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**The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on the
European Union's Foreign Policy towards Latin
America and the Caribbean (2004-2016)**

Marina Laura Pasquali

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The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on the European Union's Foreign Policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean (2004-2016)

Marina Laura Pasquali*

Abstract

In the late 1990s, the advanced process of Eastern enlargement motivated the emergence of a debate regarding the future of the EU's foreign policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Widespread views affirmed that, as a result of the accession of Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), the EU would become less interested in fostering relations with LAC. Opposing views argued that the EU's enlargement towards the East entailed more opportunities than risks from a Latin American standpoint. This contribution is aimed at examining how, if at all, EU Eastern enlargement affected EU foreign policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean since 2004 until present days. The analysis of the values and priorities orienting EU foreign policy towards this region as well as its main developments during the period under study revealed, on the one hand, that the EU was able to expand to the East while simultaneously develop a stable and values-based foreign policy towards LAC, and on the other, that Eastern enlargement has had no major transforming role in the formulation or implementation of EU foreign policy towards this region.

Key-words: European Union (EU), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC), Eastern enlargement, foreign policy, impact, inter-regionalism.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Association Agreement
ACP	Asian, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
BRICS	Brazil, India, China and South Africa
CAN	Andean Community of Nations
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEEC	Central and Eastern European countries
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CIN	Ibero-American Community of Nations
EC	European Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EEAS	European External Action Service
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EuroLat	Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
HR	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
IBSA	India, Brazil and South Africa Dialogue Forum
IRELA	Institute for European-Latin American Relations
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MEP(s)	Member(s) of the European Parliament
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
ODA	Official development aid

SEGIB	Ibero-American Secretariat General
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USD	United States dollars
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

INTRODUCTION

Enlargement has been an essential process in the development of the European Union (EU) and a particularly enduring policy since the early stages of European integration. Successive enlargement rounds have fundamentally shaped the identity of the EU: as it progressively widened, new members' differing interests and priorities regarding Europe's relations with the world had to be gradually integrated into EU foreign policy (Ruano 2011, Lazarou et al. 2014).

In particular, the so-called 'Ibero-American axis' composed by Spain and Portugal brought to the EU an unprecedented impulse to strengthen ties with LAC, putting into motion a process of 'Ibero-Americanisation' of European foreign policy (Del Arenal 2011). Ever since their entry into the EU, Spain and Portugal would take the lead in promoting the EU's interests towards Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC): "[...] the 1986 accession of Spain and Portugal [...] intensified the prevailing perception of Latin America as a natural partner" (Grieger 2014, p.2).

During the 1990s, when relations between the EU and Latin America were flourishing, the EU engaged in two new enlargement rounds¹, one of which would entail the admission of ten new members in 2004, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe². EU enlargement towards the East would later continue with the admission of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, and Croatia in 2013³.

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War in 1991, ten Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) had been encouraged to 'return' to Europe (O'Brennan 2006, p.14) and leave behind almost half a century under the sphere of influence of the

¹ In Chapter 1, we will shortly recap the several successive EU enlargement rounds.

² In alphabetical order, these countries were: Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

³ For the purposes of this paper, we will regard 'Eastern enlargement' as an overarching process that includes not only the 'big bang' enlargement round of 2004 but also the more 'selective' admissions of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, and Croatia in 2013.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This enlargement round would become the largest in scope in EU history and the one that would dramatically change its institutional structure, internal political balance and external relations.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the forthcoming EU enlargement to the East was received with some concern in the Latin American region. The EU's renewed focus on its Eastern neighbours was perceived as a potential obstacle for the deepening and development of the EU-LAC inter-regional agenda⁴. Several sources argue that, after the integration of ten new members from Eastern Europe, the impulse to develop EU foreign policy towards Latin America was left with a considerably lesser amount of leverage, considering the lack of strong mutual interests and the absence of dense relations between CEECs and Latin America⁵.

This paper aims to examine the impact of Eastern enlargement on the EU's foreign policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean. The general question addressed is how, if at all, the process of Eastern enlargement affected EU foreign policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean. Therefore, our general objective is to explain the impact of Eastern Enlargement on the EU's foreign policy towards LAC. The time frame under study extends from the 'big bang' enlargement that occurred in May 2004 until May 2016⁶.

The bulk of available literature has studied the impact of Eastern enlargement on EU-LAC relations either in a tangential way or focusing on the impact in the larger Latin American countries and integration blocs⁷. Scholars have also analysed the potential impact of

⁴ See: Chanona (2004), Martins (2004), Sanahuja (2013), among others.

⁵ See: Saraiva (2004), Vizentini (2004), EU-LAC Foundation (2014), Grieger (2014), Lazarou et al. (2014), among others.

⁶ The period under study begins on 1st May 2004, date of accession of ten CEECs into the EU, and lasts until 1st May 2016, date in which the bibliographic research for this subject ended. The time frame closure coincides with the 12th anniversary of the 'big bang' enlargement and it is also due to availability of relevant sources.

⁷ See: Durán Lima and Maldonado (2003), Flôres (2003), International Economy Centre (2004), Nolte (2004), Vizentini (2004), Lazarou et al. (2014), Dominguez (2015).

Eastern enlargement on EU-LAC economic relations, addressing the widespread concern that inter-regional economic exchange could be jeopardized since most CEEC's economies had productive profiles that were competitive with those of Latin American countries⁸.

In the view that a comprehensive analysis of the impact of EU Eastern enlargement on the EU's foreign policy towards LAC has not yet been accounted for, this paper intends to contribute -without pretense of exhaustiveness- to a deeper and updated assessment on the subject, especially after more than a decade has passed since the 2004 enlargement⁹.

In Chapter 1, we will first refer to the topic's contextualisation. Chapter 2 will examine the evolution of EU foreign policy towards LAC after Eastern enlargement, explaining the place of LAC in EU foreign policy, the impact of Eastern Enlargement on the EU's foreign policy, and the 'Europeanisation' of CEEC's national foreign policies. Chapter 3 will analyse the values, priorities and main developments of EU foreign policy towards LAC before and after Eastern enlargement. This structure of analysis will allow us to assess whether Eastern enlargement has had any impact on the EU's foreign policy towards LAC, either in the positive or in the negative. Finally, the conclusions will give an overview of the main findings and expose our closing arguments on the overall impact of Eastern enlargement on the EU's foreign policy towards Latin America.

⁸ See: Risi (1998), Nunnenkamp (1998), Ocampo and Parra (2001), Durán Lima and Maldonado (2003), Flôres (2003), Nolte (2004).

⁹ The motivation for selecting this topic goes back to the author's Bachelor studies in International Relations at the National University of Rosario, Argentina, and the European Union Research Group's activities at the Political Science and International Relations Faculty, where the author's main research topics were EU enlargement policy and EU-LAC relations.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE TOPIC

Since our study involves the analysis of two complex processes -on the one hand, EU enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), and on the other, EU-LAC inter-regionalism- we will dedicate this chapter to review the theoretical concepts and historical context behind both these overarching subjects. Making no pretense to completeness, this chapter is meant to serve as a starting point to introduce the topic at hand and put the analysis in the subsequent chapters into context.

The chapter will be divided in three sections. The first will present the basic definitions regarding EU enlargement and its historical evolution prior to the 'big bang' enlargement round. The second section will revise some concepts related to EU-LAC inter-regionalism as well as comment on a long-lasting debate over Latin America¹⁰ as a region. The third section will explore the main arguments discussed by scholars regarding the impact of Eastern enlargement in EU-LAC relations.

1.1. EU enlargement: definitions and evolution prior to 2004

EU enlargement is a topic that has caught considerable attention in public opinion, political debates, as well as in the academia. Amid the several viewpoints of enlargement explored by scholars, this study intends to make a contribution to the literature regarding 'impact of enlargement', more specifically, its impact on the EU's foreign policy. Enlargement has been one of the most enduring policies -some even argue one of the most successful- throughout the history of the EU

¹⁰ The expressions 'Latin America' and 'Latin America and the Caribbean' (LAC) will be used indistinctively throughout the text for the sake of simplicity, without prejudice to the more restrictive interpretation that regards the notion of 'Latin America' as not necessarily including the Caribbean countries.

(Dinan 2010, Nugent 2010). Ever since 1961, when United Kingdom submitted the first membership application, there has not been a time in which the EU -or the-then European Community (EC)- was not considering candidates' applications for accession or accommodating new members into the bloc (Nugent 2010).

Amongst the many policy areas that the EU develops, enlargement is a part of EU foreign policy and constitutes a branch of EU external action. One of its most special features is that “[...] the purpose of enlargement is to bring countries into the EU, after which those countries cease to be an object of EU foreign policy” (Dinan 2010, p.484).

Enlargement is defined as “[...] a process of *gradual and formal horizontal institutionalization* of organizational rules and norms” (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002, p.503)¹¹. The possibility of enlargement in the EU was first included in the Treaty of Rome - nowadays commonly referred to as Treaty on European Union (TEU)- which founded the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. Article 49 (TEU) states that “[...] Any European State¹² which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union” (Consolidated Version of the TEU, Foster 2015, p.19).

Even though enlargement had historical continuity, the EU has lacked a clear and consistent strategy throughout its enlargement rounds: the

¹¹ “(1) *Institutionalization* means the process by which the actions and interactions of social actors come to be normatively patterned. (2) [...] *Horizontal institutionalization* takes place when [...] the group of actors whose actions and relations are governed by the organization's norms becomes larger. (3) Organizational membership and organizational norms are formally defined. [...] (4) Horizontal institutionalization is a matter of degree, and enlargement is [...] a *gradual process* that begins before, and continues after, the admission of new members to the organization” (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002, p.503).

¹² The EU has never defined in concrete terms what ‘European State’ meant in the constitutive treaties. This suggests that such condition of ‘European State’ is of a political -and not merely geographical- nature: “[...] a country is European if EU leaders decide that it is” (Dinan 2010, p.485).

EC/EU “[...] has reacted to applications rather than proactively setting out its own preferences and goals” (Nugent 2010, p.47)¹³.

Mostly by means of enlargement ‘rounds’ or ‘waves’, the EC/EU widened from six founding members in 1951-1957 (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands) to the present 28 members since 2013.

Besides expanding the integration process geographically, each enlargement round has contributed to -and somehow changed- the identity of the EC/EU. For instance, the first round of 1973 extended the EC beyond its founding members, including three North-Western European States (Denmark, Ireland and United Kingdom). Two countries out of these three new EC members would later constitute a ‘Euro-cautious axis’ (United Kingdom and Denmark), characterised by constantly advocating against deepening the integration process (Nugent 2010).

The second round is commonly known as the ‘Mediterranean enlargement’ and it included the entry of Greece in 1981, and Portugal and Spain in 1986. This enlargement round expanded the EC towards the South, and particularly towards less economically prosperous States, formerly governed by authoritarian regimes (Nugent 2010).

The third enlargement round occurred in 1995 and it allowed the entry of Austria, Finland and Sweden, meaning that the-now EU had extended over almost the entirety of Western Europe, with the only exceptions of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (Nugent 2010).

Until the ‘big bang’ of 2004, all previous enlargement rounds had included European States that were considered members of the same ‘club’: a group of countries that had fought each other in the Second World War and that had sided by the Western bloc during the Cold War. They were also nations with functioning market economies - although some more developed than others- that could integrate

¹³ Particularly, the case of Turkey’s stalled EU accession process may be the paramount example to illustrate this lack of coherent enlargement strategy.

relatively easily to the rhythm of the integration process (Dinan 2010, Nugent 2010).

Moreover, all enlargement rounds prior to 2004 were reduced in scope and limited to no more than three accessions at a time, which guaranteed that the EC/EU was able to integrate the new members without requiring major institutional adjustments (Nugent 2010).

The new admissions that occurred after the change of the millennium configured the process of 'Eastern enlargement', that is to say, the accession of ten new members in 2004, commonly known as 'big bang' (Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), the entry of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, and last but not least, Croatia in 2013.

What was distinctive about Eastern enlargement is that the majority of new EU members came from a communist past, with the exceptions of the insular States of Cyprus and Malta. The majority of CEECs were undergoing processes of economic liberalisation and political democratisation, parallel to their EU accession negotiations (Nugent 2010).

Although the definition of Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) is rather controversial, we take the view of Serra (2000) who affirms that this nomenclature includes a total of 19 (former or potential) candidates to EU accession: five Central European countries (Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), two Mediterranean insular States (Cyprus and Malta), the Eastern Balkans (Bulgaria and Romania) and the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia -FYROM-, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia) (Serra 2000)¹⁴.

The 'big bang' round of 2004 went substantially beyond the 'historical continuity' of the EU's widening process, representing a real

¹⁴ For the purposes of this paper, only the CEECs that have become EU members will be relevant; that is to say, all the aforementioned countries excluding the Western Balkans (with the exception of Croatia).

breakthrough for EU enlargement policy as well as for the whole history of the EU¹⁵.

1.2. EU-LAC inter-regionalism: basic concepts and the debate on ‘Latin America’ as a region

EU relations with Latin America have developed since the 1960s into an institutional dialogue on several levels, with a far-reaching agenda that covers a broad variety of subjects.

Relations between the EU and LAC have operated through different institutional mechanisms, with diverse levels of inter-regional interaction (Hänggi 2000):

a) relations between regional groupings (group-to-group dialogues, also known as ‘hybrid’ inter-regionalism¹⁶): the EU vis-à-vis other Latin American subregional blocs such as MERCOSUR¹⁷, the Andean Community of Nations (CAN)¹⁸, the former Rio Group¹⁹, among others;

¹⁵ In Chapter 2, we will review the evolution of Eastern enlargement and its implications for EU foreign policy.

¹⁶ ‘Hybrid’ inter-regionalism takes place when the two (sub)regional blocs that engage in mutual relations have not yet achieved the same level of integration. This would be the case of relations between the EU (which is a common market with some features of an economic and political union) and MERCOSUR or CAN (which are still within a lower level of integration: imperfect customs union and free trade area, respectively). ‘Pure’ inter-regionalism only takes place when two (sub)regional blocs that have achieved the same level of integration engage in mutual relations, which is not the case between the EU and any Latin American (sub)regional bloc (Hänggi 2000, Álvarez 2011, Dominguez 2015).

¹⁷ MERCOSUR is a regional integration process created by the Treaty of Asunción in 1991, with the objective of constituting a ‘Southern common market’. Its founding members were Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Venezuela joined in 2006 and Bolivia is currently in process of accession (MERCOSUR 2016).

¹⁸ The Andean Community of Nations (CAN) was established by the Cartagena Agreement in 1969 (initially created as ‘Andean Pact’). Its current members are Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (formerly, Chile and Venezuela were also members) (Andean Community of Nations 2016).

¹⁹ The Rio Group was a political consultation forum composed originally by six Latin American States (1986). By 2008, it had expanded to 24 members. In 2010, the Rio Group was succeeded by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which would become the Latin American counterpart for EU-LAC institutionalised bi-regional dialogue (European External Action Service 2016c).

b) bi-regional arrangements (region-to-region dialogues, also called trans-regional): in the case of EU-LAC relations, this modality is embodied by the bi-regional summit mechanism established since the Rio de Janeiro summit in 1999. What is particular about these arrangements is that two -usually large- regional groups of States engage in more or less regular high-level meetings. In this case, membership is more heterogeneous and more diffuse than in traditional group-to-group dialogues: participants do not necessarily coincide with all the regional groupings' members and they may include member States from more than two regions;

c) relations between regional groupings and single powers (the so-called 'bilateral' dialogue): this modality corresponds to relations between the EU as a bloc and an individual Latin American counterpart. The EU has fostered relations with its Latin American partners through a diverse choice of instruments²⁰: association agreements (AA), free trade agreements (FTA) and strategic partnerships. The most salient examples are the EU's free trade agreement with Mexico (signed in 1997, in force since 2000)²¹, the EU's association agreement with Chile (signed in 2002, fully in force since 2005)²², and the EU's strategic partnership with Brazil (2007).

One of the main problems since the beginning of EU-LAC relations has been the absence of a unified interlocutor on behalf of LAC that could represent the region as a whole. While the EC/EU was able to speak with 'one voice' in the inter-regional dialogue, Latin American countries and subregional groupings have historically lacked a clear institutional stance that could allow them to speak in a unified manner (Chanona 2004, Martins 2004, Van Klaveren 2011).

²⁰ Such instruments are not exclusively used under the bilateral modality but also within 'hybrid' inter-regionalism and bi-regional relations.

²¹ The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) Federica Mogherini has recently announced that negotiations on an updated global agreement between the EU and Mexico are due to start in June 2016 (European External Action Service 2016a).

²² The EU's AA with Chile includes a free trade agreement that entered into force in 2003 (European External Action Service 2016b).

This difficulty or ‘asymmetry’ in the capacity of building internal regional consensus between the two blocs has geo-political roots. In the LAC region, integration forces are in permanent tension with fragmentation tendencies (Muñoz 2006).

Scholars have recurrently tried to define what ‘Latin America’ means, addressing the complexity of the region as a whole and of the several subregions comprised by it. According to the European Commission:

“[...] ‘Latin America’ is a familiar but ambiguous term: the peoples concerned [...] are not exclusively of Latin origin. Depending on who is using it, the term can be given a broad or narrow gloss, encompassing language, history, geopolitics and civilisation or religion. It also expresses a regional unity attributable to a shared development model. Yet alongside this unity [...] there exists the subcontinent’s remarkable heterogeneity” (European Commission 1995, p.2).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, several regional subsystems coexist. Each of them represents a different reality and some of them may be subject to further, more specific subdivisions (Atkins 1991):

- **Ibero-America:** composed by 19 Latin American nations that were former colonies of the Spanish and Portuguese empires²³;
- **The Caribbean ‘circle’:** it includes the insular countries in the Caribbean Sea and the near Atlantic Ocean, plus all the countries located in the Central American isthmus. Depending on the policy area, it may also include the north of South America (Colombia and Venezuela). Traditionally, these countries have been rather weak and under-institutionalised, more vulnerable to the pressure and influence of the biggest regional power, United States (US), but at the same time, more prone to take gains from US bilateral economic relations;

²³ On the account of this shared history and long-lasting heritage, an Ibero-American summit system was established within the Ibero-American Community of Nations (CIN), created in 1991 during the first summit in Guadalajara. In these summits, 19 Latin American countries meet annually with three European counterparts: Portugal, Spain and Andorra (SEGIB 2016).

- **Mexico:** this country constitutes a subsystem on its own, on the account of the dense bilateral relations it maintains with the US and Canada within the North American subregional system and, more specifically, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA);
- **The Southern Cone:** it comprehends Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. It is characterised by more institutionalised, ‘independent’ States with regard to international politics, as well as for being geographically isolated from the rest of the continent and the biggest regional power, the US. Therefore, these States are less vulnerable to US influence but less likely to take gains from its commercial exchange and investments;
- **Brazil:** it can also be considered a subsystem on its own, based on the importance of its bilateral relations with other (extra) regional actors²⁴, in addition to its relatively much larger geographical extension and demographics.

Although the different Latin American subregions have their own peculiarities and predicaments, these divisions have frequently been exaggerated by scholars and political leaders alike, in a clear attempt to deny the existence of a Latin American identity (Muñoz 2006, Cooper and Heine 2009).

Focusing on the EU’s foreign policy and interactions with Latin America as a region, this contribution intends to sustain the existence of such an entity, based on its shared history and common social, economic and political features. Nowadays, “[...] there is little doubt that, historically, culturally and behaviourally, there is such a thing as a Latin American identity which distinguishes Latin Americans from, say, Europeans or Africans” (Cooper and Heine 2009, p.22).

²⁴ A very eloquent example of Brazil’s global projection is its participation in group dialogues formed with other emerging powers such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa).

By establishing an institutionalised bi-regional dialogue, the EU has also implicitly acknowledged the importance of interacting at a region-to-region level, even if Latin America does not constitute a unified bloc for all purposes.

1.3. State of the art and main arguments under discussion

Concerning this topic's state of the art, although a considerable amount of literature is available on the impact of enlargement in EU members and neighbour States, bibliographic sources remain disperse and insufficient when it comes to analysing the impact of enlargement in EU foreign policy and external relations (Pelkmans and Casey 2003). Within the area of EU foreign policy, despite the fact that the literature on the EU's external relations is extensive, scholarly studies on the EU's relations with Latin America have been more limited, especially those in English (Dominguez 2015).

Regarding the specific impacts of EU Eastern enlargement in EU-LAC relations, even fewer sources are available: though some country and 'hybrid' inter-regional studies can be found²⁵, a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the impact of EU Eastern Enlargement on the EU's foreign policy towards LAC has not yet been accounted for. The available literature on this topic has focused on addressing concerns over potentially prejudicial effects that EU Eastern enlargement may entail for EU-LAC economic relations. Even though previous studies have pointed out certain positive implications of EU Eastern enlargement for the EU's relations with LAC, these optimistic arguments have been understated, especially in Latin America.

For some scholars, EU Eastern enlargement represented merely an 'externality', an obstacle or challenge to which EU-LAC relations had

²⁵ See: Durán Lima and Maldonado (2003), Flôres (2003), International Economy Centre (2004), Nolte (2004), Vizentini (2004), Lazarou et al. (2014), Dominguez (2015).

to respond to, but that would not evolve into an essential variable in their development (Saraiva 2004, Sanahuja 2013, Dominguez 2015).

However, in the late 1990s, there was a high level of pessimism in Latin America on the possible effects of Eastern enlargement for EU-LAC economic relations: most CEECs were seen as direct competitors of Latin American exports as well as for future allocation of European foreign direct investment (FDI) (Risi 1998). As Nunnenkamp stated, “[...] in many Latin American countries, the perception of being discriminated vis-à-vis intra-EU suppliers and privileged trading partners of the Union is deeply rooted” (Nunnenkamp 1998, p.114).

From a Latin American point of view, CEECs could become the main suppliers of agricultural goods for Western Europe as a result of EU Eastern enlargement. Given their natural resources and economy based on primary production, CEECs products could displace Latin American exports to the EU, which were traditionally composed of basic or semi-processed agricultural goods (Risi 1998, Chanona 2004).

The pessimist arguments also revived concerns over the possibility that Europe would become more ‘inward-looking’ in general terms, therefore less prone to developing its foreign ties with extra-regional actors, such as Latin America (Nunnenkamp 1998, Risi 1998). In addition to trade and investment diversion, Europe’s overall interest in Latin America could be substantially reduced as a result of Eastern enlargement (Nolte 2004).

On the other side of the debate, there were also some optimistic views concerning the potential impact of Eastern enlargement in the EU’s relations with Latin America. For instance, it was argued that Eastern enlargement could turn out to be beneficial for Latin American foreign trade: an enlarged EU represented the possibility of an enlarged market for Latin American exports (Risi 1998, Nolte 2004, Vizentini 2004, Lazarou et al. 2014).

In the same line of thought, Nunnenkamp affirmed that:

“[...] Latin America should be interested in the successful integration of the CEECs into the EU, since Latin American exporters may find new buoyant markets in the CEECs if their economic transition and integration into the Union proceed smoothly. By contrast, if the widening of the European Union to the East were to fail, this would most likely result in economic and political destabilization of the CEECs, and the adverse repercussions of such a failure might well spread beyond Western Europe, with non-EU members becoming the victims [...] because the EU would be a less reliable trade and investment partner for all non-members, including Latin America” (Nunnenkamp 1998, p.114).

Consequently, not only could Eastern enlargement eventually benefit Latin American interests but also an unsuccessful integration of the CEECs into the EU economy could prove to be detrimental for the development of EU-LAC relations (Nunnenkamp 1998, Risi 1998).

The combination of such opposing and favourable arguments constituted the main ‘dilemma’ of Eastern enlargement, from a Latin American standpoint: it was a complex event that entailed potential risks and, at the same time, valuable opportunities.

Among the possible risks, scholars also referred to the budget demands that Eastern enlargement required, considering the process of democratisation and economic liberalisation that the CEECs had to go through and that the EU endorsed in order to successfully integrate them (Nolte 2004). This could cause an increase of EU budget for structural funds and a subsequent financial contraction of development aid towards other regions, such as Latin America (Chanona 2004).

However, the same ‘financial concerns’ argument can be interpreted in an optimistic light:

“[...] the greatest positive stake outsiders have in enlargement is the success of a sustained strategy of catch-up growth by the candidates, helped by the EU market environment as well as

the Union funding [...] in the final analysis and given the fulfillment of the political conditions for membership, the EU enlargement is all about prosperity. And prosperity in Central Europe is also a boon for third countries” (Pelkmans and Casey 2003, p.208).

On the side of the potential opportunities that EU Eastern enlargement entailed for Latin American countries, scholars also pointed out that the integration of CEECs into the EU could lead to a ‘rapprochement’ (a re-establishment or resumption of harmonious relations) between Latin America and Eastern European countries (Vizentini 2004).

In the following chapters, we will address the question on whether Eastern enlargement has had a considerable impact on the main guidelines of EU foreign policy towards LAC. We intend to put these arguments to test, focusing on their possible implications for EU foreign policy towards Latin America, and give this debate a new overview after more than a decade has passed since the first round of the EU’s Eastern enlargement.

CHAPTER 2

EU FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AFTER EASTERN ENLARGEMENT

Throughout this chapter, we will examine the fundamental aspects related to the process of formulation of EU foreign policy towards LAC and the implications of Eastern enlargement for EU foreign policy.

Our analysis will be divided into three sections. The first section will deal with the place of LAC in EU foreign policy. The second section will analyse the evolution of Eastern enlargement and its implications for EU foreign policy. Finally, in the third section, the so-called 'Europeanisation' process of CEEC's national foreign policies will be explained.

2.1. The place of LAC in EU foreign policy

EU foreign policy is the result of more than four decades of institution building and policy making in the area of external relations. A series of improvements have made the EU an influential actor in the international system, and these developments of EU foreign policy are a good illustration of the willingness of member States to deepen integration (Dominguez 2015).

To define what EU foreign policy is, we can start from the classical notion of politics as an authoritative allocation of values and resources (Easton 1953). Within the EU, every policy is composed by the tangible outcomes of "[...] the capacity of member States [...] to reach collective consensuses [...] through formal and informal institutions" (Dominguez 2015, p.12).

We can then infer that EU foreign policy towards LAC is the aggregate -not the mere sum- of such tangible outcomes in the field of EU inter-regional relations with Latin America (Dominguez 2015).

In the process of EU foreign policy formulation, different political actors are involved²⁶ and several policy-making levels intertwine²⁷: the Union level, the national level and the local level (Dominguez 2015).

Ever since the establishment of the European Political Co-operation (EPC) -a mechanism initially created to manage the oil crisis in the 1970s- EU member States have agreed to progressively include foreign policy in the EC/EU legal framework (Bache et al. 2014).

EU foreign policy made its way into the constitutive Treaties first, with the Single European Act of 1986, and later within the second pillar of the 1992 Maastricht structure, by the denomination of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)²⁸ (Bache et al. 2014).

Although it became one more amongst many policy areas under EU scope, foreign policy has remained almost exclusively intergovernmental, even after the abandonment of the pillar structure and the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 (in vigor since 1st December 2009). Every foreign policy decision that the EU makes is subject to approval of all EU member States²⁹.

The highly intergovernmental feature of EU foreign policy is not merely reflected in its institutional and procedural mechanisms, but also in the substantive process of foreign policy formulation, where EU member States remain the fundamental actors. Although not exclusively, EU foreign policy priorities often originate in the national level, incorporating interests that the EU member States' national foreign policies deem the most relevant (Ruano 2011).

Even so, the EU member States' national foreign policies have progressively become more entangled with the guidelines contained in

²⁶ Further ahead, we will refer to the role of member States and the most relevant EU institutions in the process of EU foreign policy formulation.

²⁷ We will explore the interactions between these levels in section 2.3.

²⁸ Since the Lisbon Treaty, the ESDP took the name of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

²⁹ According to Article 31 (TEU), the standard CFSP/CSDP decision making process requires unanimity.

EU foreign policy: “[...] the interactions between the national and EU levels have reshaped governance in Europe, and foreign policy - though peculiar- is no exception” (Ruano 2011, p.1).

In general terms, all EU foreign policy provisions derive from the principles contained in Article 2 (TEU):

“[...] The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including [...] minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail” (Consolidated Version of the TEU, Foster 2015, p.2).

In light of such values, Article 24 (TEU) affirms:

“[...] the Union’s competence in matters of common foreign and security policy shall cover **all areas of foreign policy** and all questions relating to the Union’s security, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy”³⁰ (Consolidated Version of the TEU, Foster 2015, p.11).

Therefore, EU foreign policy towards Latin America and EU-LAC relations fall under the scope of CFSP, according to the broad definition provided by the constitutive treaties.

EU foreign policy can be best understood as a complex set of concentric circles. Among the wide international projection that EU external action enjoys, five concentric circles can be distinguished (Emerson 2013, Dominguez 2015).

The first one is composed by the ‘almost-EU’ member States that currently form the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), namely Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. The second circle includes the micro-neighbour States of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican. The third circle extends over the EU pre-accession candidates: all the former Yugoslav nations (excluding Slovenia and

³⁰ The highlighting in bold is ours.

Croatia), Albania and Turkey. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) constitutes the fourth circle, with two main subdivisions: to the East, six European former Soviet States integrate the Eastern Partnership regional programme (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine); and to the South, there are ten Mediterranean States³¹ that enjoy a close relation with the EU under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) framework. The fifth and most detached concentric circle of EU foreign policy includes the more distant regions of Asia and Latin America (Emerson 2013, Dominguez 2015).

This configuration in concentric circles illustrates the level of priority that the EU attributes to its relations with external actors, starting with the highest level of importance in the first and most immediate circles, until a much lesser degree of priority in the more remote circles.

The more distant circles include countries and regions that are of interest of the EU, but that are not usually a part of its core day-to-day economic, geo-political and strategic concerns.

The structure of concentric circles also exemplifies the application of the ‘variable geometry’ principle: member States can decide to which level they are willing to deepen their participation in EU foreign policy (Dominguez 2015).

Regarding EU interests in Latin America, it is not surprising to affirm that the region does not constitute a priority within the bigger picture of EU foreign policy:

“[...] Latin America captures a modest share of the attention, policies, and resources of the external relations of the European Union. A review of the foundational documents of the European Union indicates that Latin America was not even mentioned in the Schuman Declaration [...]” (Dominguez 2015, p.20).

³¹ These are: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Syria and Tunisia (Emerson 2013).

Still, LAC is the extra-regional group of nations with which the EU has cultivated the most systematic and diversified inter-regional ties (Álvarez 2011).

The contemporary state of EU foreign policy towards LAC is preceded by a history of several centuries throughout which the inter-regional relationship was characterised by the domination of European interests. This shared history has served, however, much more to the unity and close interaction between the two regions rather than to a relation of mistrust or apprehension. In fact, Europe has regarded Latin America as a 'natural ally' due to the strong economic and cultural ties rooted in common history (Dominguez 2015).

But it was not until Spain and Portugal's accession in 1986 that Latin America would actually become a region of interest for the EC/EU. The 'Ibero-American axis' within EU foreign policy strengthened the perception of Latin America as a 'natural partner', a view that had not been so generally accepted until then, in an EC mostly composed of North-Western and Anglo-Saxon European nations (Grieger 2014).

With no doubt, Spain has been the main driver of EU foreign policy towards LAC. Nonetheless, EU foreign policy towards the region is more than the mere sum of the national foreign policies of the member States that have shaped it. Spanish foreign policy has also become more entangled with EU foreign policy and it has been influenced by the EU layer of governance in this field. In other words, Spain has had to adapt its national policy towards LAC to the one emerging at EU level (Ruano 2013).

After the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the EU's main priorities were set on deepening integration and achieving geographical enlargement. However, the EU would still strive to get new foreign spheres of influence, engaging into inter-regional relations with other integration organisations -a policy of 'building blocs'- and taking advantage of the recent creation of the CFSP (Vizentini 2004).

In the early 1990s, the EU showed a clear intent in developing its foreign policy towards LAC. During that decade, a context of rivalry between the US and the EU dominated most explanations of the EU's efforts in strengthening ties with Latin America (Gratius 2011).

As the change of the millennium approached, the hypothesis on Europe being able to become a counterweight to the US power and influence on the LAC region was progressively left aside. From then on, EU foreign policy towards LAC would have to face new challenges and adapt to an ever-changing international context, shaped mainly by the so-called 'new transnational threats' and the uprising of global emerging powers (Gratius 2011).

Since the beginning of the development of EU foreign policy towards LAC, the EU institutional framework has played a significant role in the way that this policy was implemented. There are four key institutions and posts that play prominent roles in putting EU foreign policy initiatives for Latin America into motion (Dominguez 2015).

The first one is the European Council and its President³². Concerning his foreign policy functions, the President of the European Council exercises the external representation of the EU when it implements decisions of CFSP (Article 15, TEU). The President performs this function in coordination with the President of the European Commission and without prejudice to the functions of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) (Dominguez 2015).

The second key institution and position in EU foreign policy are the European Commission and its President³³. In general, their main functions with regard to external affairs are: to promote the general interest of the Union, to set objectives and priorities for action,

³² During the period 2009-2014, the former Belgian Prime Minister Herman van Rompuy exercised this function. Since 2014, the former Prime Minister of Poland Donald Tusk serves as the President of the European Council.

³³ For two consecutive periods (2004-2009 and 2009-2014), the President of the Commission was José Manuel Barroso. For the period 2014-2019, Jean-Claude Juncker was chosen as President of the Commission.

manage and implement EU policies and budget, and represent the Union outside its borders -with the exception of CFSP decisions- for example, negotiating trade agreements between the EU and external actors (Article 17, TEU).

The third key position in the EU's external relations is the HR³⁴. This role's functions are to conduct the Union's CFSP and CSDP, and contribute by his/her proposals to the development of those policies (Article 18, TEU) while also ensure the consistency of the Union's external action (Article 18, TEU).

The fourth key player in EU foreign policy is the European Parliament and its President³⁵. The President of the European Parliament is in charge of addressing the European Council before its meetings as well as formally representing the Parliament in its international actions. For its interactions with Latin America, in 2006 the Parliament created the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat)³⁶. EuroLat was designed to be the parliamentary dimension of EU-LAC inter-regional relations. It is composed by a total of 150 members, divided into an equal number of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and parliamentary representatives from LAC countries (Dominguez 2015).

The work of all the aforementioned institutions and actors with regard to external relations is supported on a daily basis by the European External Action Service (EEAS). This institution is composed by diplomats and policy advisors from EU member States, who are based at the EEAS seat in Brussels or assigned to serve in a network of EU delegations around the world. The EEAS's main functions are to prepare proposals and assist in the implementation of EU foreign policy, and to ensure the general coordination of the EU's external actions (Dominguez 2015).

³⁴ The first period of the HR function was occupied by Catherine Ashton (2009-2014). In November 2014, Federica Mogherini succeeded her.

³⁵ Martin Schultz was elected President of the European Parliament in 2012, being re-elected for the period 2014-2017.

³⁶ At the present, EuroLat is chaired by Spaniard MEP Ramón Jáuregui Atondo.

In the following sections, we will first examine the main implications of Eastern enlargement for EU foreign policy, and then, we will analyse the ‘Europeanisation’ process that the CEEC’s national foreign policies underwent as a consequence of EU Eastern enlargement.

2.2. Eastern enlargement: evolution and implications for EU foreign policy

Every enlargement round carried out since the change of the millennium (2004, 2007 and 2013) entailed the admission of Central and Eastern European countries that had formerly belonged to the communist bloc led by the USSR during the Cold War. Most CEECs had highly centralised and State-planned economies³⁷, and they were still adjusting to the policies of economic and political liberalisation that had been implemented since the early 1990s.

Taking into consideration the CEEC’s political and economic background, the heads of State and government of EU member States decided to outline specific requirements to be met by these prospective candidates before joining the EU. Those pre-requisites were later known as the ‘Copenhagen criteria’³⁸ and were included in the 2007 Lisbon Treaty (in force since 2009), within its Article 49 (TEU) as “[...] the conditions of eligibility agreed upon by the European Council” (Consolidated Version of the TEU, Foster 2015, p.19).

³⁷ With the exceptions of the insular States of Cyprus and Malta (Nugent 2010).

³⁸ The Copenhagen criteria were set during a meeting of the European Council in the city of Copenhagen in 1993. Three general conditions were prescribed for the prospective candidates before their EU accession: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities (political criteria); a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces (economic criteria); administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the *acquis* and ability to take on the obligations of membership (legal/institutional criteria) (European Commission 2016).

In addition to the establishment of well-defined and comprehensive accession criteria, what differentiated Eastern enlargement from all the previous enlargement rounds were the several institutional challenges that the EU had to sort out while planning a multiple and simultaneous entry of ten new members.

Concerns over the ‘absorption capacity’ of the EU and other institutional challenges motivated the well-known debate on ‘widening vs. deepening’. Opponents of further enlargement argued that the EU’s institutions and policies could only cope with a finite number of member States and that a multiple enlargement would inevitably slow down the integration process (Dinan 2010).

On the other side of the debate were the advocates of enlargement, who maintained the conviction that widening and deepening were not mutually exclusive and could be carried out simultaneously. This debate was progressively resolved in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as the EU engaged both into the ‘big bang’ enlargement as well as in the implementation of policies and institutional reforms that allowed for a deeper integration³⁹.

The debate on ‘widening vs. deepening’ was eventually overcome thanks to the ‘enhanced cooperation’ formula included in Article 20 (TEU)⁴⁰. Enhanced cooperation allows EU member States to integrate in the policy areas they are most interested in, amongst others in the ‘menu’ (Europe ‘à la carte’), while being able to implement them at different levels (‘variable geometry’) or at different speeds (‘multi-speed Europe’) (Mangas Martín and Liñán Noguerras 2010).

Despite the high level of criticism that enlargement towards CEECs had motivated, on 1st May 2004 Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the

³⁹ For instance, the implementation of the Euro currency since January 2002, and other institutional innovations contained in the Amsterdam (1997), Nice (2001) and Lisbon (2007) Treaties.

⁴⁰ The ‘enhanced cooperation’ principle was first introduced by the Amsterdam Treaty, and further developed by the Nice Treaty.

EU. Bulgaria and Romania followed on 1st January 2007, and Croatia on 1st July 2013.

Bulgaria and Romania's admission was not included in the 'big bang' enlargement, even though both these countries had developed parallel accession negotiations to those that entered the EU in 2004. The Eastern Balkans entry was delayed until 2007 since they had encountered higher difficulties in meeting the benchmarks set to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria (Nugent 2010).

In the case of Croatia, its accession was part of the Western Balkans Association and Stabilisation Process that the EU launched in the early 2000s. Its path into the EU started shortly after the 2003 Thessaloniki summit, where the European Council promoted the candidacy for EU membership of all former Yugoslav nations plus Albania (European Union 2003).

Eastern enlargement has had a considerable impact on the EU's institutional structure and internal political balance. Many institutional adjustments were due to include the numerous new members into the daily functioning of the EU: increase the number of members in the European Commission and the European Parliament, modify voting procedures, adopt the different CEEC's languages as official languages of the EU, amend the constitutive treaties, among others (Nolte 2004). Eastern enlargement has also caused a certain degree of diversion of the EU's budget towards assisting CEECs on their processes of democratisation and economic liberalisation (Nugent 2010).

Concerning foreign policy, Eastern enlargement has enhanced the EU's international projection and leverage vis-à-vis external actors (Nolte 2004). However, the more heterogeneous the EU becomes, the more different outcomes of foreign policy are likely to be achieved (Nugent 2010). As the standard decision-making process within the CFSP and the CSDP requires unanimity of all EU member States, producing decisions and recommendations on foreign policy entails a higher degree of difficulty in an enlarged EU of 28 members.

Foreign policy priorities were also affected by enlargement. For instance, according to Nugent (2010), Eastern enlargement has given relations with Russia a higher level of priority.

In the same sense, the entry of CEECs in the EU was believed to be detrimental for the development of the Union's interests towards Latin America since the majority of new member-States from CEE lacked "[...] significant interests in the region, with the result being an eastward shift in the EU's foreign policy agenda" (Grieger 2014, p.2).

All throughout the CEEC's accession negotiations, there was a widespread belief that their attainment of EU membership would strengthen the continent's political and economic stability, as well as help assure peace in the EU's immediate neighbourhood. However, that was not always the case. Blockmans affirms that:

"[...] enlargement has contributed to the stability of a large swathe of Central and Eastern Europe. Contrary to the prevailing message, though, EU enlargement has in some cases heightened security concerns. By the southeastward push of its external borders, the European Union has imported the frozen conflict over Cyprus, pitching it more sharply against Turkey, and it has been confronted more directly to hard security threats in the (new) neighbourhoods: from tensions over Kosovo's independence and bursts of violence in the South Caucasus to the slaughter in Syria [...]" (Blockmans 2014, para.6).

Therefore, Eastern enlargement was not only about guaranteeing peace and stability in the European continent, but it also brought new issues and concerns into EU foreign policy that would have to be dealt with increasingly sensitive attention.

Another major implication of Eastern enlargement for EU foreign policy is that, as the number of EU member States significantly increased, not all of them were able -or willing- to pay equal attention to every EU foreign policy issue. As a result, different leaders have

arisen on different foreign policy subjects (Nugent 2010). These leadership roles have proved particularly relevant with regard to changing perspectives in times of crisis management, such as the 2008 global economy crisis or the current challenge posed by the increasing inflow of irregular migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers into Europe. In the field of the EU's external relations with Latin America, Spain and Portugal remain the 'leaders' of EU foreign policy towards LAC, even more so in the case of Spain since Latin America constitutes 'the natural field' of Spanish foreign policy (Chanona 2004).

In its endorsement of EU foreign policy towards LAC, the 'Ibero-American axis' is usually followed by Italy and, to a much lesser extent, France, United Kingdom and the Netherlands, due to the strong historical and cultural ties shared with their (former) Caribbean colonies⁴¹ (Dominguez 2015).

To conclude, the internal debate about 'widening vs. deepening' that dominated discussions about Eastern enlargement within the EU, could be translated into EU foreign policy as 'widening vs. deepening of the EU's external relations'. Hereinafter, we intend to discuss whether these two processes were mutually exclusive or whether the EU was able to widen to the East while simultaneously deepen its foreign policy towards Latin America.

2.3. The Europeanisation of CEEC's national foreign policies

One of the reasons of concern in Latin America over the integration of CEECs into the EU was related to the fact that relations between these countries and the Latin American region had been historically

⁴¹ In the Caribbean, there are sixteen territories considered by the EU as 'outermost regions' or 'overseas territories', on the account of their special relationship with a EU member State. Four of them are French outermost regions, while the remaining twelve are overseas territories: five British, six Dutch and one French (European External Action Service 2016c).

incipient, with far less impetus and relevant interests than the ties that linked LAC with Western European countries.

During the 19th century, the World Wars and the period between them, hundreds of thousands of Eastern European citizens emigrated towards Latin America. Ethnical ties between the two regions were built, although not very much developed politically and diplomatically (Vizentini 2004).

Throughout the Cold War, CEEC's interest in Latin American culture and politics was slightly encouraged by the context of international polarisation between communism and capitalism, and the occasional rise of socialist/communist governments in Latin America (mainly, the case of Cuba). Relations between CEECs and LAC achieved its most favourable situation in the 1970s, but by the 1980s they had almost completely lost their 'momentum' (Vizentini 2004).

Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989, the CEECs started their process of integration into the EU, motivating certain mistrust and concern in Latin America over a possible competition with CEECs for Western European markets and investments.

However, it was not only about concerns related to economic interests. In fact, the majority of CEECs that would later join the EU shared the view of a 'Latin American natural partnership' to a much lesser degree than the average of the rest of EU member States (Grieger 2014).

Even though there had been certain intents to strengthen relations between LAC and CEECs in the past, all throughout the 1990s foreign policies in Eastern Europe were focused on significantly different priorities than fostering relations with extra-regional actors: they were guided by the major objective of EU integration.

Once the 'big bang' enlargement became a reality, the enlarged EU of 25 member States needed to adequate these new members' interests and preferences, both in the EU internal political game as well as in its relations with third countries (Lazarou et al. 2014).

On their part, CEECs faced the challenge of accommodating into an economic and political union with global aspirations and, no less, with

half-a-century-long history of integration. The immediate consequence of CEEC's integration into the EU was a dramatic expansion of their national foreign relations agenda (Ruano 2011, Lazarou et al. 2014).

These countries' national foreign policies underwent an inevitable process of 'Europeanisation'. This concept refers to the process of interactions that take place between EU foreign policy and national foreign policies, through which both layers of governance gradually and reciprocally adapt their diverging priorities (Ruano 2011)⁴².

The process of Europeanisation is rather elucidating in the case of EU foreign policy towards LAC since it can reveal, on one hand, what role individual EU member States have had in shaping policy towards Latin America and, on the other hand, how member States' national policies towards the region have changed as a result of that of the EU⁴³.

Different degrees of Europeanisation have taken place with all the member States that entered the EU in its various stages of enlargement, not merely with CEECs. The process comprises three particular dynamics between EU foreign policy and national foreign policies: there can be either 'download', 'upload' or 'sideways' Europeanisation.

The classic type of policy transfer between the EU level and the national level is 'download', where national foreign policies are shaped or determined by the priorities of EU foreign policy. It is also known as 'national adaptation' or 'top-down' Europeanisation: the pre-existing national foreign policies reveal a great deal of variation as a result of its interaction with EU foreign policy.

⁴² The forthcoming paragraphs will be based on the theoretical framework developed by Ruano (2011).

⁴³ An exhaustive analysis of the Europeanisation process between CEEC's national policies and EU foreign policy towards LAC requires an individual assessment of CEEC's national foreign policies. For the purposes of this paper, we intend to give an overview on the subject, explaining the logic behind this process of Europeanisation in the case of CEECs and its implications for EU foreign policy towards LAC. For more thorough analysis and national foreign policy case studies, see: Ruano (2013) and Silva Parejas (2014).

In the case of foreign policy towards LAC, ‘download’ Europeanisation indicates that EU member States -among them, CEECs- need to adapt their national foreign policies to the priorities set by the EU in its external relations with this region. Although there are naturally different degrees of adaptation, if we compare the previous underdeveloped state of CEEC’s national foreign policies towards LAC with that at the EU level, this process of Europeanisation could only increase the level and density of interactions between CEECs and LAC.

In a case by case study, different levels of national adaptation may appear: for instance, Romania -a CEEC traditionally more prone to fostering relations with Latin America, due to its Latin historical background and language- may show a lower level of ‘download’ Europeanisation than other CEECs with far less trajectory in developing national foreign policy strategies towards Latin America, such as Czechia or Slovakia.

Most CEECs that entered the EU were relatively small States⁴⁴ that had no major interests or well-developed, pre-existing foreign policies towards Latin America. One of the largest CEECs, Poland, turned out to be one of the main ‘downloaders’ of EU foreign policy towards LAC (Ruano 2013).

The Baltic States constitute a special case among the rest of CEECs: not only did they not have pre-existing policies towards Latin America but they had also recently become independent from the USSR. Their foreign policies were incipient in many more areas than external relations with Latin America (Ruano 2013).

Other exceptions were the case of the insular Mediterranean States of Cyprus and Malta. For particular reasons, both these countries have their own foreign policy logic and priorities, with very little efforts devoted to foreign policy towards far-flung, extra-regional actors. In the case of Cyprus, the majority of foreign policy priorities orbit towards its territorial conflict with the Turkish Republic of Northern

⁴⁴ With the notable exceptions of Hungary, Poland and Romania.

Cyprus. In the case of Malta, its foreign policy is dominated by priorities related to strengthening its relations and communications with the European continent.

All in all, we can affirm that this process of ‘download’ Europeanisation of EU foreign policy towards LAC affected CEECs national foreign policies in a favourable way, from a Latin American point of view. After their entry into the EU and as a result of their adaptation to EU foreign policy, most CEECs became more engaged with foreign policy interests concerning LAC.

The second dynamic of Europeanisation is the ‘upload’ policy transfer, characterised by the ‘projection’ of national foreign policy preferences towards the EU level. With regard to our topic, the paramount example is the process of ‘Ibero-Americanisation’ of EU foreign policy that took place after Spain and Portugal’s accession.

As far as CEECs are concerned, until the present there has been no indication of any significant process of ‘upload’ Europeanisation concerning foreign policy towards LAC. This is due to the fact that interest and bargaining power are the principal variables behind a successful process of policy ‘upload’: if CEECs had only minor pre-existing interests in LAC, it is unlikely that there would be any substantial process of policy ‘upload’, at least in this field of EU foreign policy. Moreover, as they were the newly integrated members in the EU, it is expectable that their bargaining power in the process of formulation of EU foreign policy was rather limited, in comparison to that of the EU’s founding or older member States.

The third dynamic in which Europeanisation can happen is ‘sideways’: “[...] this relates to mechanisms of learning and socialisation among member States and European institutions that lead to policy convergence” (Ruano 2011, p.4). This is a more agency-centered approach, since it implies that foreign policy makers look at the strategies that other actors at different levels -either EU institutions or foreign policy national agencies- are drafting, in order to set their own priorities. The study of this modality exceeds the aims of this

contribution as it requires more detailed case studies that reveal the existence of 'sideways' Europeanisation in either EU or CEEC's foreign policies towards LAC.

Regarding the Europeanisation of CEEC's national foreign policies and its relation to the impact of Eastern enlargement on the EU's foreign policy towards LAC, the most relevant policy transfer is certainly the 'downward' modality of Europeanisation.

After their entry in the EU, CEECs were prone to integrate EU foreign policy priorities towards LAC in their own national foreign policies. Although they did so in rather different degrees, the existence of 'downward' Europeanisation implies that it was not mostly about CEECs uploading their 'indifference' towards LAC to EU foreign policy, as predicted by the pessimistic views on the potential impact of Eastern enlargement. The most relevant process taking place was actually a 'download' Europeanisation, meaning that CEECs were driven towards the development of their foreign policy interests towards LAC, not otherwise.

CEEC's national foreign policies were increasingly influenced by EU foreign policy in this field, instead of making EU foreign policy more detached from the Latin American region. The institutions and external relations previously established by the EU created significant opportunities for CEECs to develop their own ties with Latin America, as well as with other partnerships around the world that had been unexplored by these countries until their EU accession (Lazarou et al. 2014).

In many aspects, the entry of ten CEECs in the EU in 2004 revived EU-LAC inter-regional relations. Not only did reciprocal political visits between CEECs and LAC increase, but the CEECs also started to search for efficient ways to take advantage of the interactions with LAC that the EU had already put into motion (Vizentini 2004).

Notwithstanding what the integration in the EU may have done for the 'Latino-Americanisation' of CEEC's national foreign policies, these countries' active participation in the EU-LAC inter-regional

framework is still deemed to be reduced and infrequent (Silva Parejas 2014). The main reason for this limited involvement is that most CEEC's interests in the region remain low, and also, fundamentally linked to the already established priorities of EU foreign policy towards LAC. Nonetheless, it is precisely in this area of EU external relations that the CEEC's engagement has the most potential for growth (Silva Parejas 2014).

In the following chapter, we will examine the substantial content of EU foreign policy towards LAC. Its values and priorities prior to and during the period under study will be analysed, as well as the influence that Eastern enlargement may have had on them.

CHAPTER 3

EU FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS LAC BEFORE AND AFTER EASTERN ENLARGEMENT: VALUES, PRIORITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

In this chapter, we will examine the evolution of EU foreign policy towards LAC, trying to detect any fundamental changes since 2004 and assess their possible correlation with EU Eastern enlargement.

The analysis will be divided in three sections. The first will explore the values and principles that guide EU foreign policy towards LAC. The second section will be devoted to the evolution of the EU's main foreign policy interests and priorities regarding Latin America. Finally, in the third section, we will recap the most important developments of EU-LAC relations during the period under study.

3.1. Values and principles orienting EU foreign policy towards LAC⁴⁵

At both sides of the Atlantic, European and Latin American countries and (sub)regional blocs have developed their mutual relations constantly alluding to and reiterating their former history, common values and shared visions of the world. EU foreign policy has been no exception: since the beginnings of EU-LAC inter-regional and bi-regional interactions, the EU has portrayed shared values and common history as the fundamentals of its foreign policy interests and external relations with LAC. The weight of the normative and declarative basis in EU-LAC relations is such that this partnership has been referred to as a 'normative alliance' (Gratius 2011).

⁴⁵ Since our objective in this Chapter is to examine the impact of Eastern enlargement on the content of EU foreign policy towards LAC, we will focus on the policies and strategies designed by the EU for its relations with LAC. In order to describe the normative basis and main priorities of EU foreign policy towards LAC, official strategy documents produced by EU institutions will be analysed.

In 1994, as the EU developed efforts to strengthen its international projection⁴⁶, all EU member States -represented by their respective Foreign Affairs Ministers within the Council of the European Union⁴⁷- approved a strategic document regarding the Union's foreign policy towards LAC. This document was entitled 'Europe and Latin America: a partnership for action' (Council of the European Union 1994)⁴⁸. The text was depicted as the 'Basic Document' that would guide the future of the EU's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. It included the main values supported and shared by both regions as well as an outline of the main priorities for the future EU-LAC relations.

In 1995, the European Commission elaborated another strategic document entitled 'The European Union and Latin America: the present situation and prospects for closer partnership 1996-2000' (European Commission 1995). While the 1994 'Basic Document' made no allusion to the forthcoming Eastern enlargement, the 1995 document produced by the Commission affirmed that:

“[...] While facing up to issues of economic competitiveness and global political stability, the European Union must go on 'deepening' and 'widening'. It bears special responsibility in the transition under way in Central and Eastern Europe” (European Commission 1995, p.4).

Other than that, the Commission made no further reference to the implications of Eastern enlargement for EU-LAC relations, simply adding that the Union had to keep increasing its presence in the world's emerging regions, one of which was Latin America (European Commission 1995). We can infer from such (lack of) comments that neither the Council nor the Commission assigned major significance

⁴⁶ The EU's external action had been empowered by the creation of the CFSP and the ESDP in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty (in force since 1993).

⁴⁷ Hereinafter referred to as the Council.

⁴⁸ The document was originally drafted in collaboration with the European Commission and the Institute for European-Latin American Relations (IRELA).

to the enlargement process in relation to the development of EU foreign policy towards LAC.

Jointly, the aforementioned strategy reports can be considered as the constitutive or fundamental basis of EU foreign policy towards LAC. Among the values and principles referred to in both these documents, the most relevant were the following (Council of the European Union 1994, European Commission 1995)⁴⁹:

- The countries and peoples of the European Union and LAC are united by **historical, spiritual and cultural common roots**;
- Both regions share the values and ideals of **freedom, solidarity, human rights and the rule of law**;
- Inter and bi-regional cooperation is based on fundamental goals such as: **peace maintenance, universal respect for human rights, balanced increase of economic exchange, promotion of sustainable development, fight against poverty and environmental degradation, and support of scientific and cultural ties**;
- The dialogue between the two regions is built upon the principles of **representative democracy and the rule of law**, including overarching objectives such as **consolidation of democracy, institutional modernisation, improvement of public morals, economic liberalisation and promotion of social justice**;
- The respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms on which the EU-LAC partnership is based calls for the **condemnation of all human rights violations** and the punishment of their perpetrators;
- Given the region's history with authoritarian regimes and their repeated violations to human rights, the EU advocates on the **civil control of the Armed Forces** by the constitutional authorities of Latin American countries;

⁴⁹ The main values and principles declared by EU institutions as guiding EU foreign policy towards LAC are highlighted in bold.

- The EU also supports the efforts of its Latin American counterparts in the area of **disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and control of sensitive exports**;
- The EU welcomes LAC countries' enhanced **participation in multilateral organisations** such as the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN), as well as their increasing collective efforts towards **peace, democratic stability and the celebration of free, democratic and periodical elections**;
- The EU notes with satisfaction the processes of regional and subregional integration being carried out in LAC and offers its support and experience in this field, showing that **the promotion of regional integration** is also a fundamental principle of EU foreign policy towards LAC;
- The EU's compromise in the field of **development aid** also constitutes the normative basis of EU foreign policy towards LAC: the EU consistently endorses **modernisation and sustainable development reforms** in the LAC region by means of its development cooperation and aid diplomacy instruments;
- In relation to the previous principle, in its foreign policy towards LAC, the EU pays special attention to the **protection of the environment** and the conservation of endangered ecosystems, mainly through the **promotion of sustainable development** practices as well as the implementation of environmental protection norms;
- EU foreign policy towards LAC includes the EU's vehement compromise and cooperation in the **fight against the 'new transnational threats'** such as **terrorism, drug trafficking and related crimes**. The EU fervently supports the **'shared responsibility' principle** among countries where drugs are either produced, transported or consumed;
- Finally, in its foreign policy towards LAC, the EU supports the **participation of civil society**, calling for a proactive involvement

of citizens and non-governmental organisations in the process of formulation of common policies, while also promoting a **strengthened civil dialogue** as a token of solidarity between the two regions and its peoples.

If we consider the broad content of these values and principles, we can affirm that the normative basis of EU foreign policy towards LAC is highly consistent with the principles included in Article 2 (TEU), which constitute the fundamental values for all areas of EU foreign policy. In other words, EU foreign policy towards LAC reflects to a great extent the general values and principles that are set to guide EU's external action as a whole. However, our main aim in this section is to determine whether the EU's foreign policy towards LAC has suffered any fundamental changes after -or as a result of- Eastern enlargement.

Following the 2004 'big bang' enlargement, the European Commission elaborated two new strategy documents⁵⁰ regarding EU foreign policy towards LAC. The first one dates from 2005 and was entitled 'A stronger partnership between the European Union and Latin America' (European Commission 2005). The second strategy document was published in 2009 under the title 'The European Union and Latin America: Global Players in Partnership' (European Commission 2009).

In the 2005 Communication, the Commission declared the need to strengthen the partnership between the EU and Latin America, as well as it set out the objective of renewing the strategy formulated in the previous decade (European Commission 2005). In this document, the European Commission affirmed that Latin America is one of the EU's closest external partners:

⁵⁰ Technically speaking, both these documents -in addition to the one published in 1995- are 'Communications' that the European Commission addresses to the Council and the European Parliament. In practice, these reports serve as strategy documents, since they lay out the main guidelines and priorities of EU foreign policy towards LAC for the forthcoming years.

“[...] we share a common commitment to human rights, democracy and multilateralism [...] Few regions in the world offer so many reasons to build a genuine alliance. Given their shared history and culture, the EU and Latin America are thus better placed to understand each other than many other regions [...] Being close allies on the international scene is therefore in their mutual interest” (European Commission 2005, p.3).

In general terms, there is a continuity of the values and principles declared by the 1994 ‘Basic Document’, although in the strategy documents published after 2004 the Commission paid more attention to objective interests and focused on elaborating concrete proposals, rather than addressing universal values and abstract principles.

Nevertheless, the endurance of the previously declared normative basis is shown by the Commission’s reference to some of the main drivers of EU foreign policy towards LAC, namely: their shared history and culture; the principles of respect for human rights, democracy and multilateralism; the spirit of cooperation and partnership between both regions; the importance of the promotion and consolidation of democracy; and the need for continuing with the implementation of economic and social reforms (European Commission 2005, European Commission 2009).

The continuity of the normative basis is also evident as the Commission alluded to: the importance of sustainable development and environmental protection; the need to strengthen regional and international political stability and security; a maintained commitment towards aid and development cooperation; an increased mutual understanding through bi-regional political dialogue and educational-cultural exchange; the will of the EU to keep encouraging greater regional integration in LAC; the importance of joint action in the international and multilateral level; the stimulation of balanced economic exchange; the need to continue fighting against social inequality, poverty and exclusion, as well as against the new

transnational challenges posed by migration, illicit drugs and organised crime on the basis of the principle of ‘shared responsibility’ (European Commission 2005, European Commission 2009).

It is noticeable that the subject of migration was officially mentioned for the first time in the context of EU foreign policy towards LAC after Eastern enlargement, being totally absent in the 1994-1995 ‘constitutive’ documents⁵¹.

Specifically with regard to Eastern enlargement, the 2005 strategy document reads:

“[...] The Commission wishes to send a positive signal indicating that Europe is interested in the region. Though unfounded, there seems to be a perception, that the EU is too absorbed by its own enlargement, its immediate neighbours or problems elsewhere in the world [...] The Commission wishes to reaffirm that the association with Latin America is not merely a fact but a must in the interest of both regions, now and in the future” (European Commission 2005, p.3-4).

The allusion to concerns over the consequences of enlargement is noteworthy since at the time the EU was undergoing a period commonly known as ‘enlargement fatigue’, a phase of “[...] public weariness of the seemingly endless process of EU accession” (Dinan 2010, p.486)⁵². The ‘big bang’ enlargement round had just become a reality, the admissions of Bulgaria and Romania were practically imminent, and the EU was still trying to contain the backlash of the failure of the 2004 European Constitution, along with other predicaments originated in certain EU member States’ national politics (Dinan 2010, Bache et al. 2014).

⁵¹ We will further refer to this point in Section 3.2, when we analyse EU foreign policy priorities towards LAC.

⁵² During this period, European public opinion on the EU’s enlargement became increasingly associated with the negative and unwanted consequences of the enlargement process, including concerns about jobs, migrants from lesser developed countries and possible scenarios of social disruption (Dinan 2010).

Distinctively, the following 2009 Communication did not include any reference towards enlargement policy or the implications of prior enlargement rounds for EU foreign policy towards LAC. This is due to the fact that, by that time, further accessions under negotiations - such as that of Croatia- were significantly fewer and did not occupy the frontline of the EU's agenda. In addition, the discussion on the EU's 'enlargement fatigue' was no longer on the spotlight of political debates and public opinion.

The content of the 2009 Communication was clearly more oriented towards addressing the new international context that had arisen since 2005, dominated by the 2008 global economy crisis, the debate on mitigation of climate change and other so-called transnational threats like terrorism, drug trafficking and migration (European Commission 2009).

However, in its fundamental values and principles, there was an evident continuity of the normative basis contained in the 1994-1995 strategy documents. We can affirm that, even though new regional and international issues had arisen and had fundamentally transformed the context of EU foreign policy towards LAC, its declared values and guiding principles remained the same during the periods that followed the 'big bang' and the enlargement to the Eastern Balkans.

Since the accession of Croatia in 2013, a new European Commission entered into functions for the period 2014-2019, led by Jean-Claude Juncker. So far, a specific strategy document for EU foreign policy towards LAC has not yet been published. Nevertheless, HR Federica Mogherini has presented a 'strategic assessment' of EU foreign policy's global context, where she declared the need to deepen EU's bilateral and inter-regional partnerships with LAC (European Union 2016). In view of the HR's remarks and the historical continuity enjoyed so far by the EU's foreign policy towards LAC, it is foreseeable that the values and principles orienting EU-LAC relations will remain fundamentally unchanged in the near future.

To conclude this section, our analysis of EU foreign policy strategic reports revealed that the development of Eastern enlargement did not affect the normative principles on which EU foreign policy towards LAC is based. The enlargement process was almost disregarded in the strategic documents, showing a certain detachment between EU foreign policy towards LAC and EU enlargement policy.

At least with regard to its declarative foundation, EU foreign policy towards LAC was hardly influenced by either the ‘big bang’ enlargement or the following accessions of Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia. The same common historical values and principles have been maintained since its original formulation in 1994 and the normative basis of EU foreign policy towards LAC was not fundamentally or substantially changed by Eastern enlargement.

3.2. EU foreign policy priorities concerning LAC before and after Eastern enlargement

What has historically distinguished EU-LAC relations -in comparison to other Latin American (extra)regional groupings such as the Ibero-American or the Inter-American⁵³- is the lack of strategic motivations and critical geo-political concerns (Gratius 2011). The obvious exceptions to the previous argument are Spain, and to a lesser extent, Portugal. Between these EU members and most Latin American countries -in the case of Portugal, mostly Brazil- there is a long-standing special relationship due to cultural affinities, common language and shared geo-political interests (Nolte 2004).

In the history of EU-LAC relations, some of the main achievements have been represented by the establishment of ‘strategic partnerships’. This modality of deepening relations with LAC has been criticised by scholars and political actors alike, since such partnerships are often

⁵³ The Inter-American system is defined by the interactions between the US and its Latin American and Caribbean counterparts, mainly under the institutional framework of the Organisation of American States (OAS) (Gratius 2011).

strategic in the rhetorical sense but to a much lesser extent in reality (Martins 2004).

In addition, the EU-LAC alliance is not only a normative one but it has also been considered as under-institutionalised and with limited budgetary allowances in comparison to other European or Latin American (extra)regional interactions (Gratius 2011). Some views argue that EU foreign policy towards Latin America usually remains within the level of good intentions and rhetoric, and that long-term strategic actions rarely surpass their initial inertial horizon (Martins 2004).

In the same line of thought, but specifically in the case of bi-regional relations, Dominguez states that:

“[...] The substance of the dialogue [...] is often declarative and seeks to reinforce broad positions of the international agenda such as respect to international law or political willingness to address climate change, but deliberately leave more precise and controversial areas of the bilateral agenda undefined in order to avoid jeopardizing the overarching interregional approach” (Dominguez 2015, p.18-19).

Notwithstanding these looming arguments on the existence of concrete and consistent actions in EU-LAC relations, EU foreign policy towards this region has shown that there are indeed concrete interests that have been maintained since the beginning of the partnership, at least on the side of the EU. The motto of the 1994 ‘Basic Document’ of EU foreign policy towards LAC was, precisely, ‘A partnership for action’.

In the following paragraphs, we will summarise the main interests and objectives set out in the 1994-1995 strategy reports, with the aim of detecting any fundamental changes in the proposed priorities of EU foreign policy towards LAC after Eastern enlargement.

First and foremost, the main objective expressed in the 1994 ‘Basic Document’ was to establish a new partnership between the EU and

LAC, that would be aimed at safeguarding their shared values and principles: “[...] In the framework of our Common Foreign and Security Policy we propose to undertake common efforts with Latin America and the Caribbean to bring about a new partnership of the two regions [...]” (Council of the European Union 1994, p.3).

The strategy chosen to build this bi-regional partnership was multi-level: the EU proposed a regional and, at the same time, country-based approach to its relations with Latin America. The rationale behind that strategy was that “[...] Latin America is both uniform and diverse; it calls for the Union to vary its approaches, tailoring them to national and regional circumstances” (European Commission 1995, p.2).

Not only did it envision the establishment of a bi-regional dialogue but the EU would also intensify its cooperation with LAC at a ‘hybrid’ inter-regional level (with the Rio Group, Central America⁵⁴, the Caribbean⁵⁵, CAN and MERCOSUR) as well as strengthen the bilateral dialogue with individual LAC countries, namely Chile, Mexico and Brazil (Council of the European Union 1994).

One of the main interests that steered EU foreign policy towards LAC has been the development of mutual commercial exchange and investments. The ‘Basic Document’ stated that:

“[...] the promotion of trade and investments will remain the cornerstone of our relations with our Latin American and

⁵⁴ The framework chosen by the EU for its inter-regional relations with Central America was the ‘San José Dialogue’, a grouping of six Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) launched in 1984. Its main objectives were related to the democratisation process and the socio-economic development of Central America. In 1993, the EU and Central America concluded a Framework Cooperation Agreement that would evolve into a broader AA in 2012 (European External Action Service 2016c).

⁵⁵ EU relations with the Caribbean take place on a two level dialogue: on the one hand, through the Asian, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), an association of countries from these three regions created since the 1975 Lomé Convention; and on the other hand, the EU has developed relations with the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM), a Caribbean subgroup of States within ACP. CARIFORUM is composed by the following Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago (European External Action Service 2016c).

Caribbean partners [...] We advocate a dynamic increase in the economic exchanges between Europe and the emerging markets in Latin America, especially through rapid implementation of tariff reductions and the abolition of trade impediments [...]" (Council of the European Union 1994, p.5).

The main EU priorities regarding its LAC partners were related to the promotion of trade and investments. These high-level economic interests included more concrete objectives such as: to encourage measures and the conclusion of agreements, in order to promote and protect investments; to enhance legal security and promote legislation on intellectual property; to support the formation of EU-LAC joint ventures; and to diversify inter-regional economic and technological exchanges (Council of the European Union 1994, European Commission 1995).

Also for the sake of promotion of trade and investments, the EU committed its efforts towards achieving 'Third Generation Cooperation Agreements' with LAC countries and subregional groupings. In the early 1990s, the EU had just begun concluding third generation agreements with its Latin American counterparts⁵⁶. The 'Basic Document' showed a strong will of EU member States to start negotiations on more ambitious partnerships with the region, by means of agreements that would "[...] reflect the economic potential of our partners and their emerging systems of integration [...]" (Council of the European Union 1994, p.5).

Another key priority in EU foreign policy towards LAC was to implement programmes for development cooperation, with the

⁵⁶ While 'first generation' agreements are based on provisions concerning commercial preferences and tariff reductions, 'second generation' agreements are wider and generally include other areas such as investments, services and intellectual property. 'Third generation' agreements allow for an even deeper inter-regional cooperation, including topics like development aid, the 'democratic clause', and instances of political dialogue (Álvarez 2011). Examples of these 'third generation' agreements are the ones that the EU signed with its LAC partners during the 1990s, namely the Framework Cooperation Agreements with Central America (1993) and MERCOSUR (1995).

assistance of the European Investment Bank and other instruments of EU development aid. This mechanism of cooperation paid special attention to issues related to sustainable development and environmental protection. The 1995 Commission strategy report highlighted the fact that, at that time, the EU was Latin America's largest source of official development aid (ODA).

Both these strategy documents also stated that the EU would strive to expand cultural ties with its Latin American counterparts, and increase exchanges in all levels of cultural cooperation.

Concerning drug trafficking, the main EU priority in its relations with LAC was to implement programmes that respect the principle of 'shared responsibility' and that efficiently combat the underlying causes of the problem. Jointly, the EU called for the execution of programmes that support alternative development, law enforcement and demand reduction.

Another main objective of EU foreign policy towards LAC was to enhance the parliamentary dialogue between the two regions, as well as to promote the inter-regional civil dialogue between non-governmental organisations and citizens on both sides of the Atlantic.

Regarding disarmament, the main interest of the EU in relation to its Latin American partners was to urge them to sign and ratify the regional and international arms control and non-proliferation treaties, as a way of helping the consolidation of peace in the region.

As we can see, the concrete interests and objectives of EU foreign policy towards LAC were generally consistent with this policy's normative basis. However, when it comes to policy priorities, a much stronger emphasis on the development of trade and investments is revealed. Within the values and principles, EU strategy documents had only mentioned the promotion of economic liberalisation and a balanced increase of economic exchange among many other principles to endorse, whereas in the concrete priorities these economic and commercial interests appear to be much more prevalent.

Continuing with the EU strategy documents produced after Eastern enlargement, in the 2005 Communication the Commission acknowledged a considerable development of relations since 1995:

“[...] The EU, which now has a common currency and 25 members, has become the largest foreign investor in Latin America. It is the largest donor for the region, and the primary trading partner for many countries there, especially the members of MERCOSUR. Political dialogue has been strengthened through three EU-Latin America/Caribbean Summits (Rio in 1999, Madrid in 2002 and Guadalajara in 2004)” (European Commission 2005, p.3).

The 2005 Communication focused on strengthening the EU-LAC partnership that had been developed all throughout the past decade. The main objectives mentioned by the Commission in 2005 were to strengthen stability and security, and bring sustainable development to Latin America (European Commission 2005). The bi-regional dialogue and the ‘strategic partnership’ established between the two regions in the 1999 Rio de Janeiro Summit would certainly be one of the ways to attain the first objective. Regarding the second, the new development aid financial instruments programmed for the period 2007-2013 would commit considerable funds to LAC and thus, help achieve the main second objective (European Commission 2005).

The EU-LAC dialogue would be strengthened by the establishment of a bi-regional strategic partnership and through a network of association agreements (including free trade agreements) involving the different LAC countries and regional integration organisations. Among them, the most important were the future association agreements with MERCOSUR⁵⁷, CAN and Central America, and the economic partnership agreement with the Caribbean⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ The 2005 Communication mentioned the need to begin the negotiations between EU and MERCOSUR on a free trade agreement, in order to upgrade the Interregional Framework Cooperation Agreement signed in 1995 (in force since 1999). After being stalled for the most part of the 2000s, these FTA negotiations

The EU kept committed towards many of the priorities and objectives mentioned in the 1994-1995 documents, such as: to contribute to the integration of the LAC region as a whole; to promote genuine political dialogues and increase both regions' international influence; to develop effective sectorial dialogues on social cohesion, environmental protection, reduction of inequalities and sustainable development; to help Latin American countries attract more European investment; to tailor aid and cooperation to the needs of the different LAC countries; and to increase mutual understanding through education and culture (European Commission 2005).

The prioritisation of trade and investment was maintained, although the 2005 Communication stressed the need to take advantage of the bi-regional commercial opportunities: “[...] Despite a significant increase in trade and investment flows between the two regions over the last fifteen years, their growth potential has been underutilised” (European Commission 2005, p.5).

The 2005 strategy document addressed with particular attention the need to tailor the different agreements and cooperation frameworks to the priorities of each regional integration process and individual LAC countries. This need for ‘tailored relations’ and a ‘targeted dialogue’ was proposed as a result of the pronounced disparity of integration among the several subregions, as well as for certain Latin American countries’ distinctive international projection, such as those of the major players in the region, Brazil and Mexico (European Commission 2005).

were re-launched in 2010 during the Madrid Summit, but with no tangible outcome until the present. One of the main obstacles towards the conclusion of this FTA is the highly dissimilar levels of integration achieved by the EU and MERCOSUR. In March 2016, it was announced that both blocs were ready to exchange trade proposals and finally move towards a comprehensive FTA that includes industrial goods, agricultural production, services and intellectual property (EurActiv 2016).

⁵⁸ This agreement was signed in 2008 as the EU-CARIFORUM Economic and Partnership Agreement. Its purpose is to promote mutual trade and investments, and help Caribbean countries boost their economic development, offering the region financial support in the form of ODA (European External Action Service 2016c).

The 2005 report also included two new proposals: on the one hand, the creation of a Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly -which was instituted in the European Parliament in 2006-; and on the other, the design of a special strategy (and corresponding financial incentives) for tackling the consumption, production and trafficking of illegal drugs and other forms of related crimes, such as corruption and money-laundering.

The 2005 Communication gave particular importance to the changing conditions of the international context, particularly the emerging role of major regional players and global issues such as the fight against illicit drugs and migration. Surprisingly, this document did not mention the fight against terrorism. Given that it was the first strategy document regarding EU-LAC relations after the ‘big bang’ enlargement, the Commission did nothing but assure the continuity of priorities and objectives set out within EU foreign policy towards LAC one decade earlier.

As we already mentioned in the normative basis analysis, this was the only strategy document that pointed out the implications of Eastern enlargement for EU foreign policy towards Latin America. In 2005, the Commission discredited the claims on the EU being too self-absorbed after Eastern enlargement. It reinforced the idea that the association partnership established with LAC was not only an interest of the EU but ‘a must’, and that the EU was ready to commit itself further to Latin America (European Commission 2005).

Continuing with the Communication released in 2009, what is initially noteworthy is the optimistic manner in which the Commission highlighted the achievements and the current state of the bi-regional strategic partnership:

“[...] Today, the EU is Latin America's second largest trading partner and the EU is the biggest investor in the region. Over the past ten years, the European Commission has financed more than 450 projects and programmes accounting for more than €3 billion” (European Commission 2009).

The 2009 Communication was entitled: ‘The European Union and Latin America: Global Players in Partnership’. The focus on the so-called new transnational threats would not only be maintained but also emphasised: “[...] Since 2005, the context in which the Partnership operates has changed. It has become more complex, and new global challenges have arisen that must be addressed” (European Commission 2009, p.5).

Particularly, the Commission gave a great deal of importance to the challenges that the 2008 global economic and financial crisis posed for the development of EU-LAC relations, in addition to other pre-existing but increasingly important global issues such as climate change, drug trafficking and migration.

We must draw attention to the fact that neither the Communications published after Eastern enlargement addressed the rise of terrorism as one of the main global security threats in EU-LAC relations. This is remarkable since both these new strategy documents regarding EU foreign policy towards LAC were produced after the 9-11-2001 attacks and the subsequent war on terrorism launched by the US and its allies in the Middle East. The war on terrorism certainly prioritised security threats related to the radicalisation of Muslim integrism in the agenda of global politics. Ever since, these issues have fundamentally shaped the logics of international politics in the post-2001 era, with Europe being by all means no exception.

The lack of reference to this subject in the most recent strategy reports on EU-LAC relations has to do with the fact that terrorism does not constitute a fundamental issue within the contents of the EU’s strategic partnership with LAC. Even though LAC is deemed as one of the most violent regions in the world and that it deals with critical security threats such as drug trafficking, corruption, money laundering, and other related crimes on a daily basis, the Latin American region has not represented any great-scale threats to global security, including the fight against terrorism (Gratius 2011). From the Commission’s point of view, the main global issues that gained

importance within the bi-regional agenda were the challenges posed by the global economy crisis, climate change and migration (European Commission 2009).

Concerning the outline of priorities, the new strategy report affirmed:

“In its 2005 Communication [...] the Commission sought to strengthen the bi-regional political and policy dialogue in a number of important areas. Its main objectives -which remain the EU’s current strategic policy priorities- are to: promote regional integration and negotiations to establish Association Agreements with sub-regions in Latin America; steer development cooperation towards the reduction of poverty and social inequality and improve educational levels” (European Commission 2009, p.2).

There was, ergo, a continuity of the main priorities and guidelines set out in the previous 2005 Communication. Nonetheless, these interests would have to be read in the light of an increasingly changing international context, dominated by the challenges posed by the aforementioned emerging global issues. As a result, the EU would need to adapt its cooperation instruments with Latin America and accommodate them to the new circumstances.

Specifically regarding migration, the 1994 ‘Basic Document’ on the EU’s foreign policy towards LAC had made no explicit reference to the issue. Besides brief references to the problem of internally displaced refugees caused by the illicit activities of para-military ‘guerrillas’ and drug trafficking ‘cartels’ -which was deemed to be an intrinsically local concern, contained within the boundaries of LAC⁵⁹-, the 1994-1995 strategy documents had given no relevance to the issue

⁵⁹ This phenomenon is of great significance in the case of Colombia, Mexico, Peru and most Central American countries. On the matter, the ‘Basic Document’ merely stated: “[...] We reconfirm our readiness to help re-integrate refugees and ex-combatants into civilian life” (Council of the European Union 1994, p.4). In the 1995 Commission Communication, the problem of internally displaced refugees was included as one of the prioritised humanitarian aid budgetary lines offered by the EU in its ODA towards Latin America (European Commission 2005).

of migration. However, this subject was considered as one of the most notable subjects in the EU-LAC agenda by the strategy reports published after Eastern enlargement.

Concerning climate change, this issue was considered to be strategic for the bi-regional dialogue and one of the key topics of the 2008 Lima Summit, which launched the 'EUroCLIMA Programme': "[...] a joint EU-Latin America initiative to promote bi-regional cooperation on climate change, with the aim of reducing its impact and helping to mitigate adverse effects" (European Commission 2009, p.3).

Other issues such as the fight against poverty, the effects of the economic and financial crisis as well as the promotion of renewable energy sources and energy security were foreseen to become crucial in the future bi-regional dialogue. Since inequality and social exclusion remained serious problems for the Latin American region, the 2009 Communication put emphasis on the need to keep promoting social cohesion, a proclaimed key objective of the bi-regional strategic partnership since its origins. This priority included other more concrete objectives such as to promote youth employment, the extension of social protection and the implementation of fiscal policies that encourage a better redistribution of wealth.

With regard to the strategic approach of EU-LAC inter-regionalism, the 2009 Communication reaffirmed the multi-level strategy of EU foreign policy towards LAC. As in the 2005 strategy report, in its 2009 Communication the Commission stressed the need to keep tailoring the bi-regional dialogue to the highly varied profiles of LAC countries and regional integration blocs, while also keep encouraging substantial advances in the subregional integration processes.

On the impact of Eastern enlargement, or for that matter, the implications of the Eastern Balkans' accession in 2007, the 2009 Commission Communication made no comment whatsoever. As we explained before, this was due to the fact that by then, possible further accessions did not represent a priority within the EU's political agenda and since the debate on Eastern enlargement and the subsequent

‘enlargement fatigue’ was not occupying the spotlight of political discourse, media and public opinion. Even though Bulgaria and Romania had recently entered the Union, this event had been foreseeable and expected since the 2004 ‘big bang’ enlargement. At least from the point of view of the EU institutions charged with its design and implementation, this event was deemed not relevant or unrelated to EU foreign policy towards LAC.

The accession of Croatia in 2013 and its implications for EU foreign policy towards LAC call for an analysis of the guidelines proposed by the Juncker Commission (in functions since October 2014). Even if a complete assessment on the continuity of EU’s priorities under the new European Commission cannot be developed in full in the present contribution⁶⁰, we can mention some of the main EU foreign policy interests proclaimed by Jean-Claude Juncker and HR Federica Mogherini with regard to the Latin American region.

Since October 2014 until present days, the main priorities and objectives of EU foreign policy towards LAC have included: promoting negotiations on an updated and more ambitious agreement with Mexico (in light of the advanced stages of negotiation in TTIP between the EU and the US); reviving FTA negotiations between the EU and MERCOSUR; developing negotiations between the EU and Cuba on an overarching a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement; and deepening the EU’s strategic partnership with Brazil (European Union 2016, European External Action Service 2016c, EurActiv 2016).

Therefore, it is expectable that the Juncker Commission will follow the priorities and objectives established so far by EU foreign policy towards LAC, and that it will keep fostering the EU’s inter-regional, bi-regional and bilateral relations with LAC.

⁶⁰ As we have previously noted, a comprehensive strategy report has not yet been adopted. The publication of a new ‘EU global strategy’ is expected by June 2016 (European Union 2016).

To conclude, if we compare the diagnosis of the EU strategy reports with the literature on the agenda of EU-LAC relations since the 2000s, there is a clear consensus on the fact that the increasing complexity of subjects dealt with in the recent years of EU foreign policy towards LAC can be attributed to a combination of variables. Since Eastern enlargement, the most influential factors in the relations between the two regions were mostly related to globalisation and the emergence of new global issues or transnational challenges, namely climate change, global economic conditions, energy security, drug trafficking and migration (Inotai 2006, Álvarez 2011, Grabendorff 2014).

Trying to determine which of all these variables may have played a bigger role in the evolution of EU foreign policy towards LAC is methodologically difficult to assess, since all of them operate in a complex international and inter-regional scenario. However, we are in a position to affirm that, overall, Eastern enlargement did not appear to have fundamentally changed the main priorities and objectives of EU foreign policy towards LAC.

In our analysis, we have found that the priority setting of EU foreign policy towards LAC has been consistent with the values and fundamental principles motivating this partnership since its origins and that EU foreign policy towards LAC has remained highly based on values, even after Eastern enlargement. When we examined the EU's concrete interests and objectives towards LAC in detail, a more noticeable emphasis on the economic dimension of this bi-regional partnership can be identified: the will of pursuing trade liberalisation and increasing commercial exchange is mentioned within the normative basis as two principles among many others, while the core objectives and most important interests to be developed involve specifically the promotion of trade and investments.

All in all, although some relatively new subjects have been prioritised in recent years due to an international context under great transformation, in general terms the EU has stuck to the values and

priorities outlined in the 1990s, and Eastern enlargement has not played a significant role in their modification.

3.3. Main developments of EU foreign policy towards LAC since Eastern enlargement

We will devote this section to briefly recap the developments of EU-LAC relations since 2004, in order to draw attention to the way in which the values and priorities of EU foreign policy towards LAC have translated into concrete achievements during the period under study.

First, we will focus on the developments of the EU-LAC bi-regional agenda. The region-to-region dialogue has been held since 1999 by means of a bi-regional summit mechanism, in which heads of State and government of all EU member States and most LAC countries meet on a biennial basis. This bi-regional dialogue has only recently become a form of institutionalised interaction between Europe and LAC; nonetheless it is a new phenomenon that has developed substantially throughout the 2000s, as the EU was enlarging towards the East.

The summit mechanism is highly representative of the general state of EU-LAC relations: these summits ‘take the pulse’ of the overall EU-LAC agenda and have contributed to finding the common denominators on which the inter-regional relations are based (Dominguez 2015). So far, a total of eight EU-LAC bi-regional summits have been held: Rio de Janeiro (1999), Madrid (2002), Guadalajara (2004), Vienna (2006), Lima (2008), Madrid (2010), Santiago de Chile (2013) and Brussels (2015)⁶¹.

From 2013 on, these bi-regional meetings have taken the name of ‘EU-CELAC summits’: in the Madrid summit of 2010, the creation of a Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was

⁶¹ For an exhaustive account of the bi-regional summits’ evolution, see: Sanahuja (2013) and Dominguez (2015).

proposed, to represent a united front of LAC countries in their bi-regional dialogue with the EU and therefore addressing one of the main challenges in the bi-regional relations, the lack of an unified interlocutor on the side of LAC. CELAC⁶² was officially created in 2011 by the Declaration of Venezuela and involved the participation of 33 LAC countries (Dominguez 2015).

The objectives set out in the 1999 Rio Declaration for the future of the bi-regional strategic partnership were rather ambitious. Some views argue that the great number of priorities envisioned since the beginning of the bi-regional dialogue has impeded the implementation of more concrete and urgent measures (Nolte 2004).

The Guadalajara Summit of 28-29 May 2004 was the first bi-regional meeting after the ‘big bang’ enlargement. Contrary to the pessimistic predictions on the implications of Eastern enlargement, this summit demonstrated a continuing interest of both blocs to keep strengthening their mutual relations (Nolte 2004). Throughout the 2000s, the main contents of the bi-regional agenda have been grouped within three areas: political dialogue, commercial exchange and investment, and development aid (Dominguez 2015).

Within the area of political dialogue, the EU-LAC bi-regional agenda has not merely comprised the ‘pure’ bi-regional dialogue but also other ‘hybrid’ inter-regional and bilateral negotiations. In fact, some of the most outstanding results of the bi-regional summit mechanism included the achievement of bilateral and inter-regional trade agreements as well as the establishment of new strategic partnerships⁶³.

The EU has been able to conclude comprehensive association agreements with Mexico (signed in 1997, in force since 2000), Chile (2000, 2005) and Central America (2012, 2013). These three agreements fall under the category of ‘fourth generation agreements’,

⁶² CELAC succeeded the former Rio Group.

⁶³ The main source of information for the following paragraphs has been: European External Action Service (2016c).

which are wider in scope and entail more ambitious, overarching partnerships with the EU than the previous third generation agreements. The EU's fourth generation agreements with LAC include provisions for deepening mutual relations in the three areas of the aforementioned bi-regional agenda: political dialogue, trade and investments, and cooperation.

In virtue of these agreements, free trade areas with Mexico and Chile have been fully in force since 2000 and 2005 respectively. Currently, efforts are being made to upgrade and modernise both these FTAs.

With regard to Central America, this region has been able to achieve a FTA with the EU, and both parties are provisionally applying a free trade area since 2013.

In addition, Mexico⁶⁴ and Brazil⁶⁵ have been chosen as the only two EU 'strategic partners' in the whole Latin American region. These strategic partnerships enabled Mexico and Brazil to broaden their dialogue and deepen their cooperation with the EU, including negotiations on a variety of global issues such as climate change, sustainable development, international peace and security, democracy and human rights, and global economic governance.

As far as the Caribbean region is concerned, in 2008 the EU achieved an Economic Partnership Agreement with 15 Caribbean countries grouped within CARIFORUM. In 2012, a Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy was also adopted to strengthen relations between the EU and this sub-region.

The area of 'hybrid' inter-regional relations between the EU and two of the most important LAC regional integration processes -CAN and MERCOSUR- has been the one with the less progress since the turn of the millennium. In relation to MERCOSUR, there have not been any substantial achievements after the implementation of the AA in 1999. Negotiations on a FTA between the EU and MERCOSUR were stalled

⁶⁴ Mexico and the EU established a strategic partnership in 2008. At the present, they are considering to upgrade this partnership into a newer Global Agreement.

⁶⁵ The strategic partnership was established in 2007 and it included a high-level political dialogue of annual summits between Brazil and the EU.

for the most part of 2000s and the current decade. However, since March 2016 there have been some optimistic signals for their revitalisation (EurActiv 2016).

In the case of the CAN, negotiations to achieve a comprehensive association agreement with the EU took place during the 2000s but no tangible outcome has been achieved after the conclusion of the 2003 third generation agreement with the EU. Due to the paralysis of this integration process, greatly weakened by its internal divisions, since 2008 the EU has pursued individual strategies of cooperation with some of its members, namely Colombia, Peru and Ecuador. Colombia and Peru were able to reach a FTA with the EU in 2012, which has been provisionally applied since 2013. Ecuador followed suit and acceded to this FTA in 2014.

In general terms, the political dialogue between the EU and its counterparts from LAC has greatly progressed during the period under study. Despite the setbacks in the inter-regional negotiations with MERCOSUR and CAN, the majority of EU interactions with LAC countries and regional groupings kept developing at a steady pace after Eastern enlargement. Even in the cases of MERCOSUR and CAN, the EU has showed a consistent interest in deepening relations and continuing negotiations towards achieving more ambitious agreements.

Over the past decade, the political dialogue has intensified the economic character of the EU's partnership with LAC. In the area of commercial exchange, recent studies have shown that EU-LAC bi-regional trade has increased since Eastern enlargement. In the period 2001-2012, EU-LAC trade multiplied threefold: Latin American exports towards the EU rose from USD 48,368 million in 2001 to USD 150,078 million in 2012, whereas the imports from the EU went from USD 52,882 million to USD 152,900 million (Silva Parejas 2014).

From 2012 to 2015, Latin American exports towards the EU maintained close to USD 150,000 million, while imports from the EU went from USD 149,000 million to USD 116,700 million within the same

period (ECLAC 2016). This recent tendency to the fall is explained by the increased trade share of global emerging powers such as China and India, international trend of which the Latin American region is a good example. Still, in 2015 the EU was able to withhold its position as CELAC's second commercial partner (Tokatlian 2015).

The EU's share of foreign trade in LAC has remained quite constant since the turn of the millennium: from 2001 to 2011, the EU's share of Latin American exports went from 11,5% to 13,7%; while the EU's share of Latin American imports stayed between 13,7% in 2001 and 14% in 2011 (Gratius and Nolte 2013). However, as China progressively gains presence and participation in the Latin American markets, it is foreseeable that the EU could be replaced as the second most important Latin American trade partner -after the US- in the near future (Gratius and Nolte 2013).

In the field of investments, there is a similar trend to that of trade of goods. European companies remain the leaders of foreign investment in Latin America, but there has been a slight tendency to the fall since 2009, due to the increasing role of China (Gratius and Nolte 2013, Silva Parejas 2014).

Throughout the 2000s, the Latin American region experienced steady economic growth, partially thanks to several Asian countries' strong demand of agricultural goods produced in LAC and the relatively high international prices of commodities (Cooper and Heine 2009). At the same time, the 2008 global financial crisis seriously affected European economies. Together, these phenomena have caused a reduction of the commercial asymmetries that historically characterised EU-LAC trade relations. These changed conditions open up a new scenario that may allow for a more equal footing of bi-regional commercial relations (Gratius and Nolte 2013, EU-LAC Foundation 2014).

Eastern enlargement has played a rather silent role in most of these economic developments: it represented an externality with which the EU foreign policy towards LAC had to deal -and it certainly did so, evidencing adaptability and flexibility (Dominguez 2015)- but its

influence was not significant so as to be considered a fundamental variable either in the evolution of the bi-regional partnership or of other hybrid inter-regional and bilateral interactions.

Regarding trade between CEECs and LAC after Eastern enlargement, studies have shown that this portion of the inter-regional trade increased five times, from USD 2,900 million in 2000 to USD 13,620 in 2012 (EU-LAC Foundation 2014). Even if trade between LAC and CEECs still only represents 6% of the overall EU-LAC trade (Silva Parejas 2014), we can affirm that the hypothesis of an enlarged EU market as a potentially positive effect of Eastern enlargement was proved accurate.

Regarding the views that portrayed the CEEC's economic profiles as competitive with those of LAC and possibly detrimental for LAC exports towards the EU, experience has shown that the composition of agricultural goods flows does not significantly overlap between the two regions. The main agricultural products that LAC exports to Europe are usually not available in the CEECs (bananas, sugar cane, tropical fruit, coffee, cocoa, soya, beef, leather, among others). There has been some overlapping, though, in the mineral products sector, specifically in coal production, which is an important sector within CEECs (EU-LAC Foundation 2014).

In the field of development aid, the European Commission financed more than 450 projects and programmes accounting for more than €3 billion during the period 1999-2009 (European Commission 2009). This shows that the EU kept committed towards the support of sustainable development in LAC through the provision of ODA.

Although development cooperation remained one of the key subjects in EU's foreign policy towards LAC, since Eastern enlargement some tendencies of ODA diversion away from the Latin American region can be identified (Dominguez 2015). Since the 2010s, some upper-middle-income LAC countries no longer qualify as recipients of the EU's ODA. One of the main examples is the case of Mexico (European External Action Services 2016c).

However, many financial initiatives of the EU's ODA towards LAC were maintained or even launched during the period under study. The EU's development cooperation towards LAC was implemented through two modalities: on the one hand, EU external aid instruments that included LAC as a recipient, among other non-EU countries or regions (for instance, instruments for humanitarian aid, the promotion of democracy and human rights, election observation missions, the generalised scheme of preferences and the Erasmus Mundus programme); on the other hand, by means of a cohort of policies exclusively directed towards LAC (the programmes EUROsociAL, URB-AL, AL-Invest, EUrocLIMA, among many others) (Dominguez 2015).

Particularly since 2014, EU development aid towards the region has increased, as proved by the inclusion of Latin America in the several financial budgetary lines within the multiannual indicative programme for the period 2014-2017. This programme supports financial aid towards LAC under the EU Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries (European External Action Service 2016c).

Another positive example of EU consistent financial support towards LAC is the achievement of a significant agreement for the promotion of investments. As a result of the bi-regional dialogue held during the 2010 Madrid summit, the Commission launched the 'Mechanism of Investment of Latin America', which would generate EU resources for the region amounting to €125 million from 2010 to 2013, as well as investments for a total of €3 billion (Dominguez 2015).

If we consider that the EU aid cooperation directed towards LAC has been quite modest, being traditionally surpassed by the amounts of aid destined to other extra-regional actors or even exceeded by the remittances of Latin American emigrants (Dominguez 2015), we can conclude that the diversion that occurred after Eastern enlargement has not had a major prejudicial effect on the wider picture of EU-LAC relations. The EU has, after all, withheld the position of principal

donor of ODA in the whole LAC region (European External Action Service 2016c).

Other instances of cooperation proposed by the EU since the 2000s, such as the creation of the EU-LAC Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat) in 2006, and the strong presence that the EU has maintained all throughout LAC by a network of twenty EU delegations⁶⁶, constitute strong indicatives of its continuing interest in the region since 2004.

To conclude, the aggregate of the aforementioned developments during the period under study shows that Eastern enlargement has not had a significant negative impact on the EU's foreign policy towards LAC. Even if not all the tangible outcomes proved to be favourable for the Latin American region, the bigger picture of the inter-regional partnership appears to be much more advanced than in the early 2000s.

Some positive and negative consequences of Eastern enlargement with regard to LAC can be ascertained in a few punctual cases. For instance, while on the one hand there was a substantial increase of EU-LAC and CEEC-LAC trade, on the other there has been a slight diversion of ODA away from the region. Nonetheless, a direct and overarching correlation between Eastern enlargement and the main developments of EU foreign policy towards LAC in the period under study cannot be established in a broader sense.

The main developments of EU foreign policy towards LAC recapped in the present section represent the concrete outcomes of a rather steady and consistently implemented EU foreign policy towards the

⁶⁶ In Central America and the Caribbean there are nine EU delegations based in the following countries (capital cities): Barbados (Bridgetown), Cuba (Havana), Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo), El Salvador (San Salvador), Guatemala (Guatemala City), Haiti (Port-au-Prince), Honduras (Tegucigalpa), Jamaica (Kingston) and Nicaragua (Managua). In South America, there are ten EU delegations: Argentina (Buenos Aires), Bolivia (La Paz), Brazil (Brasília), Chile (Santiago), Colombia (Bogotá), Guyana, (Georgetown), Paraguay (Asunción), Peru (Lima), Uruguay (Montevideo) and Venezuela (Caracas). Last but not least, there is an EU delegation in Mexico (Mexico City) (European External Action Service 2016c).

region. These results show that the EU has maintained its interest in LAC during the period under study and that, all in all, Eastern enlargement has not been an essentially influential variable in its development.

CONCLUSION

The process of Eastern enlargement represented a major development in the history of the EU. Every enlargement round since the 1970s has somehow shaped the EU's identity, but Eastern enlargement has had a much greater impact than any of the previous enlargement rounds on both the European integration process as well as in the contents and main guidelines of EU foreign policy.

EU Eastern enlargement has taken place in three stages so far: the 2004 'big bang', the Eastern Balkans' accession in 2007 and the entry of Croatia in 2013. As a result, a total of thirteen Central and Eastern European countries, formerly under the sphere of influence of the USSR, were able to 'return' to Europe and become equal partners in the project of building a European economic and political union.

In the late 1990s, the upcoming Eastern enlargement had been received with some concern in the Latin American region. There were widespread pessimistic views about the potential impact of Eastern enlargement on the EU's foreign policy towards LAC and EU-LAC relations. In general, these looming predictions sustained the idea that the admission of CEECs could cause the EU's interest in Latin America to decrease, and also, that the LAC region would become less important within the overall picture of the EU's external relations.

This line of thought was based on two main arguments. The first one posed that the CEECs would not have significant interests in fostering the EU's foreign policy towards LAC, due to their traditionally underdeveloped foreign policy and incipient relations with the region. The second argument affirmed that the preferential commercial treatment gained by the CEECs as a result of their EU membership could jeopardise the future development of EU-LAC economic relations.

On the other side of the debate, there were some optimistic views that put emphasis on the potential opportunities that Eastern enlargement entailed for EU-LAC relations; among them, an enlarged EU market

for Latin American exports and the possibility of strengthening ties with the CEECs.

Our objective in the present contribution was to show whether Eastern enlargement affected EU foreign policy towards LAC. In case it did, our purpose was to find out if the impact had been fundamentally positive or negative. Translating the renowned debate of ‘widening vs. deepening’ into terms of EU foreign policy, we wanted to determine whether the EU had been able to carry out its most distinctive and difficult widening process so far, while also deepen and strengthen its foreign policy towards Latin America.

In view of such objectives, we started our analysis by contextualising the topic at hand. The two main processes involved in our study were revised: on the one hand, the process of EU enlargement; and on the other, the development of EU-LAC inter-regionalism.

In Chapter 2, we focused on examining the general implications of Eastern enlargement for the development of EU foreign policy towards Latin America. We started by explaining the place that LAC occupies within the bigger picture of EU foreign policy. Second, we reviewed the general impact that Eastern enlargement -and more specifically, the ‘big bang’- has had on the EU’s foreign policy, modifying much of its contents and priorities. Third, we analysed the process of ‘download’ Europeanisation that CEEC’s national foreign policies underwent as a consequence of EU integration. Particularly, this section showed that the concerns over a diminished interest of the EU in LAC as a result of the CEEC’s accession were, to a great extent, unsubstantiated.

Finally, in Chapter 3, we dived into the analysis of the normative basis and contents of EU foreign policy towards LAC. The main objective was to detect any alterations after 2004 and establish the prevalent causes for the change. EU foreign policy towards LAC revealed to be an essentially values-based policy. We found that the abstract principles guiding EU foreign policy towards LAC were strictly maintained after Eastern enlargement.

In general terms, the same happened with the priorities set out in the 1994-1995 strategic documents of EU foreign policy towards LAC: the promotion of trade and investments between the two regions is still the cornerstone of the bi-regional partnership, twelve years after the 2004 'big bang'.

We also found that, as the 2000s went by, the so-called new international threats and global issues (climate change, migration, drug trafficking, energy security) made their way into the priorities of the EU-LAC agenda. Still, Eastern enlargement did not play a major role in their prioritisation but the new conditions of the international context did.

Last, the main developments of EU foreign policy towards LAC were explained. Some positive and negative consequences of Eastern enlargement were pointed out, showing that the overall process has had a varied impact on EU-LAC relations: for instance, while it encouraged a substantial increase of trade between the two regions, it also caused some diversion of the EU's ODA away from the Latin American region.

We arrived to the conclusion that the main achievements during the period under study -namely, the AAs, FTAs and strategic partnerships concluded between the EU and several Latin American countries and subregional blocs- were the result of a continued and consistent implementation of EU foreign policy towards the region, and that Eastern enlargement had not fundamentally influenced their attainment.

All in all, our study showed that the main guidelines of EU foreign policy towards LAC were maintained after 2004, and that Eastern enlargement has had no major transforming role in either the formulation or implementation of EU foreign policy towards the Latin American region. ■

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