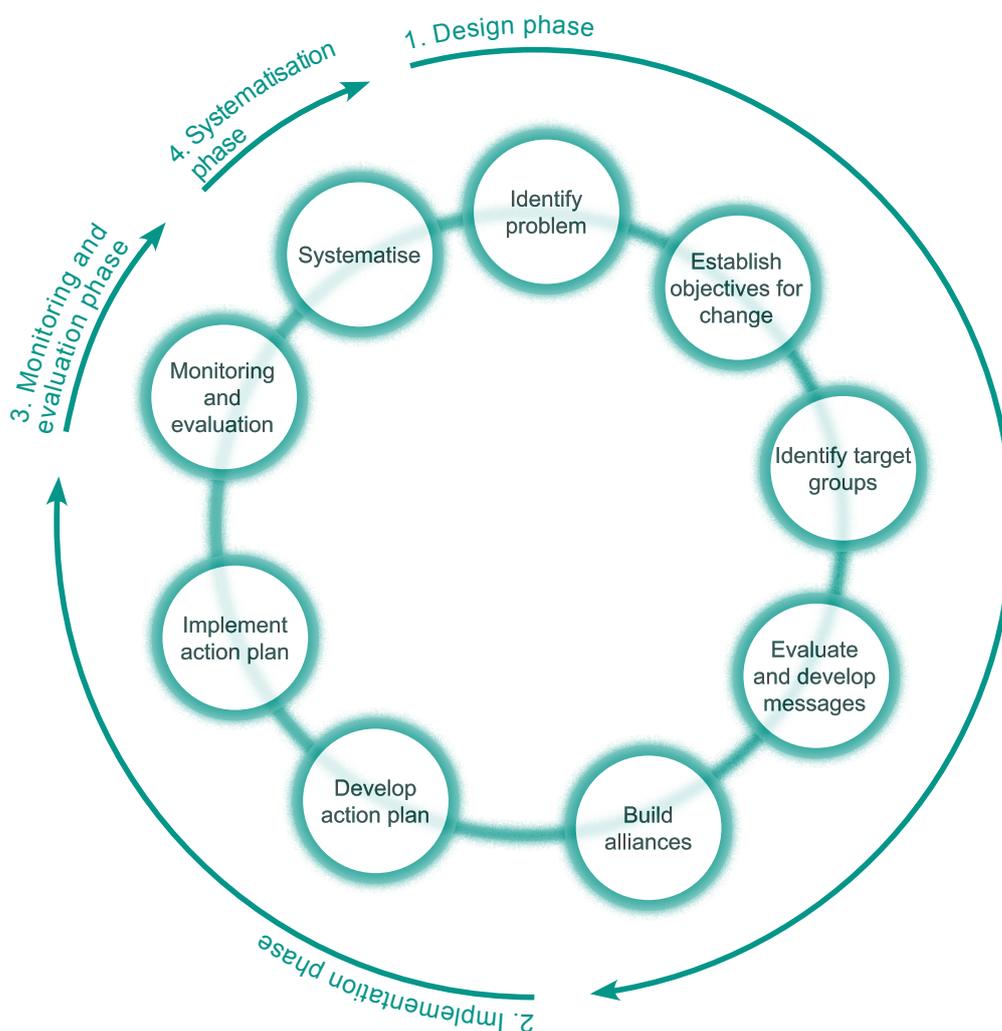
- It is not synonymous with campaigning, although campaigns form an integral part of a political advocacy strategy;
- It is not lobbying. Lobbying is one of the strategies of a political advocacy plan;
- It is not synonymous with political dialogue, political dialogue is a constituent part of a lobbying strategy, but political advocacy is much more than political dialogue;
- It is a process, not an event;
- It is about achieving specific goals, not just raising awareness about problems; about developing strategies based on research and analysis, rather than casting conjecture; it is about selecting approaches and deploying resources on what will have the most impact;
- The term “advocacy” has been used to describe advocating, publicly defending a cause, person or community. We suggest using the term political advocacy because it encompasses other social organisation practices in addition to advocacy per se and promotes the strengthening of civil society and, therefore, democracy.

2. HOW TO CARRY OUT POLITICAL ADVOCACY WITH THE EU

In this section we will describe the steps we take to prepare an **plan for carrying out advocacy with the EU**, providing some tools and suggestions to make such a plan more effective. We also include some concrete examples of the work of the ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA networks.

In order to develop political advocacy plans for the EU, we need to take time to plan, coordinate and strengthen our organisations (whether a partner, or a group, or network). In the advocacy plan we have identified four main phases, each containing specific components or sub-phases:

Figure 11. Phases and components of a political advocacy plan



2.1 DESIGN PHASE

In the design phase of our advocacy plan, we use a series of steps that allow us to better define **what we want to influence, who we are targeting and with which allies**. To support the definition of each of these steps, we use specific tools.

2.1.1 IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM OR ISSUE FOR POLITICAL ADVOCACY

A problem is a gap between the place where a group or person is situated and where they should be situated in terms of the fulfilment of their rights. This situation, which can be considered a mismatch or imbalance, includes obstacles that

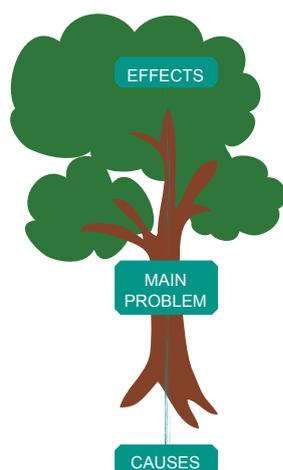
impede movements to reduce this gap. **The way in which a problem is defined determines the possibilities of finding a solution.**

In order to identify the problem that we wish to use to have an impact on the EU, we need to reflect and analyse in depth, and then prioritise and build consensus, either between the members of our organisation or between the coalition of organisations that are part of the process.

The **identification of the advocacy problem or issue** is a participatory exercise, in which we define the problem based on questions about the variables which help us to determine the dimensions or aspects of the identified problem.

To do this, we suggest a tool known as the “problem tree”.

TOOL: PROBLEM TREE



The problem tree enables us to identify the **factors that cause the problem or the factors associated with the issue and its consequences** (expressed as effects). The identified problem is located in the trunk of the tree. The effects are placed on the branches and fruits at the top of the tree, by identifying

the impacts arising from the prioritised problem – with the direct and immediate effects located on the first level, followed by indirect or secondary effects.

This exercise helps us to define the problem that we want to address through our advocacy work, as well as possible solutions.

2.1.2 DEFINING OBJECTIVES

Once we have defined the advocacy problem we wish to work on, we must define **what we want to achieve (or gain) through our advocacy work**. Our objectives will respond to a fundamental question: *What do we want to achieve with our advocacy with the EU in the short, medium and long term?*

SMART objectives

The objectives should be “intelligent” or SMART and respond to five characteristics:

1. *Specific: clearly defined*
2. *Measurable: proposing concrete changes which can then be measured or verified*
3. *Achievable: be politically and technically possible –responding to the national and international context*
4. *Realistic: considering the competencies of the European Union and what the EU can do*
5. *Timely: achievable in the short to medium term (maximum 24 months)*

EXAMPLE ADVOCACY OBJECTIVE WITH THE EU

The EU will incorporate the recommendations of the networks on citizen security in its Multi-Year Indicative Program 2014-2020 for Central America.

2.1.3 IDENTIFYING THE TARGET GROUPS AND CHANNELS OF INFLUENCE

The **target groups** are the **organs, institutions or people to whom our political advocacy messages are directed**. To identify **target groups**, we need to know how the process of defining and implementing EU external relations policies works and the responsible people/bodies.

ADVICE FOR IDENTIFYING TARGET GROUPS

In order to identify target groups, we need to know who (within the EU) has the capacity to make decisions on the identified problem, and how and when they do it. In other words, we must identify:

1. *Who has the power to decide: the EU Delegations, the European Parliament, or the European Commission?*
2. *The steps and procedures of decision-making in the EU*
3. *The key moments*
4. *The decisive person*

EXAMPLE THE GOALS OF ADVOCACY AND NETWORKS

Our advocacy goal varies according to where we do our work. So, if we are in Sweden, our target group will be the Swedish Foreign Ministry. If we are in Brussels, it will be the EU institutions. And if we are in El Salvador, for example, our advocacy target will be the EU Delegation and the European Embassies with presence in the country. As networks, the challenge is to effectively coordinate our advocacy efforts with each of these target groups, acting through network members with presence in each of these places.

EXAMPLE WHAT TO ASK OF THE EU INSTITUTIONS

EUROPEAN COUNCIL	Permanent Representations of Member States to the EU	Include the recommendations of the Declaration of the EU-CELAC Civil Society Forum in its Political Declaration and Bi-regional Action Plans
COUNCIL OF THE EU	COLAC	Include issues from CA countries in the agendas of its meetings Amendments to draft regional cooperation programs with Latin America
EEAS	HR/VP Federica Mogherini Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis	Make a public statement in cases of human rights violations in Central American countries Meet with local organisations during his visits to the countries in the region
EUROPEAN COMMISSION	DG DEVCO	Request that the implementation of its cooperation programs in Central America respect human rights and sustainable development goals
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	DEVE	Amendments to draft EU cooperation programs with LAC, submitted by the EC for approval

Channels of influence are people who influence the decision-makers. In order to influence them, we must know them, that is to say, we must know:

- What is their relationship with the decision makers?
- Are they interested in the issue or problem?
- What is their agenda?
- What power do they have to act on the advocacy issue or problem?
- Within what limits and frameworks do they act?
- Do they perceive themselves as an ally, an opponent, or an agent to be pressured?
- What will be necessary to get this person to act? Is it the pressure of the electorate, the public pressure of colleagues, other institutions or conviction and personal interest?

TOOL: POWER MAP

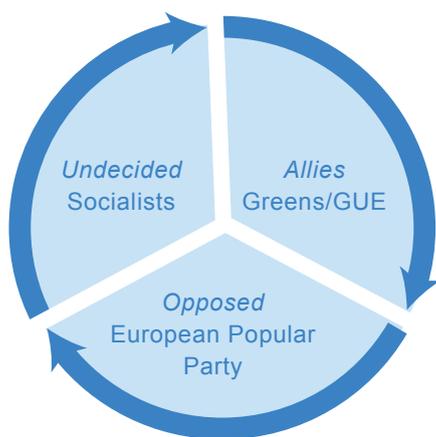
This is a tool that allows us to visually identify the key people who support the proposal - allies - in certain institutions; those that are opponents to the proposal, either because of their ideology, their position or simply because of a complete lack of knowledge about the proposal; and those people who are undecided and who because of their position should be the object of actions on the part of the organisation to convince them that the demands are fair and deserve their support.

Opponents are neutralised by the strength of our arguments.

POWER MAP DURING THE RATIFICATION OF THE EU-CENTRAL AMERICA ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT

During the ratification process of the EU-CAAA, the networks launched a campaign for the European Parliament to promote an Agreement that would take into account the inequalities between the two regions, and incorporate concrete mechanisms to channel and investigate allegations of possible human rights violations related to the agreement's implementation.

To this end, a power map was drawn up identifying the positions of the various political groups in the European Parliament in relation to these requests.



2.1.4 ESTABLISHING ALLIANCES AND TAKING PART IN NETWORKS

Building alliances between organisations allows us to **reinforce our advocacy messages to our target group and exert more pressure to achieve a potentially greater effect** than we would have if we acted alone.

Short-term alliances can be established, for example to carry out a campaign on an issue or situation.

EXAMPLE OUR ALLIANCE-BUILDING

Building alliances for advocacy work with the EU can have different characteristics and objectives. For example, in the communication campaign for the EU-CELAC Summit, ACT EU Alliance, CIFCA, [Grupo Sur](#), [OIDHACO](#), [CIDSE](#) and [the Alliance for Solidarity](#) worked together. In addition, in the longer term, networks (such as ACT Alliance EU or CIFCA) or networks of networks (such as [CONCORD](#) or [HRDN](#)) may be formed.

Another example is building alliances between Central American organisations and our networks, which has enabled us to facilitate their participation in EU advocacy fora, such as the First Bi-regional Forum of CSOs within the framework of the AA implementation, which was held in Managua, Nicaragua, in November 2014.

2.1.5 EVALUATING AND DEVELOPING ADVOCACY MESSAGES FOR ADVOCACY WITH THE EU

Once we have defined our advocacy goals and the target groups that we need to influence to achieve those goals, it is time to develop our messages, that is, the requests or recommendations that we are going to promote.

It is important that our **messages are simple, direct, consistent over time and adapted to our audience, keeping them coherent**. For example, if we influence an EU political body (the European External Action Service or a Head of Delegation in Central America), we must consider the use of political arguments; whereas if we address officials of the European Commission, our messages will be technical and legal.

ADVICE FOR DEVELOPING MESSAGES

Frame the issue. Link positive and powerful symbols to the issue and think of negative symbols caused by the identified issue or problem.

Formulate the message. Concise, related to our political advocacy proposal and summarise the essential information that we want to communicate. What, why, how, and who can make the decision that would solve the issue, and by when. Think of a slogan!

Use written materials. They should be short, one or two pages long, with two or three specific and clear requests.

Adapt the information. If it is a question for officials in Brussels or the Central American EU Delegations, or MEPs.

Make reference to EU policies. Whether fundamental (such as the Guidelines on Human Rights) or related to Central America (such as the Association Agreement, cooperation priorities, press releases from the European Union's Representative on Foreign Relations or from the Delegations in the region, etc).

BRIEFING FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In 2014, with the aim of approaching and communicating messages on the main concerns and recommendations on Latin America to the European Parliament, the networks prepared the document *“European Union-Latin America Relations: A Bridge for Change”*, which was then widely shared in joint and bilateral meetings with parliamentarians from different committees.

2.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

The next crucial phase of the design is to develop our plan of action! Planning is crucial to the success of political advocacy, so it is key to allocate time to design, implement, measure and

evaluate. Preparing a plan **involves designing, in a participatory manner, a detailed plan for each of the strategic actions described above, with the following information** (adapted according to the needs of the planning organisation):

There are several types of activities in an advocacy plan. Here we highlight the most important activities for the advocacy work of the Networks.

2.2.1 LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

Lobbying is the **activity of directly influencing decision makers - or those who can influence them - in face-to-face meetings**. It serves to communicate our proposal and to evaluate the impact of our arguments. It also serves to make adjustments to the power map.

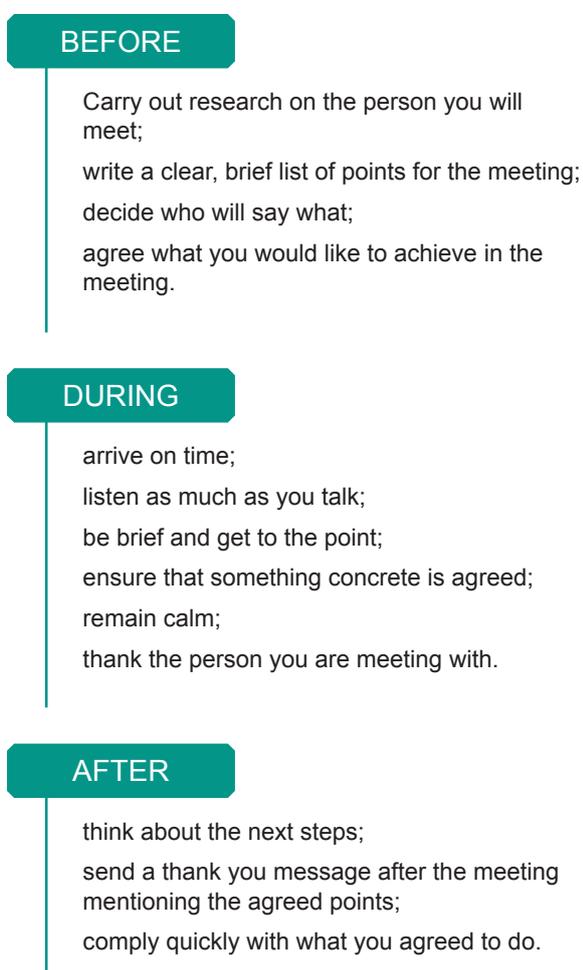
BASIC RULES FOR ADVOCACY WITH THE EU (ADAPTED FROM INPROGRESS 2011)

- Plan the lobbying strategy in a participatory and consensual manner between the organisation and / or the coalition or alliance
- Keep the message clear, consistent and simple
- Know the internal decision-making process
- Take into account the right moment to act
- Address the relevant person / adjust and adapt the message
- Know the information you need to research and monitor
- Be proactive: act in a timely manner. Present the proposal and the group
- Be positive: always suggest a realistic alternative and recognise achievements or progress by the EU or the country
- Know someone within the power space: regular / long-term contact, build trust, understand needs and limitations of position and mandate
- Find reasons to establish contact: send them press releases or any research that you publish
- Invite them to speak at conferences or public meetings that you organise; attend your events, etc.
- Never take without giving in return: offer technical support or accompaniment to delegations, establish contact with local leaders
- Be clear about what is negotiable and what is not

Table 1. Format (with illustrative information) for the planning of strategic actions

Strategic actions	Activities	Expected results	Date	Responsible	Resources
Contribute to political dialogue before and during the EU-CELAC summit in 2015, in relation to EU development cooperation policies, commercial policies and citizen security policies with Central America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organise and participate in promotional activities / lobbying meetings with the EU - Facilitate the participation of members and partners - Coordinate with EU networks to make events visible in the press 	Messages of CSOs, members and partners of ACT EU have been included in the official results of the Summit	March 2017	Member X + Network Secretariat	1,500 Euros

Figure 12. Preparing a lobbying meeting with the EU (InProgress 2011)

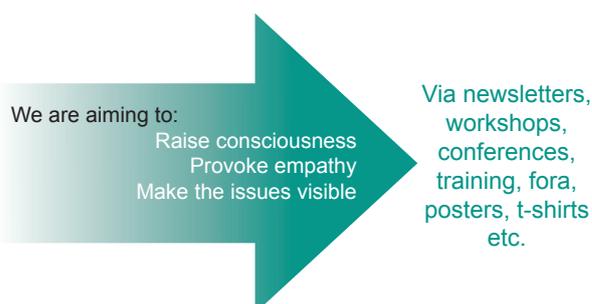


LOBBYING AT KEY MOMENTS

Visits by Central American members and partners to the European institutions is an example of lobbying. In general, these actions are carried out at key moments: for example during a Summit of Heads of State or after the Coup d’Etat in Honduras in 2009, when human rights violations in that country increased.

2.2.2 EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES – CAMPAIGNS

This action refers to **informing, educating and raising awareness in public opinion, other organisations, networks and groups, on our identified issue or problem** and our proposed solution.



SHARING EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTIONS

In 2014, the Euro-Latin American Assembly (Eurolat) adopted a series of joint resolutions, namely the resolutions [“Food security from the European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean perspective”](#) and [“Trade in raw materials between the European Union and Latin America”](#). In order for Latin American organisations to have knowledge of these instruments and their content, a summary was prepared and a campaign was carried out to disseminate and raise awareness of these resolutions and how they could be used by organisations working on those issues.

2.2.3 COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The general objective of **communication actions** in a political advocacy plan with the EU is to **gain space in the media and other channels** (e.g. social networks), **to strengthen our image, to situate the problem in the public agenda and to generate public opinion favourable to our proposal**. Communication actions also seek to establish a clear position vis-à-vis those who make decisions or do not know about the issue in question, or oppose our proposal, whether for political reasons, economic interests, etc.

Figure 13. [Opinion article](#) for the EU-CELAC Summit, example published in EU Observer, June 2015

EU-Latin America: What kind of partnership?



Latin America and the Caribbean remain the most unequal region in the world, with around 30% of its population - 167 million people - living in poverty (Photo: wikipedia)

By JULIETA GONZALEZ AND EVELINA C. URGOLLO

In the case of advocacy work with the European Union, both ‘European’ media and national media correspondents are highly specialised in EU-related issues, both technically and politically speaking. Therefore, to gain influence in these spaces, we must

gather reliable information, with messages focused on a ‘specialist’ audience, and at key moments.

Figure 14. Internal communication mechanisms: Newsletters



THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR POLITICAL ADVOCACY

How can social networks benefit political advocacy?

Social networks are useful digital tools to **form interested groups**. A social network used for political advocacy can become a communication tool to make progress on your political agenda, gaining support for the cause, promoting public opinion, using testimonies, lessons learned, etc.

In order to create strategic communication actions it is also fundamental to reflect and plan the communication process **within the network or coalition that is implementing the advocacy process**.

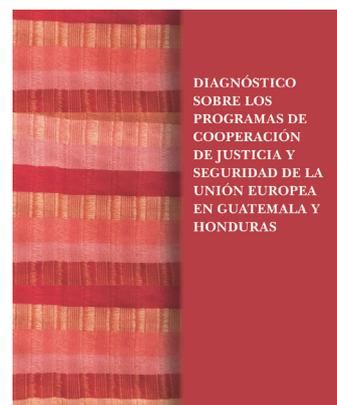
2.2.4 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

A political advocacy initiative should gather **relevant, truthful and timely information via research and by sharing the results obtained**. When looking for strategic allies, it is our own organisation that must determine what information is not available and who can provide it. A piece of research must be of excellent quality and include evidence of the problem and possible solutions on which to base our recommendations.

REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF EU SECURITY AND JUSTICE PROGRAMMES

In 2016 ACT Alliance EU and CIFCA, in collaboration with HIVOS, published the report *“Analysis of the security and cooperation programs of the European Union in Guatemala and Honduras”*. The report analyses the programs implemented between 2007 and 2013 by the EU, especially the Security and Justice Program (SEJUST, Guatemala), and the programs to Support the Security Sector and to Support Human Rights (PASS and PADH, Honduras).

The report illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and makes a number of recommendations to the EU and the governments of Honduras and Guatemala to ensure that the next programs have a greater impact and contribute more effectively to the strengthening of justice and security systems in both countries.



2.3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PHASE

We are faced with a changing context, for which we must permanently review - or monitor – strategies and objectives. This requires us to be flexible and adaptable. Such changes must be documented in order to assess whether our

advocacy achievements were **due to changes in the external context or to decisions made within our organisation or coalition.**

For the adequate preparation of a **monitoring and evaluation system** for our advocacy work, our organisations must answer a series of questions:

Table 2. Preparatory questions for monitoring and evaluation

What do we want to monitor or evaluate?	Monitoring changes (e.g. in EU policies or attitudes?) Monitoring our actions (e.g. information position papers related to the EU?)
What type of changes do we want to monitor or evaluate?	In living conditions for people? In politics, in terms of the role or actions of the EU or its member states? In information, debate, capacities of our partners?
Why do we want to monitor or evaluate our advocacy work with the EU?	To legitimise, empower and support the appropriation of advocacy by civil society organisations and networks in Central America for their relations with the EU, and by Act Alliance EU and Cifca as global actors on human rights To document learning processes and manage knowledge, support systematisation, as a “memory” of the process To strengthen democracy through transparency and accountability to our members and donors To perfect our social practices, be more effective in what we do and measure the impacts of our actions To monitor the EU and show achievements, thereby generating greater political, technical and financial support
Why is monitoring and evaluation important?	Learning Accountability

When designing a monitoring plan for a political advocacy strategy, we must consider several aspects:

- The **goal for change**, that is, the solution we want to see at the end of the advocacy plan.
- The **baseline**: the initial diagnosis that allows us to measure or make comparisons about the progress and achievement of the actions carried out in the plan.
- **Indicators**: information that gives us indications or evidence - quantitative and qualitative - that the situation is changing or that our strategies are making progress towards our objective.
- **Information management**: the production of printed or audiovisual information about the activities carried out in each of the strategies; a description of the activities carried out – minutes of meetings, photographs, surveys, testimonies and life stories.

A solidly-built monitoring system is important because it periodically allows us to:

- Visualise the connections between the actions of the organisation or alliance and the change we want to achieve in terms of political, social and economic transformations.
- Document the changes in context and the advocacy actors.
- Measure the progress of our advocacy plan.
- Significantly contribute to learning about citizenship practices.
- In addition, monitoring provides us with a key instrument for accountability with the organisations that make up the alliance and the communities which the identified solution will benefit.
- Systematise the experience, create the historical memory of the process, lessons learned and manage knowledge so that we can understand social changes and the importance of planning for process sustainability.

Evaluation is a continuous process, which collects information from the monitoring system. We can evaluate:

- Processes: lobbying, awareness raising and education activities, research

- Organisation: roles and responsibilities, resources, decision making
- Political change: whether the proposal was achieved, the policy was changed, etc

2.4. SYSTEMATISATION PHASE

Systematisation is related to the management of knowledge, that is to say, the process by which we take distance from the experience we have carried out, reflect on it, generate new ideas, reconstruct knowledge, communicate the experience to a specific audience (our foundations, our donors, the governments of the region, the various EU bodies, our allies in Europe), taking into account the lessons learned and good practice that allowed us to measure the transformations that achieved via the Advocacy Plan.

Systematisation begins at the design stage with the development of instruments for the collection of key information, so that we can account for what happened during the implementation phase. Systematisation contributes to the memory of our process; it promotes learning, increases visibility and builds capacity for political advocacy and citizen participation.

In this way, systematisation processes strengthen the organisation's capacity to construct messages, promote and enforce rights, and influence public programs and policies for the transformation of social reality.

Figure 15. Components of systematisation



NOTES

1. At the date of publication of this Handbook, the Referendum on the Exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Brexit) has been carried out. However, insufficient information is still available on its impact, both in terms of the structure and policies of the European Union
2. At the date on which this Handbook was published, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security is Federica Mogherini, for a term of five years (2014-2019), the same as the President and other Commissioners.
3. Thematic factsheet: 'Relations between the EU and Central America', included in "Mutual engagement between EU delegations and civil society joint tools for training", 2016. ACT Alliance EU for CONCORD.
4. The trade pillar of the AA was activated on August 1, 2013 in Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama; on 1 October in Costa Rica and El Salvador, and on 1 December in Guatemala. To date, 16 of the 28 EU member states have ratified it.
5. More information about the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America can be found at: <http://actalliance.eu/resources-post/todo-sobre-el-acuerdo-de-asociacion-ue-centroamerica/>
6. At the time of writing this Handbook, the Consensus on Development is being revised by the European Union, in order to incorporate the Sustainable Development Objectives and the new challenges for our changing world.
7. Action Plan: Proposed Lines of Action of the EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean: 8521/15 COLAC 48 CFSP/PESC 1032 JAIEX 20. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9353-2015-INIT/en/pdf>
8. Strategic Framework for Human Rights and Democracy and action plan for the years 2012-2014: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf
9. EU Action Plan: http://eeas.europa.eu/factsheets/news/150720_eu_action_plan_on_human_rights_and_democracy_2015-2019_factsheet_en.htm
10. Guidelines on human rights defenders: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URI:SERV:133601&from=ES>
11. Communication on CSO: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/132870.pdf

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