

MINUTES
FIFTH MEETING OF THE
ANDEAN COMMUNITY - EU JOINT COMMITTEE

I. Presentation of the delegations and approval of the agenda.

The fifth meeting of the Andean Community - European Union Joint Committee was held in Cartagena, Colombia on 19 February 1999.

The delegation of the European Commission was chaired by Mr Santiago Gómez Reino, Deputy Director-General in Directorate-General IB, and included representatives of the Council of the European Union and departments of the European Commission.

- The delegation of the Andean Community was headed by Dr Angela María Orozco Gómez, Colombian Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, and Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas de Zubiria, Deputy Minister for Asia, Africa and Oceania, Colombian External Relations Ministry.

The delegations of the Andean countries were headed by:

- Ana Maria Solares Gaité, Deputy Minister of International Economic Relations and Integration, Bolivian External Relations and Worship Ministry.
- Fernando Yopez Lasso, Director-General of Integration, External Relations Ministry of Ecuador.
- Ambassador Jose Antonio Arrospide del Busto, Permanent Representative of Peru to the European Communities, External Relations Ministry of Peru.
- Ambassador Jorge Valero, Director-General of the External Relations Ministry of Venezuela.

Jorge Vega Castro, Jose Antonio Garcia Belaunde and Carlos Longa Gonzalez of the Secretariat General of the Andean Community also participated in the meeting.

The list of participants appears in Annex II to these minutes.

The deliberations were held in a constructive and friendly atmosphere, as is traditional in relations among the parties. Having approved the agenda (Annex I), the participants moved on to discuss the various items.

II. Opening addresses

The Joint Committee meeting was opened by Marta Lucia Ramirez de Rincon, Foreign Trade Minister of Colombia, who gave an analysis of integration and relations between the European Union and Latin American countries or integration groups.

The Andean delegation gave an analysis of relations between the Andean Community and the EU, the Framework Cooperation Agreement, trade results, investment, the Andean Generalised System of Preferences, and the specialised dialogue on the fight against drugs, including a prospective analysis of its possible development and the need to strengthen the political dialogue and trade, investment and technology flows.

The EC expressed its satisfaction at progress made in bilateral relations over the last two years and at the strengthening of the political, economic and cooperation framework. It stressed that it was important for the parties to concentrate now on regional cooperation priorities as a follow-up to the adoption by the European Community of the Country Strategy Paper for the Andean region.

III. General reflections on the situation of both parties

Under items 3.1 and 3.2 of the agenda, the representatives of both regions examined the current situation of the respective economic integration processes, especially the institutional consolidation of the Andean Integration System, the state of integration of the Andean Community with other regional groups, progress on the enlargement of the European Union, the adoption of the euro, the progress of negotiations on economic and trade integration with Latin America, the new WTO agenda and recent events in the international financial system. The delegations underscored their mutual desire to achieve multilateralism in the context of international trade rules.

Under item 3.3 progress in the preparation of the summit of Heads of State and Government in Rio de Janeiro was reviewed. The Andean Community reiterated its request to hold, on the fringes of the summit, a meeting of the European troika and the Andean Presidents to discuss future relations between the two regions. The European delegation took note of this request and stressed that the competent bodies would take the relevant decision.

IV Progress of work of subcommittees and dialogue on drugs

Item 4 of the agenda comprised an analysis of the progress of the joint subcommittee on Science and Technology and the summary record of the eighth meeting in La Paz on 21 April 1998 was presented. The Andean Community recommended stepping up discussion of the transfer of technical progress and technological innovation in the productive sectors and educational technologies, besides the subjects broached in the scientific field.

The report on the results of the joint subcommittee on Trade and Industry was also presented. Its last meeting was held on 2 December 1997 in Brussels. The delegations welcomed the progress in the cooperation project start-up processes put forward by the subcommittee, particularly on Quality, Customs and Competition.

Finally, under this item, the high-level dialogue on drugs was discussed. The principle of shared responsibility guiding this dialogue was emphasised. The participants noted with satisfaction the progress made, including entry into force of the Agreements on Precursors, the Agreement on Technical Assistance signed on 12 February 1998 in fields of great importance for the fight against drugs and the special dialogue on drugs. The European Commission suggested organising an EU-Andean Community technical seminar on cooperation relating to drugs, an initiative welcomed with interest by the Andean Community. The Andean Community proposed that the next meeting of the working party provided for in the precursors agreement be held in the near future.

V. Economic and trade relations

The Andean embassies in Brussels tabled an evaluation of the Generalised System of Preferences, the Andean GSP. The importance of this mechanism for Andean exports was underlined, along with the focus on farm and agro-industrial products and basic and intermediate mining and consumer goods. An analysis was given of EU exports to the Andean Community with the trend towards industrial, intermediate and final goods (chemicals, capital goods, metallic engineering and automotive products) with significant added value and built-in technical progress.

The parties welcomed the renewal of the Andean GSP for three more years. Thanks to these preferences and the most-favoured-nation clause, almost 90% of the Andean tariff headings have access to the territory of the European Community free of any levies.

The EC stressed the importance of the trade openings granted to the Andean Community and the need to improve generally the use of the system's benefits and diversify exportable supplies.

The Secretariat General of the Andean Community analysed the trade and investment figures. For trade, it was confirmed that the overall figures had evolved positively between 1994 and 1998 but there had been a significant deterioration in the Andean Community's trade surplus over that same period, which would probably turn into a deficit in 1998 since European exports had risen more rapidly than Andean exports.

EU direct foreign investment in the Andean Community has significantly increased in the last few years, with the EU countries becoming the biggest investors in the Andean region, especially through their participation in the privatisation processes of certain services and public undertakings, in the financial system and manufacturing, mining and oil activities.

These increasing investment flows are being fostered by a series of investment protection and promotion agreements and by agreements regulating dual taxation, signed bilaterally by the countries of both regions. The need to promote full implementation of the measures stipulated in those agreements was emphasised.

Finally, the delegates highlighted the use of the instruments of cooperation and investment promotion put at the disposal of the Andean Community by the EU, such

as ECIP and AL-INVEST. The agreements signed with the European Investment Bank and the need to obtain greater use of cooperation and the development of investment agreements. The need to mobilise the necessary efforts to bring the Andean-European AL-partnership to fruition in the year 2000 was emphasised and both delegations expressed a wish to see the Andean-European Business Council consolidated as soon as possible.

The European Community highlighted the existing obstacles (animal health and other) for Community exports of pigmeat derivatives to the Andean Community.

The Andean Community reiterated that there were still problems of access to the European market, for example health regulations, trade names and tariff classification.

VI Cooperation

Under item 6.1 of the Agenda, the positive development of the last few years was underlined. Besides growing in quantitative terms, cooperation has been diversified into new areas of mutual interest. The European Union and its Member States have been the chief providers of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the countries of the Andean Community.

The projects being implemented, Granadua and Calidad, were also examined. The next steps were considered with a mutual desire for smooth development of the latter. The Andean Community hopes for a reply to its request to continue the VECEP programme.

The progress in the competition project was supported because of the need to promote regional regulations and Andean harmonisation of legislation in this matter, as well as the training of human and technical resources, information technologies and the monitoring framework. The last revisions are expected to be carried out and the agreement between the EU and the Andean Community signed in the first six months of 2000.

On item 6.2, the European Commission presented the outline of its strategy for cooperation with the Andean Community. It emphasised the importance of verifying the effective contribution of the approved initiatives to the regional integration process, and the effective political endorsement of the Andean countries. It is essential to define jointly the key areas of cooperation, confining it to a small number of high priority and highly visible projects.

The strategic document for cooperation with the Andean region, approved by the EU, identifies four fields of regional cooperation:

- Institutional strengthening of the Andean Community.
- Promotion of trade and the domestic and external economic development of the Andean Community.
- Management and preservation of the environment.

- Fight against drug production and trafficking.

For each of those fields, it is essential to carry out a joint reflection so as to identify, in the medium term, the specific cooperation projects.

For its part, the Andean Community presented the following subjects of priority interest:

- Strengthening of the Andean internal market.
- Development of the Andean institutions.
- Social agenda.

The Andean Community tabled a strategic document illustrating the thematic areas and possible projects that could be developed under each subject (Annex III).

The parties noted with satisfaction the compatibility of the priority subjects presented by each group. They decided to define as soon as possible a list of projects forming a medium-term EU-Andean cooperation programme. The European side stressed the importance of having a single interlocutor with the Andean Community competent in matters of aid programming.

The Andean Community notes with deep satisfaction the upcoming visit to the region of a European experts' mission charged with identifying a regional programme on disaster prevention.

VII. Timetable

The parties agreed, on the basis of the shape of the existing dialogue, to give renewed impetus to their ties in the years ahead.

The delegations decided in principle to hold the meeting of the sixth European Community - Andean Community Joint Committee in the second half of the year 2000 in Brussels or in the country holding the EU presidency.

Representatives of the two regions would try to fix a date for the meetings of the joint subcommittees on "Science and Technology" and "Trade and Industry" in the first and second half of 1999 respectively.

The Andean Community noted with satisfaction the proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding regarding new Andean-EU cooperation priorities and projects.

VIII. Close and signing of minutes

The representatives hereby sign these minutes in the city of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on the nineteenth day of February 1999.

FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

(signed)
Santiago Gómez Reino
Deputy Director-General DG IB
European Commission

FOR THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY

(signed)
Angela María Orozco Gómez
Deputy Minister for External Trade
Colombia

(signed)
José Nicolás Rivas de Zubiría
Deputy Minister for Europe, Colombia

ANNEX I

AGENDA OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

**CAN/COM = Andean Community/European Community

<u>Time</u>	<u>Speakers</u>	<u>Subjects</u>
09h00	CAN/COM**	1. Presentation of delegations and approval of agenda.
	CAN/COM	2. Introduction: opening addresses.
09h30	CAN	3.1 Process of integration of the Andean Community. Colombia Current situation and evolution of Andean Integration System. State of relations with other regional groups. Some considerations on the economic and financial environment.
09h50	COM	3.2 Situation of the European Union. The euro € Agenda 2000: enlargement of the European Community. Relations between the European Union and Latin America (MERCOSUR, Chile, Mexico, Central America).
10h10	CAN/COM	Ecuador: Prospects for the European Union - Latin America summit of Heads of State and Government for both regions.
10h30		Coffee
10h45	CAN/COM	4. Progress of work of subcommittees and specialised dialogue on drugs.
	Venezuela	4.1. Subcommittee on Science and Technology.
	Ecuador	4.2. Subcommittee on Trade and Industry.
	Bolivia	4.3. High-level dialogue on drugs.
11h15	CAN/COM CAN	5. Trade relations. 5.1. Recent evaluation of European Union and Andean Community investment and trade

	Sec. Gen	
	CAN/COM	5.2. Renewal of the GSP Colombia Andean embassies
	CAN/COM	5.3. EU-Andean Community Europartnership, Andean-European Colombia Business Council and ECIP.
13h00		Lunch
16h00		6. Cooperation
16h15	CAN/COM	6.1. Progress since fourth Joint Committee.
Sec.Gen.		Projects being implemented: Granadua and Calidad.
	Peru	Projects in preparation phase: Competition
		6.2. New framework of regional cooperation with the Andean area.
16h30	COM	Instruments and methodology (framework agreement, budget, memorandum of understanding).
17h00	CAN Peru	New priorities: regional document and priority areas.
18h00		Coffee and writing of minutes.
18h30		7. Timetable
		Possible date for sixth Joint Committee (or for upcoming related events).
		8. Other business
		9. Close and signing of minutes

ANNEX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ANDEAN COMMUNITY

BOLIVIA:

- Ana María Solares Gaité
Deputy Minister of International Economic Relations and Integration
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship
- Arturo Liebers Baldivieso
Ambassador of Bolivia to the European Union
- Horacio Bazoberry Otero
Advisory Minister
Embassy of Bolivia to the European Union
- Guido Riveros Franch
Ambassador of Bolivia in Colombia
- Martha Beatriz López de Mitre
Head of Department of Directorate-General of International Economic Organisations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship
- Patricia Maritza Palomeque De la Cruz
Head of Unit of CAN and Bilateral Affairs
Deputy Minister of Exports
Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment

COLOMBIA:

- Marta Lucia Ramirez de Rincón
External Trade Minister
- Angela María Orozco Gomez
Deputy Minister for External Trade
- Ambassador Nicolás Riva de Zubiría
Deputy Minister for Europa, Asia, Africa and Oceania
External Relations Ministry
- David Germán Umaña Mendoza
Director, Colombia Trade Office in Brussels
Foreign Trade Ministry
- Estela Vargas Suárez
Director General for Europe
External Relations Ministry

- Fulvia Elvira Benavides Cotes
Director General for International Cooperation
External Relations Ministry
- Tomás Uribe Mosquera
International negotiator
Foreign Trade Ministry
- José Rafael Barbosa Rodríguez
Assistant Director
Foreign Trade Ministry
- Clara Gaviria
Adviser for International Negotiations
Foreign Trade Ministry
- María Margarita Ordoñez Villamarin
Adviser for International Cooperation
External Relations Ministry
- Beatriz Vejarano Villaveces
Adviser to the Deputy Minister for Europe
External Relations Ministry
- Germán Jaramillo Rojas
President of the Chamber of Commerce of Bogota
- David Alfonso Barriga Camacho
Head of International Trade
Colombia Eurocentre
Chamber of Commerce of Bogota
- Xenia Jiménez Lee
Director
Colombia Eurocentre
Chamber of Commerce of Bogota
- Emilia Ruiz Morante
Director General
Colombian International Cooperation Agency
- Mercedes Rodríguez de Serrano
Head of Internationalisation of Science
COLCIENCIAS
- Gerardo Martínez López
Assistant director of Scientific and Technological Development Programmes
COLCIENCIAS

- Alba Lucía Trujillo López
Lecturer in Department of Natural Resources and Environment
University of Calda - Manizales

ECUADOR:

- Fernando Yopez Lasso
Director General of Integration and Regional Cooperation
External Relations Ministry
- Eva García Fabre
Executive Director of the Eurocentre/Economic Director
Chamber of Commerce of Guayaquil

PERU:

- Ambassador José Antonio Arróspide del Busto
Head of Mission to the European Communities
Ambassador in Belgium and Luxembourg
External Relations Ministry
- Marco Balarezo Lizarzaburu
Head of America Department
Directorate for International Economic Relations
External Relations Ministry
- Huber Valencia Medrano
Director for Integration under Deputy Minister of Integration and International Trade
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Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Integration and International Trade Negotiations

VENEZUELA

- Ambassador Luis Xavier Grisanti Cano
Ambassador to the European Union
External Relations Ministry
- Ambassador Jorge Valero
Director General at the
External Relations Ministry
- Mario Guglielmelli Vera
Director of International Economic Affairs
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- Trinidad Galdona de Burelli
Manager of Projects
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- Ana María Alcázar de Llovera
Manager of International Cooperation of the CONICIT

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- Pedro Henriquez Guajardo
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- Daniel Antonio Michaels Valderrama
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- Juan Guillermo Hoyos Melguizo
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HIPOLITO UNANUE AGREEMENT

- Juan Luis González Reyes
Executive secretary
- Esteban Silva Cuadra
Deputy secretary
- Santiago Gómez Mejía
Personal representative of the Colombian Health Minister
President of the Meeting of Health Ministers of the Andean Area
- Francisco Bosio Guerrero
Representative of the Telemedicine project
- Francisco Javier Bosio Guerrero
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ANDEAN PROMOTION CORPORATION

- Carlos Zannier Claros
Head of Integration Office
- Cecilia Carrero Prato
Executive principal - Office for Coordination of Integration Matters

LATIN AMERICAN RESERVES FUND

- Roberto Guarnieri Cammilli
Executive President

- Javier Comboni Salinas
Chief economist

COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY

- Juan José Calle y Calle
President

GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY

- Jorge Vega Castro
Director General
- José Antonio García Belaunde
Adviser to Secretary General
- Carlos Longa González
Coordinator
- Elizabeth Taboada Moretti
Manager

EUROPEAN UNION

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Deputy Director General DG1B
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Pablo Bajo
Spanish embassy in Colombia

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Pascal Fourcault
Economic adviser
French embassy in Colombia

Patrick Quidel
Regional cooperation adviser
French embassy in Colombia

Mr McGavran
Irish embassy in Colombia

ANNEX III

THE NEW PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY AND THE EU

I. Introduction

As agreed at the fourth Joint Committee meeting held in Brussels in November 1997, it is necessary to press ahead with a work programme which will help further Andean integration, raise standards and give greater and more positive substance to cooperation with the European Union.

On the one hand this new agenda must include the areas and sectors which could potentially be of interest for future, mutually beneficial agreements; and, on the other, a dynamic set of new projects for cooperation between the Andean Community and the EU. On the basis of Europe's experience, it is also advisable to consider the adoption of measures to strengthen the social dimension of Andean integration and facilitate harmonious development, international competitiveness and progress and technological innovation on the part of Andean firms, including SMEs.

This fifth Joint Committee meeting is taking place at a particularly propitious time for the definition of the new agenda for economic, commercial and technological cooperation and development. First, because the implementation of first-generation projects is being successfully concluded; these are intended to support the Andean integration process through its member countries and the Secretariat General. Secondly, because we are on the brink of initiating the Granadua, Plancal and Competencia "megaprojects", all of which come under the heading of third-generation cooperation.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, because both the Andean Community and the European Union are entering a new stage in their growth in which the aim is not only to meet the requirements of civil society but also to take up the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century, including growing globalisation and interdependence in economic and trade matters.

It is therefore of crucial importance to exploit all the potential of the 1993 Framework Cooperation Agreement; the Andean Community-EU Joint Committee provides an appropriate channel for institutionalised dialogue and a definite opportunity for putting forward new initiatives to deepen and diversify cooperation and extend the areas in which the economies of the two regions complement each other.

With this in mind, three categories of action have been defined, on the basis of the priorities of the Andean integration process and the specific features of political, economic and trade relations and cooperation with the European Union.

2. Category one: the strengthening of the common market

2.1. Objectives

As part of the new strategic design, the Andean Presidents have expressed the firm wish to take Andean integration further and progress in building a true common market. To that end a set of objectives has been laid down including the total liberalisation of trade in services by 2005 at the latest; greater macroeconomic coordination and convergence; the promotion of sustainable development; greater freedom of movement for persons; increased physical integration and frontier development; promoting and prioritising technological development and innovation; promoting industrial competitiveness, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises; modernising the common arrangements for foreign investment; and promoting an Andean common agricultural policy, among other broad outlines.

2.2. Areas and projects

It was considered appropriate to extend cooperation with the European Union in areas of particular importance, such as services, infrastructure, external trade, SMEs and technological innovation.

Services

In recognition of the growing importance of services for the development and economic competitiveness of the subregion, in June 1998, the Andean Community Commission approved the general framework of principles and rules for the liberalisation of trade in services in the Andean Community (Decision 439); its aim is extensive liberalisation of trade throughout the service sector, covering all types of service provision, and it includes rules on the movement of persons and recognition of diplomas and certification.

The Andean Community must therefore implement, improve and further refine the Andean rules on the liberalisation of services, and develop trade in services in the subregion. These two tasks involve complex operations in the conduct of which the accumulated experience of the European Union will be very valuable. It would therefore be highly appropriate to implement a "megaproject" with the European Union on services; it could comprise various measures such as the development of a tariff nomenclature for services, sectoral analyses and the promotion of trade in services.

Infrastructure

The subject of trade requires not only overall treatment from the trade point of view (liberalisation of trade in services), but also in terms of its contribution to integration and productive efficiency under the heading of infrastructure. This involves developing cooperation mainly in the energy, telecommunications, transport and physical integration sectors.

In the case of energy and telecommunications, we are striving to meet international standards of efficiency and apply "best practices". Particular attention should be drawn to support for, and the development of, the information society project, which is an opportunity for modernisation. In the transport sector, the Andean Community will continue to improve overland, maritime, river and air transport networks in order to facilitate intra-regional trade

and trade with other countries, and create economic links and areas of complementarity among the Andean countries themselves.

A river transport project has been designed in order to carry out a study on the commercial use of the river system of the Andean countries. The aim is a river or multimodal transport corridor, for which purpose national studies are to be conducted in all five of the Andean member countries on, among other topics, river basins, river terminals and goods and passenger traffic on rivers.

It would be advisable to benefit from European experience of physical integration in order to develop frontier integration further. This is an area of special interest and importance for the member countries of the Andean Community, and also has a distinct horizontal component in that it includes migration, customs, labour, infrastructure, etc.

External trade

Approval of the new Andean preferential arrangements entails carrying out a project to maximise the benefits offered by the programme and to continue the effort to provide the Andean exporter with information and other facilities for gaining access to, and penetrating, the European market.

A project is proposed on the use of the Andean GSP and trade promotion, geared to improving the use of the Andean preferential scheme and promoting better knowledge of the European market, offering the Andean exporter information on the characteristics of the target markets, specific potential customers on those markets and marketing methods, and also suggesting the strategy and guidelines for gaining access to the benefits offered by the European market and dealing properly with the competition and the market requirements.

Cooperation is also important for applying procedures to control the levels of contaminants (aflatoxins, mycotoxins, and ochratoxins) in agricultural products. The aim of the project is to support the member countries in implementing technical procedures for controlling the levels of contaminants in agricultural products and working out a system for the accreditation and recognition of plant health certificates.

SMEs

Improving the employment figures is one of the major challenges which will continue to face the Andean countries over the next few years. A good strategy is the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly given their capacity for creating jobs. It is necessary to develop measures and programmes to support and promote SMEs on a coordinated basis among Andean countries, and this calls for effective cooperation with the EU.

Technological innovation

On the basis of the positive results of the cooperation with the EU on academic matters and research, it is proposed to encourage cooperation for technological innovation purposes in some key sectors covered by the Agreement, such as mining, energy, health, information technology and telecommunications.

This cooperation would take the form of, for example, support for proposals for establishing relations between specialised technological development centres in the two regions in order to promote projects for technological innovation in products and industrial processes, and this would help in constructing firm bases for future business collaboration and alliances. It is also very important to propose the creation of technology transfer centres with EU support.

3. Category two: strengthening of Andean institutions

3.1. Objectives

The strengthening of Andean institutions is at present based on two main approaches:

- a. Policy direction, with greater political commitment to the direction of the process resulting from the institutionalising of the Andean Presidential Council and the Andean Foreign Ministers' Council, and greater scope for discussion and participation by the Commission.
- b. Governance, resulting from the enhanced role of its executive body, the Secretariat General of the Andean Community, with greater Community commitment.

Action is being taken to comply fully with the Presidential guidelines and to cope with the challenges inherent in the integration process, by consolidating the Andean institutions. Greater cohesiveness and structural unity has resulted from giving the Secretariat General greater responsibility for ensuring that the Andean legal order is observed, and also from consolidating the legislative and political role of the Andean Foreign Ministers' Council, in addition to the powers incumbent upon the Commission.

Of particular importance is the strengthening of the Andean Tribunal of Justice, as the ultimate authority for dealing with administrative proceedings which are initiated by the Secretariat General upon failure to observe Community rules.

3.2. Areas and projects

Community justice

With the benefit of experience acquired in recent years, in 1996 the member countries approved an amending protocol to the Treaty establishing the Tribunal of Justice (known as the "Cochabamba Protocol"); it improves some of the procedures and lays down new measures and resources.

The approval of this amending protocol makes it necessary to strengthen the institutional workings of the Tribunal so that it can act under the new powers assigned to it, and to disseminate Community law to ensure uniform application. For this purpose a project has been drawn up to strengthen the bodies of the Andean Integration System and the Andean Tribunal of Justice; its other objectives include establishing an academy of Community law; closer links between the functions of the Tribunal and the national authorities; a systematic information service; expanding the library; strengthening of the Tribunal Secretariat and modernising the infrastructure.

4. Category three: the social agenda

4.1. Objectives

The new agenda for the integration of the Andean Community comprises not only political and trade matters but also social and cultural topics. The member countries' heads of state have therefore proposed that the integration process should include a social agenda which promotes the values of freedom, justice, equity, equal opportunities, participation and democracy in our countries.

The development of this agenda must tie in with the objectives of guaranteeing the necessary full participation of citizens in the benefits of integration, promoting the eradication of poverty and meeting health and education requirements in the depressed areas and designing a social, labour, education and cultural policy which will enable an Andean identity to be formed and allow full personal development within a fair social order.

In accordance with the presidential guidelines, the Secretariat General is at present working on reactivating and supporting the management of the Andean Business Consultative Council (Decision 442); supporting the management of the Andean Labour Consultative Council and the Simón Rodríguez Agreement in drawing up and developing social and labour policies; determining how the Andrés Bello Agreement and the Hipólito Unanue Agreement should contribute to the Andean Integration System; drawing up and developing a strategy and plan of action for biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources; and drawing up a strategy for the organised participation of civil society.

In addition, some possible new areas of cooperation have been pinpointed, such as Community policies on migration, increased action on the social and labour fronts, frontier social development, education and training in integration culture. Support for the artisanal sector and microbusinesses are a clear part of the agenda, and for that reason cooperation in artisanal fishing should be extended through the VECEP programme.

4.2. Areas and projects

Health

With the Hipólito Unanue Agreement an attempt is being made to give the Andean populations a better quality of life through improved health. Consequently, part of the social agenda will be the telemedicine project under the Hipólito Unanue Agreement, approved by the Ministers of Health of the Andean region. The project dovetails with the health requirements of the countries of the subregion, there being an urgent need to establish integrated telemedicine networks to meet the challenges of social integration in health as the 21st century approaches.

Education

Similarly, the new social agenda cannot be disassociated from the education aspects, because of their direct link with the betterment and personal development of the Andean citizen and their influence and impact in creating equal opportunities and furthering the integration process. Our countries are in this way supporting the work and projects carried out under the Andrés Bello Agreement and making a special effort to ensure that cooperation links can be developed with the European Union.

Natural disasters

An issue of great importance is the prevention and control of natural disasters and subsequent rehabilitation. All the Andean countries are particularly vulnerable to natural phenomena, as evidenced by El Niño and the earthquakes. We therefore believe that the implementation of a project in this sphere will make a significant contribution towards developing observation, training and infrastructure rehabilitation networks.