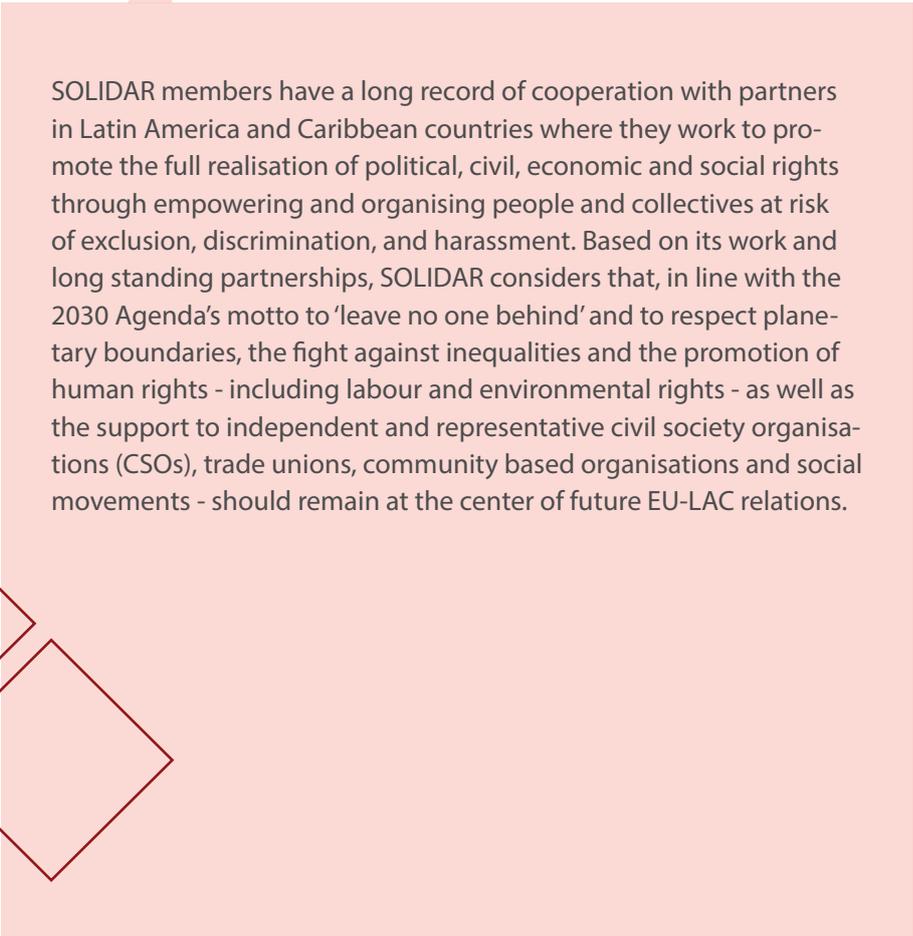
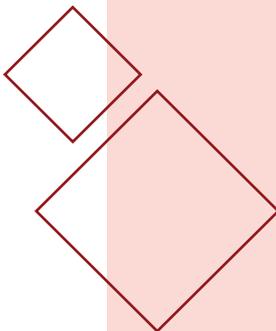


OUR VIEWS

SOLIDAR Network's vision for stronger and fairer EU- LAC relations



SOLIDAR members have a long record of cooperation with partners in Latin America and Caribbean countries where they work to promote the full realisation of political, civil, economic and social rights through empowering and organising people and collectives at risk of exclusion, discrimination, and harassment. Based on its work and long standing partnerships, SOLIDAR considers that, in line with the 2030 Agenda's motto to 'leave no one behind' and to respect planetary boundaries, the fight against inequalities and the promotion of human rights - including labour and environmental rights - as well as the support to independent and representative civil society organisations (CSOs), trade unions, community based organisations and social movements - should remain at the center of future EU-LAC relations.





BACKGROUND

Between 2017 and 2018, the European Union (EU) will 'refresh' its relations with the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries in order to align them with recently agreed EU and international frameworks (namely, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction) and the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy that stressed the will to 'expand cooperation and build stronger partnerships with Latin America and the Caribbean, grounded on shared values and interests'.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, both EU and LAC countries face major challenges that have been galvanised due to several years of austerity policies (i. e. cuts to social budgets) combined with the financialisation of the economy and accompanied by an unsustainable development model based on uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and cheap labour force.

The results of these policies have been, among others:

Increasing inequalities: while the LAC region remains a very unequal region, in Europe the rich are getting wealthier and the rest are falling behind; migrant workers do not have access to the same labour and social rights as national workers; the gender pay gap remains a reality; etc. At the same time, tax evasion, tax avoidance practices and fiscal competition among European countries put at stake the EU's capacity to implement redistributive policies to tackle these growing inequalities producing a decreased trust in public institutions, growing nationalisms and xenophobic movements.

Growing corporate greed: the continued violations of human rights obligations remain a constant challenge across LAC countries. European companies are often co-responsible for these violations. The control over natural resources, of which the LAC countries are rich of, are more and more a source of conflicts between multinational enterprises and local communities, environmental activists and CSOs. Moreover, unregulated global supply chains in agro-exports products (e. g. bananas) as well as in manufactured goods (e. g. garments¹) are the source of labour force exploitation and violation of international labour standards.

Reducing space for independent and representative CSOs to organise and to work: the last years have witnessed several and repeated attacks to independent CSO and trade unions. From the adoption of legislations limiting and criminalising

¹ According to the Clean Clothes Campaign, the 'Garment production is on the rise in Latin America and several brands familiar to us here in Europe - including the retailers C&A and Inditex - have an increasingly large presence there.'





social mobilisations, as well as reducing the right to peaceful assembly and the right to strike. The lack of political will and public measures to protect human rights defenders and to ensure justice to collectives and individuals defending human rights, including labour and environmental rights, have exposed them to the risk of increased harassment and violence.

These challenges require urgent alternatives to transform the current unsustainable growth-at-any-cost economic model into a sustainable one. **Within this context, SOLIDAR Network considers that the following elements should play a prominent role in building stronger and fairer EU-LAC relations:**

PROTECT, RESPECT AND DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable development goals (SDGs), give an unprecedented role to the private sector in its implementation. However, for companies to really contribute to reach the SDGs, substantial changes are to be made when it comes to business behaviour. Indeed, while business can contribute to the wellbeing of society, there are many examples proving that they have done the opposite, leading in turn to an increase of inequality and environmental degradation. For these reasons, the **SOLIDAR Network**

- Considers that the EU and its member states are well positioned to **'...work to prevent human rights abuses and promote the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, [...]** promote labour standards that ensure decent employment conditions and decent wages for workers, in particular those defined by the International Labour Organisation, both in the formal and informal sector...'²;
- Calls on the EU and LAC governments to **work**

² 'The new European Consensus on Development 'Our world, our dignity, our future', June 2017.

towards the conclusion of binding international agreements that strengthen respect for human rights, especially in the case of EU-based companies operating in third countries. More in particular, the revision of the EU-LAC relations should have a strong focus on upholding human rights obligations and a renewed commitment to the business and human rights agenda and, more specifically, to the UN process aimed at developing a legally binding treaty on the issue obliging companies to mandatory Human Rights due diligence;

- Calls on the EU and LAC governments to **reiterate commitment to the implementation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) international labour standards** including the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining (ILO C87 and C98) and to social protection for all;
- Urges the Latin American and Caribbean States to **elaborate and implement a public policies for the protection of human rights defenders;**
- Requests the EU to put more effort on the promotion of the respect of **the right to consultation with the aim to avoid conflicts over the use of natural resources**, with the conviction that its respect will be an important contribution to the legitimacy of many economic processes, including investments; **especially when indigeous territories and communities are involved in megaprojects and mining according ILO Convention 169;**
- Finally, the EU and LAC relations should be **based on the principle of policy coherence for development:** the EU must implement its binding commitments to ensure that its internal and external policies are consistent with its development objectives and aim at the ambitious implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreements. The Community of Latin American





and Caribbean States (CELAC) should also progress in these commitment.

PROMOTE A HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO MIGRATION

The 2030 Agenda recognises 'the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development' and 'that international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses'³. However, there is now a tendency to restrictively consider migration as an issue of border control and security. At the same time, migrant people have had difficulties in accessing their basic human rights and, in both regions, ensuring access to the same labour and social security rights to national workers and migrant workers remains a big challenge.

Against these trends, **SOLIDAR considers that**

- Migration policy should be rooted in the full respect of human rights obligations, social inclusion and equality. The right to migrate but also the right not to migrate, to stay or return in dignity should be recognised; access to justice, international protection for people seeking asylum and refugees should be guaranteed;
- Legal frameworks should be in place for the facilitation of legal migration and the protection against criminalisation and discrimination of migrants. This includes the ratification of UN Convention on the rights of Migrants and their families (1990), ILO Convention No.189 (Decent Work for Domestic Workers) as well as ILO Conventions No. 97 (Migration for employment) and No. 143 (Migrant workers);
- It is necessary to create mechanisms that

allow the full participation of migrants and their families in the elaboration of public policies and the construction of inclusive societies. The EU and the LAC countries should promote comprehensive public policies fighting the criminalisation of migration and regulate business activities that can cause land deprivation and eviction of local community that generate internal displacement and migration.

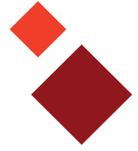
ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN

The 2030 Agenda's fifth goal seeks to 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'. This includes, among others 1) ending all forms of discrimination, violence and exploitation; 2) ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; 3) ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences; 4) giving women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws; 5) adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

However, in both regions, women are still subject to many obstacles to fully realise their economic, social, and political rights and fully participate in society. Moreover, in both regions, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is not guaranteed.



³ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN General Assembly, 2015, para 29.



With this in mind, **SOLIDAR Network** calls on EU-CELAC leaders to

- Operationalise the bi-regional dialogue on gender equality and equity in appropriate public policies and budgets to guarantee the human rights of women, including sexual and reproductive rights, the right to family planning and access to safe and secure and legal abortion to ensure their physical, sexual and economic autonomy, access to effective justice, and to eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, including femicide and trafficking, and against diverse gender identities and sexual orientation;
- Implement actions and policies that recognise that the sexual division of labour, the invisibilisation and non-remuneration of care work and unequal access to resources are an obstacle to exercise of women's rights;
- Implement mechanisms for participation and effective social and political representation of women's organisations and movements, and systems of monitoring and accountability for the fulfillment of regional and international commitments on gender equality.

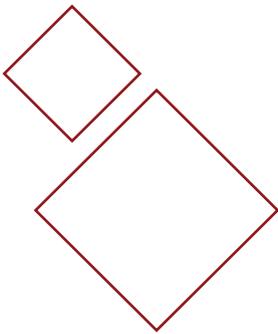
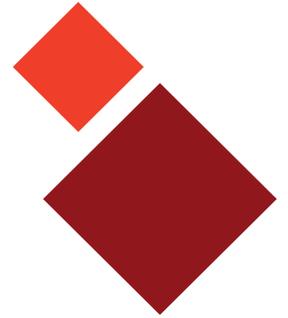




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SOLIDAR is a European network of membership based Civil Society Organisations who gather several millions of citizens throughout Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the values of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the three main policy sectors; social affairs, lifelong learning and international cooperation.

The SOLIDAR LAC working group includes the following members: Alianza por la Solidarid (Spain), ARCS (Italy), AWO International (Germany), CGIL (Italy), FOS (Belgium), ISCOS (Italy), Movimiento por la Paz MPDL (Spain), OGBL Solidarité Syndicale (Luxembourg), Progetto Sud (Italy) and Solidar Suisse (Switzerland).



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