

# **German and European aspects of a Latin America policy for the future – A social-democratic perspective**

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## **RESÜMEE**

Lateinamerika erfreute sich seit dem Ende des Kalten Krieges wenig politischer Aufmerksamkeit. Dies zeigt sich ebenso in der deutschen Außenpolitik: Deutsche Parlamentarier und Regierungsmitglieder verwendeten nur begrenzte Zeit auf lateinamerikanische Angelegenheiten in den vergangenen Jahren. Der Aufsatz bietet einige Einsichten in parlamentarische Verfahren mit Bezug zu Lateinamerika und bezüglich der Beschränkungen und Herausforderungen für den Einfluss des Parlaments. Der Artikel stellt Gebiete intensiverer künftiger Zusammenarbeit zwischen Europa und Lateinamerika vor, basierend auf einer Analyse deutscher und europäischer Interessen in der Region im Angesicht jüngerer politischer und gesellschaftlicher Entwicklungen in den Ländern des Subkontinents. Der Autor schlägt einen Politikansatz für die gesamte Region vor, welcher seine persönliche Erfahrung und Überzeugungen als sozialdemokratisches Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages widerspiegeln.

## **1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

Latin America has received little political attention since the end of the Cold War. This is also reflected in German foreign policy as German legislators and members of the German government have spent only limited time on Latin American issues over the past years. While international “hot spots” like Iran, Iraq, China and India dominate the agenda of the Bundestag or the meetings of the standing committee on foreign affairs,

1 The author wishes to thank Myriam Riedel and Florian Leuthner for their support in writing this article.

Latin America is usually only a fringe topic, reduced to short reports by an official from the foreign ministry and rarely among the speaking points of a state secretary. Of course, exceptions are made in cases of urgency as faced during the days of tension between Colombia and Ecuador after the capturing of FARC-leaders on Ecuadorian soil by the Colombian military.

The German political influence in Latin America is limited. But while relations with that region have become of lesser priority, Latin America has by no means sunk into political insignificance for either Germany or the European Union.<sup>2</sup> The Federal Foreign Office, for example, notes that Germany has closer historical and cultural links with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean than with any other region outside the European Union (EU) and North America.<sup>3</sup> This is politically reflected in the negotiations which have been underway since 1999 between the EU and the Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur) on an association agreement, while negotiations on an extended cooperation agreement with the Andean countries and Central America have been ongoing since 2003.<sup>4</sup>

Intensified cooperation between the two regions would seem all the more pressing in light of the fact that the USA has in recent years and decades neglected what it considers its own “backyard”. US President Nixon said as early as 1971: “Latin America doesn’t matter [...], people don’t give one damn about Latin America now.”<sup>5</sup> Little has changed in this attitude since that time. With regard to Latin America, US-politicians are pre-occupied with the communist leadership in Havana and Venezuela’s president, Hugo Chavez, whose behaviour towards Washington is generally thoroughly undiplomatic. Latin America is showing a growing desire to liberate itself from Washington, which offers new possibilities for emancipation and intensified cooperation between Latin America and the EU.

It is thus high time that Germany and the EU start reconsidering their engagement with and within Latin America. At this appropriate point in time, the two major German political parties, the SPD and CDU/CSU each organised conferences in 2008 with high-level speakers from Latin America and presented policy papers that contributed to one of the rare debates about Latin America on the parliamentary floor, on the occasion of the EU-Latin America summit in Lima in 2008 – a debate which came as a surprise even to parliamentarians themselves.

This paper comes to offer some insights into parliamentary procedures on policy-making with regard to Latin America and into the limitations and challenges to parliamentary

2 W. Grabendorff, *Lateinamerika. Viel Demokratie, wenig Staat und kaum sozialer Fortschritt*, Kompass 2020, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin, 2007, p. 3.

3 Auswärtiges Amt, *Lateinamerika in der deutschen Außenpolitik*, last visited date 11.03.2008, URL: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Aussenpolitik/RegionaleSchwerpunkte/Lateinamerika/Lateinamerikapolitik.html>.

4 Auswärtiges Amt, *Förderung der regionalen Integration*, last visited date 11.03.2008, URL: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Aussenpolitik/RegionaleSchwerpunkte/Lateinamerika/RegionaleIntegration.html>.

5 F. Fukuyama, *A Quiet Revolution*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, 86 (2007) 6, p. 177.

influence. It outlines fields of intensified future cooperation between Europe and Latin America based on an analysis of German and European interests in the region in the light of recent political and social developments in the countries of the subcontinent. The author proposes a future policy approach to the region as a whole, reflecting his personal experience and convictions as a social democratic member of the German Bundestag.

## 2. Recent political developments in contemporary Latin America

Latin America cannot, of course, be viewed as a homogenous political unit, since it is characterised by considerable differences. Wolf Grabendorff, in his analysis for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, calls the Panama Canal a “geopolitical border”. He categorises Central America and the Caribbean as part of the “North American community”, while he sees the emergence of a new regional subsystem in South America.<sup>6</sup> Other authors distinguish between the Mercosur countries on the one hand, which they regard as relatively safe and stable, and the countries stretching from the Caribbean via Central America to the Andes on the other hand, which they classify as being more unstable. The internal security of these states is compromised by criminal gangs, internal conflicts and protests on the part of indigenous sections of the population.<sup>7</sup> The issue of insecurity is becoming a main concern for Latin American voters with a major influence on the political discourse of many countries, as will be discussed in more detail below.

Another possible distinction can be made by positioning the governments on a right-left axis. There are liberal democracies such as Costa Rica, as well as countries which are governed by the so-called “New Left”. These include Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that they share the same basically critical attitude towards globalisation and liberalisation, it would however be wrong to regard the “New Left” as a homogenous group. The label hides a range of highly diverse and, in terms of political programmes, heterogeneous groupings with great differences in their long-term objectives, ideological orientation and their entrenchment in society. Parallel to this development, the traditional party landscapes are being progressively eroded and new political forces are emerging in the form of heterogeneous alliances of different groups. There is also a move away from institutional rules and a shift of democratic processes to areas outside the traditional political institutional framework.

Although Latin America may be frequently beset by crises, there are nevertheless a number of positive features which need to be emphasised. The region is to all intents and purposes free of weapons of mass destruction. It is the world’s first nuclear-weapons-free

6 W. Grabendorff, *Lateinamerika* (note 2), p. 3.

7 S. Haid/A. Ludwig/C. Rieck/M. Zarandi, *Sicherheitspolitische Veränderungen in Lateinamerika im Spannungsfeld der Interessen der EU, der USA und Chinas*, in: F. Kernic/W. Feichtinger (ed.), *Transatlantische Beziehungen im Wandel. Sicherheitspolitische Aspekte der Beziehungen zwischen der Europäischen Union und Lateinamerika*, Baden-Baden, 2006, p. 11.

8 D. Nolte, *Die neue Verortung Lateinamerikas in der internationalen Politik*, in: *GIGA Focus* (2007) 8, p. 4.

zone and has no biological or chemical weapons. Most countries have signed disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.<sup>9</sup> In 1994, Brazil officially renounced its ambitions to become a nuclear weapons state.<sup>10</sup> Latin America is also the only region in the world to have escaped attacks by international terrorists after 11 September 2001. While there is speculation that Islamist terror groups may be operating in the virgin forests in the triangle of land between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay which is difficult to police, there is no pertinent evidence to substantiate this.<sup>11</sup>

Since the settlement of the conflict in Central America, the subcontinent can generally be regarded as a zone of peace which shows little conflictivity. There have been no violent transnational conflicts since that time,<sup>12</sup> although the sabre-rattling between Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela in March 2008 caused concern for a short time until the Organisation of American States (OAS) stepped in to mediate.

During the 1980s, the remaining Latin American countries found their way back from military dictatorship to democracy by their own efforts. In Chile, Augusto Pinochet was defeated in a plebiscite; Argentina brought its dictators to trial; and in Guatemala the military governments, which had pursued a strategy almost akin to genocide on the indigenous population, were overthrown, to be replaced in a process of democratisation. In Nicaragua and El Salvador, also long torn by civil war, a peace process has successfully been implemented.

Compared with other regions of the developing or newly industrialising world, Latin America is by far the most democratic region.<sup>13</sup> This is astonishing given the region's undemocratic history over long periods of time as well as its economic and social problems. Surveys conducted by the *Latinobarómetro* in 2007 back up this fact impressively with a political approval rate of approximately 70 per cent.<sup>14</sup> Increased intergovernmental cooperation and, associated with this, the creation of intraregional institutions such as Mercosur have helped to stabilise democracy.<sup>15</sup> In recent years, this has gone hand in hand with a strengthening of human rights. Decentralisation, in addition, has given citizens far greater opportunities for participation.<sup>16</sup> It may still be too early to talk about good governance, but at least it is possible to detect better governance.<sup>17</sup>

9 Deutsche Botschaft von Buenos Aires, Deutsche Außenpolitik gegenüber Lateinamerika und der Karibik im europäischen Kontext, URL: [http://www.buenos-aires.diplo.de/Vertretung/buenosaires/de/03/download\\_aussenpol\\_la.property=Daten.pdf](http://www.buenos-aires.diplo.de/Vertretung/buenosaires/de/03/download_aussenpol_la.property=Daten.pdf), p. 2.

10 The use – and now the spread – of nuclear power for electricity generation is, however, at a new high at the moment. In addition President, Lula is planning the construction of a nuclear-powered submarine. cf. J. Oehrlein, Vom Luxus, Atommacht zu spielen, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 25.07.2007, p. 5.

11 S. Haid/A. Ludwig/C. Rieck, M., Zarandi, Sicherheitspolitische Veränderungen (note 7), p. 14.

12 H. Barrios, Partnerregion Lateinamerika. Zur Begründung der deutschen Interessen an einer fortgesetzten und intensiveren Kooperation, in: Lateinamerika-Analysen 15 (2006) 3, p. 87, 88.

13 J. Faust, Strategische Interessen deutscher Außenpolitik in der Zusammenarbeit mit Lateinamerika – Ein Kommentar, in: Lateinamerika Analysen, 15 (2006) 3, p. 99.

14 Corporación Latinobarómetro (Ed.), Latinobarómetro Report 2007, Online Data Bank (2007), S. 79-91. URL: <http://www.latinobarometro.org/>

15 H. Barrios, Partnerregion Lateinamerika (note 12), p. 87.

16 F. Fukuyama, A Quiet Revolution (note 5), p. 179.

17 H. Barrios, Partnerregion Lateinamerika (note 12), p. 90.

### 3. Social injustice as a threat to regional security

Despite many examples of progress in recent years, the majority of Latin America's governments continue to face huge challenges. In many cases, these threaten to overstrain the state's ability to take effective action.

If one looks for example at the national product of these countries, it might appear at first that there is no poverty problem. Yet the Gini coefficient, which is a more reliable benchmark for measuring poverty, reveals how unequally wealth is distributed. Nowhere in the world are assets so unequally distributed and the gap between poor and rich as wide as in Latin America.<sup>18</sup> According to 2006 figures, 48 per cent of income is in the hands of the richest 10 per cent of the population, with only 1.6 per cent in the hands of the poorest 10 per cent. Brazil, for example, has a per capita GDP of around 5,200 US dollars (2006), putting it far ahead of other emerging and developing countries. Its Gini coefficient for the same year, on the other hand, was 57.0, one of the worst figures by international comparison.<sup>19</sup> The comparable ratio in the industrialised countries is 10 to 29.1 and 10 to 2.5 per cent.<sup>20</sup> The poverty rate stands at 40 per cent.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to other developing regions in the world, Latin America has had success in containing poverty because there is no shortage of wealth as such. Yet there is a lack of funds and in many cases a lack of political will to fight for the redistribution which is urgently needed for both social and economic reasons. Latin America's economic elite shows no signs even today of being prepared to help bridge the deep social divide. One example of this reluctance is what is known as the "financial transaction tax" in Brazil, the *Contribuição Provisória sobre Movimentação Financeira*, introduced in 1994, which levies a tax of 0.38 per cent on all bank account transactions. This brought the exchequer 20 billion US dollars per year for social purposes (health, pensions and social assistance). The opposition and elites, however, voted in Brazil's Senate against extending the tax, thereby blocking it.<sup>22</sup>

A variety of Latin American governments have, however, made attempts to tackle poverty: In Venezuela and Ecuador, for example, the gas and oil industries have been nationalised and their profits diverted to financial and social assistance programmes for the poor and to the development of a rentier economy. These assistance programmes are an important feature of Chavez's socialism. These programmes or "Misiones" primarily benefit the poor, who represent the majority of the population. There are now 16 such programmes with different focuses throughout the country. The "Misión Barrio Aden-

18 Deutsche Botschaft Buenos Aires, Deutsche Außenpolitik (note 9), p. 3.

19 Ibidem, p. 20.

20 W. Hofmeister, Die Rückkehr des Populismus nach Lateinamerika und die Rolle Brasiliens, in: KAS-Auslandsinformationen (2006) 8, p. 25.

21 K. Bodemer, Lateinamerika und die Karibik. Gedanken zu ihrer Bedeutung für Deutschland und Europa, in: Lateinamerikaanalysen, 15 (2006) 3, p. 151.

22 R. Radermacher, Jahresbericht 2007, Gesellschafts- und wirtschaftspolitische Beratung im Cono Sur. Teilprojekt Brasilien, politische, wirtschaftlich und soziale Entwicklungen, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2007, p. 10 f.

tro” (Inside the Barrio), for example, is a project set up to establish health care in poor neighbourhoods. Initially, doctors and nurses from Cuba were sent into the barrios to work. It seems that there are now permanent medical centres in all the barrios. These improvements in health care have been made possible by the exchange of oil for medical personnel from Cuba.

There are also state-run food shops in Venezuela selling food which is presumably heavily subsidised, although the details are not made known to the public. Customers pay around 40 per cent less for food in these establishments than in a private shop. In the space of eighteen months, these state-run food shops have grown from nothing to become the country’s largest food chain. The programmes are supplemented by other measures including literacy campaigns and scholarship schemes for the universities.<sup>23</sup> Under this policy, the government has been able to reduce the number of households living in poverty from 53.1 per cent in 2004 to 36.5 per cent in 2006. The number of households living in extreme poverty has fallen from 23.5 to 13.4 per cent.<sup>24</sup> In 2006, however, poverty stabilised at the 2005 level despite high economic growth and the government’s social policy priorities.

At the same time in Brazil, President Lula launched a social programme called “Bolsa Familia” which has helped 11.1 million families or 45.9 million people, equivalent to roughly one quarter of the country’s entire population. At the moment they receive a monthly grant of 62 reais, equivalent to around 23 euro, which is about enough to feed a family for a month.<sup>25</sup> The Brazilian government has also raised minimum wages; pensions, linked to wages, have consequently also risen.

It should be noted, however, that while these programmes may cushion poverty, they do little to nothing to change structural inequalities in the countries in question. In Brazil, voters demonstrated their disappointment with the President for doing less to tackle the inequality in the country than they had expected. The landless movement, for example, turned away from him. Within his party, the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), the government has also come in for some sharp criticism for its policies.

In addition to the uneven distribution of wealth, there are also other qualitative shortcomings within the Latin American democracies. The justice and legal systems are often ineffective, resulting in many criminals going unpunished – always supposing they are prosecuted in the first place. Coupled with this problem are deficits in the area of internal security. Rising crime rates are a central issue in nearly all the countries of Latin America. Most of the countries in the region are prey in particular to organised crime and marauding gangs of youths. The murders of young women in Mexico and Guatemala have cre-

23 I. Niebel, Neopopulismus oder Emanzipation, in: APuZ. 51-52 (2006), p. 14-16.

24 Cited in: K.-P. Schütt, Jahresbericht 2007, Gesellschaft- und wirtschaftspolitische Beratung in den Andenländern, Teilprojekt Venezuela, Politische, wirtschaftliche und soziale Entwicklung in Venezuela, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2007, p. 12.

25 W. Hofmeister, Grenzen des Wachstums – und des Klientelismus, Focus Brasilien Länderbericht, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2007) 7, p. 5.

ated a particular *furor*. The clear-up rate for such cases is extremely low.<sup>26</sup> In addition, drug trade affecting many countries in the region is a serious problem. In Colombia, armed groups such as FARC and the ELN create conflicts which need to be tackled.<sup>27</sup> According to polls conducted by the *Latinobarómetro*, internal security is therefore an increasingly important issue for the population, ranking in second place after unemployment. The increase in the number of times the issue is mentioned is striking. While in 2003 only 8 per cent of the population regarded crime as their country's most important problem, this figure had risen to 17 per cent by 2007.<sup>28</sup>

The issue of guaranteeing internal security is therefore becoming increasingly important in domestic politics. When it comes to addressing all these problems by policy measures, the state does not always succeed in improving and guaranteeing the population's security or making them feel safe. Governments have frequently squandered the trust placed in them through inefficiency, corruption and involvement in criminal structures and by committing or covering up human rights violations.<sup>29</sup> It is difficult to believe that such excesses could exist without corrupt policemen, government officials, judges and functionaries in other state agencies.<sup>30</sup>

The complete loss of trust in state agencies and the police has already led in Brazil, for example, to the formation of vigilante groups. It coincides with a tendency to privatise security: Those who can afford to do so live barricaded against violence and crime. This trend creates considerable potential for conflict.<sup>31</sup> Non-state security actors are consequently playing an increasingly significant role which can no longer simply be taken away from them.<sup>32</sup> It has even led in some cases to instances of lynch justice. This is a worrying development of which growing militarisation is a part. Due to this, the Brazilian government has already needed to send police units under the control of the military to districts where the police had been severely attacked.<sup>33</sup>

Progressively, therefore the state is experiencing a loss of its monopoly on power.<sup>34</sup> This is met in some countries by reviving old concepts such as *mano dura* (Iron Fist). Attempts are being made in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras to crack down on crime through harsher criminal law and, associated with this, restrictions on civil rights.

All these factors – inadequate attempts to combat poverty, rising crime, the expansion of the drugs trade and the involvement of state forces in corruption – are ramping up social tensions in many Latin American countries<sup>35</sup> and jeopardising political stability in

26 T. Schmid, Die mordenden Machos, in: DIE ZEIT of 06.09.2007, URL: <http://images.zeit.de/text/2007/37/Guatemala>.

27 Ibidem, p. 86.

28 P. Peetz, Innere Sicherheit in Lateinamerika – Probleme und Perspektiven, in GIGA Focus (2007) 7, p. 2.

29 Ibid., p. 7.

30 J. Faust, Strategische Interessen (note 13), p. 100.

31 H. Barrios, Partnerregion Lateinamerika (note 12), p. 88.

32 Ibidem.

33 Peetz, Innere Sicherheit (note 28), p. 7.

34 Ibidem (note 27), p. 6-7.

35 H. Barrios, Partnerregion Lateinamerika (note 12), p. 90-91.

the region<sup>36</sup>, as citizens lose faith in state structures. This is also reflected in a huge fall in allegiance to parties amongst the electorate.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4. Defining shared political interests as a basis for future cooperation

While poverty, poorly functioning justice systems, crime, corruption and dwindling trust in democracy in Latin America may not have a direct effect on Germany or the EU, they might nevertheless have indirect ramifications for us. Some of the threats that the EU identifies in its security strategy (such as regional conflicts, state failure or organised crime) can be found on the subcontinent. Latin America may not be affected by Islamist terrorism, but organised crime and, in the case of Colombia, paramilitaries and guerrilla groups are challenging the state's monopoly on power. In the context of growing international interdependencies, these developments can have repercussions on European countries. Europe thus has an interest in tackling these issues early on.

This would also be in line with the wider definition of security which has become prevalent in Europe's foreign and defence policy that aims at overcoming the structural causes of conflict such as hunger, poverty and resource management.<sup>38</sup> In its final report on the summit of the heads of state and government of Europe and Latin America in Guadalajara in 2004, the European Commission therefore highlighted the importance of security-related issues in Latin America for the EU member states:

*These relations, which aim at contributing to peace, political stability and economic development, are of utmost importance for the European Union. Social and political stability in Latin America is vital for global peace and security. The European Union is contributing to the creation and consolidation of structural stability in Latin America through political dialogue, cooperation and economic relations. The European Union is interested in developing a political partnership with Latin America which promotes global governance and strengthening multilateralism.<sup>39</sup>*

The social and political challenges that Latin America faces and which are outlined above therefore give an idea of future fields of cooperation between the EU and Latin America.<sup>40</sup> However, they must be congruent with other interests in the region, which

36 S. Haid / A. Ludwig / C. Rieck / M. Zarandi, Sicherheitspolitische Veränderungen (note 7), p. 14.

37 H. Barrios, Partnerregion Lateinamerika (note 12), p. 86.

38 Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, Hamburger Programm. Grundsatzprogramm der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, beschlossen auf dem Hamburger Bundesparteitag der SPD am 28. Oktober 2007, p. 13.

39 European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Commission's objectives, in the framework of the relations between the European Union and Latin America, in view of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit of Heads of State and Government of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in Guadalajara (Mexico) on May 2004. COM (2004) 220 final, 2004, 2, URL: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/documents/fd/200/200410/20041012\\_04en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/fd/200/200410/20041012_04en.pdf).

40 W. Feichtinger, EU und Lateinamerika – Sicherheitspartner der Zukunft, in: F. Kernic, W. Feichtinger (Ed.), Transatlantische Beziehungen im Wandel. Sicherheitspolitische Aspekte der Beziehungen zwischen der Europäischen Union und Lateinamerika, Baden-Baden, 2006, S. 203.



will therefore be defined below. As European and Latin American interests cannot be expected to be naturally identical, they need to be confronted with each other first before they can be squared.

#### 4.1 The interests of Germany and the EU in Latin America

Germany's role in and its relationship with Latin America are different from those of Spain, Portugal or the USA. Unlike Spain or Portugal, Germany has never possessed colonies in the region. And unlike the USA, Germany has not intervened militarily in the region nor shown any imperial attitudes in the past 50 years, which means that there is little strain on relations.<sup>41</sup> This is one reason for the high regard Germany enjoys in Latin America.<sup>42</sup> However, relations between Germany and Latin America also go back a long way. Trade relations began as early as the sixteenth century and have remained important ever since. Generally, Germany's interests in Latin America might not always be identical with those of Spain or Portugal, but due to the European integration process there still is wide field of overlapping interests.

A central point of interest is the regional integration of the subcontinent.<sup>43</sup> It is in the interests of Germany and the EU to enhance Latin America's regional integration as a means of facilitating cooperation and trade with the region.<sup>44</sup> Despite all the current difficulties, the EU can serve as a successful model for Latin America. The European economic and social model, with its ideas of equal opportunities and solidarity, continues to be attractive to Latin America in the context of rectifying structural asymmetries.

Germany and the EU have an interest in cooperating more closely with Latin America in international politics. The countries of the region, like the EU, favour a multilateral approach to foreign and security policy. They could therefore be a valuable partner in strengthening multilateralism.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, Germany and the EU rely on Latin America's support in the struggle against international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The region is already a nuclear-weapons-free zone and also has many years' experience in international disarmament talks and in implementing inspection regimes.<sup>46</sup> Europe can benefit from this knowledge and should exploit it in current negotiations rather than leaving it unused. Likewise, cooperation with Latin America also needs to be expanded in the area of international crisis management.<sup>47</sup>

41 U. Diedrichs / A. A. Oeter, *Das neue Europa und Lateinamerika: Zwischen Abkehr und Aufbruch*, in: *Lateinamerika Analysen* 15 (2006) 3, p. 139.

42 H. Barrios, *Partnerregion Lateinamerika* (note 12), p. 91.

43 *Ibidem*.

44 *Auswärtiges Amt, Förderung der regionalen Integration* (note 4).

45 *Ibidem*, p. 41.

46 W. Feichtinger, *Sicherheitspartner der Zukunft* (note 40), S. 205.

47 *Ibidem*.

The region, with its many hectares of rainforest, also plays a very important role in environmental protection. Promoting sustainable development, particularly involving technology transfer, is important in this context.<sup>48</sup>

Europe also regards strengthening civil society structures in the countries of Latin America to be of central importance, coupled with development cooperation, as well as the promotion of democracy and upholding of human rights. Strengthening civil society is vital to the process of stabilising the Latin American democracies. Citizens need more and, above all, more efficient possibilities for becoming involved in politics. They need this not least to regain their lost trust in state institutions. A strong civil society is a basic prerequisite for creating a society built on the principle of solidarity which in turn offers the basis for more trade and investment.<sup>49</sup> Social cohesion can be strengthened by working purposefully to abolish social inequalities.

In addition to this, there is a vital European interest in establishing societal as well as internal security.<sup>50</sup> In its security strategy, the EU highlights the need to tackle dangers at their source. It is therefore hugely important to the countries of Europe for corruption, lawlessness, the drugs trade and organised crime to be contained and for weak state institutions to be supported on the road to good governance.

The European Commission would like to support primarily those countries which can and want to contribute to stability and prosperity in Latin America.<sup>51</sup> One cannot, however, leave the issue un-addressed of how to define relations with the states in the region and with the parties and movements of the New Left which want to tread a different and potentially problematic path. Ideas for this dilemma will be offered in part 5 of this paper.

## 4.2 Latin American interests in Europe

Once again, it must be stressed that the countries of the region do not form a homogeneous group. But when talking as a politician with parliamentarians in the region, it is possible to identify certain common trends. All the governments and countries in the region are anxious that Latin America should receive more attention from Germany and the EU. All countries are also interested in improving contacts on all levels. Against this background the trips made by Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel through Latin America are very much welcomed in Latin America. They prove that Germany has not forgotten the region.

48 Ibidem, p. 207.

49 Cf. F. Kernic/J. Callaghan, Die Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Lateinamerika: Transatlantische und globale Sicherheit im strategischen Dreieck von USA, EU und Lateinamerika, in: F. Kernic/W. Feichtinger (Ed.), Transatlantische Beziehungen im Wandel. Sicherheitspolitische Aspekte der Beziehungen zwischen der Europäischen Union und Lateinamerika, Baden-Baden, 2006, p. 42.

50 Ibidem.

51 Ibidem.

The region naturally has an interest in cooperating closely with the EU and benefiting from its experiences in the area of integration. However, Brazil exemplifies the internal divisions of the region. The growing importance of Brazil is shown, *inter alia*, by its involvement with India and Germany in the joint initiative to reform the United Nations. Brazil also performs an important bridging function as an intermediary between Germany/the EU and countries such as Venezuela. Brazil is striving for a strong partnership with the EU.<sup>52</sup> South America's giant, however, has yet to find its role: Sao Paulo wants to be seen as an advocate for the interests of the Third World, which has the unwanted consequence of distancing it from the industrialised countries. The country is also, on the other hand, seeking to move closer to the leading industrial nations. Thus Brazil's views and ideas are in clear contrast to those of some other Latin American countries which want to revive the outdated Third World orientation of the sixties and seventies of the 20th century.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time the member states of Mercosur are looking inwards and striving not only to establish a free trade area, but also to create a community of values similar to the EU. This is demonstrated, for example, by the inclusion in the Mercosur Treaty of a clause on democracy which is designed to prevent any member state from backsliding into autocracy.

### 4.3 Shared interests

So Latin America and Germany/the EU do share common interests. The fact that they hold congruent ideas in relation to the multilateral shaping of international relations is a good lever for intensified cooperation.

Mention has already been made of the joint initiative undertaken by Brazil and Germany together with Japan and South Africa to reform the United Nations (UN). Beyond this, there are other common goals which Germany/the EU and the Latin American countries are pursuing in international politics. Both sides want to see progress in strengthening multilateral organisations and effective structures of global governance.<sup>54</sup> Both sides share a will to work together to counter global security risks.

A comparison of the 2003 European Security Strategy and the 2001 declaration of the heads of state and government of the Organisation of American States (OAS) immediately reveals a number of significant similarities:

- Both organisations share the same view on the conditions needed to create security. These include in particular a basic democratic orientation, highlighting the importance of social justice, integral development, peace and the peaceful settlement of

52 U. Diedrichs/A. A. Oeter, *Das neue Europa* (note 41), p. 146.

53 D. Nolte, *Die neue Verortung Lateinamerikas* (note 8), p. 3.

54 L. Whitehead/M. A. Sáez/K. Bodmer/O. Dabène/J. Prats, "Regierbarkeit für Entwicklung". *Die EU und Lateinamerika – ein Manifest zum Gipfeltreffen in Wien*, in: GIGA Focus (2006) 5, p. 1.

conflicts, respect for human rights, solidarity and cooperation and respect for national sovereignty;

- Both seek security cooperation on the basis of particular values such as democracy, justice and respect for international law. Both the OAS and the EU believe that the UN is of crucial importance in this respect;
- Both partners advocate a multilateralist approach to settling international conflicts and believe that crises and conflicts should wherever possible be pre-empted by comprehensive prevention.<sup>55</sup>

Latin America and Germany/the EU in addition share a series of political and cultural values.<sup>56</sup> As already mentioned most Latin American countries have signed non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and argue for transparency and also a decrease in arms spending. In terms of non-proliferation and disarmament, the EU and Latin America share the same goals. Both regions are committed to fighting international terrorism.<sup>57</sup> Both the EU and Latin America are calling for better environmental protection. They believe that environmentally compatible and sustainable development can actually increase rather than hamper the competitiveness of countries.<sup>58</sup>

Regional integration is a further shared interest which, while it does not have a direct bearing on international relations, is important “only” for respective intra-regional relations. In order to achieve a more influential position in international politics, the Latin American countries, like the EU, want to cooperate more closely with each other politically and economically.<sup>59</sup> Only Mercosur, however, can be regarded as an effective association of states in the region. The other intraregional associations such as the Central American Common Market (CACM) and the Central American Integration System (MCCA/SICA) or the Andean Community (CAN) are weak and do not appear to have a viable future.

## 5. Fields of future cooperation – a social democrat’s view

Cooperation with Latin American states and political parties in the region has a long tradition in Germany. The nature and focus points of this cooperation must be seen not only in the light of geographic and economic factors; they can only be understood when taking party-political ideologies and agendas into consideration. The long-standing relationship between German social democracy and Latin America is one of solidarity with the numerous socialist movements and parties that came to power after World War II.

55 F. Kernic/J. Callaghan, Die Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Lateinamerika (note 49), p. 46.

56 A. Feldmann, The Interest of the European Union in Security Issues in Latin America in the 21st Century, in: F. Kernic/W. Feichtinger (Ed.), *Transatlantische Beziehungen im Wandel. Sicherheitspolitische Aspekte der Beziehungen zwischen der Europäischen Union und Lateinamerika*, Baden-Baden, 2006, p. 64.

57 Ibidem.

58 K. Bodemer, Lateinamerika und die Karibik (note 21), p. 171.

59 F. Kernic/J. Callaghan, Die Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Lateinamerika (note 49), p. 37.

Many of these parties joined the global umbrella organisation “Socialist International” which the German SPD has been a leading member of. Under the long and influential SI-presidency of Willy Brandt who played a key role in promoting the idea of North-South-Cooperation, the SPD as a party and SPD politicians individually developed strong and trustful relations with political actors from Latin America. These relations were maintained even in times of crisis or of military dictatorship from which many countries of the region suffered. During those years, the network of world-wide offices of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation was an instrumental backbone for supporting befriended movements and parties in Latin America. Likewise, organisations such as the Young Socialists (Jusos) and the Socialist Youth / The Falcons had their share in developing personal relations, offering training as well as political and mental support to their partners. Many of today’s active social democratic politicians derive their interest in international politics generally and in Latin America specifically from their personal experience with that solidarity movement and from youth exchanges with the region.

However, contemporary cooperation with Latin America is a specific challenge for social democrats because the party-political landscape has altered dramatically in recent years. Many of the traditional social democratic parties and member parties of the Socialist International are weakened or have been swept from the stage completely, so links have become looser.<sup>60</sup> New parties and movements such as the PT in Brazil or Mas (*Movimiento al Socialismo*) in Bolivia have been created. Nevertheless, supporting and advising parties and movements of both the New and the Old Left, i.e. the “progressive parties”, is and remains a key element of the work of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Latin America in relation to promoting democracy through social democracy.

One needs to bear in mind, however, that parliamentary influence in strengthening this cooperation is limited because the leading role in the field of international politics falls to the government and its respective ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economics etc. But instead of complaining about limitations on one’s influence or even blocking initiatives, both the executive and the legislative power should become more aware of the advantages that can go along with this division of powers and competences. While ministries usually follow and implement strict medium and long-term agendas, parliamentarians are not bound by a hierarchical bureaucracy. They can act and react individually and can often react faster to developments, and they can rely on individual relations that have been developed over years and decades of personal interaction with actors from the region. They can lobby within their parliamentary groups to table at short notice issues on the agenda of caucus groups or committees which they deem relevant and thereby turn them into an issue of public debate. This, however, also shows the volatility of parliamentary power and influence because much of it comes and goes with the enthusiasm and personal engagement of individual parliamentarians.

60 D. Wollrad, *Pink Tide – Was passiert in Lateinamerika*, Internes Thesenpapier der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin 2006, S. 5.

Due to the clearly defined competences of committees which often go along with very different perspectives on one and the same policy matter, even the parliamentary approach to cooperation with Latin America faces limitations and challenges. One example of this is reflected in the process that the policy-papers on Latin America introduced by the Grand Coalition of SPD and CDU/CSU in 2008 mentioned above went through. This began as an initiative towards an all-encompassing strategy towards Latin America, and it was not surprising to discover that social democrats and conservatives took very different positions regarding new political and popular movements in Latin America. While not necessarily agreeing with measures taken by the governments of Bolivia or Venezuela, for example, SPD representatives favoured a certain openness and channels of communication – something which was not seen in a positive light by the coalition partners. Likewise, the need to regulate globalisation for the common good was not given the same priority among members of the CDU/CSU as within the ranks of the SPD representatives. Even more surprising, however, was a parallel development which took place regardless of political affiliations between the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the one hand and the Committees on Economic Cooperation and Development on the other hand. Whereas the Committee on Foreign Affairs emphasised the future of bilateral relations and of fields of cooperation, the latter – due to the nature of the development policy field – focussed on demands from the European governments and institutions. Finally, this resulted in two separate resolutions in parliament by the Grand Coalition: one by the Committee on Foreign Affairs and one by the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development.<sup>61</sup> This is a particular demonstration of the particular difficulties in streamlining policy approaches with different addressees in our political system. Having said that, it is of course absolutely necessary for both the executive and the legislative branch to make an effort to combine those different policy angles if future cooperation with Latin America is to become sustainable and effective.

Turning now to the concrete fields of future cooperation with Latin America, the following should be noted. Generally, bilateral cooperation with individual countries, but also with the region as a whole, is potentially highly efficient and improves perceptions and mutual understanding. However, because of Brazil's international standing and its above-mentioned bridging function, strategic cooperation with the country should be a high priority. It would be desirable to make efforts to enable Brazil to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Together we can use our potential to make globalisation fairer and more social and to resolve global problems. The regions also have a shared responsibility at international level, particularly in the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

61 Deutscher Bundestag: „Eine starke Partnerschaft – Europa und Lateinamerika/Karibik“, Antrag der Fraktionen CDU/CSU und SPD vom 7.5.2008, Drucksache 16/9072; cf. Deutscher Bundestag: „Die entwicklungspolitische Zusammenarbeit Deutschlands im Rahmen der strategischen Partnerschaft der Europäischen Union mit den Staaten Lateinamerikas und der Karibik zielgerichtet stärken“, Antrag der Fraktionen CDU/CSU und SPD vom 7.5.2008, Drucksache 16/9073.

Beyond that, there are four areas which cooperation between the EU and Latin America should focus on, which will be outlined below.

### 5.1 Security policy cooperation

Going hand in hand with the problem of social inequality, the security situation combined with the drugs trade is among the region's most pressing problems. Some governments have tried – as mentioned above – to introduce tougher penalties to combat the problem, but their efforts are generally regarded as counterproductive.<sup>62</sup> Concepts such as *mesas de seguridad* in Honduras, *frentes de seguridad and pactos de convivencia y seguridad* in Colombia or *consejos comunales* in Venezuela would appear to hold more promise. All these are schemes in which citizens, i.e. civil society, work together with the police and/or exercise oversight over them. Particularly against the historical background of Latin America, I believe that this type of cooperation is particularly worth supporting. Governments which have not introduced similar measures to build confidence in the police and justice system should be encouraged to follow the lead taken by their neighbours.

It is vital, however, for countries in the region to act decisively against the causes of crime, taking proactive steps to tackle a lack of prospects, poverty and social inequality. Germany and the EU can provide support here through development cooperation, providing cooperation is understood to be between equals.

Fighting poverty is therefore central to the security policy partnership. If successes are not achieved soon and if the upper echelons in Latin America are not prepared to make an appropriate financial contribution, the entire region risks sliding into a vicious circle of instability. Unless progress is made in mitigating the huge social discrepancies in the region, it will be extremely difficult to effectively stabilise Latin America socially and politically.<sup>63</sup>

In the context of traditional commonalities in security policy, cooperation with respect to non-proliferation is an obvious approach. Both Latin America and Europe regard proliferation as a threat to security and are calling strongly for disarmament and arms control. For the same reasons we should cooperate with Latin America in the fight against international terrorism.

In the future, more reliance should be placed in the context of tackling international crises on cooperation between Germany and the EU on the one side and Latin America on the other. Both share common values and have been acting in the framework of international bodies and organisations as has been shown above.

62 P. Peetz, Innere Sicherheit in Lateinamerika – Probleme und Perspektiven (note 28), p. 5.

63 S. Haid/A. Ludwig/C. Rieck/M. Zarandi, Sicherheitspolitische Veränderungen (note 7), p. 25.

## 5.2 Promoting democracy, the rule of law and sustainable development

Promoting democracy and the rule of law is very closely linked to the security issue. The EU is conducting a political dialogue with Latin America in this respect on three levels: regional, sub-regional and with individual countries. It is also talking to representatives of civil society in order to strengthen the latter, but is engaging equally with state actors in order to encourage them to cooperate more closely with civil society.<sup>64</sup>

Abolishing extreme social inequalities is pivotal, as has already been said, to bringing about effective democratisation and state modernisation.<sup>65</sup> In order to achieve this goal, the EU must review and broaden its concept of solidarity with respect to Latin America. Solidarity includes not only the upholding of human rights and democracy but also the formulation of fair trade strategies.

It is inadequate for the European side to insist on adherence to labour and environmental standards while at the same time refusing to liberalise areas of trade such as agriculture which are vital to creating prosperity in many Latin American countries.<sup>66</sup> Without a fair world trade system it will be virtually impossible to bring about a sustainable development in which *all* the citizens of Latin America can be involved. This involvement in turn makes democratic stabilisation and good governance significantly more probable.<sup>67</sup>

We also need to review our definition of development to make it more than simply a matter of raising per capita income. The disadvantaged population groups and in particular the indigenous peoples must be encouraged to assert their interests. Many of them have organised themselves, in order to define and ultimately also to articulate their interests. This is a necessary process even if it leads to a certain degree of social conflict in Latin America. If it does not happen, the region runs the risk of doing lasting harm to its social capital.<sup>68</sup> In contrast to the USA, the efforts made by the EU and Germany to promote democracy concentrate on supporting civil society. The advantage of this approach is that security consequently comes to be regarded as a societal construction.<sup>69</sup>

Jörg Faust recommends that Germany and Europe should promote democracies and suggests that the first step should be to forge relations with democratic countries in the region.<sup>70</sup> I firmly believe this to be the wrong and too narrow an approach. It is wrong for those who wish to promote democracy to focus one-sidedly on those countries which are regarded as models in this area. Germany should negotiate with all Latin American countries instead of making a distinction between “good democrats” and “bad populists”. The only way of establishing trust is through meeting and talking with people on equal terms. Communication starts a learning process on both sides, opening the way to

64 F. Kernic/Callaghan, *Die Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Lateinamerika* (note 49), p. 41.

65 J. Faust, *Strategische Interessen* (note 13), p. 100.

66 L. Whitehead/M. A. Sáez/K. Bodmer/O. Dabène/J. Prats, *Regierbarkeit für Entwicklung* (note 54), p. 5-6.

67 *Ibidem*, p. 6.

68 *Ibidem*, p. 7.

69 F. Kernic/J. Callaghan, *Die Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Lateinamerika* (note 39), p. 43-44.

70 S. Haid/A. Ludwig/C. Rieck/M. Zarandi, *Sicherheitspolitische Veränderungen* (note 7), p. 25.



rapprochement and also change. If we treat states such as Venezuela only with disdain, they are likely to seal themselves off and, if in doubt, turn more decisively to autocratic structures.

Offering talks, on the other hand, does not mean paying court to populist trends or accepting them unchallenged. It is essential always to remember that these governments were democratically elected and legitimised. If we want to prevent a growing polarisation in Latin America, we must develop an active diplomacy with respect to those countries which are currently ruled by populist governments.

There is a need, therefore, to integrate countries such as Venezuela and back Brazil's strategy to increase integration. If we want to understand what is happening in Venezuela at this time, we must also, however, seek dialogue with Chavez's party *Movimiento Quinta República* (MVR) in order to try to work with democratic forces within the MVR to develop alternatives to Chavez's policy. The "no" vote to constitutional reforms indicates there may be scope here.<sup>71</sup>

A strong, firmly rooted and self-confident democracy always also includes the protection of minorities. We must consequently also exert pressure to strengthen the rights of indigenous sections of the population in Latin America. Although the indigenous peoples represent the majority of inhabitants in some countries in the region, they have long been oppressed and disadvantaged by the ruling minority. While a number of countries may have taken steps to address this problem, it is not possible to talk of across-the-board improvements, even following the election of Evo Morales in Bolivia as the region's first indigenous president.<sup>72</sup>

### 5.3 Environmental protection

The consequences of climate change are affecting the entire globe. It is essential therefore for the international community to work together to tackle the problems. Latin America with its vast areas of rainforest (23 per cent of the world's trees and 46 per cent of the world's tropical rainforests are located in the region)<sup>73</sup> has a prominent role to play here. Logging has a negative effect not only on local populations but on the whole world. There is a need to share energy-saving technologies in order to reconcile increasing growth on the subcontinent and sustainable development.<sup>74</sup> There is huge potential for scientific and economic cooperation in this area, particularly for Germany which leads the world in technologies for regenerative energy use.

Effective environmental protection will be almost impossible to achieve without preserving biodiversity in Latin America and implementing climate protection there. The re-

71 C. Zilla, „No“ zur Verfassungsreform in Venezuela, in: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. Deutsche Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit (ed.): SWP-Aktuell 67 (2007), p. 1-4.

72 J. Ströbele-Gregor, Indigene Emanzipationsbewegungen in Lateinamerika, in: APuZ. 51-52 (2006). p. 5-11.

73 W. Feichtinger, EU und Lateinamerika – Sicherheitspartner der Zukunft (note 36), p. 207.

74 Ibidem.

gion's support for the agreement on biological diversity and the Kyoto Protocol is therefore to be welcomed.<sup>75</sup> The measures, initiatives and draft regulations proposed within the post-Kyoto process must be agreed with Latin America at an early stage. Numerous agreements on fundamental positions emerged from the Climate Conference in Bali. These include in particular questions of energy consumption, the expansion of renewable energies as well as joint efforts to preserve air and water quality and forests. The fact that the countries of Latin America are already signatories to central UN conventions on environmental protection further advances future cooperation in this field.

#### 5.4 Regional integration

Latin America has made impressive efforts to strengthen regional cooperation; this is especially true for Mercosur. These efforts deserve our support, particularly since they open up new possibilities of cooperation between Germany, the EU and Latin America. We Europeans should use the experience and knowledge we have gained in this respect to drive forward the conclusion of bi-regional agreements between Mercosur and the EU.<sup>76</sup> The experience with European integration is widely perceived as one that gives us the necessary expertise to take on a leading role in the promotion of sub-regional and regional integration approaches. In terms of Latin America there is particular scope to promote institutionalised cooperation at sub-regional level.<sup>77</sup>

One good way of offering incentives for greater cooperation and integration would be to negotiate preferentially with relevant groups of countries.<sup>78</sup> Promoting regional parliaments is of subsidiary importance at the present time since even national parliaments are relatively insignificant in the political decision-making process in Latin America.

### 6. Conclusion

There are good reasons to foster intensive contacts with all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Only those who talk to each other can hope to be listened to and to exert a positive influence on each other. Only if the channels of communication are open, can Germany and the EU lobby for democracy, the rule of law and the upholding of human rights in the countries in question. We must take seriously the desire of our Latin American partners to have other points of contact in Europe in addition to Spain. Germany is well placed to be one of these contact points since we enjoy a high degree of trust in Latin America.

75 Auswärtiges Amt, Leitlinien für die deutsche Außenpolitik gegenüber Lateinamerika und der Karibik, last cited 11.03.2008, URL: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Aussenpolitik/RegionaleSchwerpunkte/Lateinamerika/Leitlinien.html>.

76 H. Barrios, Partnerregion Lateinamerika (note 12), p. 92.

77 J. Faust, Strategische Interessen (note 13), p. 103.

78 H. Barrios, Partnerregion Lateinamerika (note 12), p. 92.

The subcontinent should in future be moved further up the political agenda in the Federal Republic. It is important to bear in mind in this context that China and India are two attractive trading partners on the other side of the Pacific who do not, for example, insist on adherence to social standards. We Europeans must counter this trend with our economic and social model promoting the idea of equal opportunity and solidarity. The model of European unification continues to be attractive to the region and offers a valuable point of reference for approaches to tackling structural asymmetries in Latin America. There is scope for cooperation between Germany, the EU and Latin America in matters of environmental protection and in the three areas of security, power structures and prosperity, whereby all are contingent on each other. Security is difficult to achieve without raising the level of prosperity. Democracy as a form of governance cannot be stabilised unless the security situation is improved. Further democratisation and the establishment of the rule of law are vital to improving the security situation and combating structural inequalities in Latin America. Cooperation on a partnership basis is crucial in all these areas.

Germany can take on a leading role in consolidating democracy, reforming the constitutional state and strengthening civil society. We can also provide assistance to Latin America in the area of social welfare. In the area of security there is scope for broad cooperation between the EU and Latin America. It is important in the process to work on the basis of an expanded concept of security in which combating terrorism and the drugs trade, as well as environmental and resource protection, play an important role alongside crisis resolution and conflict prevention. International conflicts and environmental issues are risks which affect all countries in a globalised world.

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