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BACKGROUND¹

EU - LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN SUMMIT LIMA, 16 and 17 May 2008

The fifth summit between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC) will be held in Lima, Peru, on 16-17 May 2008. It will bring together heads of state and government from 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries and from the 27 member states of the European Union.

The overall objective of this event is to strengthen the links between the two regions by political dialogue at the highest level and by fostering cooperation on central issues. This year's summit will focus on two main challenges:

- the **fight against poverty, inequality and exclusion** and
- **sustainable development**, in particular environmental protection, climate change and energy.

The aim is to share experiences and promote best practices and policies to strengthen social cohesion and to highlight joint efforts towards ensuring sustainable development by preventing climate change and mitigating its adverse effects, halting the loss of biodiversity, as well as promoting sustainable energy production and use.

The results of the summit will be summed up in a common declaration of heads of state and government. Upon its adoption scheduled for 16 May 2008, the declaration will be published on the website of the Slovenian Presidency (www.eu2008.si), as well as on the Council website (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).

Moreover, the summit will provide a framework for **specific dialogues** with subregions (Andean Community², Central America, Caribbean Forum CARIFORUM³, Mercosur⁴) and with individual countries with which the EU has signed association agreements (Chile and Mexico). This will offer an opportunity to take stock of progress in negotiations on association agreements with the Andean Community, Central America and Mercosur.

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

² Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

³ CARIFORUM is composed of 13 Caribbean island states plus the coastal states Belize, Guyana and Suriname.

⁴ Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The summit will be preceded by a meeting of foreign affairs ministers, a meeting of high level government officials and the second EU-LAC business summit, organised by the Peruvian Confederation of Private Enterprises (Confiep).

The EU delegation will be led by Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša as current President of the European Council, High Representative for common foreign and security policy Javier Solana and the President of the Commission José Manuel Barroso.

The EU-LAC summit, a **forum for regular political dialogue**, takes place every two years. The first summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1999, followed by summits in Madrid in 2002, Guadalajara in 2004 and Vienna in 2006.

The **strategic partnership** between the European Union and Latin American and the Caribbean, launched at Rio, has been consolidated and further developed at subsequent summit meetings. It now includes a broad range of key issues such as

- social cohesion
- regional integration
- economic, financial and trade relations
- promoting a multilateral approach,
- respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law
- combating drugs and organised crime
- sustainable development.

The European Union is the leading donor in development assistance, the second biggest foreign investor and the second most important trade partner for the LAC region.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.vcumbrealcue.org/website/index.php>
(official summit website of the Peruvian government)

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/la/index_en.htm
(European Commission's website on relations with Latin America).
