



SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC,
SEBASTIÁN PIÑERA,
IN THE INAUGURATION OF THE 1ST CELAC-UE SUMMIT

Santiago, 26 January, 2013

Good afternoon:

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you, and offer my wishes that you enjoy yourself in this country at the end of the world, called Chile.

I would like to offer a special greeting to the President of the European Council, to the President of the European Commission, to the Heads of State of the countries of CELAC and the European Union, to the Heads of the delegations, to all our special guests and to all of you.

On behalf of the government and the people of Chile, we welcome you with open arms. For us it is a great honor and a great privilege to have you here, and to open this summit in which CELAC, representing Latin America and the Caribbean, meets with the European Union. We are two communities made up of 61 countries, a third of countries worldwide. We represent 1.100 million inhabitants and more than a third of global output.

As a result, we undoubtedly have a tremendous responsibility in our countries and our regions, but also worldwide.

The theme that brings us together today is the construction of a new strategic alliance to achieve sustainable development, based on quality investments, both socially and environmentally.

Over the next two days, we have an incredible opportunity, not only to share experiences, to exchange opinions, but most importantly, to join forces and agree on a course of action to build together a better future for our countries and for our people. This summit is not only helpful, it is necessary; not only timely, but urgent.

While the European Union to come to this summit in the midst of a long and painful crisis, we cannot forget Europe is still the largest economy in the world, a continent with a valuable and ancient culture, with a vast heritage of science and technology, and, most importantly perhaps, with a solid commitment to the values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and a respect for human rights.

Meanwhile, Latin America and the Caribbean, although we remain a continent in development and one with too high levels of poverty and inequality, is a continent that is experiencing a renaissance, that has learned from its past mistakes and that today finds itself in the process of strengthening its



economic development, and its democracy as well, with a firm commitment to these values that we share with the European Union, of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Latin America and the Caribbean have had and continue to have everything we need to defeat poverty and underdevelopment: a vast and generous territory, abundant natural resources, absence of wars and homogenous and hardworking people who want and deserve a better future. Additionally, our people are willing to face all the difficulties of the present, the future challenges and the opportunities that modern society puts in our path.

This summit will allow us, just once, to come together in one place to think together what the way of the future will be, and enable the grouping together of countries that are separated by the Atlantic, but that despite the distances, have shared values and visions. Consequently, nothing and no one should stay away from our task.

To ensure that this summit is fruitful, we have incorporated some innovations. For the first time in this summit, the three branches of government have participated: the Executive, Legislative and Judicial. The last two have already finished their summits and in a few moments we will deliver their findings and proposals.

Additionally, we have also fully incorporated the civil society which has had a very active and fruitful participation, through forums and meetings of academia, labor, business, foundations and nongovernmental organizations.

Furthermore, this time we will have a more direct and efficient format, with meetings that take the form of private retreats, to facilitate a more open and direct, and thus more fruitful, dialogue between our continents, prioritizing ideas, contents and agreements on the protocol and formalities.

The scope of this summit is big and ambitious, but it is also feasible and is our responsibility to reach it. Between our continents, by creating a new, less vertical and more horizontal, strategic alliance, evolving from assistance to true cooperation, we recognize how much unites us over what divides us, and additionally, we are promoting and encouraging investment in both directions, from Europe to Latin America and the Caribbean, and Latin America and the Caribbean to Europe, with greater social and environmental quality.

True, the European Union is the main source of investment in Latin America and the Caribbean, representing close to 43% of the stock of investments, but it is also true that in recent years this flow of investment has weakened and investment flows in the opposite direction have strengthened. It is also true that this is concentrated in very few countries sending and very few countries receiving. In fact, the bulk of the investments in Latin America come from Spain, the United Kingdom and France, and Argentina, Brazil and Chile receive over half the flow of investments, which today is close to more than 600 billion from Europe to Latin America, and 117 billion from Latin America to Europe.



Meanwhile, investment from Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe is growing strongly, although we need more and better quality investment, both social and environmental, with greater corporate responsibility, both in Europe and in Latin America.

This demonstrates the tremendous dynamism that the trade between the two continents has reached, which has managed to grow to average figures of 13% per year over the past decade and already far exceeds 300 billion dollars.

Esteemed Presidents and Presidents, honored Heads of State and heads of participating delegations:

From this moment, more than 1.100 million people on both sides of the Atlantic, and to some extent, around the world, will have their eyes on us and will put their hopes in us and in the results that this summit will generate.

We know that they do so with a degree of skepticism and mistrust, because they have been frustrated in the past, but we also know that they do so with faith and hope that this time things will be different.

The motto of this summit, symbolized by a Chilean artist's rendering of a hand that is trying to touch the stars is, "Aiming Higher". This is not a coincidence; this slogan reflects the strong intention and desire to build this new phase and this new strategic relationship between the two continents. A phase of better integration, better understanding, and better collaboration, that will allow us to face together the problems that we always face, but, above all, the challenges and the opportunities that the future places in front of us.

We do this with an eye on the sky, which is hope, imagination, but with feet firmly on the ground, which is realism and responsibility.

I conclude these words by remembering a great French thinker, Victor Hugo, who once said: "there is nothing stronger in the world than the idea whose time has come." And I am certain that all of us know and feel that the time has come to build a real strategic alliance between the world of Europe and the world of Latin America and the Caribbean, because we have many shared values and principles and many shared visions and future projects.

I am certain that our countrymen and women will not be forgiving if we do not achieve the goals we have set today. As leaders of our nations, democratically elected by our people, we have an obligation to live up to this great challenge, and I have full confidence that each and every one of you will give the best of themselves to make this summit a very successful summit.

Thank you very much.