

REGIONAL ROUND-TABLE: EHEA AND LATIN AMERICA- CARIBBEAN

THE FAP-ALCUE

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Forum for LAC & EU

Towards an Academic Permanent Forum (FAP)

- June 2012: Seminar in Paris at the “Institut des Amériques”.
- October 2012: Seminar in Lima at the “Colegio de Ingenieros del Perú”.
- Organisers and Sponsors: IdA, CELARE, EU-LAC Foundation, FUNGLODE, Lombardy Region, ECLAC (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean).

First Academic Summit, Santiago de Chile, 22-23 January 2013

- 7th Summit of Heads of State & Government, on 26-27 January 2013.
- The Academic Summit followed the model of other parallel Summits: NGOs, the Business Summit...
- The Academic Summit was a great success: 650 academics from 220 institutions in both regions participated. A book was published (492 pp.).

Preparing the Second Academic Summit (Brussels, June 2015)

- Two preparatory seminars:
 - Bucharest, 26-27 May 2014, at the Institute of Latin American Studies (ISLA) of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration. (Book published)
 - Guadalajara, Mexico, 25-26 November 2014, at the University of Guadalajara. (Book published)
- Another preparatory meeting, at the University of Alcalá, Madrid, 13-14 April 2015.

Second Academic Summit, Brussels, 8-9 June 2015

- Very well attended, with more than 500 participants.
- A book has been published (644 pp.).
- Official support was given to the Forum and the Academic Summit by authorities from both regions: EUROLAT, CEPAL (UN), UNESCO, CELAC, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, FLANDERS GOVERNMENT...

The Permanent Reflection Groups

- 1. *Higher Education*, coordinated by Francisco Aldecoa (Complutense University, Madrid) and Patricio Conejeros (University of Buenos Aires).
- 2. *Science, Technology and Innovation*, coordinated by Michiel Baud (CEDLA/University of Amsterdam) and Nielsen de Paula Pires (Vice-rector of the Federal University of Latin-American Integration, Brazil).

The Permanent Reflection Groups

- 3. *Links with Society*, coordinated by Celso Garrido (Metropolitan Autonomous University of Mexico) and Florence Pinot (ESCP Europe/CERALE, France).
- 4. *Links with Public Policies*, coordinated by Iordan Barbulescu (ISLA, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania), Christian Parker (University of Santiago de Chile) and Marco Moreno (Central University of Chile).

Last Year, and still to come...

- Preparatory Seminars in 2016:
 - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 21-22 June 2016.
 - Stockholm, Sweden, 6-7 October 2016.
- Still to come, in 2017:
 - Preparatory meeting in Salamanca, 5-6 May.
 - 3rd Academic Summit, in 2017, in El Salvador.

3 TOPICS FOR COLLABORATION

- accreditation of studies and institutions, which would require the establishment of either one Bi-Regional Agency for Quality Assurance, or of several regional agencies which would develop common criteria.
- mobility of students and academic and administrative staff, based on previous and successful experiences in both regions.
- harmonization of credit systems and degree levels (Bachelor/Master/PhD), like the process carried out in EHEA.

3 ACTIVITIES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- a joint proposal for a common path towards the accreditation of our HE systems in both regions, starting with a number of universities interested in implementing measures for harmonization, mutual recognition of studies, degrees, etc (the UDUAL experience in LAC).
- an institutional framework that would enable the previous proposal to succeed, based on a bi-regional agreement within the Strategic Association. This should be done at governmental level, in order to avoid difficulties deriving from the diversity of HEIs in both regions.
- establish a Linking Group, constituted by representatives from the two regions, which would do the follow-up of the activities mentioned.

CHALLENGES, BENEFITS & RISKS

- **CHALLENGES:** diversity and heterogeneity of HE systems within LAC (cf. the EHEA experience); the financial and legal difficulties (CELAC is not EU: no Commission, no Parliament, no Central Bank...).
- **BENEFITS:** advancement of knowledge and educational and cultural cooperation between both regions; mobility of students, academics, scientists, professionals in both regions; general benefits for the productive sector worldwide.
- **RISKS:** the movement—due to bureaucracy and the diversity of administrations— can dangerously turn into a collection of beautiful declarations without practical effects in the short or medium term; the establishment of accreditation agencies or linking groups should also move forward avoiding the risk of becoming merely bureaucratic tools.