
The European Union and Latin America: A Bi-regional Strategic Alliance

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Abstract: The European Union, as a sui generis political system, is a multi-faceted entity. It is intergovernmentality that fundamentally characterises the definition of the Union's foreign and security policy, its ties to other parts of the world, as well as its activities to resolve international conflicts. Relations between the two regions – the European Community and Latin America with the Caribbean – have become quite intensive over the last quarter century, although dialogue between the Parlantino, the Latin-American Parliament representing the countries of the region and the European Assembly (functioning as the European Parliament from 1986) started as early as the 1960s. In the 1980s the European Parliament declared cooperation with the Third World, and especially with the South American continent, strategically important. After Spain and Portugal's accession to the European Community this dimension took shape as an attempt to create a special joint status between the EU and the Latin American region, a tightening of economic, political, and cultural links, primarily negotiated via Spanish mediation. From the first Iberoamerican Summit, organized in 1999 in RiodeJaneiro, the strategic alliance between the European Union and Latin America has evolved in various institutional forms: bioregional summits, cooperation with the diverse subregional organizations (the Andean Community of Nations, Mercosur, Union of South American Nations) and interregional entities (Ibero-American Community of Nations), as well as diverse development programs with mutual participation. The strategic partnership between Latin American countries and the European Union is also consolidated by the common history, values, culture and political aims embraced by the partners, as well as the shared ambitions of protecting democracy and consolidating a multipolar international community. Currently, an important face to the strategic partnership is the ambition to attenuate the asymmetrical characteristics of economic relations between the partners. The intensification of bonds between the two regions also has a serious impact in the evolution of international relations.

Keywords: International System, The European Union, Latin America, Biregional Strategic Alliance, Mercosur, UNASUR, Ibero-American Community of Nations, Subregional Integrations

1. Historical Background: The International System and Globalisation

The European Union, as a sui generis political system, is a multi-faceted identity. It is a macro-region linking several regions, areas, systems, and countries to the notion that is Europe, within which there are significant political, economic, social, cultural, linguistic and foreign policy tradition differences manifesting themselves in various priorities. It is intergovernmentality that fundamentally

characterises the definition of the Union's foreign and security policy, its ties to other parts of the world, as well as its activities to resolve international conflicts. The creation of the EU's Presidential and Foreign Ministerial post, the careful shift towards a federal system, the difficulties concerning the rapid reaction force, the experiences gained by Javier Solana as High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, and the practice of holding summits for heads of state and prime ministers call attention to the necessity of targeting a common foreign policy for the Union, and the system of related priorities.

The definition of this foreign policy system is highly

influenced by the Eastern enlargement of integration [35, 39], the Barcelona Process launched in November 1995, [41], the European Neighbourhood Policy introduced in 2003 (Communication *from the Commission*, 2007) and the newly restructured system of links and ties between the EU's Mediterranean countries – among these, especially Portugal and Spain – with the Third World, primarily Latin America and the Maghreb region, which dates back half a millennium. When examining the relationships of the European Union with Latin America and the Caribbean (*América Latina y el Caribe -ALC*), we must consider the changes that occurred after the end of the bipolar world and starting with the emergence of a multi-player globalised political system, as well as competition among the new, regional-type institutionalised centres of power.

In the final third of the 20th century the termination of organised East-West conflicts combined with the significant shifts of focus in international relations resulted in the fact that the foreign policies, political actions and scopes of movement for states, intergovernmental organisations and regional integrations are now increasingly dominated by non-traditional forms and means of international relations.

There is growing importance of non-national, non-governmental, but rather social actors, institutions, organisations and movements in the field of the foreign policy representation of national and integrational aims and interests. Within the extended framework of a “transnational foreign policy” the role of cultures, civilisations, and the network of relations, virtual or real, between regional and subregional entities and their various organisations becomes increasingly enhanced.

Globalisation and the influence of civilisations and cultures on foreign policy is a far from obscure factor of history. Joaquim Aguiar [1], in line with Immanuel Wallerstein's concept [56], links the first wave in the emergence of globalisation to the great European expansion of the 16th-17th centuries. The trade of various products, their exchange would transcend national and European borders very early on in the formation of the world trade system; *internationalisation* and global contact as a process linked up regionalisation and localisation with the spheres of local cultures and civilisations. The second wave of globalisation launched in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th unfolded in terms of the circulation of capital and the strengthening of American world hegemony. “The present type of globalisation, leading up to the 21st century from the 20th nevertheless manifests itself as a higher-level synthesis of the previous two: as a network of eternal changes and movements, a never-ending and uninterrupted cycle of products and capitals” - Joaquim Aguiar argues [1].

In this era of postnational globalisation, postnational politics and foreign policy, the territorial fundamentals of power are largely replaced by a web of processes, networks, currents, as well as control over cyberspace. In spite of global movements of a *transnational* nature, collective existence in the 21st century has a number of divergent modes and forms. Geographical factors, borders symbolising territoriality and the classic nation-state, ethnic and cultural and civilisational

differences behind integration and disintegration tendencies, strategic cooperations representing the new regionalism of continental-integrational cooperations are all present at the same time in the network of international relations, and all are tightly linked to one another.

2. The European Union and Latin America: The Foundations of a Strategic Partnership

Relations between the two regions – the European Community and Latin America with the Caribbean – have become quite intensive over the last quarter century, although dialogue between the Parlatino, the Latin-American Parliament representing the countries of the region and the European Assembly (functioning as the European Parliament from 1986) started as early as the 1960s. In the 1980s the European Parliament declared cooperation with the Third World, and especially with the South American continent, strategically important. [43]. After Spain and Portugal's accession to the European Community this dimension took shape as an attempt to create a special joint status between the EU and the Latin American region, a tightening of economic, political, and cultural links, primarily negotiated via Spanish mediation. [36, 43, 45]

From the moment of the European Economic Community's birth in 1957, it established contact with economic formations that also included Latin America; the signing of the so-called first generation trade pacts took place in the '60s. This in turn led up to the acceptance by the EEC of the Lomé I. and Lomé II. treaties (1975 and 1979, respectively) that regulated the economic cooperation of African, Latin American, and Asian countries with Europe. A part of the second generation agreements brought about by the '80s was linked to the Lomé III. (1984) and the Lomé IV (1984) treaties. Another part is specifically and immediately tied to countries of the Latin American continent (Brazil) and its integration organisations (the Andean Community, Mercosur) [20, 42]. The third generation of treaties came to be signed in the '90s, after the era of the bipolar world. The decisive steps towards a strategic alliance to further an open type of new regionalism, which took the form of partnership agreements and bilateral contracts, may be dated back to the first 1999 Rio de Janeiro Summit of the respective state and government heads. This meeting and subsequent EU-Latin America talks, conducted at the highest levels of states, as well as experts' conferences and congresses all expressed the answers to the challenges of a changing international system by the European Union and South America emerging as independent and self-contained actors.

The turn of the millennium did nevertheless not see the end of major geopolitical shifts in Europe. From the second half of the '90s the European Union struggled with the tasks of widening and deepening; it launched a series of institutional reforms pointing towards federalism, with an uncertain and unpredictable outcome. After the failure of the

European Constitutional Treaty, these were channeled towards the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the definition of foreign policy priorities and a circle of allies for the Union, the widening of the community's scope of movement in the international field, and the institutionalised strengthening of its strategic positions. Gaps in the series of these steps presented themselves with Brexit, and the ever stronger national narratives of governments in a number of member states. In the period between 1999 and 2017 Latin America also underwent political and economic changes on a historic scale. The '80s and '90s saw the toppling of the dictatorial régimes of the Exceptional states, those that were formed as a result of military coups in the '60s and '70s, and represented the institutional rule of the military. [44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51]. The time after the birth of the democratic systems witnessed the strengthening and growth of previously formed continental integrations (Andean Community - Comunidad Andina – CA), the creation of new ones (Mercosur-1991, Unión de Naciones Suramericanas- 2007), and, thirdly, the organisation of the Ibero-American Community of Nations – Comunidad Iberoamericana de Naciones – CIN (1991) [37], which links the region to Spain and Portugal. Beside cooperation within the region, Latin America as a newly emerged independent international actor seeks a definition to an interregional and integrational model in order to enhance its field of play and terminate centuries-old dependencies. One manifestation of this is the creation of above mentioned CIN.

At the beginning of the 21st century three possible scenarios seem to present themselves from a Latin-American perspective. Next to the option of closer contact with the USA, a strong influence in the thinking of the southern hemisphere is continental cooperation. The idea of a strategic alliance and partnership between the EU and Latin America has been developing since the mid-1990s; it had become the dominant integration paradigm and everyday foreign policy practice for both parties by the 2000s. This has common historical, linguistic, value-based, political, and civilisational roots, as stressed in the introductory lines of the European Commission document dated spring 2008 and entitled *The strategic partnership between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean: a joint commitment*. “The European Union (EU), and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are natural allies linked by strong historical, cultural and economic ties, as well as by their ever increasing convergence of basic values and principles. They share a common commitment to human rights, democracy, good governance, multilateralism and social cohesion, and they cooperate to achieve these objectives. This makes them well-matched partners to address global challenges together.” [52]. The document declares the validity of the European Commission's 2005 analysis of the strengthening of the EU-LAC partnership (A Stronger Partnership, 2006) according to which strategic partnership between the EU and Latin America comprises eight elements. These are the following:

1. genuine political dialogues between the two regions;
2. furthering economic and commercial ties, promoting

regional integration by creating a network of partnership agreements;

3. contributing to the development of a stable and predictable framework to help the Latin American countries attract more European investment, which will eventually contribute to economic development
4. developing effective sectoral dialogues (e.g. on social cohesion or the environment) with a view to the sustainable reduction of inequalities and promoting sustainable development;
5. mitigating inequality and tailoring development targets to suit the needs of Latin America;
6. maintaining commitment to support Latin American countries in their fight against drug trafficking and corruption;
7. strengthening democratic governance;
8. increasing mutual understanding through education and culture.

In order to promote cooperation, the EU launched the package called *The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)* for the 2007-2013 programming period. It comprises five geographical areas: Latin America, Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Africa, along with the same number of thematic programmes. The latter are discussed in chapters entitled: investment in human resources; the sustainable management of environmental and natural resources and energy; the support of non-governmental actors and local authorities; food safety; migration and asylum. The European Community allocated funds to each region and programme. In the 2007-2013 period Latin America's share is EUR 2.670 m. The priorities set in the programmes are in line with the UN's *The Millenium Development Goals (OGS)*. [10], passed in 2000 and valid until 2015. The EU also remembered the Caribbean. It gave support to the region in the value of EUR 760m in the 2008-2013 period.

Commercial relations between the Union and Latin America have also significantly widened in scope over the past two decades. According to IMF data the Latin American continent (countries and integration organisations together) was the second largest trading partner of the European Union in 2006. In that year EU imports reached EUR 70 billion, while exports amounted to EUR 66 billion. The balance is in Latin America's favour by EUR 4 billion. [52]

At the same time, the Union became the largest investor of the region. A major role in this may be attributed to the Madrid government, which traditionally maintains strong ties with the subcontinent. By the end of the 1990s it was democratic Spain that provided 52% of operating foreign investment, with several major companies from Spain (Telefónica, YBERDROLA, Repsol YFP, Banco Santander, Banco Bilbao Vizcaya, Banco Central Hispano, Banco Popular Español, Iberia Airlines, Sol Melia, Tryp Hotels, Compania Valencia de Cementos, etc.) gaining a leading role in crucial sectors of the continent's countries – such as banking, hospitality and tourism, energy, and telecommunication. [36, 38, 45].

In spite of the above, the scale of the exchange of goods

does not reflect a magnitude expected of strategic allies. “If Latin America were one country – we read in the studies of experts - ... then the Union, tightly closing in on Japan, would be its sixth biggest commercial partner, although it has a share of a mere 5.2% of the foreign trade aggregate of the EU.

Despite Latin American criticism of European protectionism the fact remains that a quarter of the Community’s agrarian import still comes from Latin America.” [18]. Examining the same issue from the other side we may state the following: „If the EU were considered a single country – and from a commercial perspective it certainly is a homogeneous actor, - then it would be the second biggest commercial partner to Latin America, holding second place with respect to immediate capital investments and first place with respect to providing financial aid.” [18, 52].

The economic ties of Latin America and the European Union have indeed developed significantly over the last quarter century. Trade has increased by an average annual rate of 15%, but to an uneven rhythm and faster than economic capacity. Data in the volume edited by Juan José Martín Arribas corroborates sources cited earlier. In 2003, Latin America’s share in world exports was 5%, in imports, 4.7%. The same values reached 38.7% with respect to the then fifteen-member EU. Add Eastern Central Europe’s 2.6% and 2.9%, respectively, and the European community accounts for 41.3% of world exports, and 41.6% of imports. For the great competitor United States statistics show 13.3% and 19.9%, respectively. We must nevertheless not forget about the previously mentioned Japan, and China, which directs considerable energy in Latin America’s direction, too. Japan accounts for 6.3% of world exports and 4.9% of imports. The same figures for China are 5.8% and 5.3. [25]. Before giving a more detailed analysis of economic ties between the European Union and Latin America one string of data needs attention to be called to: the Union, comprising 400m inhabitants (calculated with the effect of Brexit) produces 21.4% of the world’s aggregate GDP. The GDP for Latin America with its 530m inhabitants accounts for 7.5%. The two regions, considered strategic partners, thus share one-third of the world’s GDP in total between them. This factor may give this integration considerable weight within the system of international relations, provided cooperation is effective.

The relations of the European Union and Latin America are at the same time characterised by economic asymmetry and imbalance. The countries and integration organisations of the New World primarily export foodstuffs, drinks, tobacco products, and so-called traditional products, as well as raw materials to the amount of 37.7% of the total value.

They need to fight the already mentioned protectionism of the EU, and, in addition, more than half of Latin American imports consists of high added value and high-price processed and technical goods. [25]. The Eastern enlargement of the Union may not be considered a relevant influence in this respect.

At the same time, the European Union and Latin America

are not merely strategic allies; considering commercial ties, they are also each other’s competitors. Each party strives to hold a positive balance and quite naturally enhance its own competitiveness. For the discussion of the economic relations of the two regions from this perspective, four notions have been introduced. Using phrases from literature, for certain sectors the *falling star* (*estrella menguante*) name is used, while for others, the *emerging star* (*estrella nascente*) designation. They write of the *sectors of lost opportunities* (*oportunidades perdidas*) and those of *regressive* (*retroceso*) industries. In summary it may be said that most of the economy of Latin America falls behind in the race with the European Union. These disadvantages are manifest in various manners in the relations between the heterogeneously structured and diversely developed Latin American countries (Chile, Mexico) their continental integration organisations (Comunidad Andina de Naciones, CARICOM, Mercado Común Centroamericano, Mercosur) and the EU. [25]

“Globalisation is not as global as its name would suggest. – we read in the concluding lines of the cited study in the Martín Arribas volume. – Living side by side there are the developed economies (primarily the EU and North America), which concentrate in themselves the majority of economic, commercial, and investors’ activities ... and those that have far more limited access to international trade. The EU is one of the main actors of economic life on this stage, while Latin America and the Caribbean have an insignificant role. From a Latin American perspective, trade with Europe is of great importance. Although, all counted, the number one trade partner for Latin America is the United States, the products and goods from Chile, Mercosur, and the Andean Community mainly go to the EU. It is nevertheless an undisputed fact that Europe is losing its hold on Latin American markets, because its products do not belong to the most dynamic types of goods preferred in international trade. The United States is the winner in this “area”. From another aspect, though, the LAC region plays a merely marginal role in EU trade.” – reads the analysis. [18]

The authors share the opinion that practice established over the past years should be followed in the relationship of the two regions. The number of bilateral preferential treaties and customs preferences should be increased; efforts must be made to create the framework for quality cooperation and the signing of partnership agreements. From the side of the European Union, a stronger character must be given to the strategic alliance – so Christian Freres and José A. Sanajua, Spanish experts of the field write. Beside a joint set of values, five criteria must be fulfilled. In the spirit of the Millennium Goals, the EU must contribute to the strengthening of Latin America’s social cohesion. It must promote the international autonomy of the southern hemisphere. It must give a stronger character to its foreign policy activities with Latin America, including crisis prevention mechanisms and solidarity acts. A state must be reached when the two regions will act in a coordinated way in the international arena, worthy of strategic allies, promoting the formation of the multilateral international

system and global governance. In the world of mutually influencing global tendencies, the biregional cooperation of the EU and Latin America plus the Caribbean rests on the five pillars of solidarity, autonomy, interests, shared values, and partnership. These five pillars are positioned at the intersection of three tendencies. They are influenced by the global tendencies prevalent worldwide, and regional tendencies characteristic of Latin America and the Union. A pie chart demonstrating this is to be found on p. 32 of the survey volume.” [18]

According to Christian Freres and José Sanajua the global and regional correlations of the EU- Latin America relations matrix may be summed up as follows: they may be considered primary manifestation forms of global tendencies:

1. The end of the bipolar world and globalisation: trilateral competence, economic trends, and greater autonomy for intermediary parties. The emergence of the BRIC states. [BRIC is the acronym composed of the initial letters in English of Brasil, Russia, India, and China, countries gaining increasing influence on the Latin American continent and in global politics. On a subregional level, Brazil and Mexico are called *anchor countries (países de anclaje)* because of their geopolitical weight and influence over smaller countries in their vicinity and sphere of interes.es.]. Regionalism and interregionalism.
2. Post-911 scenario: i.e. the combination of the USA’s superpower strivings based on its own military power with the universal demand for security.
3. Steps forward and halts in the creation of the multilateral international system and global governance.
4. A new consensus about development: fight against poverty and for the realisation of the Millennial Goals.

Global tendencies are complemented by *tendencies prevalent within the EU*.

1. The consolidation of the EU as an economic and international actor. CESDP. [Common European Security and Defense Policy] The emergence of the EU as a “global actor” in the international arena.
2. The consequences of 911 and Iraq.
3. The Eastern enlargement. New security and stability challenges of the bordering zones. Neighbour state policy.
4. The 2005 crisis: the European Constitution and financial perspectives.
5. The 2017-2020 EU crisis and Brexit

The relations of the two regions are also influenced by *prevalent tendencies in Latin America*, the most important of which are: “regionalism”, the politics of agreement and economic integration.

1. Democratic consolidation versus political instability.
2. The crisis of the hitherto followed development model: the road “from consensus to the state of post-consensus.
3. The presence of inequality.
4. The emergence of the native American issue, its political, ethnic, and integration consequences.

The consideration of these tendencies is of vital importance in the process of creating a strategic partnership

between the two regions, the definition of common goals and priorities, their institutionalisation, and the weighing up of different scenarios.

A similar standing was expressed in December 2007 at the session of *EuroLat, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly*. The gremium which counts as one of the most significant forums of the bi-regional strategic alliance stresses in its Resolution passed on 20th December: “.....the strategic partnership must foster closer relations between the societies concerned, improve their levels of social development and make a decisive contribution to drastically reducing poverty and social inequality in Latin America, something which should be facilitated by the economic growth shown by the region over recent years, as well as by the exchanges and aid of all kinds and the transfer of expertise in social cohesion which the EU can offer, ...

Latin America is rich in human resources and raw materials, and it represents a significant market for the Union; despite the present asymmetrical relations the Union a key partner in the economic, industrial, scientific and technological development of Latin America, and may contribute to reaching a more balanced state of the traditionally strong relations of the region with North America, which is now strengthening with Asia (and especially with China).” [17]

According to EuroLat the political and security dimensions of relations between the regions also must be deepened. The document passed by the assembly states the importance of transcending ad hoc, improvised actions of common support, and a decision was made for the creation of the *Euro-Latin American Global Interregional Partnership Area (ELAGIPA)* To allow the proposed and planned relationship to work in the desired way and efficiently, the foundation of an adequate institutional system is mandatory. The members in the chain of institutional mechanisms may be the following: the *Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly*, *internal coordination forums* assisting its work, *EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summits*, *Ministerial groups* vested with decisionmaking powers in *political matters of the bi-regional cooperation*, as well as opening these meetings to representatives of *the United States, Asia and Africa in order to promote triangular considerations and aspects*. The Resolution also stresses the importance of the foundation of the *Euro-Latin American Permanent Secretariat* to manage administrative tasks, one similar to the already well-established secretariat working for the Community of Ibero-American Nations. [17]

The Parliamentary Assembly passed a decision to create offices addressing concrete tasks and giving professional advice on concrete topics. It also tackled the questions of the tightening of economic and commercial ties, the phases thereof, and issues of cultural and social cooperation as well as social cohesion. The setting up of a *Bi-regional Social Foundation* was proposed. Major importance was attributed to *bi-and multilateral partnership agreements* with respect to strategic cooperation. The Assembly stressed that... partnership agreements contain three major elements: the

political and institutional chapter serves to strengthen democratic dialogue; the goal of the *cooperation chapter* is the promotion of sustainable economic and social development; the *economic chapter* comprises programmes to terminate asymmetric relations between the regions and boost the economy.” [17]

This document passed by the EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly projects an image of the future of historical dimensions, based on the achievements of the past, in the process of strategic partnership between the EU and the Latin American continent. [The list of participants at the first plenary session of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (18-20 December 2007) is available: *First Ordinary Plenary Session 18-20.12.2007. List of Participants. EuroLac/FC.17.12.07.*]

3. Strategic Partnership on the Road of Institutionalisation: The Summits

Based on the above discussed approach and intention, *the first European Union-Latin America Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1999*, with the attendance of 48 heads of state and prime ministers of the two regions [25] The Declaration issued stresses in its Preamble: “We, the Heads of State and Government of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, at the Summit held in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on the 28th and 29th of June 1999, have decided to promote and develop our relations towards a strategic biregional partnership, based upon the profound cultural heritage that unites us, and on the wealth and diversity of our respective cultural expressions.

These have endowed us with strong multi-faceted identities, as well as the will to create an international environment which allows us to raise the level of the well-being of our societies and meet the principle of sustainable development, seizing the opportunities offered by an increasingly globalised world, in a spirit of equality, respect, alliance and co-operation between our regions.” (<http://europa.eu/bulletin/en/9906/p000448.htm>). This historic Summit – reads the supplement of the Martin Arribas volume - was convened as a result of the political will to enhance the already excellent biregional relations based upon shared values inherited from a common history.

The objective of the Summit is to strengthen the links of political, economic and cultural understanding between the two regions in order to develop a strategic partnership.” [25]

The Document charts a 25-year programme of 55 priorities concerning the fields of politics, the economy, culture, education, science, technological transfers, society and the human sphere, and defines 55 short-term action programmes to provide common foundations in politics, society, the economy, culture and science. From an economic point of view the most important element of the latter is a Free Trade Agreement between the two regions in accordance with the demands of the World Trade Organisation, followed by the signing of further bi- and multilateral agreements. The

hardest part of these from the Union’s side is the practical implementation of the passage granting free entry to the EU market for crops and farmstock produced by Latin American farmers.

The action programme regulates the financing of joint investments through the European Investment Bank, and the introduction of the Euro in mutual relations. An important point is the network of common actions by parliaments on the various forums and institutions of international life, as well as the programme package for the promotion of cultural-scientific and healthcare cooperation.

As a general common goal the strategic partnership defined the realisation of representational and participatory democracy, human rights, the rule of law, good governance, pluralism, international peace and security, political stability, and the building of mutual trust between nations. In the political sphere it emphasised the consolidation of institutionalised dialogue between the EU and Latin America, the securing of democracy and of fundamental human rights. In the economic sphere it promoted a system of multilateral economic ties, an effective management of economic relations of the two regions based on open regionalism, the liberalisation of commerce, the promotion of prosperity, fighting destabilising and incalculable financial movements, and investments benefiting small countries and boosting production. In the cultural, scientific, social and human sectors it advocates the preservation and enlivening of the huge body of shared knowledge based on common cultural heritage and grounded in history, the promotion of education for all, and the protection and preservation of cultural diversity. The Summit names several long-term programmes. @Lis is a so-called horizontal programme for the creation of an information-based society, ALFA and Erasmus Mundus are for higher education, URB-AL for the development of local communities and cities, AL-Invest for trade and investments, and ECIP for joint financing. A complement to these is the Alban postgraduate and doctoral studies project accepted at the 2002 Madrid Summit.

The second summit for heads of state and governments of the European Union and Latin America took place *in Madrid in May 2002*. Although focus was on issues of cultural cooperation this time, the agenda also included opportunities for the creation of the mechanism for concrete economic cooperation and financial support. For the sake of historical accuracy it must be added that the four countries of the Andean Pact (Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia and Peru) and the states of the Central American region were highly dissatisfied with the economic results of the summit. The EU, in the words of European Commission President Romano Prodi (1999-2004) was not in the position until the end of the Eastern enlargement to sign partnership agreements with the countries of the region. One of the two exceptions was Chile, which signed such an agreement on 18th May 2002. The other was Mexico, having concluded related talks as early as 2000. *The Madrid Commitment signed on 17th May 2002* adopts the formal solutions of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration. The political chapter is followed by the ones regulating economic,

cultural, educational and scientific cooperation. The number of priorities nevertheless shrank to thirty-three from the original twice fifty-five programmes, and also became significantly more concrete. In addition to political programmes, point 17 of the chapter on the issues of economic cooperation is worth mentioning, as it orders the launch of talks connected to prospective economic partnerships of the EU with African, Pacific and Caribbean states within the framework of the Cotonú Agreement in September 2002. Other points of the chapter largely overlap with the previously mentioned Millennium Goals. The Madrid Commitment is supplemented by documents entitled *EU-LAC Common Values and Positions, and Assessment Report*.

The third Summit of thirty-three countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on the one hand, and the twenty-five-member European Union on the other took place on 28-29th May 2004 in Guadalajara, Mexico. At the talks attended by the highest-ranking representatives of the fifty-eight states issues of economic and trade cooperation took the prime. The common aim was still the sealing of a partnership agreement incorporating free trade pacts. The realisation of this was however delegated to the competence of the newly composed and convening European Parliament and European Commission in July 2004. It was nevertheless announced that talks in the political sense had been closed down between the EU and the Latin American region comprising several subregional economic integration organisations. *The Declaration of the Guadalajara Summit of 28-29th May 2004*. (http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/lac/vienna/index_en.htm) consists of a hundred and four points and includes several novel elements in comparison to earlier presidential and prime ministerial meetings; traditional elements also gain new emphasis in its interpretation. The meeting strongly advocates *the creation of the multilateral international system and the consequential implementation of the idea and practice of the social cohesion principle in the relations of the two regions* – as compatible with the Millennium Goals. It emphasises the importance of the *Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)* signed by the European Union and the Latin American region. With respect to Latin America's economic development it highlights the importance of coordinated developments based on the cooperation of the European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Andean Development Corporation, and the Central American Economic Integration Bank.

It puts great emphasis on the continuation of development programmes launched in Rio de Janeiro and in Madrid, and the issue of creating a *Common Higher Education Area*. It also heralds the consolidation and further strengthening of strategic partnership.

The fourth Summit of heads of state and prime ministers of the European Union and Latin America was held in Vienna in May 2006. The *Declaration* entitled *Strengthening Bi-regional Strategic Association*, consisting of fifty-nine points surveyed the status of the strategic partnership in sixteen main areas. It took a standing for democracy and human

rights. It also stressed special interest in the realisation of the Proposal of the 17th EU- LAC Interparliamentary conference (14-17th July 2005, Lima) which meant an expression of support for the creation of the EuroLat *Parliamentary Assembly*.

The activities of the Europe-Latina America and Caribbean Civil Society Forum were similarly welcomed, with great significance attributed to the organisation in the deepening of the strategic alliance. Commitment by previous Summits to the formation of a multilateral international system was reasserted, with special emphasis on peace, security, and the rule of international law. Issues of terrorism, drug trafficking, organised crime, environmental protection, and energy supply were discussed. Special stress was given to partnership agreements between the EU and Latin American countries (Chile, Mexico), their integration organisations (Mecosur, Andean Community, the Caribbean Forum-CARIFORUM, the Central American Common Market- CARICOM), and the activities of the European Investment Bank in the Caribbean were also highly appreciated.

The fight against poverty, inequality and segregation was announced. The aims of social cohesion were supported, through the promotion of Latin America's economic development. Programmes and measures to promote higher education, research, science, technological development, and culture were supported. The Summit also saw the emergence of countries following the "Bolívar alternative", dissatisfied with the economic policy of the EU in Latin America. The voice and ringleader of the group of Bolivian President Evo Morales, the Cuban delegate, and the Caracas government was then Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. Their appearance clearly speaks of the fact that there is no simple and easy way leading to a strategic partnership of the two regions.

The fifth Summit of heads of state and prime ministers from the European Union and Latin America was held in Lima between 16-17th May 2008. [22]

The title of the *Declaration* issued in the Peruvian capital is "*Addressing our Peoples' Priorities together*." Despite the fact that the Preamble of the document mentions a new phase in the relations of the two regions, the Summit only partially succeeded in resolving earlier controversies. The Latin American representatives expected an effective answer from the EU to terminate the asymmetry of relations, one that had the promise of success. The central topics of the meeting were the further strengthening of strategic partnership, sustainable development and the issues of social cohesion in line with the fulfilment of the Millennium Goals. Despite all parties agreeing on priorities, their opinions diverged with respect to their content. The European Union concentrated on the environment protection and climate-related aspects of sustainable development, and on energy resources. The Latin American party focused on the social cohesion aspects of sustainable development, the fight against poverty, inequality, and segregation. There was consensus about the fact that new cooperation schemes were needed to

consolidate strategic partnership. As a result, the most important political tools were defined as the creation of the system of bi- and multilateral partnership agreements, and Economic Associated Partnerships with African, Caribbean, and Asian countries. Decision was passed to set up the EU-LAC Foundation, which would tackle theoretical and practical issues of the strategic partnership. The Resolution of the EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly was welcomed, and the therein proposed integration mechanism was adopted. Decision was made that the next Summit would be held in Spain in the first half of 2010, during the Spanish EU presidency. It became clear at the Lima summit that the EU saw the method of structured political dialogue and the option of individual treatment applicable in the case of Latin America's countries and integration organisations as well as in interregional relations; it was also evident that there is no complete agreement even among countries of the southern hemisphere on the role of the new type integration organisations (Mercosur, UNASUR, Banco del Sur, PetroAmérica, CIN, ect.) in the strengthening of the strategic alliance.

The Summits have continued since 2010. On 26-27th January 2013 one was held in Santiago de Chile, on 10-11th June 2015, one in Brussels, while San Salvador is scheduled to host the summit of 26-27th October 2017.

4. Strategic Alliance and (sub) Regional Community Integrations

It was the 1960s that saw the emergence of the first economic type integration organisations in Latin America.

First in line was the Latin American Free Trade Association (Asociación Latinoamericana de Libre Comercio – ALALC) in 1960.

In that same year the *Central American Common Market* (*Mercado Común Centroamericano- MCC*) was launched. 1969 ushered in the *Andean Pact* (*Pacto Andino- PA*) with Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia and Peru as members, *which in the course of time became the Andean Community* (*Comunidad Andina – CAN*). The Latin American Free Trade Association changed its name to Latin American Integration Association in 1980. In order to promote a united continental economic development strategy the *Latin American Economic System* (*Sistema Económico Latinoamericano- SELA*) was born in the 1960s, followed by the organisation of the *Caribbean Community* (*CARICOM*). The second wave of integration organisations on the continent is linked to changes in international relations. By 1990-91 East-West opposition in its old form had ceased with the disappearing bipolar world's faultlines. Parallel to this – as already discussed – major changes occurred in political relations of the Latin American continent. Civil governments took over the place of military-civil dictatorships. Regional and subregional cooperation appetites, needs and commitments surfaced yet again on the southern hemisphere. One after the other, official and unofficial integration-

cooperation organisations were formed. Economic cooperation was complemented by wishes of political alliance. The Organization of American States was renewed. In 1991, with the signing of the Asuncion Treaty the most significant subregional organisation of the continent was formed with the participation of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay: *Mercosur* [28] In 1992 the United States, Canada and Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (*Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte - TLAN*).

1991 saw the birth of the *Ibero-American Community of Nations* (*Comunidad Iberoamericana de Naciones – CIN*) between Spain, Portugal, and nineteen Latin American Countries, an organisation of pivotal importance for the realisation of the biregional strategic alliance. On 16-17th April 2007 the *Union of South American Nations* (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas – UNASUR*) was introduced. This organisation is the direct successor of the Community of South American Nations founded in December 2004 by twelve Latin American countries, and has very promising prospects in politics and economics. The present paper discusses the three most significant integration organisations of the South American continent: Mercosur, UNASUR and CIN.

Mercosur is the fourth largest economic alliance of the world. It produces up to USD1, 002 billion in GDP, the population involved reaches 240m. 79% of its GDP is produced by Brazil, 18% by Argentina, 2% by Uruguay, 1% by Paraguay. It covers an area of 11,831,292 km², which amounts to 58% of the continent. Mercosur defines itself as a development-oriented organisation with core values of social justice and respect for the dignity of nations. Mercosur,- we read – is not merely a commercial body, but a regional integration of values, traditions, and the future. Its aim is the promotion of commercial negotiation position powers and economic forces of the participating countries. In this sense it is a rival to not only the United States and the European Union, but to the Andean Community and other continental integration organisations, as well. With an eye to Brazil's hegemony, the organisation at the same time works to take off the edge of rivalry and geo-political opposition between the two big countries of the southern cone: Brazil and Argentina. [20, 40, 42]

Mercosur constantly labours to extend and intensify its influence. A partnership agreement was signed with Chile and Bolivia as early as 1996, with Peru, in 2003, with Ecuador and Columbia in 2004. Venezuela officially joined on 23rd May 2006. Mercosur constantly perfects its organisational form and enhances its effectivity. Its institutional and decisionmaking structure was settled in the 1994 Ouro Preto Protocol. Several of its arrangements reflect the influence of the European Union [26]

Mercosur has been tightly connected to the EU since the signing of the 1995 Framework Cooperation Agreement. 25% of its exports goes to the European Union. The Union is the number one trade partner of Mercosur, with the latter continuously increasing a positive balance since 2001. At the

same time, the European Union provides further support to Mercosur through the so-called Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs). The first RIP was effective for the 2007-2010 period, the second for the three subsequent years (2010-2013). The European community assigns EUR 50m for three targets in the designated six years. 10% of the framework goes towards backing Mercosur's building process. 70% is earmarked for the financing of the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement. 20% may be turned to the benefit of civil society which assists the process of regional integration. In addition, Mercosur member states also get a share of programmes launched under the system of strategic partnership. [26]

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was officially created at the 1st South American Energetics Summit held on 16-17th April on Isla de Margarita, Venezuela. [54] Attended by delegates from twelve countries, the meeting decided to transform the South American Community of Nations, founded at the 3rd Summit of South American Presidents in Cusco on 8th December 2004 into a Union with a permanent secretariat. Its aims remained unchanged. That is, according to the Cusco Declaration it follows the Bolivar, Sucre, San Martin traditions "...who built the great American Nation without any borders, interpreting the aspirations and hopes of their people for integration, unity and the construction of a common future." [15]

Referring to the shared history, historical heritage, mutual solidarity, common internal and external challenges, political, economic, social, cultural and security interests, the exigencies of economic development and the combat against poverty and segregation, the foundation charter stresses:

„Their determination to develop a politically, socially, economically, environmentally and infrastructurally integrated South American area that will contribute toward strengthening the unique South American identity and, from a subregional standpoint and in coordination with other regional integration experiences, that of Latin America and the Caribbean and will give it a greater weight and representativeness in international forums. [15]

The Union of South American Nations considers its main goal and historic mission the creation of continental integration and cooperation. The organisation will probably be of crucial importance in the future of the EU- Latin America strategic alliance and the outcomes of prospective dialogues. It is no coincidence that it follows the European integration model in its name and structural characteristics. The chief governing body of UNASUR is the annual series of intergovernmental *Presidential Summits*. The work of these is in turn followed by a *Conference of Foreign Ministers* every six months. It is with view to the realisation of continental integration that these meetings are attended by the President of the Commission of Permanent Representatives, the Head of Mercosur's Secretariat, the secretary general of the Andean Community, the secretary general of ALADI along with other invited representatives of regional integrations. The meetings of foreign ministers are complemented by *Sectoral ministerial sessions*.

UNASUR also implements the "troyka", the institution of

triple presidency, which consists of representatives of the summit host country, and the previous and the subsequent host's delegates.

The work of the organisation is aided by an Interim Committee. Its members are rotated annually. In December 2005 the Commission for Reflection on the South American Integration (Comisión Estratégica de Reflexión sobre el Proceso de Integración). There is also a Commission of High Representatives. UNASUR was founded by twelve countries. Its total population is 361,000,000. Its territory covers 45% of the continent. GDP per capita is USD5900. External public debt amounts to USD315 billion. The situation of the integration, like that of the whole Latin American continent, is not an easy one, nor is it simple. Once Brazil's dominance is mentioned in the case of Mercosur, it may not be avoided for UNASUR either. In order to further continental integration, the Union of South American Nations, similarly to the EU, has introduced associate membership next to full membership. Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia and Peru are full members of UNASUR and the Andean Community, and associate members of Mercosur at the same time. Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela are full members of UNASUR and associate members of the Andean Community. Of the Chile, Guyana and Suriname trio, Chile is an associate member of the Andean Community and of Mercosur. Mexico (a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement) and Panama take part in the work of UNASUR as observers.

The Declaration of the Union of South American Nations defines six basic goals. (Unión de Naciones Suramericanas. <https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unasur>). The first is directed toward a consensus-based coordination of joint diplomatic and political action in the region. The second sets as a priority the creation of a free trade zone between Mercosur, the Andean Community and Chile. The third is aimed at the unification of South America's physical, energetic and communication system. The fourth undertaking is the harmonisation of agricultural development and alimentary economic policy. The fifth promotes the transfer of technologies, and the strengthening of horizontal cooperation in all areas of science, culture and education. The main goal of the sixth is the realisation of an interactive integration of corporations and civil society. These goals drive the integration work of the Union of South American Nations. In order to create the united economic system of the subcontinent, construction of *the Ocean-to-ocean Motorway (Carretera Interoceánica)* was commenced in September 2005. According to the plans, Brazil and Peru were to be connected by 2009, Bolivia to gain sea exit, Brazil, a connection to the Pacific, and Peru, to the Atlantic.

2006 saw the launch of construction works for the *South American Energy Ring (Anillo Energético Sudamericano)* gas pipeline, which is designed to provide the economies of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay with natural gas. Between 2006 and 2009 the *Gasoducto Binacional* gas pipeline between Columbia and Venezuela is to become fully operational. Construction of the *Poliducto Binacional* has

also started; it serves to facilitate Venezuela's oil export to the Far East, and leads through Columbia, as well.

As seen in the light of goals and concrete programmes already started, the Union of South American Nations may shortly become an important factor in subregional integration, as well as an EU-Latin America strategic partnership and the system of international relations.

5. An Interregional Actor of Strategic Partnership: The Ibero-American Community of Nations

The Ibero-American Community of Nations (Comunidad Iberoamericana de Naciones – CIN) was created in Guadalajara, Mexico on 19th July 1991 with the participation of nineteen Latin American countries plus Portugal and Spain.

The *external conditions* for this special, new regionalism-type international organisation and association were granted by changes and shifts in international relations, which were discussed in the first part of the present paper. Its *intermediate international antecedents and facilitators* in Europe and the most important countries of Latin America were democratisation processes, political transitions, systemic changes, systemic consolidations, and integration movements within three semi-peripheral regions of the world – Southern Europe, Latin America, and Eastern Central Europe in chronological order. [3, 28, 32, 34, 57]

Democratic Spain played the crucial role in the creation of the Ibero-American Community of Nations. The Latin America policies of the Spanish Kingdom were a clear break away from the traditions, methods and concepts of the Franco era. In interstate relations this meant the strengthening and deepening of the "traditional and customary" political dimension, and primarily, the rise in value for the cultural and economic spheres. At the same time, the Spanish monarchy had to lag on the burden of the authoritarian system and for this reason had to overcome the suspicions, initial mistrust and detachment of Latin American nations.

This primarily meant a distancing of the country from the Francoist ideals of Hispanity [23] and abandoning concepts and resulting activities for the creation of a Community of Hispanic Nations (Comunidad Hispánica de Naciones - CHN). [2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 29, 30]

A foundation of a philosophy behind the new type of cooperation and ties between the Madrid government and the countries of the subcontinent was the voluntary launch and institutionalisation of the Ibero-American Community of Nations (Comunidad Iberoamericana de Naciones - CIN) from 1976. The focus of the cooperation became the promotion of economic and social development rooted in the linguistic, cultural and historical community, a joint development of education and culture, the creation of a common market for knowledge and skills, respect for human rights, commitment to democratic rule, and the consideration of a multi-faceted reality represented by the twenty-one

countries.

It would be hard to overestimate the merits of King Juan Carlos I in the development of the content of this foreign policy strategy, its introduction and international dissemination. The 1978 Spanish constitution gives considerable powers to the ruler of the constitutional monarchy in the foreign policy field. Article (1) of Section 56 regulates the role of the Crown in foreign policy as follows: "The King is the Head of State, the symbol of its unity and permanence. He arbitrates and moderates the regular functioning of the institutions, assumes the highest representation of the Spanish State in international relations, *especially with the nations of its historical community* (my emphasis – I. Sz.), and exercises the functions expressly conferred on him by the Constitution and the laws." [14]

The monarch fundamentally and naturally undertakes the highest-level representation of the foreign policy of the government in power. Even if there have been shifts in emphasis, or differences in emphasis between Latin American foreign (cultural) policies of the five prime ministers (and foreign ministers) of the period since 1976, in essence they all acted similarly. Latin America was and remains at the heart of the foreign policies of the "tercermundist Adolfo Suárez González (1976-1981), who showed greater affinity towards the Third World, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (1981-1982), who foregrounded security issues and NATO accession, Felipe González (1982-1996), the pro-solidarity social democrat who closed the foreign policy transition and gained EU membership, José María Aznar (1996- 2004), the conservative people's party technocrat with a pragmatic South American foreign policy, or José Luis Zapatero Rodríguez (2004-2012), who followed the social democratic "third route" and a common *leadership and responsibility strategy* for CIN, as well as Mariano Rajoy's (2012-) conservative government. „Common interests are a crucial means and a solid political foundation to the joint undertaking of Latin American countries”- reads the last sentence of the 2005 volume edited by Celestino del Arenal. [6]

Following Spain's EU accession, this dimension was directed at the creation of an economic, political, and cultural cooperation between the Latin American region and the EU with Spanish mediation and action, a tightening of ties and the attainment of a special associate membership status.

In the course of pre-accession talks the Madrid government managed to get two Declarations attached to the Accession Treaty on the importance of cooperation between Latin America and the European Community. One of these was entitled *Joint declaration of Intention on the Development and Deepening of Relations with the Countries of Latin America*” (Declaración Común de Intenciones relativa al desarrollo y la intensificación de las relaciones con los países de América Latina). The document emphasises the importance of deepening ties between the ten member states and Spain as well as Portugal with the Latin American region, and the exceptional role of the same region with respect to Europe. The other document entitled "*Declaration*

by the Kingdom of Spain on Latin America" (Declaración del Reino España sobre América Latina) contains the official standing and promises of the Madrid government and declares that Spain continues to view cooperation with Latin America as a major priority of its foreign (cultural) policy and the strengthening and expansion of ties between the European Union and Latin America.

The position of Spanish foreign policy has remained unchanged ever since: this is clearly seen in the text of the press conference held at the America House in Madrid by acting Foreign Minister Josep Piqué in May 2001. What the former leader of the Spanish diplomacy said of relations with Latin America remains generally valid to the present day: this relationship is "part of our domestic, social, and economic life. I think that differences between Spain and a Latin American country are no greater than those between the countries of the region." He continued: "There are two unchangeable axes for Spain's foreign policy: coming closer to Latin America and to Europe. In Goethe's words we might say that we Spaniards have two souls. The two souls of Spain are Europe and Latin America. We need both." [19]

"Spain's belonging to the EU and the Ibero-American Community simultaneously – to once again quote the words of acting Foreign Minister Josep Piqué from 2001 – is a fact that is based on the essence of history ... It seems the role of Spain as a bridge between two continents has taken on a new shape." [19]

This circumstance and statement means the redefinition of a concept that was valid in a previous historical period – from a formal aspect, it designates the continuity and upholding of certain foreign policy priorities.

Quite naturally, there are fundamental differences in the content of the Ibero-American Community of Nations and the Francoist Community of Hispanic Nations. This among other things is manifest in the fact that the great family of Ibero-American Nations has twenty-one members. Boundaries of a shared language, history, culture, and religion have been extended to the great Portuguese-speaking country of the region, Brazil, and the smaller country of the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal.

As already mentioned, Spain takes the lead in the integration, with the realisation of a dynamic cultural foreign policy concept. This position is nevertheless not based on pressure and forceful intervention in the cooperating states. At its foundation lie the results Spain has reached over the past three decades. The successful democratic transition and consolidation proved an excellent example about fifteen years later to the nations and governments of the Latin-American region, so much so that the democratic systems of Latin American countries at the end of the '80s and the beginning of the '90 would indeed adopt a number of solutions from their "mother country" in the codification processes of their constitutions. [55]

If we ask the question that has defined Spain's cultural foreign policy for almost three decades: namely, what we understand as the democratic rule of law, respect for human, civil, and political rights, the observance of basic principles

of international law, the acknowledgement of realities, and the Ibero-American community that is based on a peculiar historical, cultural, linguistic and religious relatedness or brotherhood of twenty-one countries, then we have to quote the words of King Juan Carlos I from his honoris causa inauguration speech delivered at the San Marcos University of Lima in 1978. The monarch's speech, in which shares one of the fundamental principles of Spanish foreign policy, contains a *cultural approach to the nation* when addressing the newly forming community of Ibero-American nations. This concept differs from those of the British Commonwealth and the French Community. It is not even a sui generis political system similar to the European Union. This is a world; as Juan Carlos I put it, a historically *construed and evolved special civilisation, a virtual region of intellectual and moral values*. "However great differences may there be among us, – the text reads – we are together. We are neither a nation, nor an alliance or coalition, or a system based on economic cooperation; to an even lesser extent are we one race ethnically: *we are one world* (my emphasis - I. Sz.). We are the world of a language and a culture created over centuries... *This is a treasure* (my emphasis - I. Sz.) and responsibility at the same time. As King of Spain I feel responsible for my people; but this *way of life* and cultural heritage does not stop at our national borders, but expands as far as my words are understood, as far as they reach nations that dream in the same language. I would not be a true King of Spain if I did not think of brotherly nations, because we are all part of something that is not exclusively the heritage of one or the other, but is our common possession." [16]

These ceremonial and elevated words were followed by everyday work of small steps. It was far from being an easy element of Spanish foreign policy, as the continent showed a highly differentiated picture when the strategy and the concept were declared. The conflicting needs of aging dictatorships (Argentina, Chile, Brazil), civil rule (Mexico, Venezuela, Peru), and guerilla-ridden civil war-torn regions (Central America), among themselves and the democratically minded Spanish foreign policy, had to be satisfied and harmonised.

In 1982 it was the Falklands crisis that created turmoil. From the second half of the 1980s and the beginning of the '90s the picture became more politically homogeneous. Right-wing military dictatorships in Latin America were toppled and in the majority of countries civil governments representing democratic values gained power.

Concrete steps were taken for the institutionalisation of the Ibero-American Community of Nations, too. The first meeting of the heads of states and prime ministers of twenty-one involved countries was held in Guadalajara in 1991. On Spain's accession to the European Community (European Union), not only its cultural but also economic influence grew in the region. This was the start for the closing of the gap that former Foreign Minister Fernando Morán phrased as: "Reality is, there is a great difference between our capacity to act in Latin America and our capacity to influence." [27]

The most important tool and forum for the realisation of Spanish (cultural) foreign policy, and more intermediately, the construction of a strategic partnership between the EU and Latin America, as well as the creation of the Ibero-American Community of Nations is the Summit for Ibero-American Heads of State and Prime Ministers, first held in 1991. For the Madrid government, the institutionalisation of the regular top-level meetings was naturally driven by a wish to promote national interests. "Spain will become even more important to Europe - Juan Antonio March writes - if Spain is viewed as a participant of a great joint project with South America." [24] This undoubtedly successful Spanish endeavour nevertheless evoked criticism from some South American political analysts. These opinions are indeed grounded in reality. Within the general goals of cultural foreign policy, the heads of Spanish diplomacy put special emphasis on the devotedness of the country to Latin America, stressing common interests in the dissemination of shared culture and the spread of the common language. The Spanish party wishes to enhance cooperation among societies and labours to deepen institutional ties between such organisations.

Certain Latin American analysts however consider the Spanish initiative connected to the summit of state and government heads as an external effort, mainly in the field of rhetoric, in which the often-cited special Latin American is nowhere to detect. As late as 1999, after the Ninth Ibero-American Summit there were opinions voiced that despite the multilateral character of relations, it was rather ties of a bilateral nature that prevailed in the community largely promoted by Spain, and that in these relations elements of colonialist versus colony were still dominant. In addition, decisions passed by the Ibero-American Community of Nations based on the cooperation of twenty-one countries were difficult to institutionalise in national policies. Until mid-2008 only one country of the region, Brazil implemented the resolution of the Fourth Summit back in 1995 on the common and institutionalised spreading of the Spanish-Portuguese language. In Brazil, the teaching of the Castellano language was introduced as mandatory at primary level. The driving force behind this decision is nevertheless primarily the regional hegemony aspirations of the country.

The Ibero-American initiative and movement - certain Latin American surveys stress - should be harmonised with the expectations and rules of various regional and subregional blocks. As a result of the Schengen borders citizens of Ibero-American Community nations must have a visa, and their free movement within the European Union is not guaranteed. The Ibero-American Community of Nations needs to emerge as a driving force in the EU - Latin America dialogue, or Ibero-Americanism could easily become a matter of "politeness" for the countries of the subcontinent. The continent received much from Spain, but after gaining independence, in the 19th and 20th centuries, it was primarily Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy that served as cultural reference for the region. A different orientation was taken in the period of state formation. "As a

result - Chilean scholar Raul Sanhueza stresses - next to Spanish influence one may observe significant French, Italian, German, and British political, economic, social, and cultural inspiration." [31] Europe means something different, and in a certain sense, something more, for Latin America than Spain. With the launching of the Ibero-American Community of Nations, Madrid must fulfil the role of a bridge between the two worlds. These expectations fall in line with the goals of Spain's (cultural) foreign policy. According to Sanhueza however, agreement, settlement, or concertación would be words closer to reality to characterise cooperation between countries of the Ibero-American Community of Nations. Signs of this are noticeable in the outcome document of the 1992 Second Summit held in Madrid. In the discussion of changes in the international situation the Declaration stresses: "In this context the Ibero-American Conference appears as our political sphere, our *consensual forum* (my emphasis - I. Sz.) of special character. By virtue of its transcontinental character it points beyond political and economic oppositions, and may thus positively contribute to avoiding protectionist development of regional economic blocks." [31]

However we choose to evaluate the role of Ibero-American Summits in integration, a few things might be settled in advance. They are a special mechanism of political dialogue, one that is increasingly being consolidated. They might serve for the leaders of participating countries as forums to exchange experience, and hammer out agreements. Many programmes that strengthen the identities of member nations and promote their growth have been introduced there. Agreement formulas and contents increasingly shift towards integrational forms and contents. Finally: with the regular holding of Summits, and the launching of programmes passed there the *Ibero-American Community of Nations* (*Comunidad Iberoamericana de Naciones - CIN*) was created and *became institutionalised*.

The principles and main goals of the cooperation of twenty-one countries have stood the test of time, based on experience accumulated since 1991.

At the Summits following the First [48] temporary conjunctural shifts from the original programme accepted in the Mexican city occurred in line with the current situation, but the fundamental concept remained unchanged; the 1999 Ninth Summit in Havana established an *Ibero-American Cooperation Secretariat (SECIB)* to enhance the effectivity of coordinating agreement-based cooperation 80% of the SECIB budget is contributed by Spain, which spearheaded its creation in the first place.

The Guadalajara Declaration of 18-19th July 1991 consists of an introduction in 24 points and three shortened paragraphs that discuss key areas of cooperation.

It is already in the opening sentence of the Declaration that Ibero-American heads of state and government stress:

1. "...We propose that our governments unite in political action to cope with challenges and create unity based dialogue, cooperation and solidarity which is a direct result

of a shared historical and cultural heritage.

2. ...We represent a vast body of nations – the text reads on - sharing common roots and the rich heritage of a culture that is the product of different peoples, beliefs and races. ... we are determined, ... to project the strength of our community into the third millennium.

3. ...Our community is founded on democracy, on respect for human rights and on fundamental freedoms. In this context, the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention are reaffirmed and recognition is given to each people's right to build freely, in peace, stability and justice, its political system and its institutions.

4. ...We respect differences and the diversity that characterises our societies; our actions will be guided by dialogue, solidarity and Ibero-American cooperation based on commonly agreed actions." [7]

The rest of the points of the Declaration contain the discussion of principles behind concrete issues. Later these statements became the cornerstones of an agreement-based common foreign policy.

The Ibero-American heads of state and governments emphasised their respect for peace social welfare and justice. They mentioned disarmament as their primary duty under international law. They acknowledged the immense contribution of the Indian peoples (the indigenous nations of South America) to the development of mankind and the pluralisation of societies.

"...We are determined - they declare – to develop regional and subregional integration processes and ... by the termination of an ideologically-based bipolarity we will end differences between a North rich in technology and capital and an impoverished South lacking perspectives." [7]

The twenty-one leading politicians see external indebtedness as the main obstacle for the development and growth of the region. Finally, they express their commitment to further education, strengthen culture and the preservation of their own identities.

"We Ibero-American Heads of State and Governments agree – reads the final, twenty-fourth point of the Declaration's introduction - that in order to further and widen effective cooperation, regular consultations, and exchanges of opinions should be continued, which in turn will result in the formation of a common policy and an optimal use of advantages resulting from community work. We are resolved to pursue the following goals." [7]

These goals are then listed in three chapters. The first issue concerns *The Validity of International Law*. The chapter expounds the ideas of the introduction. The second chapter discusses the action programme promoting *economic and social development*. The biggest novelty of the section *Education and Culture* is a proposal to create a space called *the common market of knowledge* of skills, art, and culture. To promote this, the countries will facilitate regular exchange of Ibero-American experts from various fields, their meetings, and the creation of a library network. Decision was passed to intensify contact between tertiary education institutions, and the expansion of cultural and scientific programmes as well as the scholarship system. "In order to

achieve the above-mentioned objectives – so the conclusion of the historic document of Spanish foreign policy and the relations of the participating countries –, we have decided to institute a dialogue among the countries of Ibero-America at the highest level. The Heads of State and Governments, meeting in Guadalajara, Mexico, have decided to establish the Ibero-American Conference of Heads of State and Government ...

These meetings will enable us to embark on a political, economic and cultural process which will help our countries together to achieve greater and more efficient integration in a changing global context. We express our agreement that prior to the forthcoming summit we will mutually exchange information on the progress accomplished to fulfil the objectives laid down in the present Declaration." [7]

With the passing and signing of the Guadalajara document and the birth of the Ibero-American Community of nations a fruitful time commenced in interstate relations both for Spain and the other countries involved. [38]. A new integrational organisation and public actor of historic perspective emerged within the network of international relations and the strengthening of the strategic alliance between the EU and Latin America.

6. Summary

In the global relations reference frame, relations between the European Union on the one hand, and Latin America and the Caribbean on the other, have intensified over the last quarter century. In the 1980s the European Parliament declared the strategic importance of cooperation with the Third World, and especially the South American continent. Following the accession of Spain and Portugal to the European Community this dimension came to primarily focus on the tightening of ties, political, economic, and cultural, with leading Spanish mediation to reach a status of associate membership. Intensifying and deepening contacts led to the first Summit of heads of state and government held in Rio de Janeiro in 1999. The regularly repeated highest-level meetings, joint sessions of Latin American parliaments and European Parliamentary representatives, cooperation between various subregional integration organisations (Andean Community, Mercosur, The Union of South American Nations) and interregional actors (Ibero-American Community of Nations) and jointly launched development programmes led to the institutionalisation of the strategic alliance between the European Union and Latin America. The foundation of this partnership lies in a common historical past, values and culture, the defence of democracy, a wish to create a multipolar international system, and identical political objectives. The ambition to terminate the asymmetrical economic relationship prevalent to the present day between the parties plays a major role in the shaping of political partnership. The strengthening of partnership between the two regions has a significant influence on changes within the system of international relations.

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