



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



**Santiago de Chile, 27 January 2013
PCE**

**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
at the press conference of the EU-CELAC Summit**

Allow me at the outset to transmit my condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible fire last night in Santa Maria, Brazil. I already expressed my deep sorrow to President Rousseff this morning.

My first words are to thank you and all of Chile for hosting this Summit. This is the seventh Summit since the establishment of the European Union's strategic partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean in 1999. We have a longstanding and very fruitful relationship. It is also our first Summit since the establishment of CELAC. We acknowledge the creation of CELAC as a step in the region's ambition to deepen regional cooperation.

Summit has been a new opportunity to bring the European Union and the CELAC region closer together and has allowed us to progress on our common agenda. We discussed a wide range of issues: we reaffirmed the values that we share: our societies are based on peace, democracy, social justice, human rights and the rule of law, and we are committed to upholding these values.

The main theme of the Summit: *"an Alliance for Sustainable Development: Promoting Social and Environmental Quality Investments"* has prompted exchanges on the importance of strengthening commercial and economic links across the Atlantic, and this on a solid basis.

We have explored ways to achieve inclusive and diversified economic growth that would contribute to fighting poverty and to the promotion of social cohesion. In this context, we have acknowledged the progress made by Latin America and the Caribbean in lifting tens of millions of people out of poverty.

P R E S S

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The global economic and financial situation has been an important part of today's agenda. I have stressed that the European Union has turned the corner. The eurozone is no longer in "existential threat" mode. 2012 has been a turning point. An enormous amount of work has been done by countries across Europe, and we are now much better able to deal with the type of shocks that we have seen during the crisis. We are also reforming our economies and improving their competitiveness. In addition, we are addressing the gaps in our Economic and Monetary Union.

But we have to be realistic: There will be a time lag before growth picks up from the return to stability and from the effects of these reforms. It will also be some time before we see the positive effects on unemployment. So the priority for Europe is to reduce these time lags, speed up recovery and speed up employment. 2013-2014 will be a better time. Europeans know that in a globalised world, we cannot afford to slacken the reins, whether in individual countries or together as a Union. We need in Europe higher structural economic growth and robust competitiveness. A stronger Europe is in the interest of CELAC and the world economy.

During the Summit today, we jointly elaborated on the concept of "quality investment" and its contribution to sustained economic growth and to society as a whole. We also discussed the conditions for such investment to take root, for example through a stable, transparent and predictable legal framework.

The fact that we have such important economic relations makes our discussions today all the more relevant. Latin America is a key trading partner for the European Union, and vice versa – and the same is true for foreign direct investment. We need more trade, more free trade, we have to avoid protectionism.

Another central issue of our discussions has been our cooperation on global issues in international fora. This cooperation is already evident on matters such as human rights, security, climate change, sustainable development, the fight against organised crime and drugs. But we aim for more, in these and in other areas.

- The Summit has also been the opportunity to welcome a number of results: the adoption of a far-reaching Joint Declaration - the Santiago Declaration - and new sections of EU-CELAC Action Plan on gender and investment, significant progress towards the implementation of new trade and association agreements (Peru, Colombia, Central America), strengthened support to the Caribbean countries, and a EU-LAC Foundation that it is now operational. We are working on an agreement with MERCOSUR.
- The process of the Summits provides impetus to our relations at the highest level. In the coming years a lot of work will be invested in translating our discussions into tangible results. This Summit was a summit of optimism and hope. We are looking forward to hosting the next Summit in 2015 and to welcoming our Latin American and Caribbean partners in Europe.
