

International Symposium

‘Collaborating for Global Health: Shared Challenges & Responsibilities.

A Transatlantic Dialogue between Europe and Latin America & the Caribbean’

OPENING SESSION



FELIX DEXLER

Jan Felix Drexler is a German physician and virologist, professor of virology at the Charité in Berlin since 2017. He studied medicine at the University of Hamburg and has worked at various institutions, including the Institute of Virology in Bonn. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he advised several Latin American governments. Since 2024, he has led the ZOE project on zoonoses in degraded ecosystems. He has received several awards, such as the Heine-Medin Medal and the Memento Research Award.



ADRIÁN BONILLA

Adrián Bonilla is the current Executive Director of EU-LAC Foundation. He holds a PhD and a master’s degree from the University of Miami and a bachelor’s from the Central University of Ecuador. Formerly Ecuador’s Ministerial-rank Secretary of Higher Education and Director of FLACSO Ecuador, he is renowned for his extensive publications on Latin American and global issues in leading academic journals. His career highlights include leadership roles in international electoral observation and contributions to organizations like RIAL and RIBEI, focusing on foreign policy, security, and multilateralism in the region.



MARTIN BERGFELDER

Martin Bergfelder is a diplomat at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, serving as the Coordinator for the Foreign Policy Dimension of Global Health Issues and the Head of the Corona Taskforce.



MIRIAM BREWKA PINO

Miriam Brewka is EEAS Senior Expert on Global Health and Coordinator Global Health Task Force. The EU Health Task Force aims to assist countries across Europe and globally by offering operational support for responding to outbreaks and preparing for crises related to communicable diseases or diseases of unidentified origins.



MAURICIO ARTURO BUESO CHINCHILLA

Mauricio Arturo Bueso is the Ambassador of the Republic of Honduras to the Federal Republic of Germany. He is also a businessman in the textile industry. He hails from the northern region of Honduras, specifically from the city of San Pedro Sula. He completed his secondary education in Hamburg, Germany. He holds a degree in Business Administration, which complements his extensive experience in the business sector.

Panel 1: Heterogeneity in pandemic response: Lessons learned and the Road Ahead



MODERATOR: ANNA BARRERA VIVERO

Anna Barrera has an academic background in political science and public law from the Free University of Berlin. During her PhD in Political Science at Simon Fraser University, the University of Hamburg and the GIGA Institute for Latin American Studies, she specialised in Human Rights, Indigenous Peoples, Legal Pluralism and Gender Relations in the Andean Region. With extensive experience in scientific organisations and international development cooperation, she currently works as Director of Programmes at the EU-LAC Foundation, focusing on the thematic areas of knowledge generation on bi-regional relations, scientific and cultural cooperation, and gender equality within the EU-LAC International Women's Network.

FELIX DREXLER (see in OPENING SESSION)



MARIA DE LOURDES AGUIAR OLIVEIRA

Maria de Lourdes Aguiar is the Vice-President of Research and Biological Collections, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), former vice-deputy of Reference Laboratories, Outpatient Clinics and Biological Collections (IOC, Fiocruz) and virologist from the Laboratory of Respiratory and Exanthematic Viruses, Enteroviruses and Viral Emergencies - Reference Laboratory for the Brazilian MoH and WHO for SARs-CoV-2, Influenza and other respiratory viruses. With extensive experience in research and health surveillance, epidemics, and health emergencies, with emphasis on viruses of public health relevance. Presently, one of her main interests focuses on wastewater-based epidemiology, as an early warning system to strengthen preparedness and response to epidemics and pandemics - a joint-initiative between Fiocruz, MoH, PAHO, national and international partners. She is graduated in Biological Sciences and completed master's and doctoral degrees with practical training at the Robert Koch Institute.



ANTONI PLASÈNCIA TARADACH

Antoni Plasència led the Barcelona Institute of Global Health (ISGlobal) from October 2014 to December 2023. He holds a Ph.D. from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and a master's in public health from Yale University. As Director General of Public Health for the Government of Catalonia, he helped establish the Public Health Agency of Catalonia. Currently, he serves as associated Professor at the University of Barcelona, where he also co-directs the Master of Global Health programme. He is also co-director of the Health For All Network of the SDSN initiative and elected Chair of the European Global Health Research Institutes Network (EGHRIN).



JUAN CARLOS ZEVALLOS LÓPEZ

Juan Carlos Zevallos is an Ecuadorian cardiologist with expertise in public health, cardiovascular medicine, and epidemiology. He currently serves as the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Universidad de Especialidades Espíritu Santo. He was Ecuador's Minister of Health from March 2020 to February 2021 during the COVID-19 crisis. Previously, he was the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the Universidad de las Américas. He holds a medical degree from the University

Central del Ecuador, a cardiology degree from the University of Padua, and completed postdoctoral studies in preventive cardiology at the University of Massachusetts and epidemiology training at the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. He also founded AMNET, promoting collaboration among actors across the Americas and the Caribbean.

Panel 2: Leveraging networks: Cooperating across institutions, countries and regions



MODERATION: NORA ANTON

Nora Anton leads the Global Engagement Unit at the Charité Center of Global Health and serve as the Managing Director of the Secretariat of the German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA). Throughout her career she has focused on advancing national and European initiatives through strategic network development and effective communication, bridging academia, policy, and industry, working with e.g. the Enterprise Europe Network, EIT Health and the M8 Alliance. She holds a Bachelor's in Intercultural European and American Studies at MLU Halle-Wittenberg and a master's degree in European Studies at WWU Münster and the University of Twente.



DANIEL GARCÍA RIVERA

Daniel G. Rivera is a Professor at the University of Havana, where he serves as the Director of the Laboratory of Synthetic and Biomolecular Chemistry. With a PhD in this field, he was part of the multidisciplinary team of scientists who, together with the Finlay Vaccine Institute, developed the Cuban COVID-19 vaccine Soberana 02. He has received numerous prestigious awards, including the National Award of Chemistry and the National Award of Immunology in Cuba, as well as the National Medal of Scientific Research 'Carlos J. Finlay.' Additionally, he has held leadership positions such as President of the Latin American Federation of Chemical Associations and the Cuban Society of Chemistry, and is Titular Member of the Cuban Academy of Science.



BOGI ELIASSEN

Bogi Eliassen is the Director of Health at the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies and holds degrees in Political Science and International Law from the University of Aarhus. He also served in roles at the Faroe Business Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Over the past two decades, he has worked as a consultant for politicians, the public sector, and private companies. He spearheaded initiatives like FarGen, the first population genome project in the Faroe Islands, and now leads discussions on the future of genomics, data, and digital functions in health. Recognised with the HIMSS Future 50 global award in 2019, he is also the Chair of the Danish UNESCO Bioethical Committee.



BLADIMIRO RINCÓN OROZCO

Bladimiro Rincón Orozco is a professor at the School of Medicine, Universidad Industrial de Santander. He holds a Doctorate in Biological Sciences from the University of Wurzburg, a master's degree in Basic Biomedical Sciences from the University of Antioquia, and a Bachelor's degree in Bacteriology and Clinical Laboratory from the Universidad Industrial de Santander. He previously was involvement in the emergency response to COVID-19 in Colombia in collaboration with Charité Berlin, financed by GIZ-BMBF Germany. Currently, He coordinates activities and research in the Health Crisis Co-financed by the European Union Migration and Response programme in Colombia financed by GIZ Germany, with a focus on emerging and reemerging infectious diseases prevention and control.



ELIZABET DIAGO

Elizabeth Diago is a Doctor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the Complutense University of Madrid, with a master's degree in public health from the State University of New York. She previously managed health system preparedness programming at the New York City Department of Health, focusing on emergencies related to special pathogens and antibiotic resistance, including active involvement in the response to COVID-19. Currently, as an Associated Researcher at ISGlobal, she coordinates activities and research in the Health Crisis Preparedness and Response programme, with a focus on public health, infectious disease prevention and control, and epidemiology.

Panel 3: Let's talk about Money: Funding for Global Health



MODERATION: BERT HOFFMANN

Bert Hoffmann is a German political scientist specialising in Latin America and the Caribbean. He is the director of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) office in Berlin, co-director of the GIGA Institute of Latin American Studies, and a professor at the Free University of Berlin. Additionally, he chairs the European Council for Social Research in Latin America (CEISAL). Currently, he is involved in the German-Latin American Centre for Infection and Epidemiology Research and Training (GLACIER), funded by the DAAD, where he leads a comparative study on COVID-19 vaccination policies in Mexico, Cuba, and the six Central American states.



KATHARINA FLECKENSTEIN

She has been working at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) since June 2009 and has headed the regional DAAD office in Mexico City since June 2019. From 2016 to 2019, she was the head of section for DAAD scholarship programs in North Africa and the Middle East. Between 2014 and 2016, she served as a senior advisor in Afghanistan for the joint project “Academic Mining Education in Afghanistan” with GIZ. Prior to this, she was a senior desk officer for DAAD’s Pakistan programs in Bonn. Her academic background is in Religious and Islamic Studies from the University of Erfurt and the University of Exeter. She earned her doctoral degree on “Continuity and Change in Islamic Education for Women in Pakistan,” conducting field research in India and Pakistan.



OLGA BAUS

Olga Baus Gibert is Deputy Head of Unit in the EU Directorate General for International Partnerships, with responsibilities on the relations with Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and on regional programmes for human development and health. She has more than 20 years of career with the EU in the external relations fields, with experience in various sectors and financial instruments. She has been posted in Central America, Africa and the Middle East.



BELÉN GARCÍA CODINA

Belén García holds a degree in Business Administration and Management, a master's degree in Financial Economics, and an Advanced Diploma in Health Policy and Executive Management. She has worked in the healthcare sector, including roles at ROVI Pharmaceutical Laboratories, the Spanish Society of Medical Radiology, and HM Hospitals. She has also worked in Public Affairs and Government Relations for Kreab and PwC Spain, and has served as a Technical Advisor for COVID-19 and Global Health at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Currently, she is the Coordinator of the CSAI Foundation, supporting the strengthening of health systems in the EU, Latin America, and the Caribbean, with the Alliance for “Support for Equitable Access, Regulatory Capacity, and Regional Production of Vaccines and Medicines in the Latin America and Caribbean region.”



ANGELA HINDS

Angela Hinds is a Senior Technical Officer specializing in Health Information, Communicable Diseases, and Emergency Response at CARPHA. The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is the regional public health agency for the Caribbean.



ALEJANDRA ACUÑA NAVARRO

Alejandra Acuña Navarro, a master's degree holder in Public Health, was elected as the Executive Secretary of the Council of Health Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic (COMISCA) for a four-year term starting August 1, 2021. After many years of service in Costa Rica's Ministry of Health, she has specialised in women's health and perinatology. She has been a key member of the Mesoamerica Health Project on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and served on the Latin American Delegation to the Global Fund Board for HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. She also coordinated the National Council for Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Care (CONASIDA) and chaired both the Country Coordinating Mechanism for the Fight Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria and the National Nursing Council.



WILM QUENTIN

Wilm Quentin is Prof. of Planetary & Public Health at the University of Bayreuth. He is leading the German West-African Centre for Global Health and Pandemic Prevention (G-WAC) and is editor-in-chief of the Journal “Health Policy”. His research aims to contribute to the transformation of health systems in view of global challenges related to climate change, pandemics, digitalisation, and achievement of universal health coverage. Wilm has consulted for WHO EURO, WHO AFRO, and national governments like Slovenia and Belgium. He is a medical doctor and holds an MSc in Health Policy, Planning & Financing from LSHTM and LSE.

Roundtable: Collaborating for Global Health: Shared Challenges & Responsibilities

MODERATION: FELIX DREXLER (see in OPENING SESSION)



LEIRE PAJÍN

Leire Pajín is currently President of the EU-LAC Foundation and Director of International Development at ISGlobal. Previously, she held key positions including Spain’s Minister of Health, Social Policy and Equality, and Secretary of State for International Cooperation, where she played pivotal roles in healthcare reform and international development. She has extensive experience promoting global health and social initiatives, especially on gender with EU-LAC Women’s International Network. She holds a sociology degree from the University of Alicante and serves as an Associate Lecturer at prestigious universities in Madrid. In 2024, she was elected as a Member of the European Parliament (MEP).



CIRO UGARTE

Ciro Ugarte is a medical doctor specialising in Public Health and Emergency Medicine. He has held key positions in Peru, including Deputy Director General at the National Institute of Occupational Health and Director General of the Office of National Defense of the Ministry of Health. He has extensive experience in emergency medicine and disaster response, having served as President of the Peruvian Society of Emergency Medicine and represented Peru at the International Committee of the Red Cross. Since 2000, he has worked with PAHO/WHO, currently serving as the Regional Emergency Director for the Americas, leading the response to COVID-19 in the region.

OLGA BAUS (see in Panel 3)



MICHAEL BAYERLEIN

Michael Bayerlein is currently a Research Associate in the SWP Research Group on EU/Europe, focusing on “Global and European Health Governance in Crisis” since 2022. Prior to this, he worked as a Research Associate at the Chair of Comparative Political Science at the University of Kiel from 2019 to 2022, and at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy from 2017 to 2022. He holds a doctoral degree in political science and a master’s degree in international politics and international law from the University of Kiel.