

NEW AGENDA FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN EUROPEAN UNION AND LATIN AMERICA

Strategic priorities for cooperation in Ibero-America in the fields of **education**, **innovation**, **culture** and **ecological transition**



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The authors hold sole responsibility for the views and opinions expressed in this paper, which do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Organization or its members.

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PRESENTATION





The future is now: New Agenda for Cooperation between Europe and Latin America

The paper *New Agenda for Cooperation between Europe and Latin America* sets out the lines of action that are essential for strengthening relations between Europe and Latin America within a new concept of regional multilateralism. The agenda raises issues for the immediate future, such as technological innovation, digital educational transformation, cultural citizenship and ecological transition, which have been mentioned in the new thematic proposals of the region's governments.

The Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI); Fundación Alternativas, from Spain; Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (Funglode), from the Dominican Republic; and Corporación Escenarios, from Colombia, joined forces within the framework of the subject "Ibero-American Integration" to put forward these proposals, which aim to respond to the economic, social and political challenges that the region is experiencing after the pandemic, contribute to the reconstruction of the social fabric and the reactivation of its economies, and ensure subsequent democratic governance.

The agenda, with its initiatives, could become the road map to be taken into consideration by the governments that will participate in the XXVIII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, to be held in the Dominican Republic in 2023 - the first after the pandemic - and, to this end, we suggest taking up the ideas of the philosopher María Zambrano when she said: "Spain is discovered from Latin America". It could also be said that Latin America can be discovered at this time by looking in the mirror of Europe.

As mentioned above, this paper has been prepared by four entities and gathers the opinion of experts who have discussed and formulated proposals in the framework of the subject "Ibero-American Integration", which, since 2018, has promoted more than twenty scenarios for debate on public policies and regional challenges to overcome economic gaps and social inequalities, protect human rights and preserve the region as a zone of peace, with debates on education, science, culture and environment as the articulating axes of the great political purpose of integration.

"Never before have we been so disintegrated, and never before have we needed integration more" is one of the most alarming and recurrent phrases of the president of Corporación Escenarios and former president of Colombia, Ernesto Samper. It affirms the importance of reactivating integration processes in the region, in different spaces and at different speeds. We must never again be caught completely disjointed by a crisis such as the pandemic. Other emerging crises, such as global warming, the lack of food, or the destruction of American ecosystems, require the design and implementation of public policies that go beyond the land and maritime borders of each country.

We must be prepared for a future that has been brought forward. Precisely this anticipation, the result of the construction of a common Ibero-American space, could also serve as a reference for the task that Spain will take on next year with the pro tempore presidency of the European Union.

One issue that will be of particular importance is that of migration phenomena. Migration is still considered a "problem" because we have not yet evolved towards a concept of regional and global citizenship such as could inspire a new globalisation based on the mobility of people and the guarantee of their rights anywhere in the world.

Some of these issues are addressed in this paper with the aim of constructing a new narrative on the future of this Ibero-American relationship, which should benefit the two linked spaces so that the region can consolidate as a bloc and integration ceases to be a discourse.



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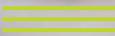
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INTRODUCTION



Latin America has long been one of the most active players in multilateralism and development policy. In this effort, based on shared values, it has always found a common goal with the European Union (EU): to provide its citizens with the goods, services and rights that allow them to develop to their full potential. However, this path has not been easy: inequality between and within countries has exacerbated multiple structural gaps that perpetuate inequitable and unfair social and political systems, with girls and women as the big losers.

Despite this, Latin American citizens have not ceased in their attempts to improve their living conditions. The support and exchange networks that have been generated in the Ibero-American area (of young people, women and human rights defenders) have been catalysts, a rich engine of transformations to build a global citizenship that aspires to greater opportunities and well-being for all. In recent decades, Latin America's democratic systems have responded to multiple social demands, which has led to important advances in legislative implementation, as well as a complex institutionalisation of the countries (with some progress at the regional level). In this process, international cooperation has also been very present and has contributed to improving the quality of public policies. The persistence of economic models based on the primary sector, the lack of quality employment, poor social protection, the increase in violence, the pandemic and the current volatile global economic situation have worsened the situation of millions of Latin Americans.

At the same time, Europe has seen its social and economic model challenged. The 2008 financial crisis not only limited economic growth, but also cracked the European project, raising existential doubts in respect of the same. The ferocity of the pandemic and its enormous human cost, however, showed that a Europe united in the strength of its welfare states was an indispensable ally in coping with the current risks. Russia's invasion of Ukraine poses a new challenge whose costs are not only political, but have a direct impact on the daily lives of citizens.

The historical conjuncture has become an incentive for active citizen mobilisation and the

formulation and success of diverse and plural political proposals that have broadened debates on citizens' expectations in both regions. However, it has also given rise to the growing presence of discourses that question values such as equality, solidarity or the plurality of societies. They also question the multilateral system and the precepts of a supranational quest for the common good.

The relationship between Europe and Latin America in a scenario of crisis and geopolitical change is a challenge, but also, above all, a great opportunity to jointly reaffirm common values and principles, as well as to update a similar sustainable development agenda that prioritises demands based on a solid conceptualisation that citizens, through civil society organizations, have placed on the table for debate and which are increasingly urgent: Substantive equality; political parity between men and women; social equity; just economic, energy, digital and environmental transition; recognition of diversity and the need to strengthen social and community links, etc. In short, the need to make a transition towards the dignification of policies, people and communities.

It is necessary to listen to the proposals put forward from the territories, communities and different age groups, as well as to draw on the experience emerging from the global south for development cooperation. Latin America is a rich source of proposals and evidence of best practices, as shown by its south-south and triangular cooperation processes. Such proposals can dialogue with policy and technical expertise if wills are united and efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and beyond are continued.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the face of emerging challenges, there is an opportunity to address far-reaching reforms so as to be able to lay the foundations for a new sustainable development agenda, in dialogue and appropriate for the two regions, in a new social contract by and for men and women. In this process, there are two crucial events to launch a new cooperation strategy: the XXVII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, to be held in the Dominican

Republic, and the Spanish presidency of the EU in the second half of 2023.

This paper is an effort in precisely this direction. Based on the dialogue between Latin American and European organizations, it presents reflections and proposals for building a more horizontal common agenda, with a greater projection on local processes and focused not on mere growth, but on the dignity of people and their environments.

While this introduction provides a broad analysis of the region's challenges and the bi-regional relationship, this paper focuses on four dimensions in which the participating organizations have long-standing experience: ecological transition, cultural citizenship, education, and science and technology. All four areas are deeply interlinked and interconnected, with digital transition at their core.

This paper addresses the four areas extensively, identifying regional challenges and proposing strategies that provide solutions based on the strengthening of the bi-regional relationship. All of these strategies are also based on the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and draw on lessons learned, networks and efforts already underway, either at the national, Latin American or bi-regional level.

OUTLINE 1.

Dimensions of the cooperation proposal



ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT





Over the last few years, Latin America has experienced a progressive economic slowdown. After the end of the commodity boom cycle in 2019, average growth in the region was only 0.3%. This situation was compounded by the health crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which, exacerbated by structural deficits, generated a disastrous result: millions of people died, many were left without income and have not yet

recovered their jobs, women suffered from the widening inequality gap and millions of children dropped out of formal education, among other serious consequences.

Specifically, the region has lost more than a decade in terms of poverty reduction. In 2021 (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2022), the poverty rate

TABLE 1.

Tension factors in Latin America's development

<p>Structural challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary sector dependency, crisis; • low productivity; • reduced public spending capacity; • less space and will for tax reforms; • forced migration; • political polarisation, growing presence of natalist or particularist discourses; • citizen anger (social mobility deficit, low quality of public policies, low capacity of redistributive policies, exclusion, insecurity, corruption); • Latin America's relative loss of international relevance; • accelerating impact and vulnerability to climate change.
<p>Impact of the pandemic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase in poverty and extreme poverty; • weakening of local markets; • unemployment and job insecurity; • disproportionate impact on women, children and youth; • loss of quality of democracy and increased institutional fragility; • less political room for social reforms; • increase in public debt; • health and human consequences; • expansion of illegal activities related to drug trafficking; • limited capacity to influence and seek support in the international environment; • fuel price increases; • difficulties in accessing technological equipment due to the global supply chain slowdown and paralysis.
<p>Impact of the war</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • added impact on food price inflation; • difficulty in accessing agricultural supplies; • lower agricultural productivity than expected; • Latin America's increased global presence in the supply of raw materials; • reduced availability of resources for cooperation with the region.



reached 32.1 % and is expected to increase to 33% in 2022, while extreme poverty stands at 13.8%. This means that there are almost 300 million poor people.

Although some countries have seen an accelerated economic recovery in the last two years, the average growth forecast for 2022 is low (2.1 %) and insufficient to directly improve the social situation. In fact, employment is still marked by the crisis: the five million jobs lost in the wake of the pandemic have not been recovered, with a particular impact on female and youth employment. This situation has been exacerbated by the characteristics of the region's insertion in the international economy. Most of the countries have undergone a return to primary sector processes in recent years, making them highly vulnerable to external shocks. This has also weakened incentives, which could generate intra-regional value chains, and has deepened low industrial productivity and employment instability, as well as fuelling conflicts over resources and land.

Furthermore, the current situation of inflation in energy, fuel and food prices poses great difficulties in addressing the structural problems of poverty and acute poverty; in fact, it is expected that 7.8 million people will join the more than 80 million who do not know if they will be able to eat every day (ECLAC, 2022). The global food situation is very serious and Latin America is no exception to this trend. In 2022, the global cost of food imports will set a record of 1.8 trillion, which means an increase of 3 % compared to 2021 (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2022). This price increase severely hits net food importers, such as Peru, Venezuela and Honduras, which "will pay more, but receive less food" (Allievi, 2022).

The vulnerability of a large part of the middle-income population is also serious, especially because of weak social protection mechanisms and the low quality of employment (there are currently some 140 million jobs in the informal economy). Between 2019 and 2020, the





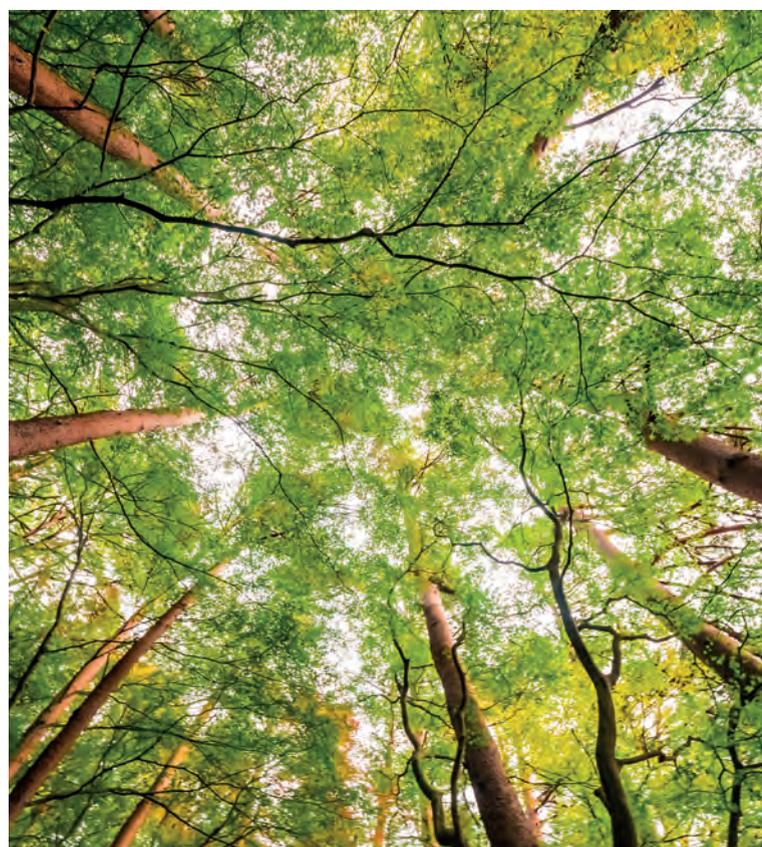
intermediate-middle and lower-middle income strata decreased by 3.5 %, while the low-income sectors (with incomes below 1.8 times the poverty line) increased by 4.7 %, and the poor or extremely poor population by 3.3 % (ECLAC, 2022). These data show the insecurity of the middle classes, who fall easily into poverty and for whom the quality of employment is a differential factor.

Latin America is also one of the regions most vulnerable in the short term to climate change, which is intertwined with the region's other challenges, including rural poverty, poor distribution of access to and exploitation of natural resources (especially land and water), and depredatory and illicit activities such as illegal gold mining and trafficking.

Finally, the impact of insecurity on citizens' quality of life should be noted. Despite the absence of violent conflict between nations, some Latin American countries have the highest homicide rates in the world, with a particularly dramatic record among adolescent males, and violence against women and femicide is widespread. The costs of this insecurity translate not only into loss of life, but also affect everyday relationships, increase distrust between people and towards the state, hinder business and have direct costs for families, the state and the productive sector.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has coined the term "development gaps", which makes explicit the factors that hinder the region's progress. While these traps reflect some structural weaknesses, they are largely the result of progress towards higher income levels, which bring to the surface new challenges for development and, specifically, for "development in transition" (OECD *et al.*, 2019). This highlights the importance for Latin America and the Caribbean of the "development in transition" approach. These traps concentrate the main challenges on four dimensions: the productivity trap, the social vulnerability trap, the institutional trap and the environmental trap.

First, higher productivity requires diversified economic structures, with more sophisticated



products and services. In many countries, production is concentrated in the primary sector, without adequate insertion into global value chains and with few incentives to invest. Second, the vicious circle of social vulnerability, volatile incomes and weak social protection needs to be broken by creating more formal jobs. The institutional trap, on the other hand, requires better institutions in order to restore trust, improve the quality of public services, respond to commitments to gender equity with care policies and education in a culture of substantive equality, and respond to the increased aspirations of a larger middle class. Finally, the environmental vulnerability trap involves moving towards a sustainable development model by reducing carbon emissions (OECD *et al.*, 2019).



LATIN AMERICA WRITES ITS OWN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA





The OECD's diagnosis of development traps reinforces one of the most important theses for understanding the challenges facing Latin American countries. Development is not a point of arrival for a society, but a continuous effort to ensure the quality of life of the population as technology advances and social, environmental and economic challenges change and become more complex.

This observation is the basis of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call on all countries to take up the challenges, while at the same time appealing to the necessary capacity for agency and multilateral engagement as actors and writers of the script for the future of humanity.

Despite its many challenges and the fact that, for years, the gaze of the global North has been more interested in areas immersed in international conflicts, Latin America has taken on the continuous challenge of dialogue and of proposing new paradigms for the development agenda.

The failed experience of the Washington Consensus, which, instead of leading to an improvement in the region, weakened its social, democratic and institutional foundations, is a long time ago. However, some of its effects still persist, especially in terms of the weakness of the industrial and institutional fabric and of social protection systems.

Latin American countries, through ECLAC, have built a powerful body of consensus, best practices and evidence that fits well with the OECD diagnosis and its proposals. There is also an early institutional and social internalisation in the region of both the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, subsequently, the SDGs. All countries have bodies in charge of implementing the 2030 Agenda and harmonising their public policies accordingly. Despite the challenges ahead and the structural challenges, some progress in the quality of development policies cannot be ignored.

Another factor that should not be lost sight of is the importance that, in the absence of more

developed intra-regional cooperation mechanisms, Ibero-American cooperation has had. It is true that this process is nourished by Spain's active presence, but Ibero-America is a space that has been endowed with content and legitimacy through sustained regional dialogue over more than thirty years. The construction of a common agenda through the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the materialisation of hundreds of projects through all the bodies of the Ibero-American system, such as the OEI, the Ibero-American Youth Organization (OIJ), the Ibero-American Organization for Social Security (OISS) and the Conference of Ministers of Justice of Ibero-American Countries (COMJIB), are another achievement in terms of development policy.

In this framework, triangular and South-South cooperation deserves special recognition, which shows that, despite the fact that regionalist political processes are not particularly developed, very active networks of support and exchange of experiences are flourishing and growing, with a significant impact on the development of sub-national and local programmes. The Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) is a good example of this progress and its contribution to public policies.

In fact, the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Escazu Agreement are relevant improvements on the topics discussed in this paper, both of which are regional initiatives at different levels, but which point to the possibility of making joint progress in some areas despite the lack of comprehensive regional processes.

Specifically, the creation of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2022) seeks to promote the development of the digital ecosystem through a process of regional integration and cooperation, strengthening digital policies that promote knowledge, impact, equity, innovation and environmental sustainability. This agenda presents a set of priority action areas that are related to the following new elements (ECLAC, 2015, 2018a; Medina and Castillo, 2022):



- 1) digital infrastructure;
- 2) transformation and the digital economy;
- 3) digital government;
- 4) inclusion, competences and digital skills;
- 5) emerging technologies for sustainable development;
- 6) trust and digital security;
- 7) regional digital market;
- 8) regional digital cooperation;
- 9) fight against COVID-19 and post-pandemic economic recovery and revival.

The Escazu Agreement is the first regional pact of its kind. It is a binding instrument emanating from the Implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (Rio+20), which recognises that environmental issues are best addressed with the participation of all people. It aims to ensure, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the full and effective implementation of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision-making processes and access to justice in environmental matters, as well as the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation, contributing to protect the right of every person, of present and future generations, to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development.

In addition to political efforts, academic, economic and civil society networks are flourishing and intensifying. The integration of technology and social innovation is a major challenge. Latin Americans, in short, are not waiting for someone to write the script for their development, but are active agents of their future. In fact, one issue in which the Latin American contribution stands out is the construction of discourses critical of developmentalist approaches and of what has been called “bad development”, i.e., alienation, inequity and unsustainability, which derive, respectively, from colonisation, capitalism and

anthropocentrism (Cubillo Guevara and Hidalgo Capitán, 2015).

In response to this diagnosis, the alternatives of good living emerge, which is constructed in three dimensions (personal, social and integral harmony) and according to which identity would be achieved through the creation of plurinational societies, while equity would be achieved through the configuration of post-capitalist societies; finally, sustainability would be achieved through the creation of biocentric societies (Cubillo Guevara and Hidalgo Capitán, 2015).

Recently, the vitality of the concept of “tasty living” has also been recognised, which brings contributions from communities and particular cultures to redefine not only development, but also the meaning of social justice. Specifically, this concept is part of the linguistic heritage of the communities of the Colombian Pacific and refers to a model of spiritual, social, economic, political and cultural organization in harmony with the environment, nature and people. It constitutes a response to the exclusion radicalised through the policies of developmentalism, which relegated to a second place the local dynamics of the evolution of human societies in time and space (Mena and Meneses, 2019).

In their spirit of criticism of the theses and, especially, of the implementation and limits of traditional Western and Eurocentric development policies, these positions deserve to be heard and recognised for their contribution to generating new paths and, above all, for redefining the idea of development by associating it with concepts such as justice, community and dignity.

The evidence that the region is witnessing a massive change of government is a sign of citizen anger and its valuable channelling through the ballot box. Despite the signs of polarisation and the demand for greater quality in the system of representation, the institutions are showing resilience and the vitality of the citizenry is, more than ever, a call to action.

THE NEW EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: A RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS OF GLOBALISATION



In general, Latin American nations, with the notable exception of Haiti, are among the middle-income countries. This classification, promoted at the beginning of the 21st century by the World Bank and adopted by the OECD, seeks to group countries by segments according to their per capita income levels (Alonso and Santander, 2019). This decision is not innocuous, as it constituted a system for targeting international aid, which concentrated on low-income countries. Thus, the so-called 'graduation' of many countries in the region as beneficiaries of trade preferences and recipients of European bilateral aid in 2014 caused their weight in EU development policy to diminish (Sanahuja, 2022b). As is evident, from a development perspective, increasing income did not mean overcoming structural gaps.

The rhetoric of average income is not conducive to cooperation with the region, nor does it improve the classification system, as it ignores the particularities and gaps that lead countries into the so-called "middle income trap".

The EU has opted to go beyond the concept of "graduation" in its cooperation strategy with Latin America, adopting the concept of "development in transition", which alludes to the completeness of the challenges facing the countries of the region and on which a multilateral consensus has been reached with ECLAC and the OECD.

EU development cooperation policy recognises the need to apply new modalities beyond the North-South paradigms and to provide official development assistance (ODA), adopting new forms of multistakeholder and multilevel partnership (Sanahuja and Ruiz Sandoval 2019). The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) is used to make the allocation of funds between geographic or thematic areas more flexible and to address global challenges and the shared SDG roadmap. These changes aim to provide the EU with the necessary resources and tools to align its values and interests in a more complex, contested and interconnected international arena, while at the same time contributing to effective cooperation to achieve the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. The EU thus reaffirms its presence and

support for democracies and sustainable development, but it needs to work on its ability to communicate the strength of its relations with the region.

But beyond a cooperation model, the EU has embarked on a broad commitment that has to do with its own development model and its presence in the world. The pandemic exposed several of its weaknesses, some of them chronic since the 2008 financial crisis. This situation speeded up consensus-building to define an EU strategy. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been another accelerator of this process.

The response to the crisis has been articulated through the Next Generation EU (NGEU) instrument, an unprecedented financial package, but also "a vindication of multilateralism and regional integration" (Sanahuja, 2022a, p. 3). Together with the funds, the commitment to a change in the production and energy model corresponds to the European Green Deal (EGD).

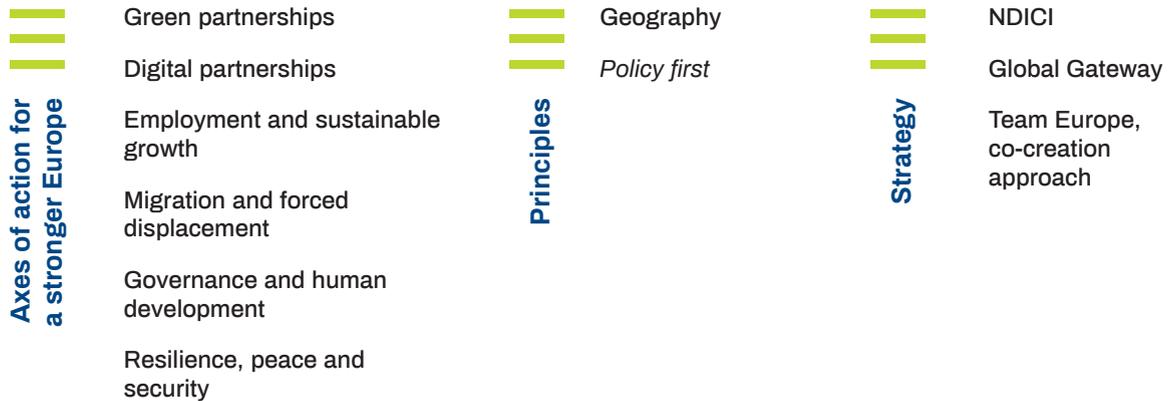
The Green Pact makes the fight against climate change the EU's main goal, integrating economic, social and environmental policy coherently with external policy within a new strategy that promotes both economic growth and sustainability. It addresses the three main environmental challenges - climate, biodiversity and pollution - with a policy matrix covering energy, industry, buildings, mobility, agriculture and food. This is done through market mechanisms, but also recognises the leading role of public policy, leaving behind ordoliberal orthodoxy (Sanahuja, 2022a).

In addition to the major strategies guiding the transformation of the European model, there are very relevant materialisations of its regulatory and social project. A good example is the Declaration of Digital Rights and Principles, submitted for approval to the European Parliament in January 2022. The declaration, the first of its kind in the world, will be a benchmark for everyone in the EU and a guide for politicians and for companies developing digital technologies. The digital rights and principles will be reflected in the EU's actions, in its future activity and in all interaction with its global partners.



OUTLINE 2.

The European development agenda



Everyone in the EU must make the most of the digital transformation. Digital rights and principles will guide the EU in its work to promote an inclusive, prosperous and sustainable society (European Commission, 2022).

Another example, without a doubt, is the incorporation of the feminist perspective into the EU's cooperation and external action through the signification of the principle of substantive equality between men and women, which has become a global and transversal value of the entire institutional and legislative machinery of the EU (*Gender Action Plan III - towards a gender equal world*, 2021- 2025). This recognition and reformulation of Europe's strategic priorities is not only intended to address the profound economic and social consequences of recession, pandemics and war, but is articulated in the strategy of a geopolitical Europe and strategic autonomy. Europe seeks to reassert its role in the world with a proposal for development within and beyond its borders; thus, following the concept of 'strategic autonomy', which already appeared in the 2016 European Strategy (EU, 2016), it moves away from alignment with other powers to promote international dialogue and the search for its own presence based on its values and interests. This stance is also echoed in a Latin America that now enjoys the benefits of trade, financial and political openness to different blocs and powers,

while seeking to enhance its negotiating capacity and favour the strategic interests of all countries in the region.

Europe is the main donor of cooperation to Latin America, despite the fact that it is essentially a middle-income region. The bi-regional relationship has always been strong and has allowed for the development of numerous projects, not only from a classic North-South cooperation concept, but also by promoting triangular cooperation. This model breaks with the rigidly bilateral structure with which the cooperation system was born to open up space for diverse geometries in which countries of different status and level join in a development action (Alonso, Aguirre and Santander, 2019, p. 159).

The European strategy also envisages articulating and coordinating its response effort through cooperation. The Team Europe initiative is a new approach based on the joint work of the European institutions, Member States and their implementing agencies, and development finance institutions. The activities carried out under Team Europe are in line with the three priorities of the Commission: to provide an emergency response to the health crisis and humanitarian needs; strengthen research, health and water systems; and address the economic and social consequences. This proposal looks

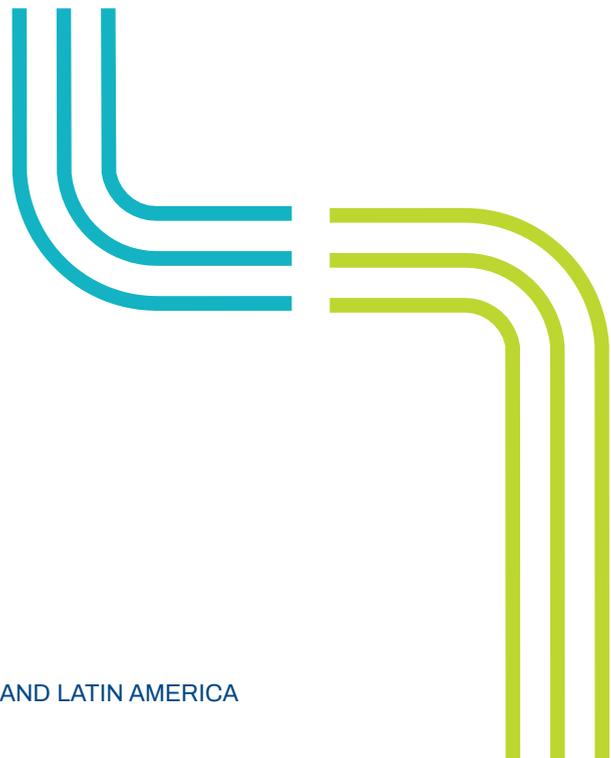




at medium- and long-term recovery, with a focus on achieving the SDGs.

The latest strategy, the Global Gateway, seeks to boost smart, clean and secure links in the digital, energy and transport sectors, as well as to develop health, education and research systems around the world. In this way, the EU enhances its role as a funder and provider of technology, knowledge and best practices to respond to the demands of the global south and assert its geopolitical role. With this direct response to the crisis of globalisation, it provides solutions within its own framework of autonomy and principles.

Thus, the EU is stepping up the offer to its partners with major investments in infrastructure around the world. Between 2021 and 2027, Team Europe will mobilise up to three hundred billion euros to invest in the digital sector, climate and energy, transport, health and education and research.



STRATEGIC AUTONOMY, DEMOCRACY, TECHNOLOGY
MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE NEW
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EU AND LATIN AMERICA



The difficult international conjuncture is a new opportunity to promote EU relations in the context of a systemic crisis that has exposed the weaknesses of the economic system and is a rupture in the process of hyper-globalisation.

The financial crisis, global pandemic, supply chain disruption, inflation and war have shown that strong institutions and resilience (not only political but also fiscal) are needed to cope with emerging challenges and their complexity. The key to resilience lies in more state, more partnerships and greater institutional strength.

Likewise, social unrest, discontent and the emergence and electoral success of ultra-conservative and natalist political alternatives imply a need to rethink the principles of democracy, to build a common front around it and to defend first, second and third generation social rights and freedoms. The democratic challenge requires more democracy, more pluralism, more gender equality and more civil society.

In relation to these principles, there are a number of priorities in the bi-regional relationship and common development agenda in respect of the proposal herein contained is made:

- the strengthening of regional and bi-regional alliances as part of the quest for strategic autonomy;
- the strengthening of predistribution and redistribution systems, particularly in education and science as a way of overcoming structural gaps;
- culture and digitisation as an instrument of representative democracy, pluralism and social justice;
- a social and environmental transition to sustainability at the heart of all public action and development cooperation.

As noted above, there are four structural gaps in Latin America (and one cross-cutting gender gap that affects all women) that prevent the region from moving forward. While the diagnosis is appropriate, it is not easy to implement fundamental changes that will help to break them. Moreover, it is necessary to act swiftly and prolifically on a multitude of fronts and levels to link the stepping stones that allow the population

OUTLINE 3.

Principles of bi-regional cooperation





to climb out of the gaps without leaving anyone behind.

This last point is very relevant if one considers the history of Latin American politics, which, despite democratic consolidation in almost the entire region and advances in institutionality, access to services and economic growth, has systematically left behind a large part of its population, particularly indigenous and Afro-descendant groups. The region's development policy must address not only specific sectors of the population, but also their worldviews, their social needs and their relationship with the environment and the territory. Furthermore, the important role played by indigenous groups and rural communities in sustainable development and their contribution from their ancestral relationship with the territory must not be lost sight of. On the other hand, Latin American democracies have not yet achieved the social cohesion required to "equalise" half of their population: Latin American women. Despite legislative inroads, the reality has kept women, in their daily lives, in a situation of structural subordination, still awaiting representation, redistricting and recognition on a par with men (Aguirrezábal, 2021). In order for women to consider the Latin American social pact as their own and feel that they are full citizens in their countries, the foundations of this social contract must be modified through sustainable development in parity democracies, in accordance with the Regulatory Framework to Consolidate Parity Democracy (Latin American and Caribbean Parliament [Parlatino], 2015).

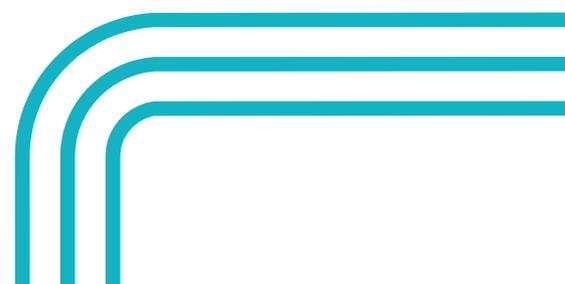
There is a historical debt to pay and it is not a question of identities and particularisms; without the much sought-after social cohesion, many of the region's ills, such as insecurity or vulnerability, will not be solved. To pull ourselves out of the gap, to pull ourselves out and not to fall back in: that is the task. It is not only a question of social justice and legitimacy, it is also a necessary and intelligent step forward, because social cohesion is more effective for sustainable growth.

It is also necessary to reach an intergenerational pact that addresses children and young people as active citizens in defining their needs

and expectations. The pandemic revealed a democratic deficit in the protection of children's rights. What is at stake is not only to guarantee these rights and provide them with tools for their future, but also to show them that democracy is the way forward and that it has answers and a specific place for them. The digital transition and cultural citizenship are essential allies in this objective.

This situation is undoubtedly linked to the social mobilisations that have taken place in several countries since 2019 and which, although they have led to processes of political channelling (such as the Chilean Constitutional Convention or the presidential elections in Colombia), have yet to find a response and maintain the tensions between political representation, citizenship and social fractures. In fact, some of them have been exacerbated and will be further exacerbated by rising fuel and food prices. Citizen anger is related to the low quality of public policies, corruption, the enormous vulnerability of the middle classes, social exclusion and insecurity. The social expectations generated around the economic growth of the first decade of the 21st century were not met, and this widened the gap between citizens and governments. The results and forecasts for the 2020-2022 regional electoral cycle show a trend of change that poses great challenges for elected presidents (Rodríguez Pinzón, 2021).

The partnership between Latin America and Europe must contribute to strengthening democracy, equity and open societies at a time when institutions and the norms on which their materialisation depends do not enjoy the necessary citizen trust and are challenged by the rise of illiberal, ultra-nationalist and authoritarian forces (Sanahuja, 2022b).



OUTLINE 4.

Towards a bi-regional cooperation strategy



But this relationship has to be based on dialogue, on a shared effort to address the challenges of development, international autonomy and the legitimisation of the democratic model.

Latin America was a promoter of development policy and multilateralism; it needs to retake this capacity and become a relevant actor at the international level. This proposal for its own model must consist of a firm commitment to R&D&I, culture and its relationship with the construction of citizenship, equality and sustainability. The latter requires the two regions to rethink and discuss their social contract and its challenges. Such a contract can be achieved at three levels: through cross-cutting agreements between socio-economic groups, territories and generations; by promoting resilient and sustainable productive strategies that create quality jobs and promote green and digital transformation (as well as broad and effective social protection systems); and finally, through a more sustainable model of financing for development (OECD, 2021).

This strategy matches the one that Latin America has launched for itself in partnership with the EU, but, despite the fact that there is no institutional regional counterpart, both the

evidence of recent electoral results and the debates taking place in the region and within the various multi-stakeholder fora in which its members participate agree on these priorities.

The solidarity-based development model and the ecological transition

The solidarity model of development, with a progressive approach, proposes an outline based on six pillars: the search for equality as a central value of development and the reduction of global asymmetries; the search for value; a new economic policy, diversified and based on the incorporation of knowledge; ecological transition; a new democratic institutional framework; and regional integration.

As can be seen, ecological transition is at the heart of the proposal. Development cannot be viewed in contemporary terms without including justifiable apprehensions about extractivism and the harmful effects that current modes of production have had on biodiversity.

The model emphasises the idea that overcoming poverty and gaining access to a level of



material equality and dignity in no way implies risking the well-being of future generations by depleting resources. It therefore proposes an energy matrix that makes the satisfaction of needs compatible with environmental balances. It also takes up the reflections following the dramatic situation of the pandemic, as it was in this context that it emerged. According to several studies, the high levels of contamination in the midst of isolation explain a 15 % increase in deaths due to the pandemic (Pozzer *et al.*, 2020). Among the areas most affected by climate chaos is Latin America and the Caribbean. Similarly, the region accounted for 32% of deaths due to COVID-19, despite representing 8.4% of the world's population (ECLAC, 2021). The new solidarity-based development model claims to be environmentally sustainable. To achieve this, it envisages a green transition starting with the implementation of the SDGs by 2030.

The green transition referred to in the model also includes proposals such as reducing activities that aggravate global warming, protecting biodiversity, halting the deforestation of the Amazon, spreading the values of animalism and the plant protein revolution, rejecting transgenic varieties, developing renewable energies, protecting water sources, defending environmental leaders and environmental governance (enshrined in the Escazú Agreement), preserving the coral banks of the Caribbean and containing the excesses resulting from the development of artificial intelligence. All this must result in a viable, durable and sustainable “ecosystem connectivity” over time, a development model in line with the new environmental reality.



ROAD TO ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN





After two years of pandemics, economic and health crises and global instability, the enormous contradictions of our political and economic systems, as well as the unviability of a productive system that is incompatible with the preservation of the environment, were exposed. For several decades, it was thought that regional integration in any of the sub-areas of Latin America was limited exclusively to the free circulation of goods, services and capital. However, given this new reality and the demands for change from citizens in all corners of the region, there is no need to wait any longer to include the ecological transition in the integration agenda.

This means looking towards a new model of development that is based on solidarity and collective values that are more compatible with environmental balances in their various manifestations. It is now well known that environmental degradation, resource scarcity and subsequent hardship are at the root of armed conflicts and social tensions around the world.

Latin American and Caribbean states run the risk of lowering their guard and believing that the creation of ministries of the environment is enough to face this challenge, but it is urgent to transcend and advance towards an environmental culture in which the authorities do not see their role as limited to that of “environmental policemen”, but rather as strategic articulators of the different policies. By the same token, there is a risk that taxation aimed at discouraging environmental damage ends up commercialising

this defence with bonds, taxes and duties that leave it in the hands of the richest to degrade, while the middle and lower classes assume the greatest responsibility, which is not at all proportional to their shortcomings. For this reason, the ecological transition implies a change of mentality to return to some of the values of the vast Ibero-American cultural universe and of peoples who have historically defended the environment.

Given the urgent nature of the ecological transition, this proposal seeks to be an input to provide a navigation chart with the objective of implementing actions that facilitate the generation of material and immaterial goods that do not affect bio-diversity and environmental balances.

What transition are we talking about when we talk about ecological transition?

In 1987, a concrete notion of ecological transition appeared for the first time when the Brundtland Commission's report (*Brundtland Report*) proposed to the United Nations (UN) a critical analysis of the path the world had taken in terms of economic development without taking into consideration the environment. This report was originally entitled *Our Common Future* and laid

TABLE 2.

Objectives of the ecological transition

Sustainable development	Improving people's lives without destroying nature.
Food transition	Agroecology so that food sovereignty does not destroy ecosystems or threaten biodiversity.
Science and technology	Further research and optimisation of processes to reduce the environmental impact of human activities.
Conservation and environmental restoration	Put biodiversity care at the centre of decisions.
Renewable energy	Move towards the elimination of fossil fuels that contribute to global warming or affect biological cycles in nature.



the foundations for thinking about sustainable development and a transition to an economic model that does not negatively affect the earth's ecological cycles.

The ecological transition is an urgent need to move forward in all areas of life (economy, culture, science, mobility, etc.) towards non-degradation of ecosystems and biodiversity. It consists of the following.

The environmental crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean

In recent decades, the framework for global environmental action has focused on addressing the so-called climate crisis. In other words, understanding that global warming, for anthropogenic reasons, is a major threat to the planet, discussions and decisions in this area have placed special emphasis on problems associated with climate, such as the burning of hydrocarbons, the melting of the poles or the emission of polluting gases into the atmosphere as a result of industries such as livestock farming.

Science has warned about the lack of measurable national and global targets on the status of biodiversity. The AICHI¹ targets fulfilled this role; however, these convention targets ran their course in 2020 and a new measure of biodiversity diagnosis and action is needed. Of the twenty AICHI targets, only four showed any progress and in twelve the threats to biodiversity worsened, hence the urgency of a proposal known as the "extinction rate" (Rounsevell *et al.*, 2020), which proposes to maintain over the next hundred years the annual extinctions below

twenty species, including all taxonomic groups. Indicators such as the coverage of protected areas or the percentage of intact wildlife (both used by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services [IPBES]) have proven to be insufficient and easy for governments to assume without commitment to real biodiversity policies.

This proposal is fuelled by the idea of establishing a limit for biodiversity policy that is analogous to the two degrees Celsius in climate change policies and that is easy for decision-makers and environmental coordination spaces to communicate. Nevertheless, the authors recognise that this indicator would leave many elements out of the analysis and that, even by reducing the rate of species extinction, the loss of biological functions of many species could have repercussions on the degradation of ecosystems. For example, the authors point out, there is the possibility of preventing the extinction of a species by maintaining depleted populations in zoos or reserves. This is raised as a possible weakness of the indicator, recognising that there is a need for a central search for media efficiency in biodiversity issues, as is the case with some climate issues.



¹ Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020:

1. mitigate the causes of biodiversity loss at social and political levels;
2. reduce the pressures it faces and promote the sustainable use of natural resources;
3. improving the status of biodiversity by caring for its ecosystems;
4. optimise the benefits that nature provides (clean air, fresh water, food, etc.);
5. increase people's knowledge of it.



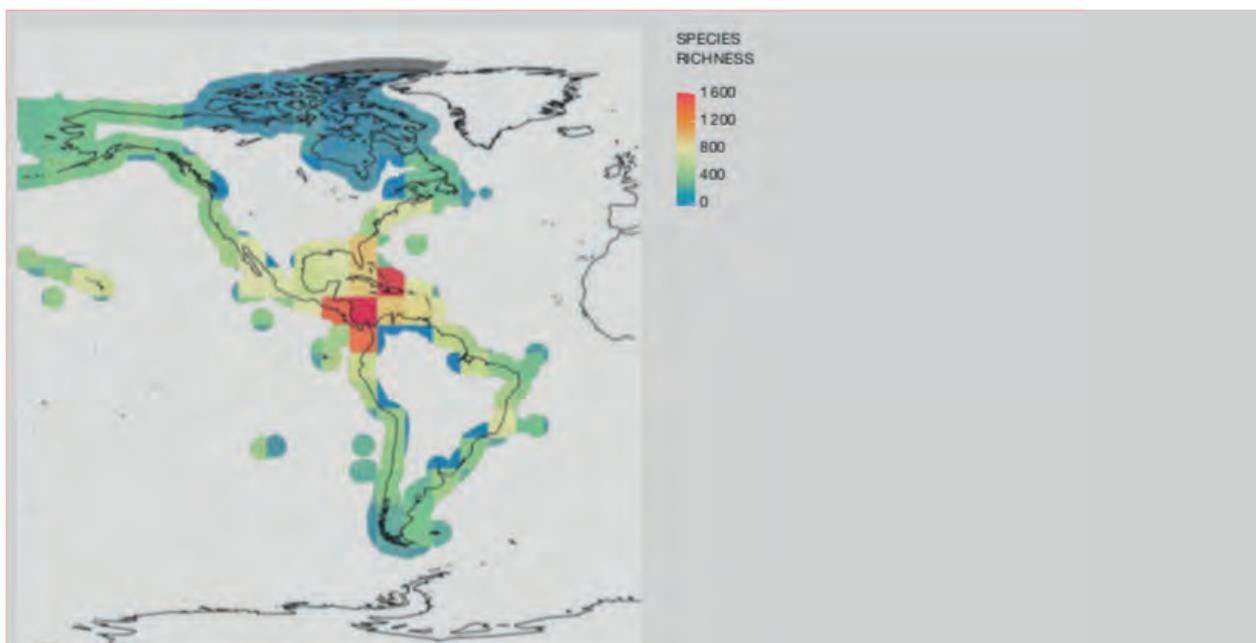
TABLE 3.

State of Latin American ecosystems

Richness and fragility of Latin American ecosystems	
<p>Twelve percent of the world's mangroves (22,000 km²) are found in the Caribbean region (Spalding <i>et al.</i>, 2010).</p>	<p>10 % of the world's coral reefs are found in the Caribbean, with a total of 26,000 km², and 90 % of the species inhabiting these ecosystems are endemic (Burke <i>et al.</i>, 2011). Since 1970, the Caribbean has lost half of its coral cover.</p>
<p>It has been estimated that Latin America and the Caribbean are home to 13,835 species of fauna and at least 12% are critically endangered (World Wildlife Monitoring Centre, World Conservation Union (IUCN)). of Conservation [UNEP-WCMC] and International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN], 2016).</p>	<p>Up to 40 % of the world's forest cover can be found in the Americas, with 842 million hectares in South America, 723 million hectares in North America and 20 million hectares in Central America (Global Forest Watch, 2017).</p>
<p>In total, 14% of the territory of the great American continent is covered by protected area designations.</p>	<p>It is estimated that by 2016, human activities had already destroyed 17% of the Amazon rainforest.</p>
<p>Marine-coastal biodiversity is mainly concentrated in the Caribbean, with two major hotspots of more than 1,600 species. One is in the northern Caribbean, facing the Atlantic Ocean, and the other in the south-western Caribbean. The graph below shows this in terms of species richness per 500,000 km² quadrants.</p>	

MAP 1.

Marine-coastal species richness of the Americas

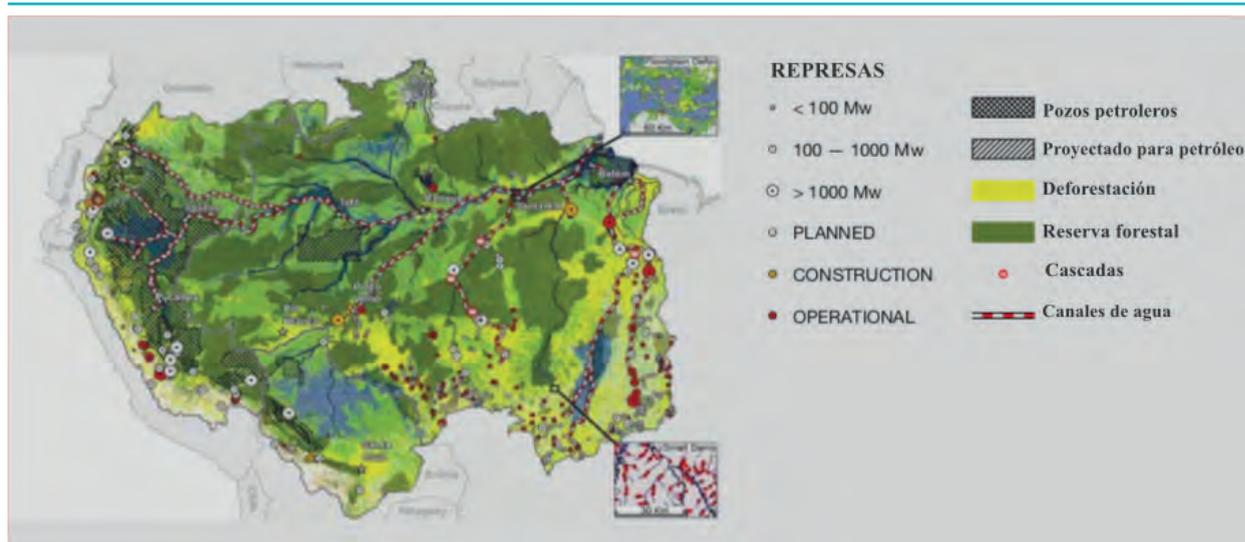


Source: IPBES.



MAP 2

Land use in the Amazon (2013)



Source: Castello *et al.*, 2013, as cited in IPBES (2018).

International and multilateral framework for the ecological transition

Although the SDGs are a benchmark, the region must go beyond them and face environmental challenges with its own vision, addressing its own needs. However, despite its environmental richness and vulnerability, the region invests less in environmental protection and ecological transition than the rest of the world.

On a global average, spending on environmentally compatible economic recovery amounted to 19.2 %, while in Latin America and the Caribbean it barely reached 2.2 %, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP warns that 74 % of the investments with negative effects on the environment have been allocated to exploiting fossil energy sources and 13 % to port infrastructure, which will inevitably lead to an increase in carbon emissions.

Therefore, Latin America and the Caribbean must find their own way and understand that their position in respect of climate change is

based on its socio-economic limitations and the need to achieve a material minimum in terms of development. This is due to the critical picture left by the health crisis. According to ECLAC, 45 million people are unemployed, which is in addition to the fact that 201 million people live in poverty and 82 million in extreme poverty. It must therefore be understood that the framework for implementing the ecological transition in Latin America and the Caribbean as a region of development in transition is different from that of those industrialised states that have already achieved a significant improvement in living standards throughout history.

Strategy, the framework for transition

The United Nations International Framework on the Environment began in 1972 with the first Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. This resulted in the 1992 **Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment**, the first international document showing concern for the protection of the environment and awareness of human damage to it.



From that moment on, the preservation of the environment and the commitments of the UN member states became a vitally important and recurring theme. This is how, for example, the 1987 *Brundtland Report: Our Common Future*, mentioned above, the precursor of the ecological transition, came into being.

After these two milestones, the legal line begins to be drawn that today allows us to speak of ecological transition and environmental protection. Of the legal framework that exists today, some treaties of vital importance should be highlighted.

Firstly, the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**² (hereafter UNFCCC) states that “change in the Earth’s climate and its adverse effects are a common concern of humankind” (UNFCCC, 1994, p. 2). It recognises the existence of climate change and obliges signatory states to contribute to the stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations. In addition, it establishes that sustainable development is both a right of the parties and a duty that they have to promote (UNFCCC, 1994, art. 4).

From this same convention, during the 21st Conference of the Parties in 2015, the **Paris Agreement**³ emerged. Its primary objective is to limit global warming to below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels.

Thirdly, the **Convention on Biological Diversity**⁴ (hereafter CBD) is considered key to sustainable development. It envisages as its objectives the conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from such use. It is the first global agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (CBD, 1994).

Fourth, in 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**⁵, an action plan that aims to benefit both people and the planet. This agenda establishes 17 goals and 169 targets that member states must achieve by 2030 in order to end poverty and hunger worldwide, combat inequalities and protect the planet and its natural resources, among other purposes.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the **Escazú Agreement: Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2018b)**⁶. This instrument arises from a multi-sided initiative of some Latin American and Caribbean countries, and is the first legally binding pact derived from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development that deals with environmental issues in the region. It is also the first in the world to include provisions on human rights defenders in environmental matters (Escazú Agreement, 2018, foreword).

Environmental diplomacy and the politics of green integration

Globalisation has posed challenges that states cannot face in isolation, but require a joint and regenerative intervention strategy for ecosystems, among other multiple actors from different countries and regions at all levels of government (local, state, regional, national and supranational) (Gual, 2020). In the various conventional spaces for dialogue on globalisation, special emphasis has been placed on the elimination of trade barriers for the free movement of goods, services, capital and, to a certain extent,

² All countries surrounding the *Seaflores* are party to this convention: Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Panama.

³ The six countries surrounding the *Seaflores* are part of it.

⁴ The six *Seaflores* countries are party to the convention.

⁵ The six *Seaflores* countries are part of it.

⁶ All are signatories, but only Nicaragua and Panama have ratified.



people. In Latin America, however, a number of transboundary issues of utmost importance, such as environmental degradation, climate risk or scientific cooperation, have been ignored or have had less presence in this discourse. Here there is an important space for dialogue with the EU on experiences in the regionalisation of environmental and ecological policy and to seek its support in promoting it.

The environmental issue must be included in regionalisation, given that so far much emphasis has been placed on trade integration in Latin America, but little on issues related to ecological transition. Its regional relevance is even greater given the transnational character and the interdependence of national ecosystems on their regional structure. It is necessary not only to mainstream the issue, but also to work on fundamental aspects such as disaster management, on which progress had already been made in spaces such as the now defunct Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

In this sense, “environmental diplomacy” is important for an ecological transition as a mechanism for interaction between states, academia, multilateral actors and local communities. Its purpose is, on the one hand, to build the necessary spaces and instances for a regional ecological conservation and restoration path that integrates all views on nature and, on the other hand, to make environmentally meaningful cooperation a tool for a fair distribution of the economic, political and social burdens derived from the ecological transition.

One example of environmental diplomacy is ocean governance under UNEP’s Regional Masters Programme. It has emphasised that the ocean is an ecosystem without borders and that its marine and coastal problems vary considerably between physical scales that do not always coincide with jurisdictional scales, which is why they are best solved from a regional approach. From the regional agreements and action plans that exist under this UNEP model, it has become evident that, although no single country has been able to tackle ocean problems on its own today, one thing is clear: cooperation is essential to move solutions forward. And not only cooperation between states, but also with other

international organizations and the local communities that have inhabited and conserved the seas and coasts for centuries (Mead, 2021).

In addition, it is important to highlight the benefits generated by the implementation of environmental diplomacy: it improves diplomatic relations between neighbours by always dealing with issues of regional interest, facilitates the coordination of common actions in the face of cross-border challenges to avoid the overlapping of efforts between States in the face of the same problem and boosts the implementation of global roadmaps, such as the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda (Gual, 2020). It is therefore urgent to include the issues of biodiversity, ecological transition and climate change through environmental diplomacy as a facilitating mechanism within the various regionalisation schemes, be they trade integration, political coordination or participation in multilateral bodies.

The EU, for its part, has set out to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and to lead the global effort for the protection and ecological recovery of the planet (European Commission, 2019). This means promoting these objectives in European trade policy to encourage greater and more ambitious environmental cooperation (Giles Carnero, 2021). This is especially relevant in the framework of trade relations with Latin America and to strengthen a civil society that faces numerous threats both from vulnerability to climate change and from confrontation with violent actors. It is vital to protect human rights defenders, trade unionists and journalists and to urge Latin American governments to commit to ensuring their integrity.

Regional strategies to address urgent issues

Accelerated loss of biodiversity

In recent decades, the planet has suffered a massive loss of biodiversity due to anthropogenic causes, such as the use of land in many regions of high environmental value, climate change and pollution of water sources, among others. Between 1970 and 2020, the world has

**TABLE 4.**

Biodiversity problems and proposals

Problem	Proposal
Overexploitation of natural resources (hunting, logging, fishing, trade in species).	Regional ceilings and joint anti-illegality strategies.
Habitat destruction through conversion of economic activities that change land use in areas of environmental interest.	Regional seals of origin and best environmental practices.
Introduced species.	Regional protocol to deal rapidly and under bioethical principles with the introduction of non-native species into countries and avoid abrupt ecosystem changes.
Climate change.	Regional strategy to delimit and restore high mountain ecosystems, such as moorlands, snow-capped mountains and high Andean forests, among others.

lost 68% of the populations of 21,000 species of mammals, birds, fish and amphibians⁷.

The ecological transition project should revise the climate focus of the environmental organization of Latin American countries to pay special attention to the state of biodiversity. The setting of biodiversity targets at national and regional level should be determined by three crucial factors:

- monitor trends;
- create better communication strategies;
- ensure harmonisation with the global agenda.

As mentioned above, the “extinction rate” can be the pivotal indicator for a regional policy to halt the massive loss of biodiversity, together

with regional programmes and joint instances that address the causes of this phenomenon.

Fragmentation of ecosystems and biological corridors due to lack of coordination among States

Around the world, countless ecosystems can be found that are interconnected across national borders: forests, mangroves, reefs, rivers and a long etcetera of life-supporting biomes that cross the political boundaries set by humanity. This reality has not been matched by global environmental management, which has decided, in many cases, to parcel out ecosystems and biological corridors on the basis of political maps, which has seriously affected the natural cycles.

Joint management of transboundary ecosystems is also a reality. In many latitudes,



⁷ See at: https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/ipv_2020_resumen.pdf



agreements have materialised between two or more countries to implement a model of environmental management beyond national borders in order not to fragment ecosystems or biological corridors. Latin America and the Caribbean are made up of a mosaic of interconnected ecosystems, hence unilateral decision-making in environmental matters has consequences for neighbouring countries involved in the same biological cycle.

There are many agreements, conventions, declarations and roadmaps around the world that invite countries to agree on regional environmental management models, without imposing sovereign approaches on the ecological agenda. Thus, the ecological transition for Latin America and the Caribbean should chart a clear path towards the consolidation of transboundary environmental conservation and restoration agreements.

Environmental degradation and hunger

Science has indicated that much of the world's coastal and island areas are exposed to major climate hazards: natural disasters, water shortages, flooding and beach erosion, among others. Furthermore, the degradation of forests, rivers, moors and other ecosystems in Latin America has a direct impact on the food security

of the entire region. According to the most recent UN study, in 2022 approximately fifty-seven million people will be undernourished in Latin America and the Caribbean. One of the reasons for this is the climate crisis, which has intensified its negative effects on the lives of farmers and fishermen.

The region's agro-food model has also been built on a balance of environmental degradation that today takes its toll on millions of people and threatens the ecological integrity of Latin America and the Caribbean. One of the greatest expressions of this phenomenon is the unregulated extension of the agricultural frontier into forest areas, mainly for livestock farming. In countries such as Colombia, the removal of forest cover for subsequent logging is currently one of the main environmental challenges, as it results in the under-utilisation of vast areas that could be used for large-scale sustainable agriculture programmes or to restore forests and biological corridors. Similarly, the extension of the maritime frontier for industrial fishing has been depleting marine resources, putting millions of people living in coastal environments whose diet is directly dependent on artisanal fisheries at risk of starvation. The UN's SDG agenda includes as its main global goal number two to double smallholder agricultural production (pastoralism, fisheries and agriculture) to ensure the transition to a sustainable agri-food model that

TABLE 5.

Proposals for transboundary environmental conservation and restoration

Create a Latin American strategy to boost transboundary agreements with the collaboration of Unesco through its Man and Biosphere programme.	Propose a multilateral facilitation exercise for all countries in the region to sign on to and ratify regional environmental agreements, such as the protocols to the Cartagena Convention.
Promote regional programmes for the consolidation of conservation clusters between two or more countries for areas such as the Amazon, the Caribbean and high mountain Andean ecosystems, among others.	Systematise species migrating throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to establish safe air, land and marine corridors, as is currently the case in the region with the Jaguar Corridor.

TABLE 6.

Proposals for tackling environmental degradation and hunger

Latin American programme for agroecology with emphasis on low-scale models and local trade.	Regional and concerted strategy against illegal fishing and control and surveillance of large-scale fisheries.
A plan to establish schools for food transition based on a self-sustainable family farming model of home gardens.	International cooperation strategy, assumed by the countries, whose specific function is the fight against malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean.
Advice to states in the region on strengthening markets at the local level, primarily for food stocks, to avoid price volatility.	

does not destroy the ecosystems that it uses and surrounds.

Against this backdrop, which links hunger to overexploitation and the destruction of ecosystems, the region could urgently move forward on several strategies.

Criminal exploitation of natural resources and security of social leaders

The Escazú Agreement has been one of the most important steps taken by Latin American states to protect civil society's environmental leadership and to level the playing field between citizens and environmental exploitation projects. According to the records kept by the NGO Global Witness, Latin America is the deadliest region for environmental defenders, with three out of every four murders of environmental leaders in the world⁸.

The ecological transition is a demand of global citizenship that should in no way entail threats attacks, exiles, assassinations, or any kind of violence or intimidation against people who demand an urgent transition. States, companies and criminal groups have contributed to the stigmatisation and victimisation of environmentalists

and territorial defenders in the region with discourses and policies of stigmatisation. One of the main urgencies to be considered for a successful energy transition is for developed countries, their governments and their companies to commit to guaranteeing an ethical, informed, peaceful and dialogue-based presence in countries where they have economic interests.

Reports on threats to environmental leaders in Latin America conclude that they are closely related to the territorialisation of mining, oil, timber and urban development projects, among others. The state-multinational relationship, in which public order generally cedes the administration and exploitation of natural resources to private actors even by virtue of the provision of a service, has bypassed the central actor in the conservation, restoration and usufruct of environmental services: the communities. And it is this omission that triggers the absence of dialogue channels, lack of information, stigmatisation and, in the worst cases, private management of security and conflicts in areas of influence of the projects. In Honduras, the transfer of a hydroelectric dam to a private company led to the assassination of the leader Berta Cáceres, a high-profile case at the regional level, for which the private company was found guilty. The cooperation of developed countries

⁸ "Un continente mortal para los defensores de la tierra". *El País*, 2022.

TABLE 7.

Proposals to support the work of environmental leaders

Create a regional protocol for releasing information related to high environmental impact projects.	Design mechanisms for the dissemination of each country's environmental inventory, understood as information of general interest.
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with Latin America for a just ecological transition must prioritise the exchange of goods, services and resources in an environment of full information, citizen deliberation, certification of origin and best practices in the exploitation of ecosystems. International cooperation as an observer of these processes will help protect the lives of nature's defenders.

From the Escazú Agreement, some lines of work can be taken up that balance the Europe-Latin America relationship, protect the lives of the environment and contribute to the ecological transition.

Overcoming the fossil energy matrix

It is widely known that the way in which the vast majority of energy is currently produced through fossil fuels is the main cause of the climate crisis that threatens humanity and the planet (UN, 2021). It is also clear that access to energy is an essential service that must be guaranteed.

The UN, being aware of this dilemma, has made great efforts to unite Member States, private sectors and international organizations in the struggle for an energy transition that overcomes the fossil fuel matrix in energy and ensures access to clean electricity for the more than five billion people who do not enjoy this service.

The fight then consists of two imperatives: ending energy poverty and limiting climate change; to meet them, affordable, renewable and sustainable energy for all must be ensured, as stated in SDG 7 of the 2030 Agenda (Guterres, 2021, cited by UN, 2021).

To address the climate crisis, a "clean" energy source is considered to be one that does not

generate carbon emissions into the atmosphere, which contributes to achieving the targets set in multiple international agreements on "zero emissions" to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels (Paris Agreement, 2015). However, the climate crisis is not only caused by global warming, but also by biodiversity loss and land degradation, among other factors.

However, despite the importance of the UN's global transition agenda, this concept of "clean" energy, which prioritises the reduction of emissions caused by the fossil fuel matrix, can also be dangerous and harmful to ecosystems. While there are energy sources (such as wind, solar, nuclear or hydroelectric) that do not generate carbon emissions into the atmosphere, or generate less than fossil fuels and are therefore considered "clean", their production has some negative externalities that should be highlighted. To begin with, not all renewable sources are necessarily clean, as is the case, for example, with mega-hydroelectric plants. Although they do not produce emissions, they not only affect the dynamics of natural populations, but also cause the loss of forests, change the flow of rivers and lead to the emergence of diseases, thus influencing the biodiversity of the planet, which is one of the main problems of the climate crisis today (Craig *et al.*, 2001).

This is important, especially in the case of Central and South America, because, of the modern renewable sources, hydroelectric power is the most widely used, as the graph from the International Energy Agency (IEA) shows. In fact, 45 % of the region's electricity comes from hydropower sources, which is almost three times more than the world average (IEA, 2021). Although

dams are a mechanism for harnessing energy from rivers, their construction does not always generate the expected benefits and profitability, while causing the displacement and impoverishment of multiple communities, damaging important ecosystems and thus favouring the loss of biodiversity (Rico, 2018)⁹.

Another problem for hydropower in these countries is the danger of their operation in the face of climate variability caused by global warming. The IEA (2021) noted that the higher the concentration of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, the greater the negative impact on global hydropower generation. Rising temperatures, fluctuating rainfall patterns, melting glaciers and extreme weather events are variables that countries must take into account in identifying the reliability and cost-effectiveness of hydropower projects (IEA, 2021; China Dialogue, 2022).

It should also be noted that renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power, have their own externalities. They generate energy without emitting carbon into the atmosphere, but the raw materials required for their production destroy the environment of the places where they are extracted. The Europe-Latin America relationship should give a critical sense to the obsession with promoting renewable energy so as not to stimulate an uncontrolled expansion of the industry of these raw materials because it would cause an environmental disaster other than global warming, related to the degradation of ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity (Villadiego, n.d., cited by Aldama, 2020).

The same is true of nuclear energy, which, despite not being a renewable source, does not emit greenhouse gases into the environment

and is therefore considered “clean”. To generate nuclear energy, uranium is required, a mineral that is obtained in different ways and which in this process, as in the extraction of any mineral, does produce greenhouse gases. However, this is not the most important externality of nuclear energy. What is really important is the storage of radioactive materials and the risk that this entails. The case of Chernobyl in 1986 is the perfect example: due to an accident at the power plant, a series of explosions occurred that released an enormous amount of radioactive materials into the atmosphere, which spread over 162,000 km²; this caused not only the death of many people, but also the contamination of more than 200,000 km² (Foro de la Industria Nuclear España, n.d.). The effects still linger within a 30 km radius of the explosion and, in addition, have increased deaths and alterations in the reproductive capacity of many species of flora and fauna (World Health Organization [WHO], 2005).

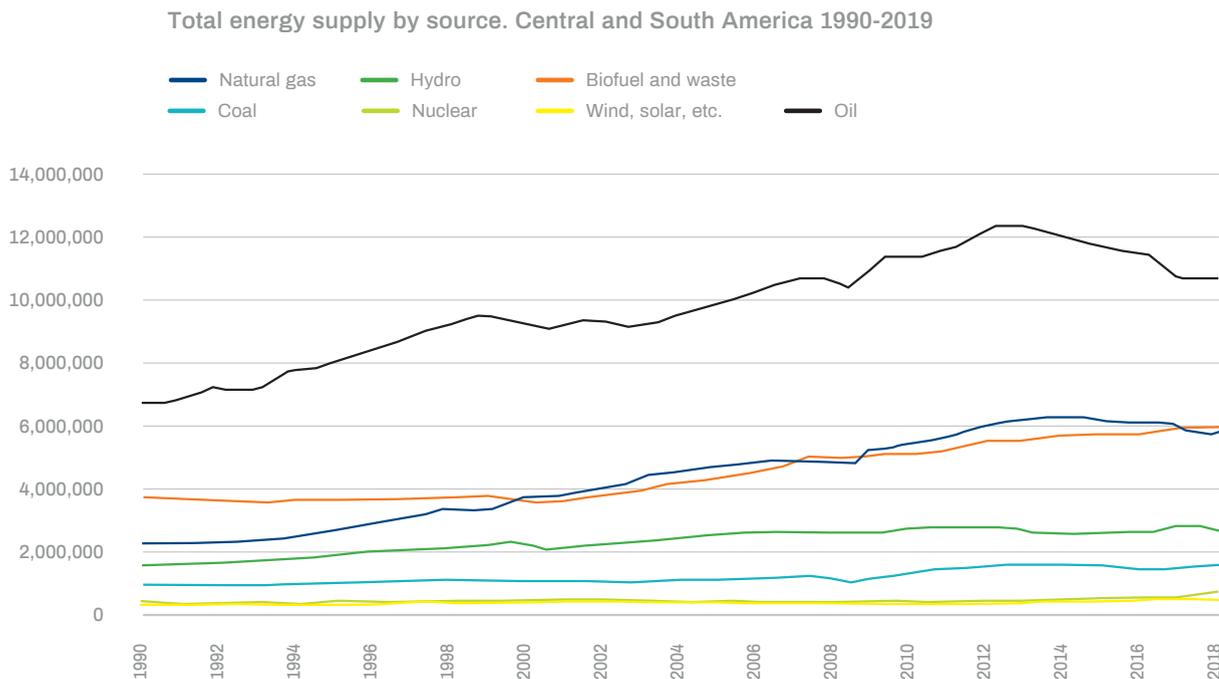
In conclusion, “clean” energy should be read with caution. Although the fight against global warming is a priority at the moment, in order to tackle the climate and environmental crisis, attention should not be diverted from other problems that aggravate it further. The push for clean, sustainable and renewable energy should not lead to a growth in the number of people living in poverty.

The need to reduce energy consumption and a circular economy in which the necessary materials can be recycled and reused instead of discarded is important. It is important to ensure a reduction in energy consumption and a circular economy in which the necessary materials can be recycled and reused instead of being discarded. Only in this way can the ecological transition be sustainable in terms of energy.

⁹ It is worth noting the case of Mexico, presented by Jocelyn Soto (2020) in an article on the website of the international organization Green Peace. In 2013, this country coined a concept of “clean energy” that allowed it to simulate compliance with international agreements, as it considered “clean energy” to be that which does not generate polluting emissions during its production, regardless of whether it causes other damage to the environment. This caused Mexico, in light of international treaties, to go from producing 3.9 % of its electricity from renewable sources to generating 18.9 % in 2012. This 18.9 % was made up of 10.7 % of power from mega-hydroelectric plants, 4 % from nuclear energy and 3.9 % from renewable energy, mainly wind power.

CHART 1.

Participation of the different sources of energy generation in Central and South America



Source: IEA

Risk, vulnerability and environmental health

Latin America's environmental vulnerability is determined by natural hazards that have intensified in recent years: hurricanes, floods, droughts, etc. These threats feed back into the countries' lack of preparedness and adaptation to the planet's new ecological crisis. For example, coastal settlements in areas of hurricanes or the diversion of rivers are risky realities that increase the vulnerability of certain regions to natural hazards.

Recognition of the dangers posed by the phenomenon of climate change has been present in UN treaties, agreements and reports for decades. In 1989, the UN General Assembly wanted to mitigate the consequences of

natural disasters and recognised the importance of prevention, mitigation and preparedness to achieve this. Subsequently, several documents were produced, including the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the Sendai Framework for National Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which already specifically mention the phenomenon of "climate change" as a producer of risks of various categories¹⁰.

On this path, Latin America needs to be mindful of the more serious scientific agenda that has been set to reduce environmental vulnerabilities around the world due to climate change, starting with the regional adaptation strategies that emerge from the same report. This indicates that, while many of the risks are unavoidable in the short term, they could be moderated with appropriate adaptation.

¹⁰ The most important diagnosis and roadmap ever written on climate change is the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Summary for policy makers*.



The proposed risk-based measures could be summarised as follows.

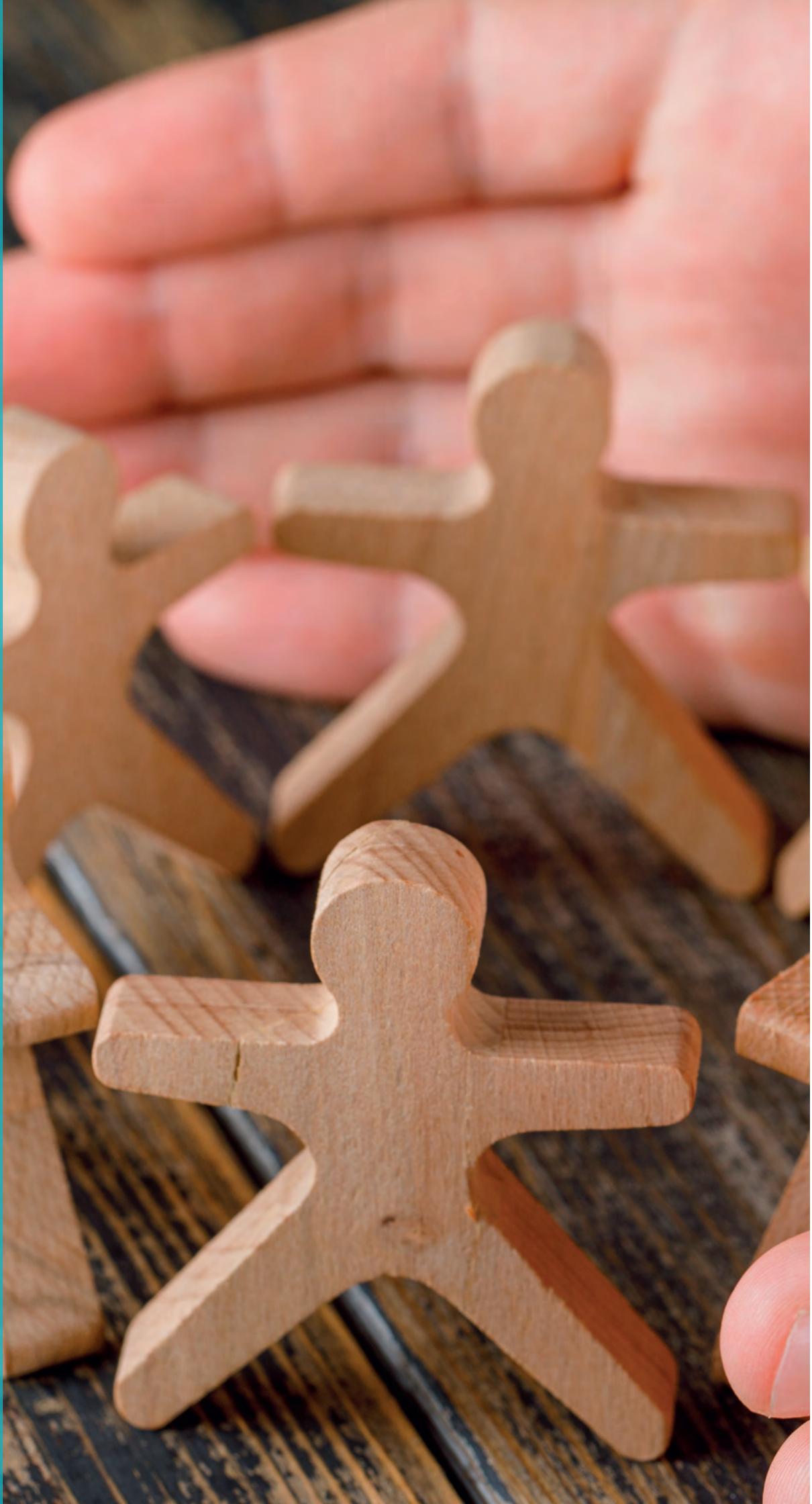
TABLE 8.

Proposals for adaptation to climate change

Floods	Adjustment of existing systems (such as early warnings), wetland and river restoration, land-use planning, upstream forest management and establishment of no-build zones.
Drought	Irrigation (with proper management to avoid other risks, such as soil salinisation).
Food security	Agroforestry, community-based adaptation and knowledge, farm diversification, urban agriculture, natural process-based management, food loss reduction strategies and support for balanced diets.
Forest fires	Diversification and adjustment of tree species composition (in logged-over forests).
General adaptation of forests	Inclusive cooperation and decision-making with local communities and indigenous peoples, recognition of the inherent rights of these peoples.
Loss of biodiversity	Conservation, protection and restoration of ecosystems to reduce the vulnerability of biodiversity to climate change. Facilitate the movement of species to new ecologically appropriate locations, notably by increasing connectivity between conservation or protected areas. Manage vulnerable species intensively. Protect refuge areas where species can survive locally.
Coastal erosion	Conservation of coastal wetlands.
Coastal infrastructure that could be submerged and lost due to sea level rise	Protection, shelter, anticipation and planned relocation.
Diseases	Improved access to safe drinking water, reduced exposure of water and sanitation systems to flooding, improved early warning systems and development of vaccines.
Mental health	Improving mental health surveillance and care and monitoring the psychosocial impact of extreme weather events.
Migration patterns	Enhancing capacities to adapt to climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022, pp. 22-29).



CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP





Latin America is a region of great and complex cultural diversity. In order to address it in its relation to citizenship and processes of social change, it is particularly appropriate to use the concept of “hybridisation” developed by Néstor García Canclini. In opposition to the classical concepts of “syncretism” and “crossbreeding”, the author suggests the idea of “hybridisation” as a mechanism for understanding how socio-cultural processes in which some discrete structures or practices existed separately combine to generate new structures, objects and practices.

García Canclini tends to highlight how the continuous interchange between the traditional and the modern, the popular and the mass, the objective and the subjective is at the basis of the movements of cultural reorganization typical of late modernity and of the very sense of “modernisation”, which would be marked precisely by the increasing breakdown of borders and rigid demarcations, ontologically constituted by modern socio-cultural phenomena and processes (Moebus Retondar, 2008). This complexity of overlapping processes, diverse elements and deterritorialization of cultural experience is at the heart of the understanding and promotion of cultural citizenship as a pillar of a social, environmental and institutional transition in the region.

One of Latin America’s greatest advances in the field of cultural citizenship was born of Ibero-American cooperation: the adoption of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter, a political instrument geared towards the region’s action in this field, which was approved in 2006 at the XVI Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government in Montevideo. The Charter falls within the multilateral framework promoted through the 2001 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In fact, it is the first instrument for the development and implementation of the convention (Rodríguez Pinzón and Romero, 2022). This instrument conceives culture as a condition, a means and an end for personal and social development, with the understanding that there

must be a permanent relationship between social and cultural policies, given that all social policy unquestionably has a symbolic dimension in the construction of citizenship, its inclusion and participation. Another relevant aspect of the Charter, especially in the Ibero-American context, is the protection of diversity as a key factor for human development.

Furthermore, the document recognises and deepens the complexity of the concepts of “interculturality”, “multiculturality”, “biodiversity” and “decolonisation”, and advocates a process of autonomous change through which citizens and communities are free to decide which traditions, values, practices and rituals they wish to reproduce, recreate or transform. Within the framework of these processes, the state is empowered in its role as manager and guarantor of dialogue, participation, respect for worldviews and the decision-making capacity of Ibero-American cultures (OEI and ECLAC, 2012). However, while recognising Ibero-America as a dynamic and unique cultural space, the Charter seeks to strengthen an “Ibero-American space” that is characterised precisely by its capacity for transformation and constant adaptation to new social, economic and political contexts and realities.

The fifteen years of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter are an opportunity to make progress on the issues it raises and to reformulate some concepts. For example, its preamble states that culture is understood as another dimension of citizenship. However, it does not explain what this cultural citizenship consists of.

Much has changed since 2006, when the charter was approved; indeed, the pandemic has profoundly affected the exercise of cultural rights, the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage and the activity of cultural and creative industries in both Europe and Latin America. This, together with the dizzying digital development, has generated a gap that increases inequality and endangers cultural diversity, one of the main bulwarks of the Latin American and Ibero-American sphere.

According to ECLAC (2021c), in Latin America, less than 40 % of the population have



basic computer skills, 30 % have medium skills and less than 25 % have advanced skills. In the case of Spain and Portugal, the European Commission's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) shows that Spain has 91 % internet penetration, which is in line with the European average. In Latin America, it is 72 % (Statista, 2022), although there are large social gaps in terms of connectivity, a situation that particularly affects rural areas. The same situation exists in Argentina, where 77.6 % of internet users are in urban areas (ECLAC, 2021). Chile and Colombia present positive data on the digital skills of the population and the level of connectivity. Peru is where the greatest problems of internet access have been identified due to the lack of infrastructure: only 15 % of the rural population has access to the internet. This context poses a clear risk to guaranteeing citizens' access to and participation in cultural life, i.e. it becomes a limit to "collective rights" (León and Mora, 2006), which guarantee cultural participation in the digital sphere.

It is desirable to advance in the reflection and provide content to the concept of "cultural citizenship" in order to strengthen culture in a changing society. Today, there is a clearer picture of what culture can contribute in situations of great social tension. The role played by this sector in alleviating the harshest moments of confinement was fundamental in conveying the importance of literature, film and music for the people. The social value of culture is one of its greatest strengths and should be closely linked to the concept of "cultural citizenship".

In this sense, the most relevant articulation of concepts is the association of cultural capital with cultural citizenship (Zapata-Barrero, 2016). The creation of cultural capital through cultural consumption, which links people to certain groups, is thus proposed (Bourdieu, 1979). In this way, cultural capital can be associated with social capital and it can be affirmed that participation in cultural life strengthens social cohesion and the very concept of "citizenship". However, in order to produce positive results in this sense, it is necessary to propose approaches based on diversity, starting with one's own places of reference (community, neighbourhood, people).

We can say that cultural citizenship is key for public space to become the place where diversity is welcomed, and should be fostered through public policies. The concept, long advocated, holds that contact reduces prejudice and promotes knowledge (Allport, 1954). Furthermore, we wish to link this notion to that of democracy, incorporating cultural rights into those of citizenship, which encompass civil, political and social rights (Marshall, 2007) and involve not only the theory but also the praxis of citizenship, especially for Latin American women (Lister, 1997). This argument is further supported by the recognition of participation in cultural life as a basic human right in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Participation in cultural life can be grouped into three areas: creation, audiences and management (Moore, 2003). It is on these that cultural policies that strengthen cultural citizenship should focus.

In Brazil, cultural citizenship was incorporated into the management structure of cultural institutions during Gilberto Gil's term as Minister of Culture from 2003 to 2008, and in Colombia, specifically in the city of Medellín, during Jorge Melguizo's term as head of the Secretariat of Citizen Culture (2005-2009). In both cases, the results have been remarkable. In the case of Medellín, it was selected by the Urban Land Institute as the most innovative city out of 200 candidates. In the case of Brazil, it is worth highlighting the creation of culture points that made it possible to link the network of participation in cultural life throughout the country.

These experiences gave rise to the *Cultura Viva Comunitaria* programme, with projects throughout Latin America. It held its first meeting in Mar del Plata in 2009 under the name of the First International Congress for Social Transformation. In 2017, it became part of the of the Ibero-American programmes (Iber) under the name IBERCULTURA VIVA. It constitutes another of the contributions from the Ibero-American space that could be a starting point for developing initiatives in the field of cultural citizenship throughout the region.

The incorporation of cultural rights into the legal system of Latin American countries has taken place gradually. As far as Ecuador is concerned, they have been included in the 2008 Constitution. Among the rights that are reflected is the protection of cultural, tangible and intangible heritage as a non-exhaustive obligation of the State. They also appear in Colombia and Bolivia. The case of Ecuador is also interesting because it advances the concept of an “intercultural state”, which implies a connection between the country’s different cultures in terms of equality. This is also recognised by Bolivia. On the other hand, the text initially presented by the Chilean Constitutional Convention included culture as a right in its draft, based on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations (1966).

New structures are being generated that develop intersectoral partnerships to respond to social needs in a more comprehensive manner. An example of this is the case of health, studied in the report published by the WHO in 2019¹¹. This document scientifically confirmed that culture improves people’s health. Scientific evidence has led to new lines of work to increase the benefits that culture brings to society. This report demonstrates with data that listening to music reduces blood glucose and that painting helps to improve depression, among other notable benefits. This has led many medical treatments to include “cultural therapies” to complement pharmacological means.

With these developments, a world of possibilities opens up for society to recognise the importance of culture beyond mere artistic creation. Mainstreaming is a key element of the new scenario and must be present in Ibero-American cultural policy and in the recognition of cultural citizenship.

The close links with education must also be considered. The need to incorporate artistic disciplines into the educational curriculum is another

urgency that we need to consider in the development of new policy frameworks. It is important to understand the meaning of “cultural life” in order to fully exercise cultural citizenship, and in this process education must be a strategic partner.

One of the specific objectives of this framework of advances and challenges is to develop the concept of “cultural citizenship” in order to broaden the scope of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter, as well as to advance in the respect of the cultural rights included in it, making visible its implication in the exercise of citizenship.

Four aspects of the notion of “citizenship” stand out. Firstly, it is a status that confers rights on the individual; secondly, it is made up of three elements that correspond to three kinds of rights: civil, political and social: civil, political and social, so that one can speak of civil, political and social citizenship, all of which are citizenship rights and are linked to belonging to a community; thirdly, its development took place gradually over a process of three centuries; and finally, citizenship is not a local institution, but a national one by definition, and requires a bond of union, a feeling of belonging to the community that is perceived as a common heritage (Achugar¹² *et al.*). And, of course, in the development of this notion today, we must refer to women’s full citizenship, the basis of which is built precisely on the culture of substantive equality, an *acquis* today in Europe and Latin America (Aguirezabal, 2021).

Following on from this reflection, the current notion of “cultural citizenship” contains a high degree of conceptual ambiguity. For some, it means the right to be different. For others, it is the process through which subjects create and are created by the nation and civil society. If cultural citizenship is about “full participation in cultural life”, then we are left with the task of determining what this “cultural life” implies and what this “full participation” might look like. This

¹¹ <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329834/9789289054553-eng.pdf>

¹² Universidad de la República / Centro Universitario Regional del Este (CURE), Uruguay.

was pointed out by Mauricio Delfín in his contributions during the First Summit of the Americas (2018), organised by the Canada Council for the Arts.

These reflections on citizenship, which took place at the meeting held in Montevideo, Uruguay, on the occasion of the **15th anniversary of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter**, open up a two-way path: on the one hand, the meaning of “cultural citizenship” as a right to participation, also incorporating artistic creation; on the other, the protection of the concept of “cultural diversity”. The latter has been at the heart of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter and of all the actions that have been developed within this framework. Cultural diversity, as recognised in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), is one of the fundamental elements of the cultural policies of the member countries of the Ibero-American space. Therefore, we understand that any development of the concept of “cultural citizenship” should be based on the principle of respect for diversity, which is key to the defence of cultural and citizenship rights (as indicated in the concept note of the commemoration of the **15th anniversary of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter**).

According to the reflections that emerge on the question of “cultural citizenship”, the idea of a possible link with social rights and how they are affected by the situation of inequality should be developed. In addition, some key questions need to be raised to define the concept of “cultural citizenship”, for example: what is the specificity of cultural activities and who are or should be the agents of both cultural practices and governance; what is meant by “cultural life”, “cultural activity” or even “creative industries”; what does it imply to exercise cultural citizenship and to which agents, individual or community, does it refer? What does

exercising cultural citizenship imply, and to which agents, individual or community, does it refer? Do all inhabitants of the Ibero-American space have the right to be recognised as “citizens” of artistic life or activity? (Achugar, 2022).

It is also essential to strengthen young people’s relationship with culture in order to ensure the survival of the concept of “cultural citizenship” (Zapata-Barrero, 2016). This is related to the development of the digital environment and the link that young people establish with culture through technology. New methods of creation (AI), new means of consumption and changes in cultural practices should be explored to determine how they affect the concept of “cultural citizenship”¹³.

It must also be understood that this notion can be debated if we accept “cultural life” in a broad sense. Participation in cultural life, understood as a right enshrined in UN Covenant XV on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, could call into question the professionalism of artists and other cultural workers. In this sense, the professional ecosystem of this sector should be clearly defined and the right of citizens to contribute to the cultural life of their community (or their choice) should be accepted. Both sides of the coin would be acceptable in the concept of “cultural citizenship”, but the nuances should be highlighted.

It is also appropriate to broaden the meaning of “culture” to include science. Scientific culture is part of the heritage of humanity and should be recognised as a fundamental part of cultural life, especially in view of the development of technology, which generates a greater symbiosis between creative and cultural processes.

Another key element is that of intellectual property, which would be closely related to “cultural

¹³ A good practice is that of Brazil and Uruguay, which have cultural citizenship secretariats in their governmental structure. A detailed description of the powers of these bodies could help to determine the scope of the concept.

citizenship” and in fact opens up other debates, such as questions of cultural appropriation (Achugar, 2022).

Culture and digital citizenship in Europe

The EU set out, through the digital agenda, a first digital strategy for the decade 2010-2020 that focused on improving consumer and business access to digital goods and services in Europe, equipping the EU with an advanced system of user rights and consumer and business protection. From 2020, a more comprehensive approach was developed through the Digital Compass 2030 with the intention of implementing digital policies that empower people and businesses to take advantage of a human-centred, sustainable and more prosperous digital future.

This strategy is based on four points that focus on the digital skills of citizens, digital infrastructures, the digital transformation of businesses and the digitisation of public services. It also advances the term “digital citizenship”, which aims to safeguard rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of establishment for businesses and the protection of personal data and intellectual property.

On the other hand, the regulatory package that the EU has put in place to regulate the digital environment (Digital Services Act [DSA], Digital Markets Act [DMA], Data Act, Artificial Intelligence Act) is key to ensuring the development of the digital economy. It is in this area that the cultural and creative sector (CCS) has the strongest presence. According to Eurostat, more than 70 % of the content consumed on the internet is cultural. Music, cinema, reading, etc., are the preferences of users, which generates a special dynamic for the sector, which needs to strengthen its knowledge of the digital economy and ensure that regulatory frameworks support its development.

The European experience in the creation of regulatory frameworks that protect commercial exchanges in the digital environment can be a benchmark for advancing the Ibero-American digital agenda. The Spanish case also provides a very relevant experience: in July 2021, the Spanish government presented a digital rights charter after a participatory process, in which a group of experts with a multidisciplinary profile was set up and two public consultations were held. This charter offers a reference framework to guarantee citizens’ rights in the new digital reality and aims to recognise the challenges posed by the adaptation of current rights to the virtual and digital environment. Without being regulatory in nature, the text includes a set of principles and rights that serve as a guide for future regulatory projects and the development of public policies, in order to guarantee the protection of individual and collective rights in the new global scenarios.

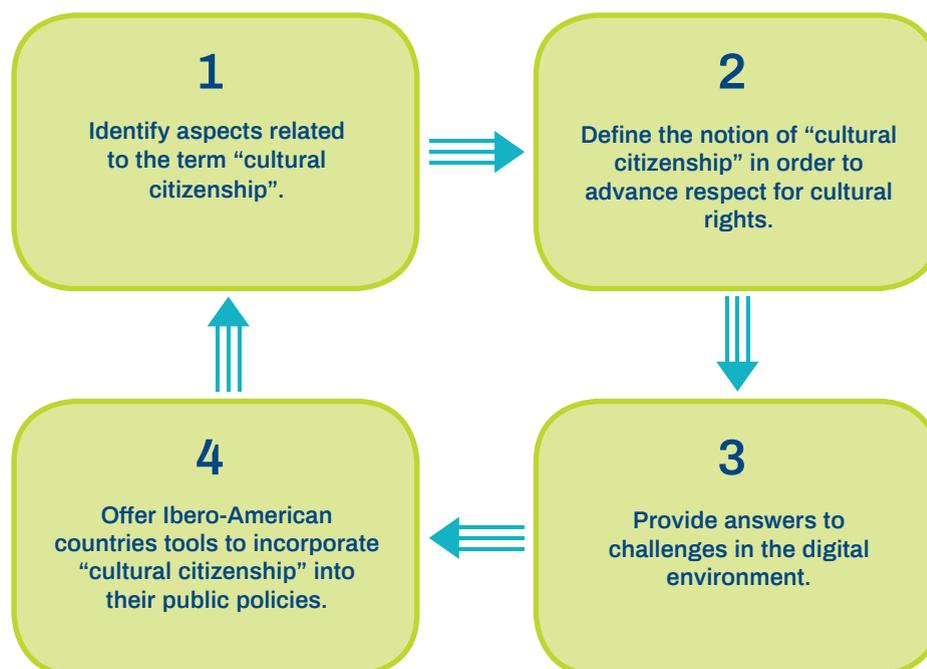
Strategies

In general terms, the strategy suggested here seeks to act on four fundamental aspects.



OUTLINE 5.

A strategy for cultural citizenship



1	Develop the concept of "cultural citizenship" based on the principle of cultural diversity.
2	Expand the content of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter.
3	Investigate the link between cultural citizenship and social rights.
4	Design strategies for the cultural participation of young people, incorporating arts education into the educational curriculum.
5	Study experiences on the creation of cultural citizenship secretariats and other similar bodies in the region.
6	Clearly define the professional ecosystem of the cultural sector.
7	Incorporate cross-sectorality into the cultural fact.
8	Establish an appropriate intellectual property framework.

These actions can be carried out through the Euro-Latin American dialogue on cultural citizenship on three levels that must be connected: expert dialogue, political and institutional dialogue and dialogue with civil society. The aim of this approach from different levels is to implement the following proposals, providing them with legitimacy, viability and, especially, rootedness within the construction of national policies on citizenship and culture. It is also important to promote shared experiences and assistance from one country to another.

EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE: QUALITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



Latin America has made a great effort to advance education, both through national initiatives and from an early multilateralism that took up education as a banner. From the outset, it set out to leave no one behind and applied itself to promoting not only the education of the new generations, but also of adults and vulnerable groups who had not been able to access education and basic skills training in childhood (Rodríguez Pinzón and Romero, 2022).

The literacy rate among 15-24 year olds is now close to 100 % following major advances in literacy in the 1980s and 1990s, which have been consolidated over the course of the 21st century. However, the concept of “literacy” has become more complex: it has moved from seeking to enable as many people as possible to understand written texts and to write to trying to develop life-long competences. Thus:

[...] literacy must be understood as an indispensable foundation for lifelong learning. Literacy is not an isolated set of skills that can be acquired or completed in a short interval of time; rather, it is one component of a set of essential competences that require sustained learning and continuous updating (Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning [Unesco-UIL], 2017, p. 7, cited in Letelir Gálvez, 2018).

Along with literacy, Latin America made progress in expanding educational coverage and years of schooling, and achieved an average of 12.1 years (OEI, 2018). It is important to note the role that families have played, as they have embraced education as the main mechanism for social mobility, which has animated the enormous personal efforts they have made to ensure that their children have access to the best possible education. The combination of policy and social

action has been key to these results. Indeed, one of the major indicators of regional progress is the number of people accessing higher education. In 2017, the enrolled population reached thirty million students, with an average annual growth of 3.7% and a very remarkable progression in Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia and Bolivia. Moreover, many of the new university students are the first in their families to reach this level.

However, further progress is needed. External standardised tests to assess the competences of Ibero-American students, such as the PISA tests or similar tests, show that, even with improvements (except in some particular cases), the countries of the region obtain results below the average of the sample. In fact, there is worrying data such as, for example, “high grade repetition, differences by gender or, even more so, by social background, as well as limited levels of expectation” (OEI, 2018, p. 11).

There are also huge challenges in higher education: enrolments have increased, but with them also a low-quality offer that takes advantage of the huge demand. On the other hand, the dropout rate is high, at 50 %, which means that even if students reach higher education, paying for their studies, slowing down or delaying work and achieving minimum results is not a suitable equation for everyone.

The structural challenges are compounded by the deep mark left by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although, on the one hand, it accelerated the necessary incorporation of digital tools, it did so at a forced pace, without the appropriate quality, preparation or technical conditions. The duration of the pandemic also widened the gap between those who had the technical means to access the virtual world and those who did not. This means that even there is much work ahead at all stages of education and that there are structural and emerging challenges that need to be addressed with an eye to the future, to the process of digitalisation, changes in employment and socio-ecological challenges.

Attention must also be paid to demographic changes and their impact on the demand for education. The region’s demographic bonus is



coming to an end and this means that fewer traditional students will be entering universities. In other words, the demand for university studies from young secondary school graduates will decrease because their demographic cohorts are getting smaller. On the contrary, another student profile has emerged that demands virtual education, management and services (mobility, library, etc.), as well as a more personalised, flexible, shorter and more specialised education, closer to the demands of the productive sector, etc. (OEI, 2022).

In the cases of education and culture, the proposal that emerges from the reflection contained in this paper highlights the Latin American contribution and experience, as well as the need to build on the evidence that has been gathered over more than seventy years of work for education in the region (Rodríguez Pinzón and Romero, 2022). In its commitment to education, based on multilateralism, it has had invaluable allies, such as UNESCO, and has managed not only to create a space for political dialogue, but also to implement numerous projects at all levels. The links with Ibero-America in the field of education constitute an open door to the Euro-Latin American relationship and a rich source of experience.

Grassroots first: early childhood education and reading promotion

According to the data already mentioned, in the last decade Latin America has managed to increase access to education at all levels, including pre-primary education: from 67.1 % in 2008 to 69.9 % in 2012 and reached 75.7% in 2016. Above this average are Brazil (with a remarkable 95 %), Chile (82.4 %), Costa Rica (78.1 %), Cuba (102.4 %), Peru (93.7 %), Surinam (89.7 %) and Uruguay (94.2 %) (United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics [Unicef-UIS], 2016). Despite this remarkable progress, significant disparities persist in many countries in the region, limiting access to quality and inclusive early childhood education

for all children, particularly those from the most vulnerable populations.

It is important to note that pre-primary education is education between the ages of three and six; however, a developmental and equitable approach cannot lose sight of early childhood care and education (ECCE), which is one of the best investments a country can make. Such investment promotes human resource development, gender equality and social cohesion, and reduces the cost of later catch-up programmes. It is also a great tool for equity, compensating for family background deficits and combating educational inequalities for the most vulnerable children.

For this reason, early childhood and pre-primary education are the foundations on whose quality and equal access lie the entire sustainability and equity of the human development system. A bi-regional development policy must address this fundamental aspect of social equity.

Another issue of particular importance at this stage is the creation of reading habits, which reinforce school skills, but also have to do with the formation of critical thinking, creativity and the strengthening of the foundations of autonomous learning.

Ibero-America already has a successful experience through the Ibero-American Reading Plan (ILIMITA), an important inter-institutional effort that was carried out in the early years of the 21st century, with the support of the OEI, *Centro Regional para el Fomento del Libro* (CERLALC), the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (*Agencia Española de Cooperación al Desarrollo, AECID*) and *Convenio Andrés Bello*. ILIMITA geared its actions within the framework of its two cross-cutting axes, articulation and dissemination, through which it managed to promote the formulation and execution of public reading policies; develop activities of reflection on reading in regional spaces, such as book fairs; disseminate experiences in the promotion of reading with a high impact on its target communities; support the preparation and publication of technical documents that provide conceptual and practical elements for the design of



reading promotion programmes; and achieve the involvement of the private (sectoral) enterprise in the plan (Segib, 2002).

This experience serves as a basis for a programme that focuses on creating young readers through early reading stimulation. There is ample space to generate dialogue, share best practices, develop projects and bring together the many committed actors around this goal.

Hybrid education and education for the job of the future

By 2030, enrolments in Latin America and the Caribbean are expected to increase by forty-five million students in higher education. A significant part of this demand will come from social sectors that have historically been under-represented at university and from countries with emerging economies that need to significantly increase the university-educated population to continue to thrive. Moreover, in these countries (and in those that already have university population rates above 30 %), there will be a growing demand for lifelong learning. Technological changes, advances in knowledge and the major impact of digitisation on the labour market will demand it.

Latin American universities cannot remain on the sidelines of the needs that the changing times we are going through pose, with far-reaching challenges in the digital, environmental and socio-economic spheres. The centres have to face them both in terms of their ability to accompany the necessary changes with research and training from an internal point of view, transforming its structures and procedures. To achieve this, internationalisation, the ability to compare and learn from the experiences of other institutions, is a key factor for updating and improvement. The Ibero-American higher education area should gradually strengthen its presence and help universities to continue to be a first-class public for any country or community (Subirats, 2022).

The European experience in this process is perhaps one of the most relevant in the world. With

its successes and weaknesses, Europe has implemented programmes that have profoundly changed its model of university education: the Bologna Plan, the Erasmus Programme and Erasmus Mundus, among others.

Within the framework of common values, but above all in the regulatory and demographic complementarity between Europe and Latin America, an effort must be made to deepen and improve their relationship around higher education and the development of science and technology. In this regard, this proposal suggests covering two essential issues: firstly, skills training for the jobs of the future and, secondly, hybrid training models.

The study *Education, Youth and Work. Skills and competences needed in a changing context*, jointly prepared by the OEI and ECLAC, emphasises the existing gap between the skills on which the training provided by educational institutions focuses and those required by the productive system. The application of competence-based educational models is an ongoing practice; however, their consolidation requires a design of educational, curricular and assessment policies in order to adapt to the risks and opportunities that arise for young people as a consequence of the processes of automation and digitalisation. In the future, about half of all jobs may be automated, which will affect low- and medium-skilled people, especially young people, the most (OEI and ECLAC, 2020).

In fact, compatibility between academic and professional content is currently low. Although, in general, the educational level of young people is higher than that of the adult population, 80 % of them do not have a profile that is compatible with the requirements associated with higher productivity jobs. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2016), 36 % of young people state that they do not apply the knowledge acquired in their work and 39 % that their work requires a lower level of education. In turn, another element that emerges is that, when separated according to areas of knowledge, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers are perceived to have a greater mismatch. 50 % of employers report difficulties



in filling vacancies: the reasons are lack of experience (25 %), shortage of technical skills (24 %) and lack of sought-after profiles (17 %).

Migratory flows also pose a relevant challenge, in this case associated with the selection bias of migrants, which could be increasing the potential problems of human capital shortages in the region and, therefore, the difficulty in matching the profiles required by the most dynamic firms.

There is a need for non-educational plans and programmes that adapt to the new times, incorporating the digital modality or looking for hybrid methodologies, but always in a more thoughtful and elaborated way. This should not increase social, gender or digital discrimination, but rather the opposite: to seek the development of pedagogical resources that take into account the specific needs of social groups and collectives, thus reducing the digital divide in the region. This work requires the involvement of different social agents (such as citizens, national and international governments and the business sector, among others) in order not only to condition and adapt remote areas to provide the necessary infrastructure, but also to create other types of initiatives, such as scholarship programmes and financial aid for families with fewer economic resources.

Policies that aim to bring educational institutions closer to these potential students should design hybrid formats, without presuming that the mere acquisition of devices and connectivity will insert them into the virtual world (Perosa *et al.*, 2022). This process is therefore complex and requires addressing different points, including access to devices and basic skills, training of teachers, creation of personalised support systems, access to licences and equitable learning environments, etc. Among the practices to be highlighted is the launch of the *Kalos Virtual Iberoamérica* seal, which will certify the quality of distance university programmes in the region and was launched by the OEI and the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

It is necessary to address the challenges arising from the resistance to change on the part of academia, which fears that digitisation will lead to a

loss of identity that will distort the meaning and purpose of university institutions. It is also necessary to support institutions in addressing two urgent needs: firstly, a cultural change, which must be accompanied by strategic reflection; secondly, a greater role for and demand from the student body.

Teaching innovation and quality of education

Spain has a rich and heterogeneous history of pedagogical renewal, full of Spanish initiatives that represented a rupture and an innovation in each historical moment (Pericacho, 2013). In fact, in the educational reform processes of the 1980s and 1990s in Latin America, Spanish education left its mark.

Pedagogy and innovation in education are key tools to overcome the challenges of digitalisation and the changing labour markets of the future. It is necessary to ensure that people develop their skills from the earliest stages of life in the best possible way. That is why the education of children, the development of scientific vocations, training in vocational skills or lifelong learning cannot be separated from the interest in digitalisation, science and technology.

In this sense, the key lies in quality, linked not only to the availability of material resources, but also to the training of teachers and the people who accompany them in the training processes and to the ability to transform educational models in order to adapt them to technological progress. From a systemic point of view, the quality of education is not a factor to be considered independently, but rather as the sum of a number of crucial and interrelated components, and also an equity issue (Unicef, 2019).

In both Europe and Latin America, there is an enormous diversity of educational models, many of them dependent on local general government, which further widens the casuistry. Despite this, it is possible not only to dialogue, but also to create programmes to improve teacher training or to develop training support projects.



Strategies

Strategies in education

Early reading promotion programme.	Regional strategy for digital skills education.
Programmes to strengthen capacities and overcome inequality in early childhood and pre-primary care and education.	Support for adapting academic content to the reality of the labour market, with a commitment to dual education.
Teacher training and academic mobility programmes.	Support for hybrid models through the development of strategies, methodologies and regulations for their development.
Promotion of STEM programmes in compulsory education cycles.	Support for vocational training systems.
Educational cooperation for mobility and easier establishment of bi-regional scientific consortia.	Promotion of alternating approaches between academia and business in high-tech careers.

Proposals for action

Strengthen knowledge and innovation exchange networks with Spain and Europe through the creation of tripartite alliances between governments, universities and companies. Efforts must be redoubled to meet the objectives of Ibero-American academic mobility and overcome the difficulties that limit it.

Proposals

Within the framework of the 2030 Ibero-American University strategy, carry out an analysis of best practices in digitalisation and virtual teaching.	Create spaces to enhance hybrid education systems and make progress in addressing their challenges.
Enhance the process of quality assessment in higher education initiated by the OEI.	Develop and strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation programmes in vocational and lifelong training adapted to the demands of productive transformation.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (STI)



Between 1950 and 1970, science and technology policies began to be institutionalised in Latin America. In the case of countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, government ministries, agencies and departments were created to coordinate and guide the actions to be taken in these fields.

Scientific institutions were set up mainly in Mexico and Brazil, while European scientists emigrated to Argentina, Uruguay and Chile and promoted research and science education, establishing engineering schools and technical institutes and encouraging the study of archaeology and anthropology, as well as research in medicine and public health.

These processes were accompanied by the growing strength of engineering activities linked to the expansion of the physical infrastructure of railways, ports, sewerage, roads and even telecommunications, in addition to maintenance of industrial equipment, prospecting and mining activities, and the improvement of agricultural production (Sagasti and Pavez, 1989).

Despite these initiatives, overall, investment in research and development in the region remained low.

Over time, although Latin America made progress in education, health and institutional development indicators, for example, science and technology were not central to government action, even though they represented an opportunity within the import substitution policy that the region tried to implement. Moreover, in the 1980s and beyond, the subordination to trade and financial liberalisation, in particular the cycle of structural adjustment and policy reforms

linked to the Washington Consensus, significantly undermined the policy of developing home-grown technologies. This led to a market-oriented STI policy characterised by competitive matching grants and the promotion of firms, defined as the demand for knowledge (Katz, 2007; Natera and Medina, 2022).

However, the first decade of the 21st century brought some relevant changes linked to a political cycle with a deep social impact and to the good economic situation as a result of a commodity export boom. In this period, for example, digital innovation was not limited to education, industry and public services. Culture and artistic expression took centre stage. Moreover, principles of technological sovereignty, locality and bridging digital divides were established in almost all countries (Avila, 2022).

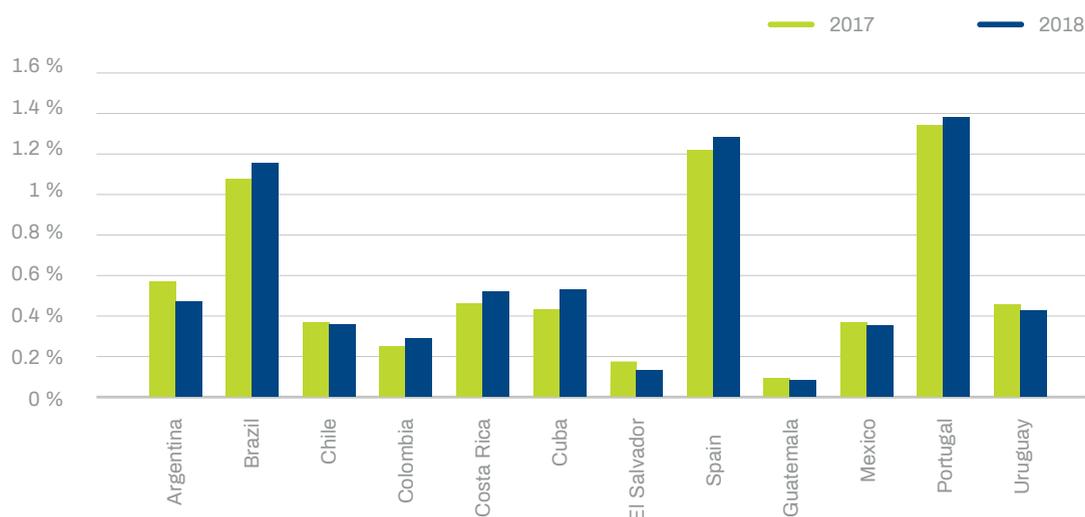
However, the change of governments and the downturn in growth brought with it a drastic shift towards general governments that placed the interests of the private sector, locally and internationally, above the advances that had been made in areas related to science and innovation, such as inclusive digital transformation. Instead of pursuing massive digitalisation projects, governments funded accelerated innovation clusters, entrepreneurship funds and large public-private partnerships with tech giants, not only to acquire hardware and software, but also to transfer entire government functions to them (Avila, 2022). One of the examples of the impact of this shift is that today less than 10 % of government operating systems run on open source software (Kaspersky Security Network, 2020, cited in Avila, 2022). This poses a risk, given that critical data storage infrastructures, on which the functioning of government in many countries depends, are entirely moved to US platforms, with the consequent application of private standards of a foreign legal system at high cost (Ávila, 2022).

In general terms, and without going into the important particularities of the different countries in the region, it can be said that the rationality of STI policies in Ibero-American countries evolved hand in hand with changes in the general



CHART 2.

R&D expenditure (% of GDP) in selected countries (2017-2018)



Source: Medina and Castillo, 2022

frameworks of public intervention (Natera and Medina, 2022).

The 21st century is the century of the knowledge and information society¹⁴, which has highlighted the importance of investment in innovation, as well as in intellectual resources and the generation of ideas, necessary for economic growth and competitiveness, but also to face the great challenges facing humanity, such as climate change and food insecurity, among others. Latin America faces this process with a great task ahead of it.

Ibero-American investment in R&D is low when compared with that of industrialised countries. In terms relative to GDP, the Ibero-American countries as a whole made an investment which represented 0.74 % of regional gross domestic

product in 2018, while the same indicator for Latin America and the Caribbean reached 0.63 %. In comparison, Korea and Israel allocate almost 5 % of their GDP, while in Germany and the United States this investment is around 3 % (Natera and Medina, 2022).

In the decade 2009-2018, the economy grew more than R&D investment, which was only 2.8 % worldwide, a figure that explains the region's low productivity, as stated in the report *Higher Education, Competitiveness and Productivity in Ibero-America*. In addition, the 2020 Global Innovation Index (World Intellectual Property Organization [WIPO], 2021) shows that: public and private investment in research and development is low, and that the use of intellectual property systems is still incipient.

¹⁴ A knowledge society is a society that considers knowledge as a fundamental element for its development and progress. On the basis that knowledge and information have a significant impact on people's lives, the exchange of knowledge and information through information and communication technologies (ICTs) is seen as having the power to transform economies and societies alike. According to Unesco, knowledge societies must rest on four pillars: freedom of expression, universal access to information and knowledge, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, and quality education for all. Source: Building knowledge societies, Unesco (2002): <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000125647>.



Proof of this is that Chile and Mexico, leaders in innovation in the region, do not appear until 54th and 55th place in the world ranking.

According to WIPO, Latin America as a whole is lagging behind in terms of invention, as evidenced by its low level of patents, even today. According to WIPO data for 2019, 56,000 patent applications were obtained from the Latin American and Caribbean region, which represents only 1.7 %¹⁵ at the global level. It is worth noting that 82 % of these patents from Latin America and the Caribbean come from foreign companies that safeguard products in the region (OEI, 2022).

In general terms, looking at the 2018 Digital Ecosystem Development Index, composed of eight pillars (infrastructure, connectivity, household digitisation, production digitisation, competitive intensity, digital industries, factors of production and regulatory frameworks), Latin America and the Caribbean are positioned at an intermediate level of development and adopt an index value of 49.92 (on a scale of 0 to 100), which would place the region in a more advanced position than Africa (35.05) and also slightly better than Asia Pacific (49.16). However, in comparative terms, the region is at a disadvantage and lags behind other blocs, such as Europe and North America (Development Bank of Latin America [CAF], 2017; Medina and Castillo, 2022).

Despite the shortcomings, in the last five years there has been a 25 % increase in the number of Ibero-American researchers. Most of them, 56 %, carry out their activities at university level and in these years they have managed to increase by 81 % the number of articles published in scientific journals registered in Scopus. However, only 12% of the academics are PhDs (OEI, 2020).

These data, together with the evolution of university enrolments, show the importance of the university in the Latin American ecosystem of science and innovation, but also the great

challenges it faces, without sufficient human and material resources to achieve a greater scientific and social impact.

One of the biggest problems in the region is that efforts are not aligned with capacity building and the meeting of national challenges, which results in important consequences, such as:

[...] projects with little funding, low socio-economic impact and limited market reach; large dispersion of projects, which undermines the creation of intensive innovation capacities; prioritisation of short-term projects, conditioned by political cycles, which do not address strategic thematic areas, and weak local capacities to address priority challenges (ECLAC, 2021).

There is also a clear lack of resource mobilisation from the private sector. Governments account for 50 % of R&D funding, although this greater weight of public investment can be explained by the public good nature of knowledge, which in turn translates into a lower relative importance in the productive and market spheres, as well as a low propensity for appropriability of innovation results (ECLAC, 2016; Medina and Castillo, 2022).

Research and technology development clusters remain concentrated in the capitals of Latin American countries, leaving other regions with little or none, which directly affects progress and impact. Technological innovation has great potential, linked to the comprehensive

¹⁵ Charts available on the official WIPO website: <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/infogdocs/en/ipfactsandfigures2019/>



CHART 3.

R&D expenditure by funding and execution sector (2019)



Source: data from the Ibero-American and Inter-American Network of Science and Technology Indicators (RICYT), obtained from Natera and Medina, 2022.

TABLE 9.

Challenges of science and technology in Latin America

At present, there is a weak link between universities and research centres on the one hand, and between both actors and the national productive sectors on the other.	A higher level of internationalisation and scientific exchange with other areas of the world is required.
There is a prevailing disconnect between ecosystem actors and the governance of science, technology and innovation.	There is insufficient human capital, in terms of PhDs, in hard sciences and business incubators for the development of technology start-ups.
Investment in research and development is precarious in relation to GDP: it is far below that of developed countries and rests mainly in the hands of the state.	The number of scientific researchers per 100,000 people shows an Ibero-America at a disadvantage compared to other regions of the world.
The publication rate in scientific journals is below the average of the developed world.	A small number of patents are registered.
Research and technology development clusters remain concentrated in the capitals of Latin American countries, leaving other regions with little or none, which directly affects progress and impact.	



development of the region; in fact, it is one of the key elements of the “mission-oriented” policy proposal that Mariana Mazzucato (2022) plans for Latin America. She highlights some efforts, such as the first advances in public procurement and contracting in favour of innovation that have been made in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Colombia and Peru. In fact, this incipient experience demonstrates the need for an adequate regulatory framework, the absence of which, although it does not make pro-innovation procurement completely unviable, does hinder its use in a more systematic way (Comotto and Meza, 2017, cited in Mazzucato, 2022).

In short, in an increasingly complex global scenario, investment and the development of policies on science, technology and innovation cannot be addressed in isolation from or turning a back to the challenges and problems affecting governments and society today. On the contrary, the agenda of states must include these areas of knowledge, emphasising the fundamental role of public and private strategies that support the development of science, technology and innovation in the region and enhance the dynamic links between science and industry.

The Euro-Latin American relationship in the digital transition

The EU is one of the most scientifically and innovatively developed areas in the world, although, as in the Latin American region, there are significant differences between the 27 member countries. However, as a regional system, it has made significant progress in strengthening research and development. The Horizon 2020 programme and its successor, Horizon Europe, are benchmarks not only for the breakthroughs they have enabled, but also for their returns: “Every euro invested under Horizon 2020 is estimated to result in a GDP increase of between €6 to €8.5” (European Commission and Labareda, 2020).

Europe’s capabilities in science and innovation and its commitment to a comprehensive

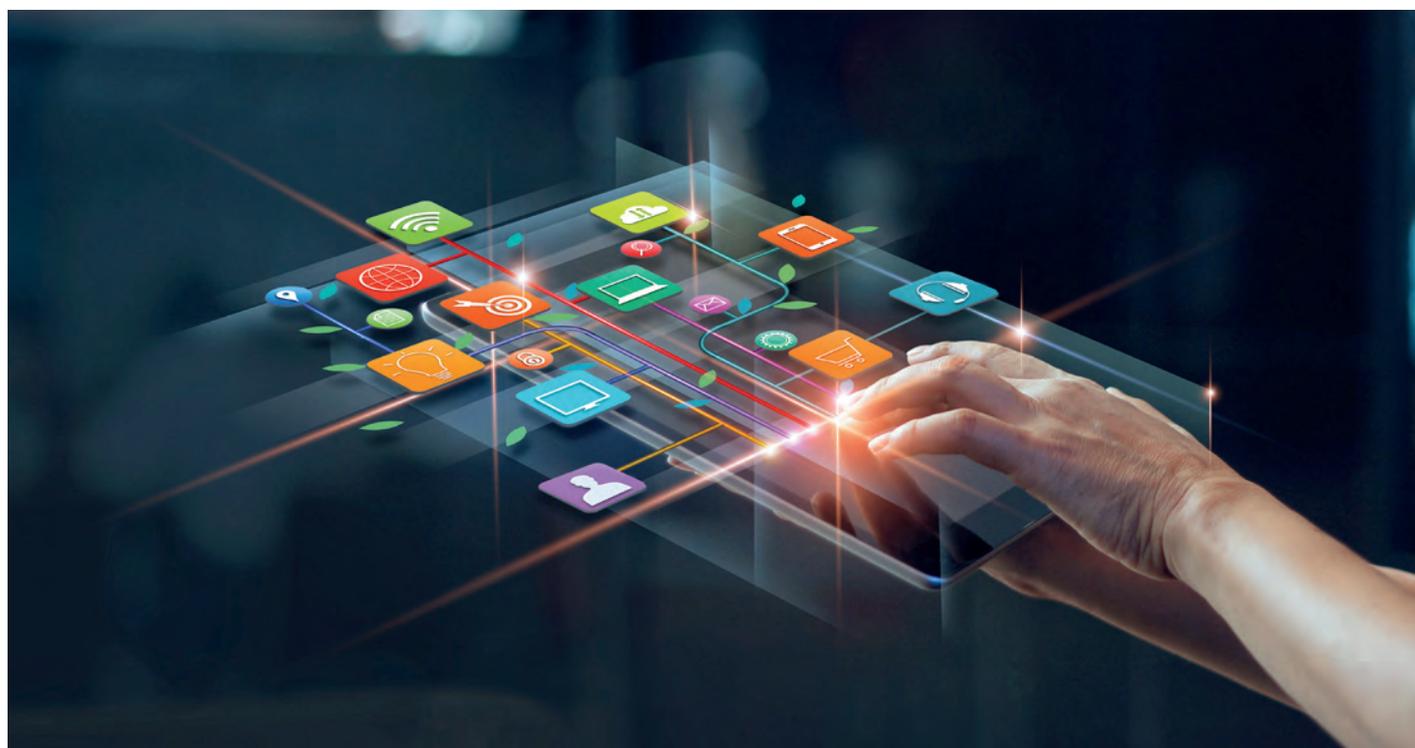
transition in its economic and energy model mean that the region can once again be at the forefront of the world in areas that are crucial for Latin America. This is one of the pillars on which the strategic bilateral relationship must be based.

In fact, there has been significant progress in this regard: in 2022, the EU-LAC digital alliance, linked to the laying of the transatlantic fibre optic cable (EllaLink), and the European Union’s Global Gateway connectivity strategy will be launched. Strong support for digitisation processes should reinforce their social dimension and strengthen the digital and productive transition of enterprises.

While projects of this type are a qualitative leap in the relationship, it is also important to pay attention to the asymmetries in the benefits. For example, projects such as BELLA and EllaLink benefit leading countries in the region through access to data, astronomical observation (as in Chile) or particle research (as in Brazil), with clear advantages for some countries and delayed benefits in terms of time and priority for others. There is a need for win-win strategies that take into account regional differences and differing needs, but what is needed is to move towards win-win cooperation (Avila, 2022).

Another noteworthy programme as an example, despite the limits of its scope, is the FORCYT programme for strengthening science and technology, in which the OEI participates, together with the European Union. It was signed in 2021. This project aims to foster the creation of bi-regional research networks, improve the region’s science and technology statistical production systems, and strengthen the evaluation and monitoring of public science policies in order to develop evidence-based science policy to improve decision-making.

A very important challenge in the framework of bi-regional cooperation is to make it truly inclusive and to take advantage of the power of local networks and civil society in Latin America. Both for the digital transition and for progress in science and technology it is necessary to rely on the grassroots: associations of municipalities,



networks of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, associations of start-ups and gamers, micro-enterprise organizations, community media networks, peasant cooperatives, library networks and associations, collectives for the improvement of education and groups that advocate for food security. Latin America functions with solidarity and cooperation networks that are interconnected from the grassroots and must be harnessed, recognised and given their due space when the new institutional concept is drawn up (Ávila, 2022).

The two regions have a very strong incentive to join forces despite the similarities between them. In the current geopolitical framework and in the face of the uncertain evolution of the de-globalisation or post-globalisation process, the alliance can have great advantages, from those derived from building networks of trust to cement productive complementarity and friendshoring to those that come from the accumulation of means, talent and financial capacity. As Mazzucato (2019) points out, it is not only true that productive investments generate growth, but also that the Keynesian multiplier effect is stronger when spending is more geared towards, for example,

the information and communication revolution (as was the case in the 1980s and 1990s) and perhaps the green revolution of the coming years. The combined efforts of the two regions may even be more cost-effective in an international system in full readjustment. In this sense, one of Mazzucato's proposals (2022) in his 'mission' plan for Latin America is particularly relevant in the framework of the European strategy. It is the financing of innovation and technological capabilities through natural resource funds.

Given the vulnerability of primary-sector dependent economies and the depth of the structural challenges, it is difficult to guarantee the necessary long-term resources for innovation, science and technology, following the experience of developed countries rich in natural resources that were financed by royalties from the commodification of minerals, oil and hydrocarbons.

These funds were intended to redistribute income from natural resource sectors, as well as to develop new capacities.

These approaches already have a track record in the region, as reported by Mazzucato



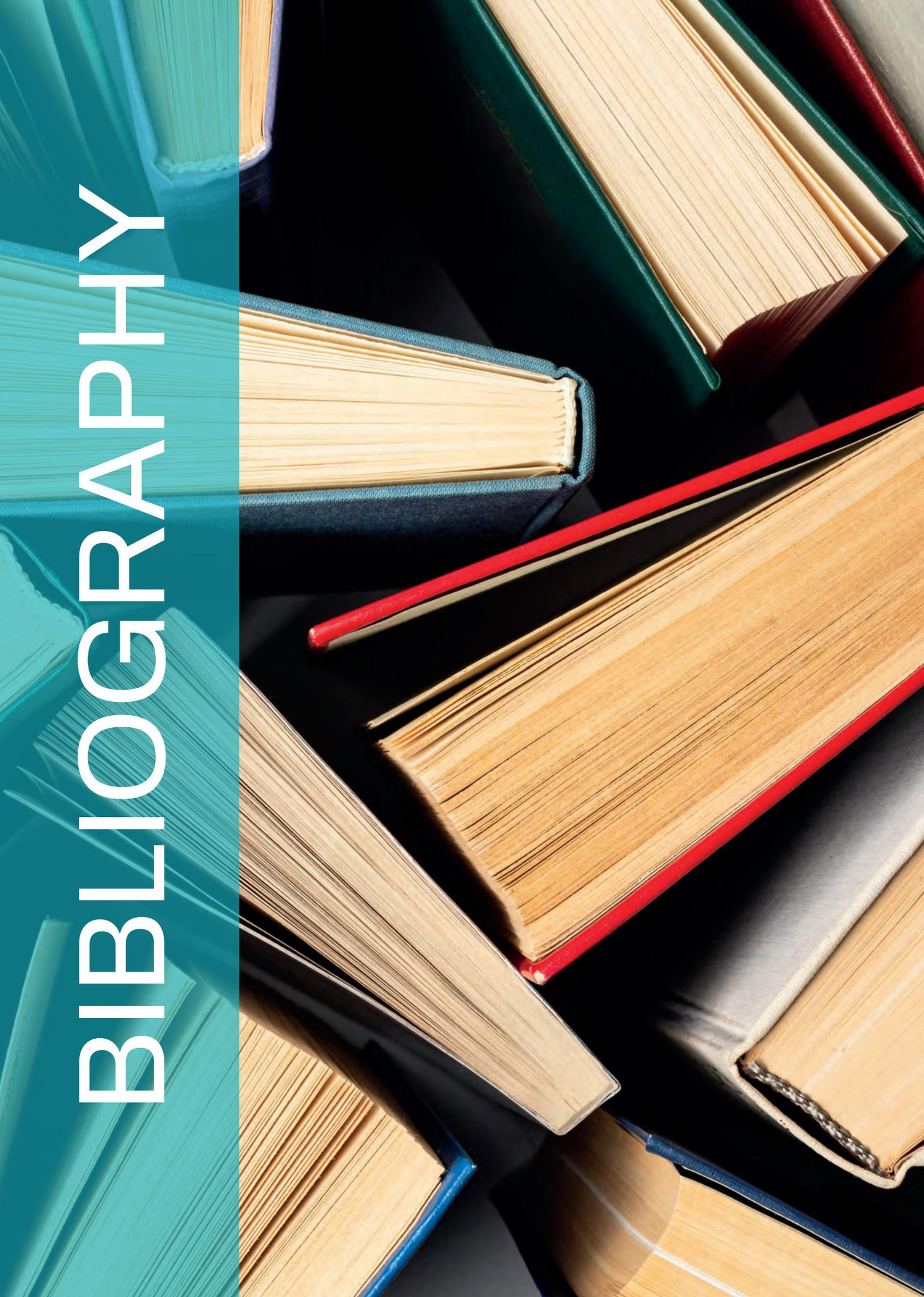
(2019). Traditionally, this type of financial instrument has been used to respond to development challenges, support public investment and develop innovative capacities. There are relevant experiences in Chile, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico that pave the way for deepening this mechanism in order to coordinate public sector efforts and to offer long-term financing with a view to developing innovative capabilities and seizing technological opportunities, the results of which depend on the ability to

strike a balance between short- and long-term priorities. In this particular case, the European experience in the use and application of Next Generation funds, despite regional differences, can be very relevant, especially with regard to the difficulty some of the existing models have faced in formulating sustainable and quality proposals, implementing public-private schemes and developing impact monitoring and measurement systems.

Strategies

Accelerate the process of digital transition in Ibero-America to enable its full entry into the information and knowledge society.	Promote joint actions to train human resources and to promote the use of robotics, artificial intelligence, artificial nanotechnology, blockchain and the internet of things.
Seek novel formulas to strengthen science, technology and innovation ecosystems in the region with a view to increasing the productivity and competitiveness of the various national productive areas.	Promote the formation of research and innovation networks at various levels, both at university and scientific level and at business and social level.
Generate an intra-regional cooperation network for mentoring and incubation of research and development groups and initiatives in science, technology and innovation.	Share experiences and technical skills to set up investment funds with the objective of financing intensive projects in science and technology using the European experience of Next Generation.

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