The European Union (EU) and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are essential partners in today’s challenging global context. The two regions have developed one of the most integrated partnerships, having concluded 27 association, trade or political and cooperation agreements. The partnership is of geostrategic relevance, with EU and LAC countries accounting for a more than a third of the UN membership. It is a force for a strong and rules-based multilateral order and an ambitious international response to defining global issues such as sustainable development, climate change, human rights and fair and free trade.

The EU is the largest provider of cooperation for sustainable development to LAC countries, allocating €3.6 billion in grants for bilateral and regional programmes between 2014-2020. As “Team Europe”, the EU, its Member States and the European Investment Bank have mobilised €2.4 billion to address the immediate challenges of the COVID-19 crisis in LAC countries. The EU and LAC are joining forces to build back better following the pandemic, cooperating on critical areas such as:

- **Security and the Rule of Law**
- **Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change**
- **Inclusive Economic Growth**
- **Democracy and Human Rights**
- **Digital Transformation and Connectivity**

**THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK’S PROJECTS**

- **Construction of drinking water supply and wastewater treatment facilities benefiting 200,000 people**
  - **Bolivia**

- **NAFIN credit line to boost access to finance for MSMEs in Mexico affected by the Covid-19 outbreak.**
  - **Mexico**

- **USD 60 million loan to finance the development of drinking water and sanitation networks in the Portoviejo region in Ecuador.**
  - **Ecuador**
The EU is supporting regional efforts to move towards more equal and socially inclusive economic models in LAC. The flagship programme *Eurosocial*, funded by the EU since 2005, advances dialogue and peer-to-peer learning between the EU and 19 LAC countries to reduce gender and socio-economic inequalities, enhance social cohesion and strengthen public institutions.

The EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI) promotes bi-regional research and innovation with a focus on researcher mobility, research infrastructure, global challenges and innovation. Under Horizon 2020, LAC researchers have participated in 406 projects, to which the EU contributed €1.31 billion; €53 million went to LAC participants. An example: transnational cancer research with researchers from nine Latin American countries to improve early detection and develop targeted therapies.

Since 2014, nearly 2500 LAC researchers participated in the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions.

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European & LAC Telecom Regulators work together to lay the foundations for the digital economy and improve the roll-out of broadband. Regulatory dialogues take place with individual countries in the region, in particular with Brazil, Argentina and Mexico.

A new high-speed submarine cable will link Europe and Latin America in 2021, and enhance connectivity across the region.