



FROM FRAGMENTATION TO COOPERATION: DEMOCRACY AND MULTILATERALISM AT THE 2025 EU–CELAC AND AMERICAS SUMMITS

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FOREWORD

The world stands at a crossroads. Fragmentation, polarization, and distrust are eroding the foundations of international cooperation. The global system that once promised stability and progress is now marked by competing visions of governance, resurgent nationalism, and a widening gap between citizens and institutions. In this context, the capacity of democracies to deliver; to govern effectively, inclusively, and in solidarity, is under unprecedented strain.

Yet this moment also offers an opportunity. Across Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean, there is renewed awareness that no region can face today's transnational challenges alone. From climate insecurity and digital disruption to democratic backsliding and inequality, the threats we share are deeply interconnected and so must be our responses.

This report, "From Fragmentation to Cooperation: Democracy and Multilateralism at the 2025 EU–CELAC and Americas Summits", emerges from that conviction. Developed jointly by Club de Madrid and the Atlantic Council, with the support of Spain's Secretariat of State for the European Union, it reflects a shared commitment to move from episodic engagement to structured cooperation between Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the United States.

The dialogues that inform these pages conveyed a clear and urgent message: our regions cannot afford isolation or indifference. What divides us politically is far less significant than what unites us in values and purpose. The defense of democracy, the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive growth, and the renewal of multilateralism are not parallel agendas; they are a single, interconnected project. If we fail to act together, we risk allowing fragmentation to harden into irrelevance. But if we choose cooperation, we can restore credibility and direction to the multilateral system when it is most needed.

For more than two decades, Club de Madrid has embodied this belief. As a network of over 100 former democratic heads of state and government, it exists to support democratic leadership, foster dialogue across divides, and promote governance that delivers for people. Our Members bring the voice of experience, but also a sense of responsibility to help build the next generation of democratic leaders capable of facing today's complex challenges.

The recommendations in this report are ambitious yet pragmatic. They call for new tools, new partnerships, and new leadership to bridge regions and generations. They invite policymakers, experts, and citizens to rethink how democracies cooperate, aligning governance with inclusion, security with human dignity, and prosperity with sustainability.

Democracy has always been an unfinished project. It demands renewal, courage, and empathy. The very qualities this report seeks to inspire. The future of the transatlantic and hemispheric relationship will depend on our capacity to translate shared values into collective action and vision into results.

This report is both a roadmap and an invitation to act, to collaborate, and to lead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francisco Sagasti'.

Francisco Sagasti
Member of Club de Madrid
President of Peru (2020–2021)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a context of accelerating geopolitical rivalry and institutional strain, the European Union (EU), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and the United States (US) share both the challenge and the opportunity to redefine cooperation for a fragmented world. Building on two high-level dialogues held in 2025, this report outlines a strategic and operational framework for trilateral engagement centered on democracy resilience, security, sustainable prosperity, and inclusive multilateralism.

The dialogues revealed that, although there is recognition of shared interests and institutional readiness to engage, cooperation among the regions is uneven and often ad hoc. Divergent political priorities, shifting domestic agendas, and growing asymmetries in influence have limited the capacity for coordinated action. Nevertheless, participants agreed that strategic collaboration remains not only possible but necessary to preserve an international order grounded in rules and cooperation.

This report proposes a **four-pillar framework** for structured interregional cooperation:

1. Democracy and governance
2. Security and stability
3. Sustainable prosperity
4. Inclusive societies and multilateral renewal

Across these pillars, the report advances **ten interlinked recommendations** that translate strategic vision into action:

1. **Establish an Academic Working Group on Democracy, Security, and Sustainable Development** to provide continuous analytical support and evidence-based policy inputs for both summits and beyond.
2. **Create a Joint Electoral Integrity and Democratic Resilience Initiative** to align EU and OAS electoral observation methodologies and strengthen early-warning tools against disinformation and electoral interference, reinforcing public trust in democratic processes.
3. **Develop a Trilateral Framework for Human Security and Governance** to address transnational threats such as organized crime, illicit financial flows, and justice reform, through joint programs and pilot projects.
4. **Launch the Initiative for Knowledge in the Americas (INKA)** as a flagship platform for science, technology, and innovation cooperation across the EU, LAC, and - North America.
5. **Strengthen Economic Partnerships and Sustainable Value-Chain Integration** by promoting resilient, diversified, and sustainable economic ties between the regions,
6. **Promote Structured and Inclusive Social Dialogue** inspired by the ILO tripartite and Nordic models, to ensure that transitions toward sustainability and digitalization remain fair and participatory.
7. **Advance a Common Trilateral Narrative for Multilateral Renewal** through coordinated positions on UN reform, debt sustainability, and governance of global public goods.
8. **Ensure Continuity through a Regular EU–US–LAC Dialogue Platform** to monitor progress, sustain engagement between summit cycles, and align regional initiatives.

9. **Foster Emerging Leadership and Capacity Building** to cultivate a new generation of leaders, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, able to articulate and implement a shared regional vision for inclusive and cooperative governance.
10. **Reinforce Spain's Role as a Strategic Bridge for Trilateral Cooperation** by leveraging its dual identity as a European and Ibero-American actor to sustain dialogue between regions.

Together, these recommendations outline a roadmap toward a coherent, balanced, and forward-looking trilateral agenda, capable of translating dialogue into collective action and shared progress.

QUOTES

Francisco Sagasti, Member of Club de Madrid, President of Peru (2020-2021)

- *"We should advance along two parallel tracks: one practical, focused on cooperation that delivers visible results; and another political, aimed at alliances on global issues such as democracy and inclusion."*
- *"The Initiative for Knowledge in the Americas (INKA) is about demonstrating that we can achieve concrete outcomes together. It is a trust-building exercise through science, technology, and innovation."*
- *"Constructive disagreement is essential to build common ground; we will need patience and trust to bridge differences across our regions."*

Kjell Magne Bondevik, Member of Club de Madrid, Prime Minister of Norway (1997-2000; 2001-2005)

- *"Democracy is not about the winner taking it all. It must ensure that minorities (political, religious, and ethnic) have a voice and influence."*
- *"Europe may find itself squeezed geopolitically between China, Russia, and the United States; this underscores the need to include Latin America more fully in global strategic discussions."*
- *"Structured social dialogue, as practiced in Norway between government, business, and labor, could inspire inclusive and resilient democracies in Latin America."*

Susana Malcorra, Adviser of Club de Madrid, Founder and President of GWL Voices

- *"We must anchor our cooperation in what is politically and practically possible; modest initiatives that demonstrate results can build trust."*
- *"Security and cooperation must be understood through a southern transatlantic lens; one that recognizes the growing interconnections between Latin America and Africa and the potential for joint action on shared challenges"*
- *"Europe and Latin America share a structural dilemma in their relationships with China and the U.S. Both must navigate asymmetry and interdependence through strategic cooperation."*

Rut Diamint, Adviser of Club de Madrid, Professor of Political Science, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella

- *“Latin America and the Caribbean do not need a patron — they seek horizontal, mutually respectful cooperation.”*
- *“Short-term, event-driven cooperation is insufficient; transformation requires sustained engagement beyond summit cycles.”*
- *“In this dialogue, ‘geopolitical’ should be reframed as ‘political,’ emphasizing that cooperation challenges are fundamentally political, not military.”*

Allyson Maynard-Gibson KC, Adviser of Club de Madrid, Former Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas

- *“Judicial independence is fundamental to trust in government, the rule of law, and democratic coexistence.”*
- *“We must safeguard academia from political or ideological control. It is the engine of critical thought and civic engagement.”*
- *“Democracy is ultimately about people: protecting the judiciary and academia, and empowering civic participation are its foundations.”*

Ted Piccone, Adviser of Club de Madrid, Nonresident Senior Fellow – Foreign Policy, Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, Brookings

- *“Haiti represents both a humanitarian imperative and a test case for collective action. A coordinated EU–US–LAC initiative could demonstrate that democratic partners can still deliver where global governance has faltered, aligning political, security, and development tools to restore stability and dignity to the Haitian people.”*

Susanne Gratius, Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Autonomous University of Madrid

- *“Strengthening democracy begins with protecting electoral integrity. The EU and the OAS already bring decades of experience in observation and trust-building, but working separately often dilutes impact. A joint, complementary approach could turn electoral observation into a true transatlantic public good, improving methodology, coordination, and resilience against disinformation.”*

Jason Marczak, Vice President and Senior Director, Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center, Atlantic Council

- *“We need to move from summit diplomacy to sustained, institutional cooperation. Strengthening democracy across our regions means aligning the work of our electoral bodies, media, and civic actors — not reinventing new structures but making existing ones fit for purpose. That’s how the transatlantic and inter-American communities can regain citizens’ trust and prove that democracy still delivers.”*

2. INTRODUCTION

Building a New Ecosystem of Cooperation Amid Global Fragmentation

The international system is undergoing a profound realignment. Power competition, technological acceleration, and ideological polarization are reshaping global governance, while inequality, disinformation, the erosion of political will, institutional capacity, and public confidence in governments' ability to deliver effective solutions are exposing the limits of existing institutions. Economic interdependence, once a source of stability, is increasingly used as leverage in supply chains, data, and critical resources. At the same time, social polarization and declining trust in democratic institutions have challenged prior assumptions about multilateral cooperation. The result is a fragmented geopolitical landscape in which no single actor or alliance can address transnational challenges alone.

This landscape of volatility and fragmentation is redefining the role of regions and mid-sized powers in sustaining collective action. The European Union (EU), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and the United States (US) are all navigating complex domestic and international pressures, ranging from political polarization and populism to climate vulnerability, economic inequality, and digital disruption. Yet their interdependence remains undeniable: they share dense economic, social, and cultural linkages, and they face transnational threats (organized crime, cyber insecurity, environmental degradation, and external interference) that no region can manage in isolation.

Against this backdrop, these regions face a common test: how to engage with each other in ways that strengthen democratic governance, foster sustainable and inclusive growth, and safeguard the international system from further erosion. What is at stake is not the preservation of an old order, but the construction of a new, flexible ecosystem of cooperation; one capable of generating trust, enabling pragmatic collaboration, and transforming shared interests into collective action and measurable results.

For these reasons, interregional cooperation among the three regions is both a strategic and a democratic imperative. The challenge is not to replicate past models of transatlantic or hemispheric dialogue, but to design a framework that reflects today's multipolar reality. One grounded in shared interests, mutual benefit, and respect for diverse regional perspectives. The capacity of these three regions to act in concert will help determine whether the next phase of globalization is defined by competition and fragmentation or by inclusive governance and sustainable development.

It is within this transformative moment that [Club de Madrid \(CdM\)](#) and the [Atlantic Council's Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center \(AALAC\)](#), have strengthened their partnership to foster structured, forward-looking cooperation between the EU, LAC, and the US. Club de Madrid, through its Members, democratically elected former heads of state and government, mobilizes political experience and moral leadership to advance democratic governance and inclusive policymaking. The AALAC, with its deep expertise in transatlantic and hemispheric relations, brings analytical insight and convening capacity to bridge policy communities across regions. Together, both organizations are committed to promoting democratic resilience, inclusive multilateralism, and constructive dialogue as foundations for a more cohesive global order.

Since 2023, this partnership has evolved through a series of complementary initiatives that have progressively shaped the contours of a trilateral agenda linking the EU, the US, and LAC. The first milestone, **“Spain: A Driver for Broadened Transatlantic Relations,”** implemented under Spain’s Presidency of the Council of the EU, and the report [*“Galvanizing Spain’s Presidency for the Next Chapter: Multilateralism, Green Transition, and Digital Transformation”*](#) reaffirmed Spain’s role as a European, transatlantic, and Ibero-American bridge. Supported by Spain’s Secretary of State for the European Union of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, the project underscored the value of an expanded Euro-American partnership in tackling shared challenges, from democratic erosion and inequality to the twin green and digital transitions.

The second phase, **“Bridging Horizons between the EU–CELAC Summit and the Summit of the Americas 2025,”** launched in 2024, sought to align the agendas of the EU–CELAC Summit (Colombia) and the Summit of the Americas (Dominican Republic) both to be held in 2025. The resulting report, [*“Bridging Dialogues for a Unified Trilateral Agenda,”*](#) advanced seven key recommendations to enhance coordination and institutional cooperation between the two Summits. It also consolidated partnerships, thereby broadening the political and institutional coalition behind this trilateral effort.

The present phase, **“From Fragmentation to Cooperation: Democracy and Multilateralism in the 2025 EU–CELAC and Summit of the Americas,”** builds directly on these achievements. Developed within [*Club de Madrid’s strategic priority on Multilateralism and Global Cooperation*](#), it aims to consolidate the progress made while responding to a more complex geopolitical reality. Amid shifting global leadership dynamics and growing uncertainty in multilateral engagement, this project seeks to sustain and deepen collaboration among the EU, LAC, and the US, focusing on democratic renewal, institutional resilience, and joint action on security and governance.

To that end, the initiative draws on extensive consultations with Members and Advisors of Club de Madrid, Atlantic Council experts, and key stakeholders from governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector, identifying successful cooperation practices and emerging opportunities for joint initiatives. To guide the formulation of recommendations, two successive high-level dialogues were held in 2025, ensuring continuity between strategic reflection and policy formulation:

- **High-Level Dialogue on “Interregional Cooperation in a Fragmented World: Security, Geopolitics, and Democratic Resilience”.** This meeting examined how geopolitical rivalry, hybrid threats, and weakened multilateralism are reshaping the EU–US–LAC relationship, identifying practical avenues for coordination in areas such as security, foreign policy, and democratic resilience.
- **High-Level Dialogue “From Priorities to Proposals: Concrete Steps for EU–US–LAC Cooperation in 2025 and Beyond”.** Building on the first dialogue, this session focused on translating strategic priorities into actionable policy proposals, reinforcing political momentum and consensus ahead of the 2025 EU–CELAC and Summit of the Americas processes and beyond.

These exchanges fostered a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities shaping interregional relations and provided the analytical and political foundation for the recommendations presented in this report.

At the core of the initiative lies the establishment of a **High-Level Working Group** from across the three regions, coordinated by Club de Madrid and the Atlantic Council. The group promoted sustained dialogue and formulate joint proposals across three dimensions: **security and governance, foreign policy coordination, and democratic and geopolitical resilience.**

The EU–CELAC Summit in Colombia and the Summit of the Americas in the Dominican Republic in 2025 represent a defining moment to translate this vision into action. Strengthening the connection between both processes and ensuring continuity in engagement can lay the foundation for a structured trilateral partnership, designed to protect democracy, promote sustainable and inclusive growth, and renew multilateralism as a shared public good.

3. CONTEXT

Navigating Fragmentation through Cooperation

As the international order continues to shift toward multipolarity, the relationship between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the U.S., faces a delicate balance between renewed engagement and growing fragmentation. Recent years have seen important efforts to rebuild trust, including the 2023 EU–CELAC Summit and a reinvigorated Summit of the Americas process, yet the gap between political discourse and implementation remains significant. Diverging priorities, competing regional frameworks, and asymmetries in resources and influence have limited the emergence of a coherent trilateral vision.

At the same time, this evolving landscape offers a chance to rethink the foundations of interregional cooperation. In the absence of strong global leadership, regions and mid-sized powers are increasingly positioned to anchor stability, shape multilateral reform, and generate innovative responses to transnational challenges. For the EU, LAC, and the U.S., this moment presents both risk and opportunity: the risk of deepening fragmentation if coordination falters, and the opportunity to affirm that shared interests still exist and can unite diverse political systems around a common agenda.

3.1. Geopolitical and Institutional Fragmentation

The global reconfiguration of power has intensified competition among major actors, eroding the coherence of traditional alliances and testing the resilience of multilateral frameworks. Within this environment, the EU, the US, and LAC countries often operate with misaligned strategic priorities, resulting in fragmented and episodic cooperation. Divergent positions on Venezuela’s situation or migration, for instance, have constrained policy alignment and diluted collective influence in hemispheric affairs.

The Summit of the Americas and the EU–CELAC process embody contrasting models of engagement: the former, selective and politically contested; the latter, inclusive but slow in implementation. These asymmetries undermine the perception of trilateral coherence and risk reinforcing the notion that global governance is driven by competing rather than converging agendas.

Leadership dynamics also matter: political polarization within the US, domestic pressures within the EU, and renewed regionalism in LAC countries have all contributed to an erosion of strategic

trust. At the same time, the proliferation of overlapping regional forums diffuses energy and prevents LAC from articulating a single, cohesive position toward its transatlantic partners.

The result is an institutional vacuum in which the mechanisms for regularized coordination between the EU, the US, and LAC remain underdeveloped. Without a shared platform to reconcile perspectives, policy misalignment risks deepening and reducing the capacity for collective action on issues where the three regions share long-term interests.

3.2. Security and Governance Gaps

Security cooperation among the EU, LAC, and the US remains largely reactive and compartmentalized. The US continues to prioritize containment and enforcement strategies focused on migration control, counternarcotics, and transnational crime, while the EU emphasizes institutional reform, prevention, and human security. LAC governments, for their part, often approach security through a non-interventionist lens, shaped by historical sensitivities to external influence and the legacies of law-enforcement-focused approaches.

These divergent frameworks limit opportunities for joint action. Regional initiatives remain fragmented, and trust deficits persist between governments and societies that view external security engagement with caution. Meanwhile, organized crime, cyberattacks, disinformation, and illicit financial flows transcend national borders, demanding precisely the kind of coordinated responses that current mechanisms fail to provide.

The absence of integrated approaches also undermines democratic resilience. Weak justice systems and endemic corruption create entry points for external manipulation and criminal infiltration, while parallel EU and OAS electoral observation missions often operate independently, using distinct methodologies and communication timelines. Past experiences, such as the 2017 Honduran elections and the 2019 Bolivian crisis¹, have shown how divergent reporting timelines and methodologies can lead to mixed interpretations and weaken the collective credibility of international observation efforts. Without coordinated investment in institutional integrity, civic trust, and rule-of-law reform, efforts to strengthen democracy will remain piecemeal and vulnerable to reversals.

¹ Organization of American States (OAS), *Declaration of the OAS General Secretariat regarding the Presidential Elections in Honduras*, December 6, 2017,

https://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-090/17

European Union Election Observation Mission, *Honduras Final Report General Elections 2017*,

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/212559/Honduras-general-elections_26-November-2017_EU-EOM-report_EN.PDF

Long G., Rosnick D., Kharrazian C., Cashman. D., *What Happened in Bolivia's 2019 Vote Count? The Role of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission*, Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), November 2019, <https://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/bolivia-elections-2019-11.pdf>

Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy (SSD), Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) of the OAS, *Electoral Integrity Analysis General Elections in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Final Report*, October 20, 2019, <https://www.oas.org/fpdb/press/Audit-Report-EN-vFINAL.pdf>

European Union Election Expert Mission, *Bolivia 2019. Final Report*, October 20, 2019, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2037731/EU+EEM+BOL+2019+FR+EN.pdf>

3.3. Political Volatility and Regional Constraints

Latin America is entering another cycle of electoral processes, marked by presidential elections in Chile and Bolivia and a likely electoral contest in Venezuela, all of which will shape the democratic trajectory of the region. At the same time, Costa Rica and Colombia are moving into pre-electoral periods ahead of their 2026 elections, while Peru continues to face deep political volatility and calls for early polls. This regional context of shifting political priorities and heightened polarization is redefining foreign policy orientations and complicating sustained engagement and policy alignments with the US and the EU. Even in countries not holding elections, domestic pressures, ranging from social unrest to the erosion of trust and capacity within governance systems, are constraining governments' ability to commit to long-term interregional initiatives.

Beyond elections, structural governance deficits² have deepened vulnerability to populism and misinformation. Although the region remains free from interstate war, latent tensions, such as the Guyana–Venezuela border dispute³ and persistent instability in Haiti⁴, underscore the fragility of regional peace.

Environmental pressures and climate risks further complicate this picture: [Caribbean Small Island Development States \(SIDS\)](#), face existential challenges from rising sea levels and displacement,

² Recent data from International IDEA's Global State of Democracy 2025 reveal a worrying erosion of democratic performance worldwide. Over the past five years, more than half of the countries assessed have deteriorated in at least one of democracy's core dimensions (Representation, Rights, Rule of Law, or Participation). Representation, historically the most robust pillar, has undergone its steepest decline in over twenty years, despite an unprecedented 74 national elections held in 2024. The number of countries showing regression in this area outpaces those improving by a factor of seven, underscoring a global crisis of political representation. At the same time, Rule of Law continues to weaken, with the sharpest setbacks recorded in Europe, a region once seen as a model of institutional stability. By contrast, Participation remains comparatively resilient, suggesting that civic engagement and grassroots mobilization are now the principal forces sustaining democratic vitality where formal institutions falter.

International IDEA, *The Global State of Democracy 2025: Democracy on the Move*, 11 September 2025, https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/2025-09/global-state-of-democracy-2025-democracy-on-the-move_0.pdf

In Latin America and the Caribbean, these global trends intersect with chronic fiscal imbalances and governance fragility. The region's average fiscal deficit of around 4 % of GDP and public debt surpassing 60 % of GDP have constrained policy responsiveness, while weak party systems and fragmented institutions have eroded citizen trust. See: Passadore, J., Treviño, JP., Valdés, R., *Why Latin America Needs Lower Deficits and Stronger Fiscal Rules*, IMF Blog, December 18, 2024, <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/12/18/why-latin-america-needs-lower-deficits-and-stronger-fiscal-rules>

OECD, *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2024*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/4abdba16-en>

³ Gunson, P. *Venezuela Presses Territorial Claims as Dispute with Guyana Heats Up*, International Crisis Group, 08 April 2025, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/venezuela-guyana/venezuela-presses-territorial-claims-dispute-guyana-heats>

Bethell, L. *Notes on the History of the Venezuela/Guyana Boundary Dispute*, CEBRI, Year 3 / Nº 9 / Jan-Mar 2024, <https://cebri-revista.emnuvens.com.br/revista/article/view/191/277>

⁴ Organization of American States, *OAS Secretary General Presents Roadmap for Stability and Peace in Haiti*, August 20, 2025, https://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-047/25

Center for Preventive Action, *Criminal Violence in Haiti*, October 1, 2025, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-haiti>

Human Rights Watch (HRW), *World Report 2025. Haiti. Events of 2024*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/haiti>

while South American economies must balance decarbonization goals with dependence on extractive sectors.

Compounding these dynamics is a growing “summit overload” in 2025: 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), the EU–CELAC Summit, the Summit of the Americas, COP30, and the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2). Competing priorities and overlapping diplomatic agendas risk stretching institutional capacity and weakening political follow-through across all processes.

3.4. Economic and Policy Asymmetries

Despite renewed rhetoric on partnership, the economic relationship between the EU, LAC, and the US remains uneven and underleveraged. The [EU’s Global Gateway](#) initiative, envisioned as a flagship mechanism to strengthen connectivity and sustainable investment, has not yet translated into tangible projects in LAC countries, where awareness and access remain limited.

Meanwhile, US re-engagement in the region, driven by strategic competition with China, has been narrowly focused on securing supply chains and access to critical minerals⁵. This extractive emphasis risks reproducing historical dependency patterns rather than fostering value-added industrial cooperation.

Latin America, for its part, continues to struggle with low productivity, institutional informality, and fiscal constraints, limiting its ability to engage as an equal partner in global economic transitions. Despite its strategic assets, such as renewable energy potential, biodiversity, and critical resources, LAC remains underrepresented in global decision-making spaces. Several participants described it as “the region geopolitics forgot,” symbolizing the persistent gap between its potential and its geopolitical weight.

Without a concerted effort to rebalance economic cooperation and strengthen regional ownership, the trilateral agenda risks reproducing dependency rather than promoting genuine partnership.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussions underscored the complexity of advancing trilateral cooperation in a fragmented geopolitical environment. While participants expressed diverse perspectives, they converged on the view that deeper coordination between the EU–CELAC and Summit of the Americas processes could enhance strategic alignment and policy coherence. The following recommendations collected by strategic pillars, reflect the areas where such convergence emerged and propose actionable steps to strengthen interregional engagement.

⁵ Bentley, A., Goldman, J. *Securing America’s Critical Minerals Supply*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 8, 2025, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/10/securing-america-critical-minerals-supply?lang=en>

Berg, R.C., *Ending the Strategic Vacuum: A U.S. Strategy for China in Latin America*, Centric for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), December 2, 2024, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/ending-strategic-vacuum-us-strategy-china-latin-america>

Bordoff, J. *A Critical Moment for Latin America’s Mineral Supply Chain*, July 22, 2025, Columbia Energy Exchange, <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/a-critical-moment-for-latin-americas-mineral-supply-chain/>

4.1. Democracy and Governance

4.1.1. Establish an Academic Working Group on Democracy, Security, and Sustainable Development

Participants across both dialogues highlighted the need to sustain collaboration among research institutions, think tanks, and policy networks across the regions. Building on this shared vision, a dedicated Academic Working Group should be created to generate evidence-based analysis and policy input for the EU–CELAC and Summit of the Americas processes and beyond them.

The Academic Working Group would:

- Bring together universities, think tanks, and independent experts from the three regions.
- Focus on three interrelated themes: (i) Democratic resilience and governance, (ii) Comprehensive and human security, and (iii) Sustainable and inclusive growth.
- Produce joint studies and policy briefs, including an Annual Trilateral Barometer tracking democratic trends and cooperation opportunities.
- Feed its outputs into summit processes and beyond them through concise Trilateral Action Notes shared with policymakers and relevant institutions.

This Working Group would create a sustained intellectual foundation for trilateral cooperation, ensuring that dialogue between the EU, LAC, and the US is informed by research, data, and cross-regional understanding rather than *ad hoc* exchanges.

4.1.2. Create a Joint Electoral Integrity and Democratic Resilience Initiative

Across both dialogues, participants underscored that free, fair, and trusted elections remain the cornerstone of democracy, yet are increasingly vulnerable to disinformation, digital manipulation, and declining public confidence. A practical and high-impact area for trilateral cooperation lies in enhancing coordination between Election Observation Missions (EOMs) of the EU and the OAS, while expanding collaboration with credible civil-society and academic partners.

This Joint Electoral Integrity and Democratic Resilience Initiative would:

- Strengthen coherence and complementarity between EU and OAS EOMs through shared methodologies, training, and communication protocols, reducing duplication, costs, and improving credibility.
- Promote joint analytical capacity on electoral integrity, covering issues such as information manipulation, campaign financing, cybersecurity, and foreign interference.
- Develop a permanent trilateral pool of experts from the regions to support election observation, early warning, and digital monitoring.
- Foster peer-learning networks among electoral authorities and civil-society organizations to exchange best practices and build resilience against democratic erosion.

Enhancing coordination among EOMs would demonstrate a visible, measurable commitment to defending democracy across regions, turning election observation into a shared instrument of accountability and trust-building within the broader trilateral agenda.

4.2. Security and Stability

4.2.1. Develop a Trilateral Framework for Human Security

Adopt a comprehensive approach to security that goes beyond militarization, emphasizing human security, governance, and prevention.

This framework should:

- Integrate law-enforcement reform, justice cooperation, and community-based prevention with regional approaches to food, water, and energy security.
- Include a joint mapping of illicit flows (arms, drugs, finance, cybercrime) across the Atlantic space to inform policy coordination.
- Pilot cooperation in Haiti and Ecuador as test cases for EU–US–LAC collaboration combining security, governance, and development tools.

This people-centered approach would help align the U.S. focus on enforcement with the EU’s institutional-building emphasis and LAC’s social-policy experience.

4.3. Sustainable Prosperity

4.3.1. Launch the “Initiative for Knowledge in the Americas (INKA)” as the Flagship Platform for Trilateral Cooperation

A strong convergence emerged across both high-level dialogues around the idea that knowledge, science, and innovation are powerful engines of sustainable development, prosperity, and human well-being. Participants emphasized that no trilateral agenda can succeed without investing in people, ideas, and technology capable of generating shared solutions to transnational challenges. Building on this shared vision, the [“Initiative for Knowledge in the Americas \(INKA\)”](#) should be launched as a flagship platform for cooperation among the EU, the LAC countries, the U.S. and Canada.

The INKA Initiative would:

- Promote joint research, innovation, and education ecosystems focused on areas such as digital governance, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, biodiversity, and climate resilience.
- Mobilize public, private, and philanthropic investment to support trilateral research partnerships and innovation clusters.
- Strengthen academic and policy exchange, expanding mobility programs for students, researchers, and practitioners across the three regions.
- Encourage science diplomacy and open knowledge-sharing as tools to bridge political divides and empower new generations.

Endorsing INKA at both the EU–CELAC and Summit of the Americas meetings would send a clear political message: that trilateral cooperation is not only about responding to crises, but about building a common future through knowledge, innovation, and inclusion.

4.3.2. Strengthen Economic Partnerships and Advance Sustainable Value-Chain Integration

Discussions across both dialogues underscored that economic relations between the regions must evolve from extractive or transactional models toward diversified, resilient, and inclusive value creation. Participants highlighted that the EU–LAC partnership on green transition and sustainability can serve as the anchor of this shift, while U.S. engagement, driven by supply-chain resilience and investment in strategic sectors, adds critical economic and technological depth to the trilateral equation.

To advance this transformation, the regions should develop a coordinated approach to sustainable value-chain integration, linking trade, investment, and innovation agendas.

Key actions include:

- Deepening the EU–LAC Green Partnership through initiatives on renewable energy, biodiversity protection, and sustainable industrial development, ensuring that climate ambition translates into jobs and social inclusion.
- Operationalizing an “EU–Mercosur Trade + Standards Dialogue”, connecting market access discussions with shared commitments on labor rights, environmental safeguards, and responsible business conduct.
- Leveraging complementary financing instruments, including the EU’s Global Gateway, U.S. development finance mechanisms under the U.S. financing tools and regional institutions such as Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), to co-finance projects in areas such as renewable energy, digital infrastructure, sustainable mining, and circular economy.
- Aligning financial tools and technical assistance to promote transparency, fair competition, and social safeguards in public–private partnerships.
- Supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and local innovation ecosystems to ensure that integration efforts generate tangible community benefits and decent employment.

This approach would consolidate the EU–LAC Green Partnership as the normative and developmental core of interregional cooperation, while harnessing U.S. investment and technology capabilities to build diversified, sustainable, and inclusive value chains across the Atlantic space.

4.4. Inclusive Societies and Multilateral Renewal

4.4.1. Foster Structured and Inclusive Social Dialogue

Discussions across the dialogues underscored that social dialogue is a cornerstone of democratic resilience and shared prosperity. Participants emphasized that sustainable economic transitions (green, digital, and demographic) require cooperation among governments, employers, workers, and civil society.

Building on the International Labour Organization (ILO)’s longstanding tripartite framework and inspired by the Nordic model of consensus-oriented governance, the EU, LAC, and the US should

foster interregional platforms for inclusive dialogue that extend beyond traditional labor relations to encompass the social, environmental, and democratic dimensions of development.

These platforms would:

- Encourage structured exchanges among governments, business, labor unions, and civil society to deliberate on issues such as just transition, social protection, digital inclusion, and equality of opportunity.
- Facilitate the exchange of best practices of negotiated reforms, trust-based institutions, and social partnership, adapting them to diverse regional contexts.
- Promote collaboration between social partners and policymakers across the three regions to align economic modernization with fairness, transparency, and worker participation.
- Ensure representation of women, youth, and community organizations, giving voice to actors traditionally excluded from high-level policy debates.

Rather than duplicating existing mechanisms such as those of ILO, these trilateral platforms would complement and amplify them, embedding participation and social cohesion into the broader trilateral agenda and demonstrating that democracy delivers when dialogue is inclusive, structured, and sustained.

4.4.2. Advance a Common Trilateral Narrative on Multilateral Renewal

Participants converged on the need for the regions to move beyond fragmented diplomacy and articulate a shared vision of multilateral renewal grounded in democracy, sustainability, and inclusion.

This recommendation calls for the formulation of a common trilateral narrative that reaffirms the value of democratic governance and collective action in addressing global challenges.

Joint priorities could include:

- Coordinated positions on multilateral reform, including the revitalization of the United Nations system, the restructuring of global financial governance, and joint action on debt sustainability and fair access to global public goods.
- Mutual advocacy for inclusive and transparent frameworks in digital governance, artificial intelligence, and climate action, ensuring that the rules of the future are shaped by democratic values and human rights.
- Activation of existing institutions as policy connectors and implementing partners that can translate political declarations into actionable cooperation.
- Strategic coordination across the 2025 summit cycle, including shared messaging on democracy, sustainability, and multilateral governance.

Such a shared narrative would signal that transatlantic and hemispheric cooperation remains a viable and necessary force for global stability, capable of shaping the rules and values of the 21st century. Aligning political vision with operational instruments would allow the EU, LAC, and the US to lead a new generation of multilateral cooperation that is more representative, resilient, and responsive to citizens' needs.

4.4.3. Ensure Continuity through a Regular EU–US–LAC Dialogue Platform

Participants in both dialogues emphasized the importance of ensuring continuity and coherence across interregional initiatives. They warned that, without a structured mechanism for follow-up, the political momentum generated by the 2025 EU–CELAC Summit in Colombia and the Summit of the Americas in the Dominican Republic could dissipate before it translates into lasting cooperation. There was broad consensus on the need for a regular trilateral platform to maintain engagement among policymakers, experts, and civil society beyond individual summit cycles.

To respond to this need, the report proposes the creation of a Regular EU–US–LAC Dialogue Platform that would serve as a space for strategic review, knowledge exchange, and coordination of initiatives emerging from both summit processes.

The platform could:

- Convene periodically, alternating between regions, to assess progress on democracy, security, and sustainable development goals.
- Bring together governmental representatives, regional organizations, development banks, academia, private sector, and civil society to monitor implementation of summit commitments and identify new cooperation opportunities.
- Build on the experiences of institutions such as the EU–LAC Foundation, CAF, and the IDB, which could act as conveners and knowledge partners.
- Produce a concise “Trilateral Progress Note” summarizing advances, gaps, and forward-looking priorities to inform future summits and policy dialogues.

4.4.4. Reinforce Spain’s Role as a Strategic Bridge Between Europe and the Americas

Spain occupies a uniquely strategic position as both an EU member and a country with deep political, economic, and cultural ties to LAC countries, as well as strong transatlantic partnerships with the U.S. Throughout this process, participants recognized Spain’s capacity to serve as a diplomatic and institutional bridge.

To consolidate this role, Spain could:

- Champion the continuity of trilateral dialogue by hosting preparatory meetings and supporting the proposed EU–US–LAC Dialogue Platform.
- Leverage its development-cooperation and research programs to nurture the STI initiatives and emerging leadership programs.
- Promote policy coherence between the EU’s external action priorities and LAC regional initiatives, emphasizing democratic governance, social inclusion, and multilateral reform.

Such a platform would institutionalize continuity, ensuring that interregional cooperation becomes a sustained process rather than a series of disconnected events.

4.4.5. Foster Emerging Leadership and Capacity Building for a Renewed Regional Vision

Participants in the dialogues emphasized that lasting cooperation between the regions depends on leadership renewal; the emergence of new voices capable of translating regional aspirations into actionable policies. In particular, the discussion highlighted the need to cultivate a new generation of leaders in LAC countries who can articulate a shared vision grounded in regional identity, cooperation, and tangible public benefit.

To meet this challenge, the three regions should prioritize leadership development and capacity-building initiatives that strengthen analytical, diplomatic, and governance skills among emerging leaders across sectors.

Such initiatives could:

- Support regional and interregional training programs on leadership, policy innovation, and public service management.
- Encourage exchange and mentorship networks connecting young policymakers, entrepreneurs, and civil-society actors with experienced democratic leaders.
- Promote joint research or policy labs that allow emerging leaders to co-design solutions to regional challenges, particularly in areas such as governance, sustainability, and digital transformation.
- Engage institutions as facilitators of cross-regional leadership cooperation.

Strengthening emerging leadership would consolidate the foundations of a shared regional vision and ensure that the trilateral partnership is sustained by a diverse and forward-looking generation equipped to navigate the complexities of the global order.

CONCLUSIONS

The process that gave rise to this report demonstrated that Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean share both a responsibility and a strategic advantage: the ability to transform political diversity into a source of creativity and resilience. If coordination among these regions remains fragmented, opportunities for collective influence will be lost. But if cooperation is strengthened, they can jointly shape a global order that is more democratic, sustainable, and representative.

The 2025 EU–CELAC Summit in Colombia and the Summit of the Americas in the Dominican Republic offer an unprecedented chance to translate this vision into practice. The challenge is not merely to produce new declarations but to embed mechanisms, such as the Academic Working Group, Dialogue Platform, and INKA Initiative, that ensure continuity, coherence, and accountability beyond the summit cycle.

Sustained interregional cooperation requires three enabling conditions:

1. **Strategic coherence**, aligning political dialogue with concrete deliverables and measurable outcomes.
2. **Institutional continuity**, establishing regular mechanisms for coordination among governments, experts, and civil society.
3. **Leadership renewal**, empowering emerging leaders who can carry this trilateral vision into the next years.

The task ahead is demanding, but achievable. As this report shows, the foundations of a renewed Euro–American partnership already exist. What is needed now is the determination to turn dialogue into joint action and shared purpose.

Club de Madrid and the Atlantic Council stand ready to continue facilitating this effort, linking political vision with policy innovation, and ensuring that cooperation between the EU, LAC, and the US becomes not an exception, but a defining feature of a more inclusive and effective multilateral order.

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ABOUT CLUB DE MADRID

[Club de Madrid](#) is the world's largest forum of democratic former presidents and prime ministers, who use their individual and collective leadership, as well as their global reach, to strengthen inclusive democratic practice and improve the well-being of people around the world. The strengthening and promotion of a more robust multilateral system that provides global solutions to common challenges through inclusive cooperation that leaves no one behind have also been one of the essential strategic pillars of the organization.

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The Atlantic Council's nonpartisan [Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center](#) (AALAC) broadens understanding of regional transformations while demonstrating why Latin America and the Caribbean matter for the world. The Center focuses on pressing political, economic, and social issues that will define the region's trajectory, proposing constructive, results-oriented solutions to inform public sector, business, and multilateral action based on a shared vision for a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable future.

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