

## Migration in EU-Latin relations

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## Migration from Latin America to the EU

According to a recent analysis of the [CEPAL](#) more than 25 million Latin American and Caribbean born citizens, or 13% of the world's migrant population, live outside their home countries, out of which only 3 million are thought to have stayed within the LAC region. The vast majority are Mexicans (estimated 9 million). In the Caribbean, the majority of states have more than 20% of their population living abroad.

Main destination for LAC migrants remains the US, followed by Spain, Japan and Canada. Other popular EU destinations are the Netherlands and the UK (mainly for migrants of Caribbean origin) and Italy, France and Portugal for LA migrants.

In the EU, the biggest LAC migrant communities are the Ecuadorians and Colombians followed by, Argentineans, Surinamese, Brazilians and Peruvians. Not surprisingly, [Spain](#) is by far the most popular destination for LAC migrants, hosting important Ecuadorian, Colombian and Argentinean communities. [Italy](#) has large Argentinean, Brazilian, Venezuelan and Ecuadorian Diasporas. In France, Brazilian and Colombians are the dominant groups (estimated LAC total of LAC migrants). Portugal hosts Brazilian and Venezuelan migrants.

### Remittances

Latin America and the Caribbean are among the main remittances recipient areas in the world, receiving about a third of global flows (estimated at \$ 40 bn 2004). The economic importance of these transfers is enormous: In El Salvador, the World Bank estimates that remittances made up for some 16.2 % of GDP (2004). In Ecuador (where the share of GDP is around 6%) and Colombia, remittances are estimated to be the second largest foreign currency earner after oil exports. Amid the surging migration from Latin America to the EU, important remittances corridors exist, for example, from Spain to Colombia and Ecuador and from Portugal to Brazil.

Co-operation on facilitating the transfer of remittances was identified as a priority area for EU-LAC co-operation in the Summit Declarations of [Guadalajara](#)(2004) and [Vienna](#) (2006). The European Commission has been active in this regard: In December it adopted a proposal for a unified legal framework for payment services in the EU. 'A Single Payment Area' should allow for modern and unified rules applicable to all payment services throughout the EU. The Directive should provide for competition on equal terms, adequate protection of consumers, and an increased security and efficiency of payments. This will be an important step to more competition, transparency and security of transfers and it is expected that it will lead to a major reduction in cost.

Following the 2004 G8 Sea Island summit, international efforts have been started to harmonise the system of data collection on migrant remittances. [EUROSTAT](#), the EU' statistical office, is actively participating in these efforts. It hosted the first meeting of the new '[Luxemburg Group on Remittances](#)' in June 2006 with the participation of *inter alia* the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD, several EU Member States, Mexico, the Philippines, Japan and Lebanon.

Skilled migration has increased over the last decades and creates an important 'brain drain' challenge in particular for the smaller countries.

Controlling illegal migration and curbing trafficking in human beings and people smuggling poses significant challenges for LA authorities who often lack the capacity to control their borders adequately. Certain EU Member States are, for example, among the major destinations for trafficked prostitutes from Brazil or Paraguay. Increasing migration and low social development have contributed to fragmented family structures, with particularly dangerous consequences for children. Guatemala, for example, records the world's highest percentage of children placed in foreign families (including in the EU). There is growing concern over the

vulnerability of children to trafficking or to adoption without protection of the legal requirements and conformity to international standards. In general, the request for co-operation and assistance in border and passport control or with collection of data at the borders has been a recurrent issue in EU-LAC expert exchanges.

## Migration in EU-LA relations

Co-operation and dialogue with third countries in the area of migration are based on the principle of partnership and the conviction that migration is a common challenge that needs to be addressed by countries of origin, transit and destination. The Commission has been very active in making a range of policy proposals *inter alia* on issues such as integration of third country nationals, legal migration, the fight against illegal migration and trafficking in human beings as well as on how to foster the linkages between migration and development. A summary of relevant policy initiatives is contained in the Communication setting out the Commission's contribution to the United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development.

The Political Dialogue and Co-operation Agreements between the EU and [Central America](#) and the [Andean Community](#) contain specific clauses on co-operation in the area of migration and re-admission.

Given the enormous economic, political and social importance of the phenomena of migration for certain countries in LA, the issue has become a regular subject not only for relations with the countries of the Andean Community, but also for the bi-regional dialogue with Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole. Two EU-LAC expert meetings have taken place in preparation of the EU-LAC summits in [Guadalajara \(2004\)](#) and [Vienna \(2006\)](#). The most recent meeting in [Cartagena de Indias \(March 2006\)](#) issued conclusions and recommendations, endorsed by Heads of States in Vienna, for follow-up activities and exchange in the areas of treatment, rights and integration of migrants, on remittances, on new approaches to migration policies as well as on illegal migration and the fight against trafficking in human beings, thus providing a useful road map for future co-operation.

## Co-operation activities

Besides dialogue, the [AENEAS program](#) foresees projects worth some € 5m in 2005/2006, notably in the CAN, Argentina and Uruguay, as the LA countries with the most important migrant communities in the EU. The Commission has also signed a contract with the IFAD/BID contributing € 1m to the facilitation of migrant remittances sent from the EU to rural areas in LAC.

Under the new Financial Perspectives, the AENEAS program will be replaced by a new thematic program for migration and asylum.

Future [Country Strategy Papers for Latin America](#) will address the issue by attempting to tackle the root causes of migration, such as poverty eradication, creation of employment opportunities, fighting social inequalities, improving higher education, but also by addressing destabilising factors with a highly detrimental impact on the lives of the civilian population such as conflict prevention and the fight against illicit drugs.

**Visa :** The increased migratory pressure has led the EU to the progressive introduction of visa requirements for Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and most recently suggested also to include Bolivia. The number of asylum seekers from LA in the EU is insignificant.

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### Useful links

- JLS Website: [Justice and Home Affairs - Freedom Security and Justice - Immigration](#)
- RELEX Europa: [Migration and Asylum - Overview](#)
- Luxemburg Group on Remittances: [IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics - Remittances Statistics](#)
- [AIDCO projects](#)
- [IOM](#)

