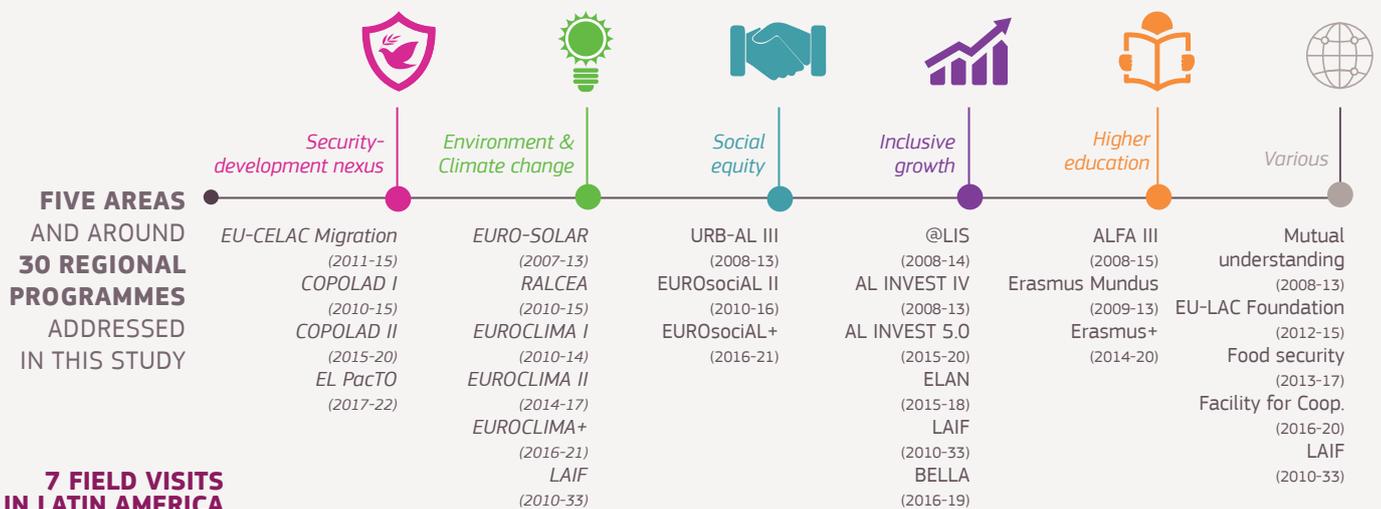




European Commission

EVALUATION OF THE EU'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH LATIN AMERICA (2009-2017)

This evaluation is an independent, evidence-based assessment of the European Union (EU) regional development cooperation with Latin America in 2009-2017. It aims at providing key lessons and recommendations to improve and inform future regional cooperation. The EU regional cooperation covers 18 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.



FIVE AREAS AND AROUND 30 REGIONAL PROGRAMMES ADDRESSED IN THIS STUDY

7 FIELD VISITS IN LATIN AMERICA AN E-SURVEY

Field visits in seven countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru) and an e-survey to all EU Delegations in the region.



370 INTERVIEWS

Interviews with a large range of stakeholders, including EU Headquarters and Delegations, Member States, international organisations, universities, civil society and business organisations.



1,000 DOCUMENTS

Documents analysed, included EU strategies/programmes, evaluations, progress reports and documentation from other development partners.



METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The evaluation was implemented between November 2017 and March 2019. It was based on a theory-based approach using a contribution analysis framework. An inventory of EU regional support and seven evaluation questions, with judgment criteria and indicators were defined to guide data collection and analysis. The evaluation was managed by DG DEVCO's Evaluation and Results Unit, and the process was overseen by an inter-service steering group including all EU relevant services.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Latin America is a region with a surface area of around 19 million km² and a total population of 618 million. After the 2008/2009 world crisis, economic activity rebounded quickly. However, while growth remained relatively robust in Central America, it came to a halt in South America, mainly due to recession in the two largest countries (Argentina

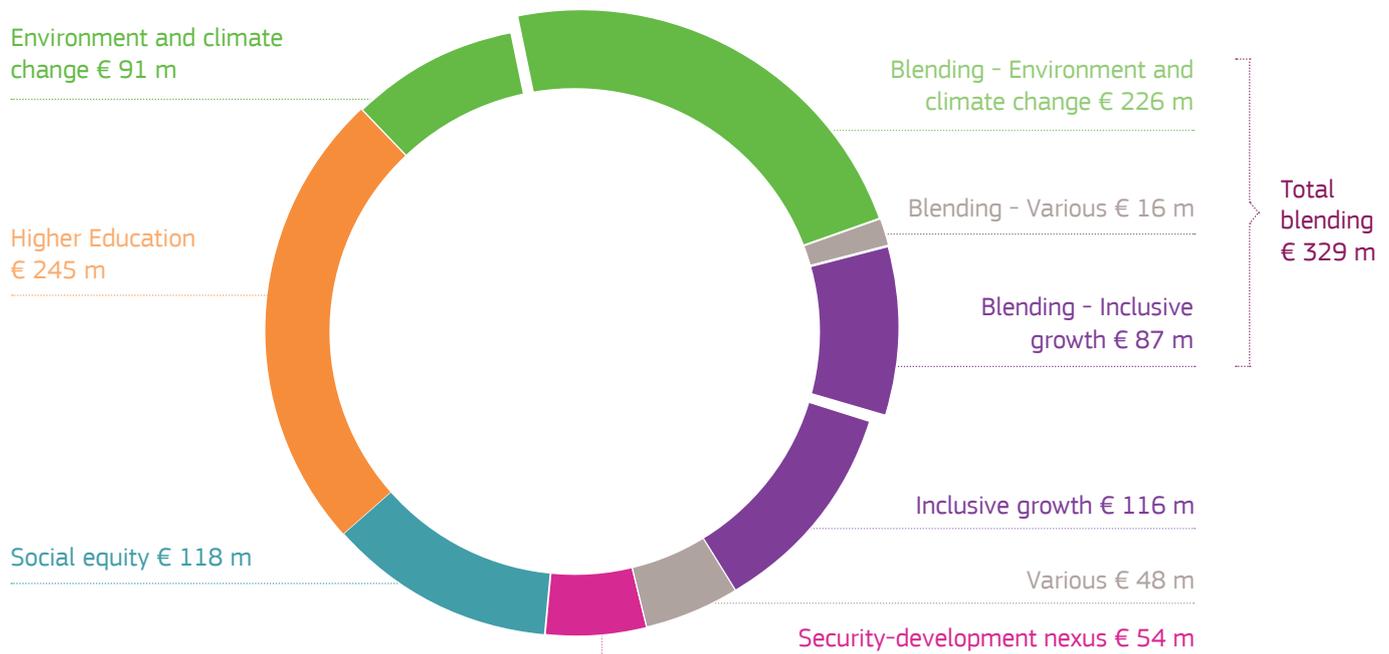
and Brazil) and the breakdown of the Venezuelan economy. Over the last decade, several Latin American countries have achieved upper middle income country status and poverty/extreme poverty have declined steadily in both relative and absolute terms. However, pockets of poverty persist and gender equality is still a big challenge. Beyond national and sub regional specificities, some crucial issues are common to the region as a whole.

THE EU-LA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The EU's partnership with Latin America is embedded in close historical and cultural ties, extensive people-to-people exchanges, strong and growing trade and investment flows, and shared values and aspirations. While there have been EU-LA bi-regional relations for several decades, high-level summits, accompanied by ministerial and sectoral meetings, have taken place in a more structured and regular way since 1999.

EU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

EU regional support for Latin America in 2009-2017 amounted to around **EUR 1 billion**.



OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Overall, the evaluation highlights the following main findings:



STRONG FRAMEWORK FOR JOINT ACTION

A comprehensive strategic partnership has been built on the basis of strong historical links and common interests in the face of major global challenges.

KEY CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

EU has significantly contributed to strengthening joint EU-LA responses to key development challenges, leading to improved policy and institutional frameworks in areas such as: social cohesion, environment and climate change, higher education, science and technology and key governance matters.



CREDIBILITY AND EU ADDED VALUE

Regional cooperation has proved to be a powerful tool for achieving results, with EU institutions the most credible partner to promote it.

INNOVATIVE COOPERATION MODELS

Intra-regional and triangular (EU and intra-Latin America) cooperation has been highly developed, consolidating models for peer exchanges between Latin American countries belonging to different income groups.



AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Lack of a regional capacity to monitor and evaluate the implementation of sectoral policy support; and potential for coordination and synergies between regional, sub-regional and national cooperation programmes not fully exploited.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

C1. Strategic relevance: appropriate focus on institution-building to respond to regional challenges

EU support was highly relevant, demand driven and appropriately focused on strengthening institutional capacities and response strategies. This made the programmes more attractive and improved the level of ownership.

Call to action



R1: Strengthen links and feedback loops between regional programmes and bi-regional dialogue

C2. Strong EU added value and innovative approaches to regional cooperation

The EU support highlighted the regional dimension of the key challenges to development and promoted innovative approaches, including South-South and triangular (North-South-South) exchanges where graduated countries played a key role.

Call to action



R2: Define specific strategies and models to strengthen the involvement of graduated countries

C3. Gender equality and marginalised groups: improvements in implementation, but lack of systematic approach

The regional programmes lacked a systematic approach to gender equality and the rights of marginalised groups, although gender-related improvements were observed in the programming of some programmes (EUROSociAL, EUROCLIMA).

Call to action



R3: Establish a comprehensive rights-based approach in programming and implementation

C4. Joint regional responses developed to address global challenges

EU support fostered a common vision among Latin American and EU partners in main policy areas. This helped CELAC put its development vision into practice, though its capacity to implement and monitor remained weak.

Call to action



R4: Promote regional mechanisms and tools to facilitate networking, coordination and monitoring

R5: Put monitoring and learning at the centre of the regional cooperation programmes

SECTOR RESULTS

C5. Common ground established to address the security-development nexus

Regional cooperation helped promote a common understanding and joint institutional tools to address crucial security challenges, focusing on drugs policy; the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime; and migration.

Initial achievements were significant but, barring a few exceptions (e.g. EL PACCTO), consultation with national stakeholders was not optimal.

Call to action



R6: Reinforce high-level dialogue and country stakeholders' participation to strengthen the security-development nexus

C6. Strengthened regional awareness and promotion of national reforms targeting environment and climate change

EU programmes helped promote:

- regional awareness of the environment and climate change;
- regional specialised networks;
- national policy reforms;
- bilateral cooperation; and
- new green investment in water, energy and transport (e.g. LAIF).

However, the lack of regional monitoring and coordination capacity was limiting.

Call to action



R7: Promote the establishment of a regional coordination institution or mechanism on climate change

R10: Improve LAIF's coherence and complementarity with the regional cooperation programmes

C7. Effective support to policy reforms fostering social equity

Mainly through EUROSociAL, public policies were upgraded (e.g. taxation, social protection and basic services, enhanced access to justice). Such support became very popular and led to widespread regional exchanges of expertise and policy models.

Call to action



R8: Strengthen the EU regional support to social reforms by focusing on new social exclusions and vulnerabilities and enhancing the participation of non-state actors

C8. MSMEs strengthened for inclusive growth, with a new focus on competitiveness and strategic investment

For over 20 years the regional programmes have successfully supported Latin American MSMEs as the engine for inclusive growth in the region, strengthening their business associations, bi regional networks and technology exchange, internationalisation, and competitiveness (e.g. AL-INVEST and ELAN). More recently they have also started leveraging strategic investment projects, but linkages between the regional investment facility LAIF and other EU programmes and key regional priorities need strengthening.

Call to action



R9: Focus on improving the private sector development framework to enable MSME growth

R10: Improve LAIF's coherence and complementarity with the regional cooperation programmes

C9. Valuable contributions to networks in higher education and student mobility

The programmes supported bi-regional university networks for quality teaching and research (ALFA & Erasmus+), improved student mobility and inclusion (Erasmus Mundus & Erasmus+), and boosted the internationalisation of Latin American universities.

EU support for higher education has long been successful and is highly visible and attractive, but synergies with other EU regional development programmes are still limited.

Call to action



R11: Strengthen reciprocity and inclusion of higher education programmes and improve links with other European interventions

COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY

C10. Despite some good practices, EU-internal coordination remains weak and synergies limited

Despite some good practices, synergies between regional cooperation and other EU actions were weak. This mainly regards the coordination and complementarities with other development programmes (national and

thematic) and the related role of EUDs and other instances involved. It also regards its coherence and coordination with other programmes, such as the links between the bi-regional dialogue on Science and Technology and the higher education programmes.

Call to action



R5: Put monitoring and learning at the centre of the regional cooperation programmes

R12: Improve coordination between regional, national and thematic cooperation with a focus on EU Delegations and Headquarters' roles

C11. Coordination with EU Member States was limited and synergies were scarce

There was some exchange of information with Member States, and a few actively took part, through technical agencies, in the implementation of EU regional programmes, but tangible synergies with EU Member States' bilateral or sub-regional cooperation are scarce.

Call to action



R12: Improve coordination between regional, national and thematic cooperation with a focus on EU Delegations and Headquarters' roles

C12. Regional monitoring and learning processes developed halfway

The results of programme implementation were not fully fed into regional policy and institutional learning, due to weak monitoring mandates and systems and to poor links between the programmes and intra- or bi-regional policy dialogue structures.

Call to action



R1: Strengthen links and feedback loops between regional programmes and bi-regional dialogue

R5: Put monitoring and learning at the centre of the regional cooperation programmes

OVERVIEW OF THE GRADUATION PROCESS AND EVOLUTION OF BILATERAL AND REGIONAL EU SUPPORT TO LATIN AMERICA



The independent evaluation was carried out by Enzo Caputo, Jörn Dosch, Ana García Femenía, Warren Olding, Carlos Rivera, Tino Smaïl, Susan Soux, Sergio Uribe. The opinions expressed in this document represent the authors' points of view which are not necessarily shared by the European Commission or by the authorities of the countries involved. The full report is available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/80199_en. Manuscript completed in May 2019. The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication. © European Union, 2019. Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged. The reuse policy of European Commission documents is regulated by Decision 2011/833/EU (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the copyright of the European Union, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders. Printed by OIB in Belgium.