



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**San José Dialogue Ministerial Meeting
Prague, 14 May 2009
Joint Communiqué**

1. The Ministerial Meeting of the San José Dialogue between the European Union Troika and the Ministers for External Relations of the countries of Central America was held in Prague, Czech Republic, on 14 May 2009.
2. The meeting was co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Mr. Jan Kohout, as President of the EU Council, and Mr Valdrack Jaentschke Whitaker, as President Pro Tempore of the SICA. The European Commission was represented by Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy.
3. Following the completion of 25 years of the San José Dialogue and its significant contribution to the peace process in Central America, both Parties reaffirmed their commitment to a strong bilateral relationship between the EU and Central America and highlighted the importance of this dialogue, while recalling its spirit of solidarity and mutual respect.
4. Both Parties welcomed the successful electoral processes held in El Salvador on 16th January and 15th March 2009 and in Panama on the 3rd of May 2009.

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5. The European Union recognizes the significant progress achieved by Central America in its regional integration process and acknowledges the efforts made for the entry into force of the Framework Agreement for the establishment of a Central American Customs Union. The Parties confirmed their commitments to fully implement all undertakings, as recorded in the Vienna Summit Conclusions.
6. Both Parties had an in-depth discussion on the negotiations of an Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America, which should come to a rapid and mutually satisfactory conclusion. This process exemplifies the strength of the bi-regional relationship. Both Parties also expressed satisfaction at the positive outcome of the meeting held in Brussels in April 2009, where an ambitious roadmap was drawn up, including inter-sessional meetings to pave the way for a successful and expeditious conclusion of the negotiations. Both Parties reiterated their political will and commitment to continue engaging in negotiations with a view to achieve a balanced agreement on all outstanding issues. Both Parties agreed to set up a bi-regional working group to study the creation of a financial mechanism.
7. Both Parties had an exchange of views on a series of essential issues regarding the future Association Agreement. Taking into account the asymmetries between both regions, Ministers highlighted the importance of special and differentiated treatment, cooperation and technical assistance, as well as the region to region dimension based on three fundamental and complementary pillars. The Central American side expressed recognition for EU cooperation efforts to date.
8. In anticipation of the EU-LAC Summit, due to be held in Spain in spring 2010, both Parties declared their satisfaction with the current state of relations between Central America and the European Union, and underscored the need to see this reinforced through the firm desire to successfully conclude the negotiations for an Association Agreement in 2009 at the earliest convenience.
9. Both Parties had an exchange of views on security in the Central American region, and expressed high concern regarding the current situation. They agreed to cooperate to encourage urgent and sustainable measures, in particular in support of the 2007 Central American Regional Security Strategy, in order to tackle this preoccupying situation, as an issue that permeates all sectors of society.
10. Both Parties decided to continue close co-ordination within the framework of the WTO, particularly to reach an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive conclusion of the Doha Round, to reject protectionist measures and to boost trade flows.