

*On the historic date of March 08th - International Women's Day, a large number of international affairs specialists gathered for the second consecutive summit in Vienna, Austria. This leg of the Vienna Process titled: "Europe - Future - Neighbourhood at 75: Disruptions Recalibration Continuity". The conference, jointly organized by the Modern Diplomacy, IFIMES and their partners, with the support of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, was aimed at discussing the future of Europe and its neighbourhood in the wake of its old and new challenges.[\[1\]](#)*

*Along with the two acting State Presidents, the event was endorsed by the keynote of the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Excellency Olivér Várhelyi. The third concluding , of the three-panel conference, was brilliantly conducted by Katrin Harvey of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens.*

*Among her speakers, the one to represent Latin American views in the panel titled: Brexit and Future of cross-Atlantic relations: Decoupling or Recalibration?, was Dr. Elizabeth Deheza, Head of the London-based Latin America Strategic Intelligence. Discussing western dimension of the European good neighborly relations and their possible future prospect, the following is a rough outline of her intervention:*

Dr. Deheza began by affirming the comprehensive efforts of the European Union (EU) in building relations with Latin America, stating that these are strong and growing since the EU is the principal development partner all over the Latina America. But she also stated that there is still room for improvement as there is a disconnect between these efforts and the EU's apparent political priorities, which she finds surprising given the many shared values between the regions and their people.

She remarked that although there have been multiple summits between these players, many Latin American countries have been left disappointed with the lack of tangible actions following these summits. Many claim repetitive declarations deprived of substance exhausting resources while not coupled with the new bold and embracing actions. This is surprising because before the Covid lockdowns and restrictions (C-19), there seemed to be no shortage of the EU financial support. There are still in place and active trade agreements of the EU with 27 of the total 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, not to mention the Mercosur deal.



Image source: Getty

The EU is also active through the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and the World Bank WB), amongst others. However, the C-19 has had dire effects on Latin America causing the region to seek more help and support than ever before from the EU in hopes to recover from this calamity.

Latin America suffered for a very long time due to political instability, violence, and corruption, and the pandemic crisis has worsened these issues even more, causing poverty and insecurity to increase as well as mass migration. Elizabeth Deheza described these to be among the reasons driving the population to seek change from wherever it may come, including populism, creating political uncertainty everywhere.

In her note, speaker, then, moved from the issues that the region is suffering from and

stated the qualities of Latin Americans, including their determination, resilience, and hard-working nature. She described these to be the reasons why there have been such immense strides in areas that are of such relevance to the EU, including: digitalization, sustainable development, and green financing which have been taking the lead when compared to the rest of the world. Moreover, it was affirmed that these are the sectors in which the EU and the (post-Brexit) UK could assist the region even more than what they already do.

More specifically, Dr. Deheza believes that they could further support the region in its digital innovation as they have used this as a way for survival and increasing life quality. She stated that the EU and UK could help in all of these areas and “not just star-ups, but also fintechs, e-commerce solutions, and venture backed businesses that are all in this process of transformation, as well as governments which are trying to undergo and adapt to the pandemic”. Furthermore, it was asserted that there is still a great need of aid in the sustainable development sector with regards to deforestation, pollution, waste management, and recycling since, although the great advancements that work in the Latin America reality, there are still many issues that the EU and UK could help with.



Image source: cfr.org

Lastly, Deheza stated that it is not enough for European banks to suspend financing oil & gas companies in the Amazon or European asset managers to hold their investments in Brazilian agrobusiness due to their government's failure in the Amazon. She affirmed that political intervention by the EU and UK is also necessary to combat them. Moreover, speaker clarified that the UK relations with Latin America, although not much trade happens between them, is cordial and mutually beneficial. This is primarily because of the trade agreements signed with various countries and creative financing mechanisms put in place such as the "Government-2-Government" between Peru and the UK which spiked similar ones with other Latin American neighboring nations.

Finally, Elizabeth Deheza concluded her intervention at the conference by stating that the EU and UK could best strengthen their partnerships with Latin America by providing "political support, knowledge, and best-practices for tackling systematic challenges alongside an actionable, relevant, and pragmatic transatlantic relationship with the EU

and the UK, and there has never been a better time to do that than now”.

Clearly, the trans-Atlantic cooperation of Europe should not be exhausted with the north American continent only but should energetically include and involve the Caribbean and South America, too. Hence, the triangular symmetries would be viable and sustainable model for the future conduct.

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[1] This highly anticipated conference gathered over twenty high ranking speakers from three continents, and the viewers from Australia to Canada and from Chile to Far East. The day was filled by three panels focusing on the rethinking and revisiting Europe and its three equally important neighbourhoods: Euro-Med, Eastern and trans-Atlantic (or as the Romano Prodi’s EU Commission coined it back in 2000s - “from Morocco to Russia - everything but the institutions”); the socio-political and economic greening; as well as the legacy of WWII, Nuremberg Trials and Code, the European Human Rights Charter and their relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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