



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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

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

Over the past two days we have engaged in very rich and useful discussions – on the central theme of investment, on a wider range of global challenges, and on how to make best use of the strategic partnership between our two regions in the future.

Before I offer a few conclusions, I would like to join in thanking, on behalf of all European leaders, the Chilean Presidency of CELAC for its outstanding work in preparing and hosting this summit. The summit has certainly lived up to its main theme – which was the importance of quality.

Recalling yesterday's discussions on investments, quality is every bit as important as quantity. Allow me to reiterate that quality investments are essential for sustainable development; GDP growth alone cannot ensure the wellbeing of our citizens, nor our biodiversity for future generations;

There is a strong partnership already in place between the European Union and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean when it comes to quality investments. This alliance for sustainable development is beneficial to both sides, and both of us remain committed to fostering it. We need development with tangible results for all of our citizens. Inequality and poverty are not an inescapable fate. We can overcome these scars in our societies.

Our discussions during the Summit have been wide-ranging. Besides investment-related matters, we have exchanged views on many key challenges facing our regions and the rest of the world: international stability, sustainable development, climate change, social justice, human rights, drugs and organised crime, as well as security.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Preben Aamann - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 2060 - +32 (0)476 85 05 43
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

On all these issues, I have been impressed by the high degree of common thinking that exists between Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. I have also been struck by the fact that both sides are acutely aware of their inter-dependence. This shared conviction that we depend on each other, is what forms the basis of our strategic partnership. The financial crisis and the way we are able to deal with it strengthened me in that conviction. The future belongs to regional cooperation and integration, as well as inter-regional collaboration.

I welcome equally the commitment to the relationship between Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean – between the European Union and CELAC, that was clear through all our debate. There is a shared wish to make full use of the potential of this bi-regional strategic partnership. To this end, the Santiago Declaration we have adopted and the EU-CELAC Action Plan, which we have expanded by adding new chapters on gender and on investment, will be essential tools.

Our next summit will be hosted by the EU two years from now. But in the meantime, our discussions here in Santiago have given new energy and momentum to our strategic partnership. On top of this, the inter-Summit period will see the EU-LAC Foundation become fully operational and step up its valuable work – on the basis of an international agreement – to foster debate and exchange of experience between the two sides.

In the next couple of months, we will also start seeing the beneficial impact of the EU's Multi-Party Free-Trade Agreement with Colombia and Peru. Soon after that, ratification of the EU-Central America Association Agreement should be completed and it will enter into force. We are looking forward to an agreement with MERCOSUR.

In the near future, I also expect a strong political impetus to relations between the EU and the Caribbean – following on from the commitments taken at the Madrid summit two-and-a-half years ago – as well as the launch of the EU's new Caribbean Investment Facility.

All in all, as a result of our discussions and the progress made on our common agenda, I leave Santiago even more convinced of the value of the bi-regional strategic partnership; even more optimistic about its future; and even more certain that by working together we will make a positive difference to the lives of our citizens and to dealing with the challenges facing the world. There is no continent so close to Europe than yours when it comes to values.

We could conclude today with the words of one of the great sons of Chile, Pablo Neruda:

*"No me reservo nada
sino todo el espacio
y allí trabajar, trabajar,
manifestar la primavera."*

[I withhold nothing
But the wide open space,
Through labour and toil
Spring will shine.]

Muchas gracias Chile, muchas gracias Señor Presidente, Muchas gracias a todos los participantes.
