

Launch of the negotiations of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Andean Community (CAN), 6-8 May 2003

• [The EU & the Andean Community](#)

IP/03/636 - Brussels, 06 May 2003

See also:

☞ [Opening of the first round of negotiations](#)
Speech by Chris Patten
06/05/03

On 6 May 2003, Chris Patten, Commissioner for External Relations, opened the first round of negotiations of a new Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Andean Community (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela). Speaking at the opening ceremony, Commissioner Patten stated: "Today marks an important step forward in our relations which will ultimately strengthen our political dialogue and expand our cooperation to new areas such as conflict prevention, drugs and good governance. I hope we can conclude the negotiations that we are opening here today by the end of the year". Commissioner Patten also referred to the shared belief about the merits of regional integration: "Politically, regional integration contributes to the stability of the region and fosters democracy and respect for human rights. In economic terms, as we have seen in Europe first-hand, integration means development and growth; we are ready to help others benefit from the same experience". Prior to the opening of the negotiations, Commissioner Patten and the Secretary General of the Andean Community Mr De Soto met bilaterally to review the bi-regional relationship and prospects for its evolution.



Chris Patten (left), Commissioner for External Relations & Mr. De Soto, Secretary General of the Andean Community

The Andean region was the first region in Latin America with which the EU concluded a regional cooperation agreement. Relations between the EU and the CAN already encompass a large spectrum of cooperation fields and are currently governed by the second regional framework agreement which entered into force in 1993. This agreement is complemented by the Rome Declaration of 1996 laying down modalities for political dialogue as well as a generous EC trade regime known as the 'drugs' GSP under which 90% of the products exported by the Andean community are exempt from customs duties.

The new EU-CAN Agreement on political dialogue and cooperation aims to formalise and strengthen the political dialogue by putting it on a contractual basis and focusing it more on the concerns of both regions (such as security, regional development and stability, conflict prevention and resolution, human rights, democracy, good governance, terrorism, migration and drugs) and intensifying exchanges at working level. Its provisions on cooperation endeavour to widen the scope of the bi-regional relationship and support the Andean Community's regional integration process which comprises economic, political and social cooperation.

The decision to negotiate this agreement was taken by Heads of State and Government at the Madrid European Union-Latin America and Caribbean Summit in 2002. The first round will last three days and cover the entirety of the draft text submitted by the Commission. A second round should take place in Ecuador in the autumn. The EU aims to conclude the Agreement before the next European Union-Latin American and Caribbean Summit of Heads of State and

Government, which is to take place in Mexico in 2004.

The European Union is the leading donor to the Andean Community with EU aid worth about € 810 million in 2001 (Development Aid Committee source). Historically, the European Commission has granted significant levels of development cooperation to the Andean Community, averaging some €130 million per annum over the past ten years. This cooperation has focused on human rights and democracy, regional integration, integrated rural development, infrastructure and social development. The new Agreement will expand current cooperation to include new areas such as conflict prevention, uprooted people, migration and counter-terrorism.