

5th Forum of Dialogue between Civil Society and Institutions of the Mexican Government and the European Union

OPENING WORDS

by Tomas Dupla del Moral, EEAS Director for the Americas

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to express great satisfaction for hosting this 5th edition of the EU-Mexico Civil Society Forum here in Brussels.

This meeting has become, over the years, an invaluable opportunity to discuss and convey your ideas in order to make the EU-Mexico Global Agreement more and more in touch with the needs of our respective societies.

Today's gathering comes at a moment of excellent bilateral relations: trade and investment have increased; Mexico and the EU share positions and values in the international arena, we coordinate well on multilateral issues; sensitive issues - such as security and human rights - are discussed constructively and give rise to cooperation and concrete advances.

Allow me, first of all, to assess the achievements of EU-Mexico relations thus far. We have our Global Agreement since 2000, with its institutionalized and regular high-level political dialogue. Joint Councils and Joint Committees to deepen and strengthen even more the bilateral links, while the Presidential Summits added political drive to this process. An inter-parliamentary dialogue takes place every two years, expanding the span of our interaction and exchange of ideas. Structured relations with civil society add yet another strand to our relation.

Mexico is a strategically important partner for the EU. On the multilateral stage, it has demonstrated its influence in 2010, during the strenuous discussions on climate change in Cancun, and subsequently in Durban. This success is a reflection of Mexico's capacity to rally support.

Our Strategic Partnership can be the vehicle that provides us with the impetus to develop a coordinated approach to issues of global importance on the multilateral level.

Our bilateral relation has also proved a successful one, as we have made undeniable progress in our human rights and security cooperation, another meeting of which has been held only last week. Soon, we will be launching the macroeconomic dialogue

to cooperate to address global economic and financial issues. In this sense, Mexico's G20 Presidency has had once again a lot to show for itself.

Our Trade relations have expanded significantly thanks to our FTA. However, we now need to look to the future, and make progress in expanding the FTA on the unfinished areas of our agreement, notably services, investment and agricultural goods.

The purpose of our Global Agreement is to benefit to the Mexicans and the Europeans. Therefore, it is essential that we have decided genuinely to associate civil society to its implementation and evaluation.

The EU is satisfied that our joint reply to the recommendations of the 4th EU-Mexico civil society dialogue forum has found a positive echo in Mexico. On many of these, we have given a tangible follow up. In particular, we have deepened and enlarged the scope of our dialogue and cooperation, adding areas such as security and macroeconomic issues. Our cooperation, whilst reduced in amount, has tried to better take into account social aspects, as well as human rights and human security, notably

through a new phase of the Social Cohesion laboratory, worth 22 m€

Finally, the EU encourages the ongoing debate about the creation of a joint consultative mechanism, which was probably the most concrete proposal which came out of the 4th Forum. Such a mechanism would allow for permanent dialogue between Mexican and European civil society; its results would be better taken into account in the EU-Mexico relation.

EU's civil society has organised itself within the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). This consultative body is structured and representative. As such, it is taking part in the dialogues with the civil society of partner countries. Mexico does not have yet a similar organ at federal level. In order to optimise the quality and results of the civil society dialogue, all sectors of Mexican civil society should be proportionately represented in this mechanism.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I now invite you to start the dialogue, in a constructive and positive atmosphere that corresponds to the level of our strategic

partnership. EU representatives will be present in all tables at all stages and take note of your ideas on political dialogue, trade and cooperation or institutionalization of the dialogue.

I am looking forward to receiving your concrete suggestions. I again assure you that we will come back to you with our feedback and views on how we intend to take them on board of our institutionalized relationship.

I wish you a successful day.