

International Symposium

‘Collaborating for Global Health: Shared Challenges & Responsibilities.

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

- Concept Note -

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic showed in dramatic form that health is a global issue; it also evidenced how interdependent our societies and economies are, and how ill-prepared we were to engage in bold and solidarity-based cooperation across national borders and world regions.

Based on these experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic and the multiple health, climate and food security crises that we face, there is consensus among decision-makers in Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe on the need for a transition to more sustainable forms of cooperation. The Heads of State and Government who convened in Brussels last July committed, in paragraphs 27, 28 and 30 of the [Declaration of the EU-CELAC Summit 2023](#), to improve cooperation and coordination on issues of common interest, such as health; to generate investments for health infrastructure through the Global Gateway initiative; to boost local manufacturing of vaccines, medicines and other health technologies; and to strengthen the resilience of health systems to improve prevention, preparedness and response to public health emergencies, in support of the CELAC Health Self-Sufficiency Plan.

Aim of the International Symposium

In response to this prioritisation of the issue on the bi-regional agenda, the European Union – Latin America and Caribbean International Foundation ([EU-LAC Foundation](#)) and the German-Latin American Centre for Infection and Epidemiology Research ([GLACIER](#)) are joining forces to convene an International Symposium ‘**Collaborating for Global Health: Shared Challenges & Responsibilities**’, to be held on 25 June 2024 at the Charité, Berlin.

This high-level one-day event will bring together researchers from different disciplines, specialised organisations, public officials and interested members of the general public from Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean to learn from the pandemic experience and to discuss how to develop more robust and reliable structures and mechanisms for cooperation to enable both regions to engage in more coordinated measures to prepare for and respond to current and future health challenges.

The Symposium will address questions such as:

- *Are public health systems in the EU and LAC today better prepared to react to outbreaks of epidemics and pandemics?*
- *What are the key lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of the national, regional and international production and distribution of vaccines, medicines and other vital supplies, as well as health services accessible for the population.*

- *How can we put in place structures that will enable us to cope better with the health challenges ahead?*
- *Looking at the bi-regional relationship between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean: where do we have promising synergies, and where is more coordination needed? How can this be achieved?*
- *What joint initiatives should be taken to advance cooperation between the governments and societies of the two regions, and how can they be financed?*

Structure of the event

The international symposium will be open to the public (prior previous registration) and structured around three thematic panels and a concluding roundtable which will be moderated by representatives of the EU-LAC Foundation and GLACIER. The **first panel** will focus on the heterogeneity of responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in both regions. As Latin America and the Caribbean suffered high rates of infection and mortality in the early stages of the pandemic, vaccine development, availability and distribution became a key point of friction between the two regions. What needs to change to ensure a more equitable and more efficient response in the future? Policies also varied widely within regions – and within countries - from vaccination as to non-pharmaceutical interventions, testing policies, diagnosis, and treatment. What best-practice lessons can we draw from these different approaches?

The **second panel** will focus explicitly on the issue of cooperation and coordination – which we saw diminish even between neighbouring countries during the pandemic. Contacts in established networks became fewer and more fragile; trust and established forms of cooperation dwindled. What structures do we need to make cooperation across institutions, countries and regions a self-evident and reliable practice, both in emergency and non-pandemic situations? How can we leverage structures and methods of cooperation in existing networks more effectively? Do Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean need supranational regional pandemic prevention centres?

In the **third panel** invited experts will discuss the ever-important issue of financial resources - an essential ingredient to facilitate the provision of health services as a public good and to strengthen the work of research consortia, collaborative initiatives and health alliances. While some proposals for change may require nothing more than goodwill and initiative, others depend crucially on funding. What resources - public and private - can be mobilised in Europe and in Latin America and the Caribbean to support sustainable and effective health structures? What viable options and instruments do we have at international, regional and national levels, and where are the gaps? While the issues at stake are global, can we find effective responses in regional and bi-regional cooperation? What opportunities does the EU-LAC Global Gateway Investment Agenda offer in this regard?

The symposium will conclude with a **roundtable discussion** in which scientists, practitioners and public officials from Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean will outline their visions on how to move forward in addressing the shared health challenges in a spirit of shared responsibilities.

The event will conclude with a reception at Charité to deepen contacts and facilitate networking among participants and the audience.

Follow-up to the event

As a follow-up to the symposium, a **policy brief** will summarise the main take-aways and outline recommendations for improving cooperation and policymaking at all levels. The publication as part of the EU-LAC Foundation's policy brief series will ensure a wide dissemination among interested audiences in both regions.

Languages

The language of the event will be mostly in English. However, simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English and Spanish for those who require it. The interpretation will be provided through the “**Zoom**” platform, where the interpreters will be connected in the respective channels in a specific Zoom session, according to the language of preference. Participants attending the event on site in the Charité in Berlin who need the interpretation are kindly requested to bring with them an electronic device, either a laptop, a tablet or a cell phone, through which they can access the platform. It will also be necessary for each participant to bring their own headphones to listen to the interpretation services. The room where the meeting will take place has Wi-Fi, the code of which will be provided upon entering the venue.

Contact persons

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