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🕒 13.06.2024 👤 [EEAS Press Team](#)

Joint Statement:

The VIII Meeting of the Mechanism for Bilateral Political Consultations between the European Union and Ecuador took place in Brussels.

The meeting was co-chaired by Pelayo Castro, Deputy Executive Director for the Americas at the European External Action Service and Jaime Barberis, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador.

The Dialogue was constructive and cordial. It covered a broad agenda with topics of interest to both sides, confirming the strength of the bilateral relationship and the potential for closer ties in the future.

The commitment to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the European Union and Ecuador was reiterated. In particular, the deepening of relations was noted following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, which has been followed up with the holding of dialogues in priority areas for both parties. The delegations expressed their satisfaction with the positive results of the sectoral dialogues on environment, oceans and fisheries; and security, and undertook to maintain the regularity of these dialogues as regular mechanisms whose results contribute to this High Level Political Dialogue. Both sides expressed their willingness to continue working to deepen the relationship and to consider the possibility of a more advanced and modern Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in the future.

The importance of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, its positive balance for all parties, and its role in ensuring the economic, environmental and social sustainability of bilateral trade was reaffirmed. In particular, it was agreed to work on how to improve the impact of the trade agreement on sustainable development.

It was agreed to move forward together to achieve the goal of sustainability and to work on some areas of the Green Deal, such as the circular economy and the promotion of deforestation-free value chains to reach the joint goal of halting and reversing forest loss and land degradation by 2030.

Ecuador, as the leading supplier of organic products to the EU, reiterated its interest in starting negotiations on a bilateral agreement on mutual recognition or equivalence of organic products.

The EU delegation took note of the successful 2023 Debt-for-Nature Swap operation to raise resources for conservation in the Galapagos Islands, and of Ecuador's request for EU support for these mechanisms. The delegation of Ecuador expressed its satisfaction to learn about Team Europe's initiative to scale up sustainable finance and green bond issuance in third countries through the Sustainable Finance Advisory Centre and the Global Green Bond Initiative (GGBI), and invited an EU delegation to visit Ecuador to work on it.

Both Parties stressed the need to continue joint work in the field of the fight against transnational organised crime and illicit drug trafficking through appropriate mechanisms. The European Union reiterated its support for the efforts of the Government of Ecuador to maintain law and order, uphold the rule of law, protect and promote human rights, including labour rights, and ensure democracy and citizen security. Broad security and defence issues were also addressed. The European Union and Ecuador undertook to rapidly resume negotiations on the international agreement allowing for the exchange of personal data with Europol.

The European Union commended the Ecuadorian Chairmanship of the Latin American Committee for Internal Security (CLASI), highlighting the progress made at the EU-CLASI Senior Officials' meeting on 30 May 2024. Both sides committed to intensify exchanges between experts in view of the EU-CLASI ministerial meeting to be held in early 2025.

The Parties highlighted the importance of the cooperation of the European Union and its member countries through Team Europe in Ecuador. The broad portfolio of existing cooperation, based on the various financial and development assistance mechanisms of the European Union, was recorded. Both sides welcomed the fluid exchange in this field and expressed their willingness to maintain a regular dialogue on cooperation and on the EU's Global Gateway strategy.

The European Union and Ecuador highlighted the importance of the Global Gateway strategy to advance a green, digital and just transition. Both Parties recognised the transformative potential of this European investment agenda and showed their willingness to define, in the short term, options to effectively channel investment resources to the country and contribute to a just energy transition with an emphasis on renewable energies. Ecuador acknowledges the outstanding work of the European Investment Bank and underlines its willingness to deepen this fruitful relationship.

Ecuador expressed its interest in initiating - as soon as possible - the negotiation of an Investment Facilitation Agreement (SIFA) to assist in these processes.

Ecuador reiterated its interest in obtaining a short-stay visa waiver in the Schengen area. The European Union expressed its readiness to continue exchanges of information with Ecuador on the criteria established by the EU regulation for visa waiver.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing was discussed. The European Union acknowledged the efforts made by Ecuador in this sector and the substantial improvements they have brought. Both Parties expressed their aspiration that the lifting of the yellow card will be possible as soon as the outstanding issues that motivated the 2019 decision are resolved.

The Parties agreed on the importance of cooperation on knowledge, innovation, space cooperation and digital transition, in particular in the framework of cooperation between the two regions, through the Digital Alliance launched by the European Union together with the Latin American and Caribbean region or the new EU-CELAC Strategic Roadmap on research and innovation, currently under preparation. The EU welcomed Ecuador's willingness to strengthen its participation in the Horizon Europe programme and to maximise the use of space-based information made available to Ecuador by the EU through the regional Copernicus centres.

The European Union and Ecuador held a frank exchange on relevant global foreign policy issues. On Russia's war against Ukraine, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to UN resolutions A/RES/ES-11/1 and A/RES/ES-11/6 and stressed the importance of their participation in the Summit on Peace in Ukraine held in Switzerland on 15-16 June, as well as their commitment to upholding international law and the UN Charter. They highlighted the results of the III EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government in July 2023 in Brussels and expressed interest in making progress on the roadmap for the holding of the fourth EU-CELAC Summit in Colombia in 2025.

In the multilateral and regional framework, both Parties recognised their commonalities in the face of common challenges such as migratory crises that require humanitarian attention to migrants, under the principle of shared responsibility and the search for regional cooperation and alliances; climate change (including the need to work together to conclude the

'International Agreement against plastic pollution' before the end of the year); and disaster risk reduction (as set out in the recent Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean on cooperation on integrated disaster risk management); strengthening democracy, multilateralism, the rules-based international order and the fight against organised crime.

Finally, both Parties agreed to hold the next meeting in Quito in 2025, at a date to be agreed.

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