



**FIRST PREPARATORY SEMINAR**  
**OF THE THIRD ACADEMIC SUMMIT**  
**LATIN AMERICA, CARIBBEAN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**SANTO DOMINGO 21 AND 22 JUNE, 2016**

**-REPORT-**

Higher education institutions, academics, government authorities of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, representatives of the European Union and of international organizations gathered in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2016 for the First Preparatory Seminar of the Third Latin America and the Caribbean – European Union Academic Summit, reiterated their commitment to progress in strengthening the Euro - Latin American and Caribbean Space for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, which is one of the pillars of EU-CELAC Strategic Partnership, as agreed in the First and Second Academic bi-regional Summits, held respectively in Santiago de Chile, on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2013 and in Brussels on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of June, 2015.

In this context and TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that:

- The declaration of the First Academic Summit, delivered to the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of CELAC and EU and incorporated in Article 29 of the Formal Declaration of the EU-CELAC Summit in Santiago de Chile, brought the academic world forward as the seventh institutionalized forum of the CELAC-EU Strategic Partnership and contributed in strengthening the perspective of building an Euro - Latin American and Caribbean Space of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in both regions;
- The Declaration of the Second Academic Summit, "Building the Common Area of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation for a Strategic Bi-Regional Partnership", which contains a number of recommendations to the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of CELAC and the EU, and which was handed to them during the Bi-regional Summit in Brussels, calls on EU institutions and ministers of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation from both regions to open a permanent space for dialogue within the Permanent Academic Forum of the Academic Summits of CELAC -EU in order to move forward in the implementation of these proposals;
- As a result of the initiatives and proposals of the Academic Summit, the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the EU-CELAC in Brussels approved the creation of a new bi-regional cooperative line - Scope 9 of the Action Plan from Brussels 2015 - in connection with higher education, which should foster the creation of regulatory and financial conditions for the Euro - Latin America and Caribbean space for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation,





THE SANTO DOMINGO PREPARATORY SEMINAR, activity which is included in the Pro Temporary program of the Presidency of CELAC, exercised in 2016 by the Dominican Republic, gave continuity to the activities undertaken by the preceding events, mainly addressing the following issues:

### **1. Strengthening Mechanisms of the training conducting joint investigations**

It was suggested that, currently, the strengthening mechanisms for joint research training in both regions are divided into three different levels:

- Governmental: by conducting bilateral agreements between EU Member States and LAC countries;
- University: by signing specific agreements for academic cooperation;
- Business: creating partnerships between academia and the business sector.

It is considered necessary for each country to have legislation promoting the development of science, technology and innovation. Therefore, it is considered important to encourage and support the establishment of research units, such as:

- Research;
- Research staff;
- Support and Research Centers;
- Associated units.

A very useful tool for bi-regional development in research would be the creation of transfer offices, which can on the one hand systematize information and secondly, share the researches results. A few examples of bi-regional projects were mentioned: @LIS, ALCUENET, ERANet and BOHEMIA.

The financial support provided by IDB, CAF and the technical assistance from ECLAC when preparing documents analyzing ALC strategic vision around 2030 and 2040 were also presented. These documents highlight future trends for regional development in science, technology and innovation and provide data and information for researchers to develop new projects and relevant research programs.

Among the issues that need to be overcome in this area, the following have been noted:

- The lack of transfer of the C + D + i results in decision making and in creating new development policy;
- The lack of vision or model of medium and long-term development policies;
- The lack of participation of small countries in bi-regional projects;
- The asymmetry in the bi-regional cooperation and intra-regional, which tends to favor large countries within ALC.



## 2. Promoting technical education and academic linkages with manufacturing sectors

It was stressed that the relationship between academia and productive sectors falls within the academic – society cooperation, which must necessarily be based on recognition of heterogeneity situations between the two regions, as well as of the level of Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, it was indicated that this is a multifaceted topic that is related to factor productivity, employment and employability, social inclusion and innovation, entrepreneurship and SME development.

This subject must be viewed from a dual perspective: bi-continental and Latin American - as well as through the *bottom up* dynamics, which generates a multitude of initiatives, which are so numerous that are not easily identifiable and which richness may raise an incoherent picture. Hence the need for a state of the art which has already been carried out largely in Europe, on a sample of 6,000 universities and, to a lesser extent, in Latin America - thanks to the work undertaken by the Business Network University ALCUE and FAD-PYMEs on about 80 cases of universities that are linked to productive sectors.

An important aspect that is related to the relationship between academia and productive sectors is linked to the issue of employability, more exactly the capability to create conditions for access to decent work and quality. At this level, it was pointed out that higher technical education and technical training are presented as a promising alternative to bridge the gap between higher education and access to jobs. In this regard, there were explored different ways in which higher education institutions in the two regions can collaborate to work in university trainings and in terms of technical and professional skills.

Finally, there were built several action plans regarding the links between universities and productive sectors, mainly:

- Advancing the establishment of indicators of the relationships between universities and enterprises;
- Creating a seal or mark for companies benefiting from a hinge mechanism university-business;
- Strengthening existing networks in various Latin American countries and Europe, such as alumni networks;
- Promoting the creation of a student – worker visa, or a similar formula that allows the harmonious development of inter-regional circulation practices during the studies;
- Joint promotion of the Permanent Academic Forum and Birregional Business Forum in every EU-CELAC Summit.

## 3. Education Accreditation in Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union

Certain current models of accreditation were presented - from both Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, changing a number of approaches and needs in order to establish a common language. It was



pointed out that accreditation systems are essential to ensure the quality of education and are aimed at building trust between different national systems.

Several examples of accreditation systems were provided. These are already established in different parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, for example RIACES (Ibero-American Network for Accreditation of Higher Education); ARCA-SUR Mercosur; and CEC (Central American Accreditation Council). It was mentioned that the generation of public policies is a challenge, as beyond their evaluation systems form, they allow the increase of the quality of higher education institutions, identifying clearly the tasks and improve management, the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate courses and their relationship with the environment and research environment. In the case of technical education it is also necessary to establish the links to the demands of the labor market.

Therefore, for an ethical framework of quality universities it is required:

- To persuade bi-regional systems today, such as ECTS accreditation, and in European and Latin American and Caribbean RIACES ARCA-SUR, CEC;
- To generate consensus for a common language base;
- Public policies for raising the quality of education and guarantying higher education funding;
- To design models of framework agreements that facilitates bilateral and / or multilateral avenues by exploring strategic cooperation with regional bodies;
- To maintain an "expert dialogue" on quality assurance and mobility;
- To create common areas of validation and generating evaluation calendars between countries.

#### **4. Qualification recognition for academic mobility (UNESCO - IESALC)**

The main foundation of regional agreements promotes and facilitates:

- Mobility and employment;
- Mobility of teaching and trainers;
- Education and research;
- Systems development, structures and mechanisms for quality assurance in higher education;
- Institutional accreditation systems at the national level;
- Balanced and transparent application of measures for the recognition of higher education qualifications.

It is required to have a detailed review of the Regional Convention regarding the recognition of studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean of 1974, which involves analyzing the processes of internationalization of higher education, incorporating the latest conclusions and agreements contained in the declarations of UNESCO and the expansion of areas in which the recognition of academic and professional performance works; including, for example, human rights perspective in professional practices.





On the other hand, the concept and objectives of the review process of the Convention was analyzed, as well as institutional and organizational aspects involved in the process.

It has also been stated that the issues which still require further discussion in this ongoing process are the employment opportunities for regulated professions, the recognition of incomplete partial studies, recognition of qualifications of displaced persons and refugees, and the need to create a structure similar to the ENIC-NARIC through the implementation of the Convention.

### ***5. The relevance and quality of postgraduate studies in Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union***

Since postgraduate courses are mostly addressing skills, it is stressed that they must contribute to improving the social collective competitiveness, by creating better environments that are prepared to meet the growing demands of globalization.

In order to produce better results at the graduate level the following are necessary:

- Creating structures and more flexible and standardized access requirements to facilitate international mobility; comparing programs and scientific skills regional and inter-regional, taking into account national particularities;
- Development of multidisciplinary graduate programs according to the demand on the labour market in the country concerned, particularly through partnerships with foreign universities (joint masters and doctoral programs) and software resources in the form of grants;
- Re-evaluation systems for quality assessment of university programs, identifying indicators such as the economic impact on the environment, the incorporation of graduates on the labour market and its effect on social mobility. Quality rating graduate programs must evolve from current systems audit advisory and consultancy for models that support the development of innovation;
- Development of common standardized parameters to facilitate professional certification.

At the seminar in Santo Domingo it was established to further deepen these issues within the frame of the activity of the four groups of the Permanent Reflection of the Higher Education; Science, Technology and Innovation Academic Forum; Academy ties with the society; Academy ties with the Public Policies, overlooking the Second Preparatory Seminar which is to be held in Stockholm on the 6 and 7 of October, and the third Bi-regional Academic Summit.

Thus, it is expected to present a set of concrete proposals to the Heads of State and Government CELAC-EU Summit, which will take place in 2017, which is to move towards defining specific basis for the creation of the Euro - Latino American and the Caribbean Academic space.



This seminar has expressed its satisfaction with the significant results obtained in the meeting of the Bi-regional Academic Council held in Lisbon on 1 February 2016, in which important decisions concerning the organization and functioning of bodies Permanent Academic Forum were adopted, including those highlighted in its status and action Plan for 2015-2017.

This seminar confirmed once again that the process that begun during the first Academic Summit is an open space, inclusive, promoting the growing participation, broad and active, transparent and supported, without discrimination, to the entire academic community in both regions who are interested to contribute to strengthen the Bi-regional Academic Space for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

Finally, all those who attended the seminar expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MESCYT), towards the universities in the Dominican Republic and towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MIREX) for the pleasant hospitality and generous effort to organize such an effective First Preparatory Seminar of the Third Academic Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union.

