

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE GENERAL IBEROAMERICAN SECRETARIAT

The European Commission hereafter referred to as "the Commission" represented by the Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Mrs Benita Ferrero-Waldner, on one side, and:

The General Iberoamerican Secretariat, hereafter referred to as "The Secretariat," represented by the General Secretary Mr Enrique Iglesias, on the other hand,

Collectively referred to as "the parties",

Considering that as an executive organ of the European Union, the Commission is responsible for managing and implementing the policies and programmes adopted by the Parliament and Council,

That the General Iberoamerican Secretariat (SEGIB) is the permanent organ for institutional, technical and administrative support for the Iberoamerican Conference, with the competencies allocated in its Statute, agreed by the XIV Summit of Iberoamerican Heads of State and Government in San José, Costa Rica, on 19 and 20 November 2004.

In order to facilitate the fulfilment of their institutional objectives and with the aim of cooperating in reenergising political, economic and cultural relations between the both regions, agree that a "Memorandum for Understanding" would provide an adequate framework for inter-institutional cooperation.

Both parties believe that deepening their cooperation, taking into consideration their respective comparative advantages, will result in an increased efficiency of their activities in both regions.

## 1. OBJECTIVE

The objective at hand is to foster dialogue and institutional cooperation between both parties and in particular to encourage an alliance and collaboration in fields of mutual interest, particularly regarding the EU-LAC and Iberoamerican Summit processes with the effect of reinforcing the bi-regional association.

## 2. AREAS FOR POLICY DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATION:

The Commission and the SEGIB have agreed to concentrate their policy dialogue and collaboration in the following areas of shared priority:

- The EU-LAC and Iberoamerican Summit processes

Both the EU-LAC and the Iberoamerican Summits are key events that because of their visibility and political significance can contribute to the strengthening of the strategic partnership between the two regions. There is a need to develop all possible synergies between these two processes so as to contribute more effectively to this endeavour. This should be the parties' priority area of intervention.



- Social cohesion

The promotion of social cohesion that is the fight against poverty, inequality and social exclusion is a challenge for the LAC and the EU regions. The EC and SEGIB will support experiences and processes in this area.

- Regional Integration

Regional integration remains a challenge for the LAC region. The EC and SEGIB will continue to support the regional integration efforts made by the different sub-regions and regions in the LAC area.

- Middle Income Countries

The majority of LAC countries are middle income countries. Cooperation with MICs is important both for development and political-strategic purposes. The EC and SEGIB will participate in the reflection on how best continue cooperation with and support to MICs

- Migration

Migration has become an issue of major social, economic and political importance and an integral part of the regular bi-regional dialogue between the EU and LAC. The EC and SEGIB will foster an exchange of best practices in this area.

- Education

The EU and SEGIB will support EU and LAC commitment to the promotion of a common area for higher education and support for cultural and academic exchanges.

### 3. MODALITIES OF COOPERATION

These objectives will be achieved through regular policy dialogue and enhanced collaboration. These initiatives will offer an important opportunity to put into practice common values and ideals.

The following constitute the various modalities of cooperation between the two sides:

- a) Consultation and reciprocal sharing of information, particularly regarding the EU-LAC and Iberoamerican Summit process. This will involve reciprocal attendance to the Summits and developing a framework of cooperation and consultation in the in- between Summits period;
- b) Exchange of experiences and of best practices;
- c) Organisation of seminars, conferences and workshops;
- d) Other potential modalities and partnerships agreed by the parties.

In order to deepen and diversify the association between our regions, we require a renewed effort, greater political will, more instruments at our disposal and greater levels of institutionalisation. It is essential for "bi-regional" relations to strengthen progressively and for this reason they must diversify, involving greater participation from governmental



and political actors, social actors (business leaders and syndicates), cities and regions, the world of culture, universities and research centres and sectors representative of civil society, etc. This will enable us to achieve jointly greater regional integration aimed at progress in the fields of security, development and democracy.

#### 4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COLLABORATION

The main forum for policy dialogue between the Commission and SEGIB will be formal, regular bilateral meetings, where discussions will take place on policy matters of common interest to the both parties and particularly on those directly related to the EU-LAC and Iberoamerican Summit processes. The Commission and SEGIB will also reciprocally invite each other to meetings and working groups that are relevant for the cooperation between both parties.

Both parties will develop means of cooperation which are coherent with their association with the processes of the Iberoamerican Summits (in the case of the Commission) and with the EU-LAC Summits (in the case of SEGIB).

The focal points to this end will be, on the one hand the Directorate general for External Relations in the Commission, and on the other hand, the Directorate for External relations in the SEGIB. The focal points shall ensure the coordination within their respective organisations.

#### 5. VALIDITY

The present memorandum will enter into effect on the date on which it is signed.

The present Memorandum will be valid for five years, automatically extendible by the same period. Either party may cancel the agreement by written notification. The cancellation will take six months from receipt of written notification and will not affect the projects being implemented at that time, unless agreed otherwise.

The present memorandum may be modified, by mutual agreement, by request from one of the parties. Such modifications will enter into effect in accordance with the procedure specified in the first paragraph.

Signed in Vienna, on the twelfth of May of two thousand and six, in two (2) original copies in Spanish and English, with both texts being equally authentic.

12 May 2006

