

# The LA-EU Alliance in the Context of the Transformation of the World Order

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## Introduction

As technological advancement accelerates and globalization propels humanity toward an increasingly interconnected global community, challenges, and complex global issues emerge for which the current international governance model appears unprepared to provide adequate responses. Simultaneously, new influential actors in the global arena question the legitimacy of the liberal international order and seek to transform it.

There are clear indications that a new international order is taking shape, and Latin America cannot remain on the sidelines of this process. To take part in the shaping of the new global rules, the region must make much greater progress towards the consolidation of partnerships based on shared worldviews and common interests. These alliances will allow it to successfully advocate for the inclusion of the region's values, principles, and legitimate interests in the architecture of this emerging world order. The peoples of Europe share deep historical, human, political, and economic ties with those of Latin America. Hence,

the European Union (EU) emerges as a natural partner for the Latin American region to face this challenge.

### **The Need for a World Order**

Henry Kissinger, a renowned scholar and one of the most experienced former Secretaries of State of the United States of America, highlighted in his latest book 'World Order' the urgent need of the modern civilization, increasingly interdependent, to establish a model of global order that rescues it from the chaos or disorder into which it has been increasingly submerged in recent decades.

Our age is insistently, at times almost desperately, in pursuit of a concept of world order. Chaos threatens side by side with unprecedented interdependence: in the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the disintegration of states, the impact of environmental depredations, the persistence of genocidal practices, and the spread of new technologies threatening to drive conflict beyond human control or comprehension<sup>1</sup>.

Kissinger defines World Order as "the concept held by a region or civilization about the nature of just arrangements and the distribution of power thought to be applicable to the entire world"<sup>2</sup>. According to this author, historically, due to material and technological limitations, humanity had neither the need

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1 Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and Course of History* (7th ed.; Penguin Politics; Penguin Books, 2015), p. 9.

2 Henry Kissinger, *World...* p. 9.

nor the possibility to establish a truly global order. Hence, each civilization or region tended to view its own order as the ideal to impose within its accessible geopolitical environment without there being a truly global and interconnected vision.

With no means of interacting with each other on a sustained basis and no framework for measuring the power of one region against another, each region viewed its own order as unique and defined the others as “barbarians” – governed in a manner incomprehensible to the established system and irrelevant to its designs except as a threat. Each defined itself as a template for the legitimate organization of all humanity, imagining that in governing what lay before it, it was ordering the world<sup>3</sup>.

In relatively recent times, the acceleration of technological developments, especially in transportation and communications, has enabled sustained interconnection among the world’s various regions, thus driving globalization and making humanity much more interdependent and integrated. This profound transformation of the world has made the emergence of concepts and governance arrangements with a truly global scope feasible and even indispensable, which must materialize in an international order.

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3 Henry Kissinger, *World...* p. 9.

## Transformations in the international order

Kissinger understands “international order” as the practical application of a certain concept of “world order” to a substantial part of the planet, large enough to affect the global balance of power during a historical period. This materialization is achieved through a system of principles, norms, institutions, and balances of power that regulate the relations between the actors capable of influencing the international arena in a given era.

Although there are divergences in academic doctrine regarding the number of international orders that have existed throughout history, Novak and Namihas point out that most authors agree on distinguishing four international orders established successively from 1815 onwards.

- **The first one (1815-1914)**, known as the Concert of Europe, begins with the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and extends until the beginning of World War I in 1914.
- **The second one (1919-1939)** emerges in 1919 with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and the establishment of the League of Nations, and lasts until 1939, with the beginning of World War II.
- **The third one (1945-1992)** arises after the end of World War II in 1945 and was marked by the Yalta Agreements, the founding of the United Nations Organization (UN), the creation of the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF, World Bank), but mainly by the beginning of the Cold War in 1947 between the two major global superpowers, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

- **The fourth order (1991-2008)** emerges from 1991 with the dissolution of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. This period was characterized by the international hegemony of the United States as the sole global superpower.<sup>4</sup>

### **Turning point of the current international order**

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, signs of the progressive decline of the predominance of the United States began to emerge, and with it, the current liberal international order, which ‘has been linked to American power: its economy, its currency, its system of alliances, and its leadership’<sup>5</sup>.

Among the main events that marked the turning point of the current international order are: The global financial crisis of 2008-2009, which exposed vulnerabilities of the liberal economic model promoted by the West; internal tensions within the European Union and NATO, which eroded the cohesion and ability to act of these important allies of the United States; the rise of China as an economic and geopolitical power of global scope; the repositioning of Russia within the regional and global power structure; the emergence of regional powers such as India, Brazil, Turkey, and Iran, which gained greater influence in their respective areas; the challenge to the

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4 Fabián Novak y Sandra Namihás, *Tiempos de Transición: La conformación de un nuevo orden internacional* (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2019), p. 17.

5 John Ikenberry, “The End of Liberal International Order?” *International Affairs* 94, 1 (2018): <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix241>

preeminence of the dollar as the main global reserve currency by China, Russia, India, and other countries

### **Increased geopolitical tensions in the world**

These changes in international power distribution often bring considerable uncertainties and significant risks of instability and conflict. This situation is aggravated in the current global context, characterized by a growing and sustained interrelation among world regions that are very different from one another. In this regard, Kissinger warns that the interaction between “entities not related to each other by history or values (except under conditions of full competition) and defined mainly by their capabilities, leads to conflict rather than order”<sup>6</sup>.

This perception is confirmed by recent events such as the growing tension between NATO and Russia, stemming from the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Another example is the increase in tensions in the Middle East, as a result of the attack carried out by the terrorist group Hamas against Israel in May 2021, which triggered an escalation of violence in the region.

The Global Risks Report 2024, published by the World Economic Forum, confirms a gradual increase in geopolitical tensions worldwide over the last decade. One indicator of this phenomenon is the growing number of interstate conflicts with a high potential for internalization. The report estimates that this increase in conflict worldwide is due, among other reasons,

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<sup>6</sup> Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and Course of History* (7th ed.; Penguin Politics; Penguin Books, 2015).

to changes in geopolitical power and the inefficacy of the international system.

The world has become significantly less peaceful over the past decade, with conflict erupting in multiple regions last year. Active conflicts are at the highest levels in decades... While difficult to attribute to a single cause, longer-term shifts in geopolitical power, economic fragility and limits to the efficacy and capacity of international security mechanisms have all contributed to this surge.<sup>7</sup>

### **Diffusion, degradation, and fragmentation of power**

The challenges currently faced worldwide go beyond simply redistributing international power shares among traditional and emerging state actors. Moisés Naím, in his book *The End of Power* (2013), warns that in terms of global governance, 'much more important than knowing who rises or falls [in the hierarchical order] is understanding how much can be done with the power acquired by the nations that are already 'on top' or those that are 'on the rise'.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, Richard N. Haass, in his article 'The Age of Nonpolarity: What Will Follow U.S. Dominance' (2008), warns that the advancement of globalization has been diluting the power and influence of large states, while strengthening the

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7 World Economic Forum, *Global Risk Report 2024* (2024), World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024/>, p. 22.

8 Moisés Naím, *El fin del poder: empresas que se hunden, militares derrotados, Papas que renuncian y gobiernos impotentes: cómo el poder ya no es lo que era*, 5ª ed. (Barcelona: *Debate*, 2016), p. 159.

capabilities of non-state actors, some legitimate like large multinational corporations, and others illegitimate like “terrorists (who use the Internet to recruit and train, the international banking system to move resources, and the global transportation system to transport people), [and] rogue states (which can exploit black and gray markets)”.<sup>9</sup>

In the same line of discourse, Moisés Naím points out that new technologies and global connectivity are degrading, fragmenting, and limiting the power of large traditional actors (governments, armies, companies, unions, etc.), allowing smaller actors, both in size and resources, not only to challenge them but even to undermine their power. These variations in the boundaries and possibilities of traditional centers of power have significant consequences for global governance:

Nowadays, it is much more difficult for a small number of dominant countries (let alone a single hegemonic country) to unilaterally shape international relations, alliances, or conflicts as was done in the past. The crises of the moment, and those to come, involve many new actors who use technologies, tactics, and strategies very different from those common in the past.<sup>10</sup>

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9 Richard Haass, “The Age of Nonpolarity: What Will Follow U.S. Dominance,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2008): 44-56.

10 Moisés Naím, *El fin del poder: empresas que se hunden, militares derrotados, Papas que renuncian y gobiernos impotentes: cómo el poder ya no es lo que era*, 5ª ed. (Barcelona: *Debate*, 2016), p. 158.



Likewise, the erosion of power weakens the concerted and cooperative action of states at the international level to address challenges that transcend national borders, such as large migratory flows, pandemics, drug trafficking, transnational terrorism, and climate change. According to the Global Risks Report 2024, in the next two years, the five greatest risks the world will face are misinformation, extreme weather events, social polarization, cybersecurity, and armed conflicts.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with the complex global challenges, authors like Kissinger, Haass, and Naím argue for the need to adapt the global governance system to the new realities. Only in this way, these authors believe, can the chaos<sup>12</sup> or disorder<sup>13</sup> prevailing in the current world be effectively addressed.

### **Transition to a new international order**

Multiple analysts and renowned academics agree in affirming that the world is currently in the midst of a transition toward the reconfiguration of the international order. This new order is anticipated to be more decentralized, regionalized, and multipolar<sup>14</sup> The Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS) 2023-

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11 World Economic Forum, *Global Risk Report 2024* (2024), World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024/>

12 Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and Course of History* (7th ed.; Penguin Politics; Penguin Books, 2015), p. 9.

13 Richard Haass, *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order* (Penguin Press, 2017).

14 Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), en New York Times Best Sellers. Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power*, 1st ed. (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011).

2024, which collected the opinions of 1,490 experts from the academic, business, governmental, international community, and civil society sectors, revealed that two-thirds of the respondents believe that in the next ten years, humanity will face a multipolar or fragmented order, where medium and large powers will compete to establish and enforce regional rules and norms.<sup>15</sup>

However, despite these agreements among experts, there are no certainties about the definitive form that the new international architecture will take<sup>16</sup>. As is well known, politics belongs to the world of the contingent, and its outcomes are never assured in advance. What is clear is that this transitional period is extremely complex and challenging.

Amidst questioning the effectiveness and legitimacy of the current international system<sup>17</sup>, powers like Russia and China, and even influential groups within the Middle East,

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15 World Economic Forum, *Global Risk Report 2024* (2024), World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024/>, p. 10.

16 John Ikenberry, "The End of Liberal International Order?" *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix241>

Bikram Acharya, "Modeling Local Government's Perception towards Implementation of ICT Infrastructure and Services through Public Private Partnership Mechanism: Case of Nepal" (2018).

Ana Covarrubias Serbin, "El nuevo orden mundial y América Latina y el Caribe: modelo por armar," *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* 114 (2022), p. 147, <https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/index.php/rmpe/article/view/223>.

17 Ana Covarrubias Serbin, "El nuevo orden mundial y América Latina y el Caribe: modelo por armar," *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* 114 (2022), p. 147, <https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/index.php/rmpe/article/view/223>.

promote alternative models.<sup>18</sup> Everything indicates that, beyond criticisms of the current international system itself, what is being called into question is the Western liberal world order model that shaped it.<sup>19</sup> Faced with this situation, Kissinger wonders: Can regions with cultures, histories, and traditional theories of order so divergent claim the legitimacy of any common system?<sup>20</sup>

### **Reconfiguration of the new international order: challenge for LA**

Kissinger's response to this dilemma breaks from Samuel P. Huntington's pessimistic view in his well-known book 'The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order'.<sup>21</sup> While Kissinger acknowledges the difficulty of finding common

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18 Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and Course of History* (7th ed.; Penguin Politics; Penguin Books, 2015), p. 1.

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Carlos Melero E., "La perspectiva china del orden liberal internacional: ¿nuevo orden mundial?," *Relaciones Internacionales* 55 (2024): <https://doi.org/10.15366/relacionesinternacionales2024.55.005>

19 "Instituciones y normas internacionales acordes con el derecho internacional, promoción de los derechos humanos y de la democracia, y liberalización económica, en el marco de una concepción predominantemente westfaliana de un sistema internacional basado en la interrelación entre Estados, pero con la posterior participación de otros actores". Ana Covarrubias Serbin, "El nuevo orden mundial y América Latina y el Caribe: modelo por armar," *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* 114 (2022), p. 136, <https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/index.php/rmpe/article/view/223>.

20 Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and Course of History* (7th ed.; Penguin Politics; Penguin Books, 2015), p. 9.

21 David Wilkinson, "Samuel P. Huntington: The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 7, no. 2 (2001): 341-361, DOI: 10.5195/jwsr.1998.152.

ground between such disparate worldviews as those existing among different regions or civilizations of the current world, he believes it is possible to establish a new global international order consensually through diplomacy, cooperation, and commitment.

Kissinger applies old principles of political philosophy to the modern international sphere, which indicate that mere force is not enough to maintain the stability of a social order;<sup>22</sup> power must be accompanied by legitimacy derived from justice: ‘Any system of world order, to be sustainable, must be accepted as just—not only by leaders, but also by citizens’<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, if the new global international order is to be effective and stable over time, it cannot simply be imposed by the power of a few dominant nations, but must arise and ‘cultivate’ through a more organic, inclusive, and consensual process.

Within this process of reconfiguring the international order, Latin America, as a region, cannot remain a mere spectator. As Serbin points out, ‘the tectonic movements through which the international system is going can be a magnificent opportunity [for Latin America] to build - both bilaterally and multilaterally - potential consensuses for a new Atlantic framework and for a more active collective insertion at the global level’.<sup>24</sup>

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22 Rafael Tomás Caldera, *El poder y la justicia para jóvenes políticos*, Colección Letraviva (abediciones, 2023).

23 Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and Course of History* (7th ed.; Penguin Politics; Penguin Books, 2015), p. 9.

24 Ana Covarrubias Serbin, “El nuevo orden mundial y América Latina y el Caribe: modelo por armar,” *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* 114

## Latin America and European Union Alliance

To influence this juncture, Latin America needs to elevate its profile as a global actor further. In this direction, it must continue to strengthen alliances that, based on shared worldviews and interests, generate the necessary support to ensure that its values, principles, and legitimate aspirations as a region are represented in the design of the new global architecture. Within this challenge, the European Union (EU) emerges as an ideal natural partner, given the historical, cultural, political, and economic relationship that links European and Latin American peoples.<sup>25</sup>

Although Latin America and the European Union are differentiated regions with their own characteristics and priorities, they have significant convergences. Highlights include the close historical, cultural, and economic ties, as well as the shared values and principles of Western civilization, as well as reciprocal migratory flows, sustained political links, and a clear commitment, albeit with varying levels of success, to democracy, free trade, and human rights in both regions. Likewise, they share similar perspectives on the desired inter-

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(2022): p. 155, <https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/index.php/rmpe/article/view/223>

25 Comisión Europea, “Una nueva agenda para las relaciones entre la UE y América Latina y el Caribe,” Comunicación Conjunta al Parlamento Europeo y al Consejo, JOIN (2023) 17 final, 2023, p.1 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023JC0017>. Ana Covarrubias Serbin y Arantxa Serbin Pont, “¿Por qué la Unión Europea debería ser de relevancia para América Latina y el Caribe?” (2019), Fundación EU-LAC, p.1 <https://eulacfoundation.org/es/por-que-la-union-europea-deberia-ser-relevancia-para-america-latina-y-el-caribe>

national order and the importance of strong multilateral global governance based on norms.<sup>26</sup>

Based on these convergences, the links between Latin America (LA) and the European Union (EU) have experienced, with ups and downs, continuous evolution over the past six decades. The relations between both regions, which initially focused on trade agreements and development cooperation during the 1960s and 1980s, evolved into a broader and more comprehensive bi-regional strategic partnership from the late 20th century. This partnership encompasses aspects such as political dialogue and coordination on global issues, economic partnership, and development cooperation.<sup>27</sup>

The relationship between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) operates at three levels: bi-regional, sub-regional, and bilateral. The Union has a wide network of agreements with twenty-seven out of the thirty-three countries in LAC. Currently, the EU is the largest investor in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), its third-largest

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26 European Commission, *The Strategic Partnership Between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean: A Joint Commitment* (European Commission, 2008).

UE-CELAC, “Declaración de la Cumbre UE-CELAC, Bruselas, 17 y 18 de julio de 2023,” 12000/1/23 REV 1 (es), 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/press/press-releases/2023/07/18/declaration-of-the-eu-celac-summit-2023-17-18-july-2023/>

27 Iván González Sarro, “Veinte años de relaciones estratégicas de la Unión Europea con América Latina y el Caribe (1999-2019): análisis de la evolución de sus ‘tres pilares’ fundamentales” *Foro Internacional* 60, no. 3 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.24201/fi.v60i3.2646>.

trading partner, after the USA and China; and the main contributor to development cooperation.<sup>28</sup>

### **Progressive institutionalization of the EU-LAC political dialogue**

Since its inception in 1999, the “strategic partnership” between the European Union and Latin America (EU-LA) has gradually progressed towards a more solid institutionalization, providing a formal and structured framework for political dialogue and cooperation between both regions.

Between 1999 and 2010, six bi-regional summits between the EU and Latin America were held. In 2011, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was created. Since then, three summits between the EU and CELAC have been held. In 2006, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), a forum dedicated to the debate, monitoring, and review of all issues related to the bi-regional partnership, was established. Since its creation, EuroLat has held fifteen plenary sessions. In 2019, the EU-LAC Foundation was established, conceived as a tool to strengthen the bi-regional partnership and promote debate on common strategies and actions, as well as to enhance its visibility.<sup>29</sup>

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28 European Commission, “A New Agenda for Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean,” Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, JOIN (2023) 17 final, 2023, p. 1 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023JC0017>.

29 UE - ALC, 2010, p. 9.

In addition to these political forums, within the framework of the strategic relationship between the EU and LAC, an extensive multi-level institutional structure has been established to facilitate the participation of numerous state and non-state actors in building an agenda of mutual benefit. Subregional forums stand out within this structure: EU-CAN, EU-MERCOSUR, EU-CARICOM, and EU-SICA.<sup>30</sup>

### **Asymmetries in the EU-LAC relationship**

Despite the progress made, the development of the alliance between the European Union and Latin America has experienced ups and downs.<sup>31</sup> At times, moments of distance in the relationship have been related to the global context, such as in 2007 when the international financial crisis occurred.<sup>32</sup> On other occasions, it has resulted from political differences within the regions, as happened following the enlargement of the EU<sup>33</sup>. Other structural factors are added to these causes, related to the

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30 Andrés Serbin y Andrés Serbin Pont, “¿Por qué la Unión Europea debería ser de relevancia para América Latina y el Caribe?” Fundación EU-LAC, 2019, p.11 <https://eulacfoundation.org/es/por-que-la-union-europea-deberia-ser-relevancia-para-america-latina-y-el-caribe>

31 Iván González Sarro, “Veinte años de relaciones estratégicas de la Unión Europea con América Latina y el Caribe (1999-2019): análisis de la evolución de sus ‘tres pilares’ fundamentales” *Foro Internacional* 60, no. 3 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.24201/fi.v60i3.2646>.

32 Bacaria Colom, Jaume, y Stephan Sberro. “El eje económico y financiero de la relevancia de la Unión Europea para América Latina y el Caribe”, in *¿Por qué la Unión Europea debería ser de relevancia para América Latina y el Caribe?*, 14-20. Fundación EU-LAC, CRIES, 2018. p. 14.

33 Lorena Ruano, “La Unión Europea y América Latina y el Caribe: breve historia de la relación birregional,” *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* 112 (abril-junio 2018), p. 81.



asymmetries in size, power, resources, and capacities between the EU and Latin America.

One of the asymmetries that stands out from a political point of view is the disparity in the development of regional institutions. The regional institutions of the European Union are considerably more developed and consolidated than those of Latin America. This disparity is manifested, for example, in the homogeneity of the positions of each region: “While European countries show greater coordination in foreign policy matters, Latin American governments attend the meeting with virtually no prior agreement. Furthermore, in some areas, they arrive extremely divided”.<sup>34</sup>

Peter Birle, a researcher at the Ibero-American Institute (IAI) in Berlin, argues that while regionalism in Latin America shows considerable organizational diversity, as a whole, these structures “are characterized by organizational weakness, limited competences and narrow margins of action. Lacking the political will to change this situation, regional organizations cannot play a proactive role in deepening regional cooperation and integration”.<sup>35</sup> The IAI researcher observes that presidential diplomacy predominates in Latin America, leaving little room for supranational developments.

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34 Carlos Malamud, “Las relaciones entre la Unión Europea y América Latina en el siglo XXI: entre el voluntarismo y la realidad,” *Plataforma Democrática*, 2010, p. 5. <https://eulacfoundation.org/es/las-relaciones-entre-la-union-europea-y-america-latina-el-siglo-xxi-entre-el-voluntarismo-y-la>

35 Birle, 2018, p. 258.

Both the European Union and Latin America are very aware of these asymmetries, and they have been implementing instruments to reduce imbalances and promote more equitable long-term integration.

### **Relaunching the LA-EU relationship**

Just as the international context has sometimes hindered the advancement of the bi-regional partnership, this dynamic has reversed in recent years. As the global geopolitical context has become increasingly complex and challenging, governments in the EU and Latin America are increasingly recognizing the benefits of revitalizing and strengthening the bi-regional relationship.

Detlef Nolte, a researcher at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), highlights how “the experience of unilateralism and protectionism from the United States under the Donald Trump administration, the growing dependence on China as an economic partner and competitor, problems with the supply of medical equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine have strengthened the pursuit of strategic autonomy<sup>36</sup> in the EU”.<sup>37</sup> In this context, Nolte points out that

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36 “Such autonomy implies having the capacity to act and cooperate with international and regional partners whenever possible, while being able to operate autonomously when necessary” (Nolte, 2023, p. 4).

37 Detlef Nolte, “The European Union and Latin America: Renewing the Partnership after Drifting Apart,” *GIGA Focus Lateinamerika* 2 (2023), German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), p.4 - Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien, Institut für Lateinamerika-Studien, <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/85384>

there has been a renewed interest from Europe in Latin America: “There is no doubt that the strategic value of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has increased for the European Union since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022”.<sup>38</sup>

The renewed attention that the European Union is paying to Latin America and the Caribbean is based on several aspects, according to the GIGA researcher. Firstly, the EU considers countries in this region as potential allies in multilateral international forums, especially on Russia-related issues. Additionally, Latin America and the Caribbean are crucial sources of strategic raw materials such as natural gas, oil, lithium, niobium, and fluorspar, essential for European industries. Lastly, this region is emerging as an important producer and exporter of green hydrogen, a key resource in the European agenda for renewable energies.<sup>39</sup>

In the past two years, both regions’ interest in revitalizing the strategic partnership has been evident in the resurgence of high-level political dialogue. In October 2022, the CELAC-EU 3rd Foreign Ministers Meeting was held. During this meeting, the importance of defending the shared values on which the bi-regional partnership is based was reiterated, and the commitment to jointly address current global challenges was emphasized. Likewise, a roadmap of high-level events was established to “pave the way for a qualitative leap in our bi-

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<sup>38</sup> Detlef Nolte, “The European...”, p. 2).

<sup>39</sup> Detlef Nolte, “The European...”, p. 2).

regional commitment.” These events included a Summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in 2023.<sup>40</sup>

In June 2023, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Joseph Borrell, along with the European Commission, presented a “Joint Communication” titled “New Agenda for Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean”. The objective of this initiative is to establish a “new era of cooperation between equal and compatible partners,” in order to work together to leverage collective strength, defend common interests, and jointly address global challenges.<sup>41</sup>

In July 2023, eight years after their last meeting, the heads of government and the state of the EU and CELAC gathered in Brussels for the third EU-CELAC Summit. Among the outcomes of this Summit are a set of bi-regional commitments aimed at reforming the international governance system to address global challenges more effectively, inclusively, and equitably.

In this regard, the III EU-CELAC Summit 2023 agreed on the need to strengthen the multilateral system and promote a

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40 UE-CELAC, “Comunicado de prensa, III Reunión de Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores CELAC-UE, Buenos Aires, 27 de octubre de 2022,” UE-CELAC, 2022, [https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2023-04/comunicado\\_de\\_prensa\\_-\\_reunion\\_celac-ue-esp.pdf](https://eulacfoundation.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2023-04/comunicado_de_prensa_-_reunion_celac-ue-esp.pdf)

41 European Commission, “A New Agenda for Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean,” Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, JOIN (2023) 17 final, 2023, p. 1 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023JC0017>

more effective and inclusive global governance, respectful of international law; revitalize multilateralism; improve bi-regional cooperation and coordination in relevant multilateral forums on issues of common interest (the EU and CELAC together represent more than one third of the UN membership); contribute to the efforts to reform the United Nations system, including its Security Council; and strengthen bi-regional collaboration in international financial institutions and multilateral organizations, recognizing the importance of having a fair, inclusive, and effective multilateral system.<sup>42</sup>

The final declaration of the III EU-CELAC Summit reiterated that “by working together as sovereign partners, we are stronger and better placed to face the multiple crises and challenges of our times”<sup>43</sup>. Although it is clear that there is still a long way to go, it is crucial to adequately value these types of meetings and the high-level political statements that emerge from them. These events reinforce the legitimacy of the partnership, adjust its strategic objectives to new realities, and set the political direction for the various institutional levels to continue advancing in the development of the relationship.

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42 UE-CELAC, “Declaración de la Cumbre UE-CELAC, Bruselas, 17 y 18 de julio de 2023,” 12000/1/23 REV 1 (es), 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/press/press-releases/2023/07/18/declaration-of-the-eu-celac-summit-2023-17-18-july-2023/>

43 UE-CELAC, “Declaración...” <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/press/press-releases/2023/07/18/declaration-of-the-eu-celac-summit-2023-17-18-july-2023>