

EUROPEAN UNION IS SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN ITS RELATION WITH SEVERAL COUNTRIES FROM LATIN AMERICA

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European Union began to develop new bilateral relations and tries to become more global. It aims to find new partners that can provide both economic and political credibility. One of the global regions that captured Brussels attention is the western coast of Latin America.

The Andean countries, despite the regional difficulties, have registered and impressionable economic growth rate. Peru and Colombia represent the best examples of this part of the continent. One of the main factors of their success lies in the geographical position and their political regime. The fact that they have borders with Pacific Ocean and try to strengthen their democracies make of them a model for other countries and prospects of South America.

The opening to global Ocean offers them a large amount of economic possibilities that are related to a liberal and free market economy. Peru's and Colombia's annual economic growth rate is about 5-6% and it wasn't affected very negative by global recession. Their geographical strength made them to adhere to a regional organisation called Pacific Alliance. This organisation is composed of promising economies such as Chile or Mexico.

The biggest problem of these two countries, Peru and Colombia, are related to black market and drug trafficking. Because of their specific climacteric conditions, drug industry profit of it and tries to obtain illegal plant called coca. The Andean countries are a paradise for cocaine traffickers and consumers. But in contrast with other countries like Bolivia; Peru and Colombia prohibited coca cultivation and fight cocaine traffickers with the support of international community. One of the biggest countries that support Lima's and Bogota's government in their struggle with drug lords is USA. Washington provides them big amounts of money to reform their justice and to modernise police and army equipment.

Besides this, Colombia got another bigger problem. It is confronted with the longest war on then continent. Colombian government is fighting for more than 50 years with left-winged guerrillas. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC how they call themselves, tries to obtain control over all the country and to achieve Bolivar's utopia with a Marxist view, a united continent with a socialist government. This war caused more 200,000 human loses.

However, things started to went better. Colombia politicians and guerrillas leaders came to an agreement in 2012 to negotiate peace. Along this peace negotiations they agreed to continue hostilities until they reach peace. Cuba offered itself as mediator and Havana became the place where peace talks continued.

European Union observed the qualities of this countries and the fact that they are prone to be democratic and want to be a part of a more globalised world determined Brussels to negotiate with them on different issues.

One of the most important events regarding EU-Colombia, Peru relations refers to trade agreement. Trade barriers between the EU and Colombia were lifted on 1 August 2013 and a

comprehensive and far-reaching trade deal entered into application. The Agreement has opened up markets for both EU and Colombian exporters, bringing annual savings of more than €500m for companies. The improved, more stable conditions for trade and investment are expected to boost trade and investment between the EU and the Andean region. The deal was signed by the EU, Colombia and Peru in June 2012 and will now be applied between all three parties. The EU is Colombia's third largest source of imports. Imports from the EU are mostly machinery and transport equipment. At the same time, the EU is Colombia's the second biggest export market. EU demand for Colombian products is mostly in the agricultural, fuel and mining sectors. The trade agreement should allow Colombia to diversify its exports to the EU, not only for agriculture and fisheries, but also for Colombian industrial products. EU-Colombia trade has grown significantly in recent years and its volume reached more than €14 billion in 2012. The EU remains also one of the largest investors in Colombia.

Other event that occurred recently and has a great impact on Europe-Andean Region relations refers to visa-free access to the Schengen area. Peru and Colombia were exempted from visa in order to travel to European Union. On 29 October 2014, Commission adopted two reports concluding that Colombia and Peru fulfil the relevant criteria, with a view to the negotiation of visa waiver agreements between each of these countries and the EU. If everything is going well the Agreement can enter into force in the earliest, second half of 2015.

After all, these great progresses there was created a strong trust between these two world regions, especially between Brussels and Bogota. President Juan Manuel Santos began a five-day marathon tour of Europe on Monday, 3 November 2014, aiming to secure political and economic support for post-conflict Colombia in the event that a peace deal is reached with the FARC guerrillas.

Things started to get much better in Colombia and there is a hope that Peace Talks will provide a peace agreement as soon as possible. After 50 years of war, it is normal for a country to seek support and financial aid for post-conflict reconstruction. Colombia will need a financial boost that would help her to repair war consequences and to start building a new infrastructure to be more competitive on global market.

All Europeans leaders, including Herman Von Rompuy, Angela Merkel, Martin Schulz, Federica Mogherini and Francois Hollande expressed their support for a sooner peace agreement. They are glad that Bogota and FARC found a common point and are discussing in terms of peace. There are voices that EU will create a special fund that will comprise money for reconstruction. Jose Manuel Santos seeks to find about 45billions in the next ten years. The first aid came from German government-owned development bank, KfW. They gave about 100millions dollars. This is a good start for the future of Colombia and will motivate other member-states to donate or lend money.

HR/VP Federica Mogherini expressed her optimistic expectations about peace talks and reminded Colombia that it can have a more important role in world politics. Mogherini spoke about Framework Participation Agreement last August to facilitate Colombia's participation in EU crisis management operations, ensuring that it contributes to world peace and stability. In July of this year, the EU established the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine), a civilian mission Colombia could potentially join. The EU has maintained an anti-piracy mission, known as Operation Atalanta, off the coast of Somalia since 2008 and in which the Colombian Navy has been invited to participate.

Other purpose of the European support to Colombia reflects the consolidation of the state of justice and it is a demonstration that violence must stop and the settlement of the conflict should be exclusive pacifist. On other hand the declarations of Europeans leaders are a message to Cuban and Venezuelan governments that support the Marxists guerrillas. Europeans wanted to tell them that encouraging violence is unacceptable and the only solutions to conflicts are civilized negotiations.

The invitation of Westerns for Colombia to participate in crisis management operations doesn't represent an obligation for Andean nation to spend its budget on international affairs, it's rather an invitation to integrate as faster as possible in the large family of the international community where the rule of law reigns and states helps each other. For EU it is important that Colombia won't remain a security consumer and would develop own capabilities to protect itself and to provide assistance in case of aggression or other crisis situations.

Besides all this idealism, Colombia is important for European Union from economic point of view. Brussels tries to create a business partner in Latin America. It has already two partners, Peru and Colombia. European leaders are a bit disappointed that Bolivia and Ecuador couldn't become such states but they hope that its governments would rethink their strategies and options. Also, Colombia and Peru could constitute a balance for a more independent and bigger Brazil.