

BI-REGIONAL PACT FOR CARE
BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION
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Considering the needs and demands for care throughout the life course, including long-term care, are increasing in both regions due to the aging process of the population, the demographic and epidemiologic trends and the effects of climate change¹ and that there is a reduction in the time and number of people available to provide them.

Recognizing the persistence of gaps between men and women in the labour market, in wages, quality of employment, and access to social protection and social security, as well as of a social organisation that predominantly assigns paid and unpaid domestic and care work to women, together with the insufficiency of care policies and services that ensure gender co-responsibility and between the State, market, families, communities, and individuals.

Mindful of the unprecedented and harmful effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the global population and a disproportionately strong impact on women, adolescents, and girls, in all their diversity, deepening the structural challenges of gender inequality and leading to massive job losses, as well as an increase in informality and school dropout rates and, consequently, an increase in the demand for care and the burden of care work on women, adolescents, and girls, among other consequences, and at the same time, it has highlighted the decisive role of paid and unpaid care work for the sustainability of life.

Recognizing that investment in care policies and systems from a gender perspective, in addition to contributing directly to people well-being, allows the direct and indirect creation of quality employment and facilitates women's labour participation/women's participation in the labour market, generating returns to the State through taxes and social security contributions and economic and social benefits for the whole society.

Recognizing the importance of the intersectional, intercultural and territorial approach for the design and implementation of comprehensive care policies and systems.

Taking into account that investment in early childhood care promotes early childhood development, contributes to avoiding the intergenerational reproduction of poverty and inequality, and provides benefits to individuals in the medium and long term, and thus to society and the economy as a whole.

Considering the importance of global and regional care chains, their structural causes, and the need to guarantee human rights and decent working conditions for women migrant workers and domestic workers in accordance with ILO Convention 189, as well as the prevention of and attention to violence -particularly sexual violence-, and human trafficking, and non-

¹ The CEDAW Committee, in its General Recommendation No. 37, notes that “The burden of caregiving and domestic work often increases for women following disasters. The destruction of food stocks, housing and infrastructure such as water and energy supplies and an absence of social protection systems and healthcare services all have specific consequences for women and girls. The result of such gendered inequalities is the increased vulnerability and mortality levels among women and girls, and they are frequently left with less time to engage in economic activities or to gain access to the resources, including information and education, necessary for recovery and adaptation.”

discriminatory access to health services and comprehensive social protection for the women who are part of them.

Considering that the European Commission presented in September 2022 the [European Care Strategy](#) and recommendations on the [Revision of the Barcelona Targets on early childhood education and care](#) and on [access to affordable high-quality long-term care](#), adopted by the European Council in December 2022, setting out an agenda to improve the situation of both caregivers and people in need of care, with the aim of guaranteeing quality, affordable, and accessible care services, with better working conditions, gender equality, and work-life balance for caregivers, contributing to progress in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Union 2030 headline targets on employment, skills and poverty reduction.

Taking into account the [mid-term evaluation report of the Gender Action Plan \(GAP III\)](#) that identifies care as one of the areas of the Plan that requires more attention, pointing out as a challenge that the work that the EU is doing in this area is not always visible, as it is integrated into projects in other areas (p.35) and recommends that such support can be made explicit in a distinctive way in the results obtained, budget allocations, and indicators (p.58).

Considering [the conclusions on the transition of care systems](#) adopted by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) on November 29, 2023 which recommend Member States to expand the areas of work of the European strategy in key aspects such as the comprehensiveness of long-term care services, the cultural transformation of imaginaries and the promotion of community care and local solutions

Considering that Latin American and Caribbean countries adopted the [Buenos Aires Commitment](#) in November 2020 during the [XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), recognising care as a right of people to care, to be cared for and exercise selfcare including measures to overcome the sexual division of labour and move towards a fair social organization of care, in the framework of a new development model that fosters gender equality in the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and to move towards a/the care society;

Taking into account the results of the [EU-LAC Gender Equality Forum](#) held in Berlin on 11-12 May, convened by the EU-LAC Foundation, the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, together with Red Unidas and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), where it is recommended to "Explore new modalities of cooperation for the construction of joint bi-regional pacts, such as a bi-regional Pact for care".

Taking into account the [declaration of organizations, networks and platforms of civil society and unions from Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union](#) adopted in the UE-LAC forum in Brussels on July 13 and 14, 2023, which recommends "to promote a bi-regional Pact for care based on the European Care Strategy and the Buenos Aires Declaration on the Care Society".

Bearing in mind that during the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the European Union (CELAC-EU Summit) held in Brussels on the 17th and 18th of July is Heads of State and Government committed “to fighting multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and gender-based violence, and to promoting fundamental labour principles and rights and ILO core labour standards and conventions of decent work for all, gender equality, full and equal representation and participation of all women and girls in decision-making processes, rights of indigenous peoples as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, rights of the child, human rights defenders, and the rights of persons in situations of vulnerability and people of African descent”².

Considering that [Declaration of the Co-Presidents of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly \(EuroLat\)](#) issued on the 30 November 2022 calls to “underscore the importance of expressions of solidarity with women, adolescents and girls living in conflict situations in the world and call for the promotion of multilateral cooperation to implement the provisions of international humanitarian law and to maintain international peace and security, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and the other resolutions related to the women, peace and security agenda proclaimed in the Buenos Aires Commitment adopted at the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean; and call for women’s participation in leadership positions in strategic sectors of the economy to be fostered with a view to achieve and move towards a society of care, thus overcoming the gender-specific division of labour”

Considering that during the Fifteenth Ordinary Plenary Session of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EURO-LAT), held in Madrid from the 24th to 27th of July 2023, parliamentarians from both regions signed a commitment to advance gender equality, which calls for "strengthening bi-regional cooperation to ensure the right to care, to receive care and self-care in conditions of equality and quality, and therefore advance in the consolidation and financing of comprehensive care systems in all Latin American, Caribbean and European countries, as committed to in the Strategy European Union on Care adopted in September 2022 by the European Union and the Buenos Aires Commitment adopted by the Member States of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in November 2022 at the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean". Additionally in the sessions of the Permanent Committee on Social Affairs, Youth and Children, Human Exchange, Education and Culture, as well as during the Women's Forum, participants urged to promote the cooperation of both regions in the agenda of care promoting a bi-regional Pact for care. Likewise, during the Permanent Committee on Economic, Financial and Commercial Affairs, participants emphasise the importance of strengthening gender equality and the role of women in and between the two regions.

Considering that during the Sixty-fifth Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the member States of ECLAC agreed to “*Also encourage* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in coordination with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the EU-LAC Foundation, to advance a biregional compact for care between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, with a view to promoting cooperation among the countries of both regions on comprehensive care policies and systems with a gender

² Paragraph 9 Declaration of the EU-CELAC Summit 2023.
<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12000-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

perspective, in the framework of the implementation of the Buenos Aires Commitment and the European Care Strategy, and fostering cooperation initiatives in this area with other regions of the world.”³

Considering that on January 24, 2024, during the exchange of views on the Bi-regional Pact for Care organized by the European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the European Parliament Committee on Development, in partnership with the Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (DLAT) and the Delegation to the Caribbean-EU Parliamentary Assembly (DCAB), Members of the European Parliament expressed their support for the Pact to promote bi-regional cooperation in the implementation of comprehensive care policies and systems.

Recognizing that members States of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, share common challenges in developing universal care policies and systems that include the provision of quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood and long-term care services, as well as ensuring decent working conditions and quality employment, training and vocational training for caregivers.

IT IS PROPOSED

To establish a Bi-regional Pact for care between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union with the objective of promoting cooperation on comprehensive care systems and public policies among the countries of both regions, promoting cooperation actions in the following areas:

1. Fostering **exchange** of progress and promising practices in care policies, systems, programmes, and benefits among others:
 - Policy and regulatory frameworks in the field of care.
 - Quality standards for early childhood education and care services; support for people with disabilities, care for older persons, and long-term care for dependent persons.
 - Governance mechanisms and institutional architecture of policies and comprehensive care systems, including mechanisms for social participation
 - Local, territorial and community-based care experiences
 - Care training and professionalization strategies.
 - Strategies for financing care policies and systems.
 - Follow-up, monitoring and evaluation systems for care policies and systems.

2. Conduct comparative **studies and analyses** on topics such as:
 - Time use in care and the calculation of satellite accounts to measure unpaid domestic and care work in households.
 - Investment required to close the gap between the supply and demand of care services for different populations, as well as prospective analyses of positive economic impacts that such investment generates.

³ Paragraph 7 in the Agreements approved at the Sixty-fifth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/23-00947_mdm.65_agreements_adopted.pdf

- Regulations on maternity, paternity, parental leave, and other care leaves and their conditions of application.
 - Regulations and working conditions of workers in global and regional care chains and their link to women migration flows in both regions.
 - Linkages between the environment, climate change, and care
3. Promote subregional, regional, and multilateral **cooperation programmes** through multi-actor North-South, South-South, and triangular and circular cooperation modalities, that promote gender equality and care policies and systems as well as the necessary cultural change for the gender and social co-responsibility between State, private sector, families, communities and between women and men.
 4. **Stimulate the formulation of concrete proposals** to be taken into consideration by the decision-makers in both regions and by the authorities, to contribute to moving towards the care society.

Establish a **Bi-regional Liaison Commission on Care composed of the presidency of** the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the competent authority designated by the European Union. The secretariat will be composed of the EU-LAC Foundation, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN). The Bi-regional Liaison Commission will elaborate a **work plan** within six months from the date of its establishment/creation to propose joint actions to be developed by both regions.