

## Americas

The digital economy & society is now firmly part of the agenda for the EU's relations with the Americas.



### USA

The European Commission has regular ICT policy dialogue with the US Department of State, and the Directorate has had an ICT Counsellor stationed at the EU Delegation in Washington D.C. since 2010.

In June 2021, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and President of the United States Joe Biden launched the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC). The TTC is a forum for both sides to coordinate approaches to key global trade, economic, and technology issues and to deepen transatlantic trade and economic relations based on shared democratic values.

Cooperation was further strengthened by the opening of an EU office in San Francisco in September 2022, to further the EU's digital diplomacy in the US. The office will work under the authority of the EU Delegation in Washington, D.C., in close coordination with Brussels and in partnership with EU Member States consulates in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### Latin America

The EU is committed to making digital cooperation central to its relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean, assisting the economies of both regions to reap the benefits of new technologies while promoting innovation and digitalisation.

Areas of cooperation include connectivity through the BELLA transatlantic fibre-optic cable, high-performance computing, research & innovation, ICT standards, and regulatory cooperation in

telecommunications, digital media, online platforms, eCommerce and cybersecurity.

A number of projects on digital cooperation with Latin America were launched under the Partnership Instrument with key partners in the region. These projects include:

- cooperation on personal data protection while promoting free flow of data across international borders (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay with bilateral activities and regional activities).
- cooperation in the field of standardisation and interoperability of ICT services across international borders (Brazil)
- international efforts to build trust and security in cyberspace (Brazil)

The meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) adopted a political declaration in July 2018, which includes the digital economy as one of the main priority areas for cooperation.

Four strategic areas of cooperation at regional level were explored during the first EU-LAC digital cooperation workshop in July 2018. The following ideas for future cooperation were identified:

1. telecoms regulation
2. media
3. cybersecurity
4. eCommerce and online platforms

A second workshop took place in March 2019 to elaborate specific action-oriented roadmaps in the aforementioned areas.

Regutel, the Forum of Latin America telecoms Regulators, works with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) to deepen understanding of regulatory issues.

The Commission also participates in the eLAC Ministerial Conferences organised by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), whose long-term vision is to promote ICT as a tool for economic development and social inclusion.

A contract to launch a submarine fibre-optic cable linking Lisbon in Portugal to Fortaleza in Brazil was signed in August 2018. This would connect RedCLARA, the South American research & education network and GEANT, the European research & education network. The cable is expected to be operational in 2021.

A final report on digital cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean was published in March 2019.

## **BELLA: A new digital data highway between Europe and Latin America**

The BELLA (Building the Europe link to Latin America) project will provide ultra-high speed connectivity through submarine and terrestrial cable to connect Latin America with Europe.

The cable will boost business, scientific and cultural exchanges between the two continents and within Latin America. This paves the way to cooperation in high-performance computing and Earth observation data.

BELLA includes 11 European and Latin American research and education networks from Germany, Portugal, Italy, Spain, France, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile and Brazil and is led by RedCLARA, the South

American research & education network, and GEANT, the pan-European research and education network.

A contract was signed in August 2018 by a group of public stakeholders to form the BELLA consortium and ELLALINK, a private consortium to deploy a submarine fibre-optic cable linking Europe and Brazil. The BELLA consortium was established to take full advantage of the future high-capacity link for the benefit of research and education networks.

The EU is the main funder of the consortium, with around €26.5 million invested from the Horizon 2020 programme, Copernicus and the Development Cooperation Instrument.

The EllaLink transatlantic cable connecting the European and South American continents was inaugurated during the Digital Assembly 2021.

Linking Fortaleza in Brazil with Sines in Portugal, this digital data highway will enable the first direct, high-capacity data connection between the two continents to support research and education data exchange.

## **Brazil**

The EU and Brazil established a strategic partnership in 2007 where Science & Technology is one of the most active areas. The bilateral agreement was renewed for another five years in 2017.

Ongoing cooperation focuses on cloud computing, high-performance computing and experimental platforms. Further topics to be explored include 5G, cloud and the Internet of Things.

Brazil is a key Latin American partner under the ICT theme Horizon 2020, with several coordinated calls leading to results with high social and industrial impact. Brazil also plays a prominent role in the context of the ongoing trade negotiations with MERCOSUR.

As part of this cooperation framework, a dedicated dialogue takes place yearly between DG CONNECT and Brazil.

Read the 11th EU-Brazil Digital Economy Dialogue — Joint statement

## **Mexico**

Domestically, Mexico has undergone a radical transformation of its telecoms and audio-visual markets following a reform in 2014. This brought the country to a much closer level playing field with the EU digital market. Mexico's reform has started the deregulation of the market to introduce competition.

Regionally, Mexico is very active together with Colombia in pushing the 'Mercado Digital Regional' — an initiative within the CELAC members and the so-called 'eLAC 2020' process (Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean).

The EU and Mexico reached an 'agreement in principle' in April 2018 on the trade part of a modernised EU-Mexico Global Agreement, which will replace a previous agreement between the EU and Mexico from 2000. Besides the revised Free Trade Agreement, the agreement contains an updated political pillar for cooperation on many sectors, including digital economy.

The EU and Mexico have successfully organised two dialogues on digital economy, in Brussels in 2017

and in Mexico City in 2019. Both dialogues reflected on shared values and approaches to common challenges.

## Canada

Following the first Digital Dialogue between the EU and Canada on 27-28 May 2019 in Ottawa, strong ICT and artificial intelligence (AI) conclusions were a highlight of the subsequent EU-Canada Summit held in July 2019.

Points relevant to ICT and AI in the Canada-EU Summit Joint Declaration of July 17-18 in Montreal included:

- no.19: responding to technological change in a manner that upholds democracy, respects human rights and advances our shared values;
- no.20: deepen our cooperation on artificial intelligence.

Follow-ups with the Canadian ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) and Canadian Heritage on common areas of interest has increased. Progress on artificial intelligence, quantum and public sector innovation has been made, and various joint actions have been undertaken.

The EU and Canada signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement, and its implementation began with the first Joint Ministerial Committee in December 2017. The committee adopted a joint statement and agreed to strengthen EU-Canada bilateral relationship, to enhance foreign policy coordination and to work closer together to address global challenges and opportunities.

A Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was also adopted by the Council and signed at the EU-Canada Summit on 30 October 2016. Provisional application of CETA started on 21 September 2017.

The Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between Canada and the European Union has been in place since 1996 and is not limited in time. The responsibility for the scientific and technical cooperation dialogue lies with the EU-Canada Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee, which meets on a regular basis to review progress and provides new directions for cooperation in the fields of science and technology.

Follow the latest progress and learn more about getting involved.



Follow the Commission's work on tech and digital @DigitalEU

## Latest News

DIGIBYTE | 05 September 2022

Solidarity with Ukraine: Digital Europe Programme open to Ukraine to access calls for funding

This week, the European Commission signed an agreement to associate Ukraine to the Digital Europe Programme. From now on, Ukrainian businesses, organisations, and public administrations will be able to access the calls from the Digital Europe Programme, which has an overall budget of €7.5 billion for the 2021-2027

period.

PRESS RELEASE | 05 September 2022

EU opens new office in San Francisco to reinforce its digital diplomacy

The European Union has opened its new office in San Francisco, California, a global centre for digital technology and innovation. The office will reinforce the EU's cooperation with the United States on digital diplomacy and strengthen the EU's capacity to reach out to key public and private stakeholders, including policy makers, the business community, and civil society in the digital technology sector.

PRESS RELEASE | 07 July 2022

Commission calls on telecom operators to continue help refugees stay connected

It is essential that Ukrainians have access to affordable connectivity to stay in touch with their families and friends.

PRESS RELEASE | 05 July 2022

Commission welcomes European Parliament's adoption of Digital Services Package

The Digital Services Package sets out a first comprehensive rulebook for the online platforms that we all depend on in our daily lives.

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## **Related Content**

### **Big Picture**

Foreign policy

As more countries are inspired by the European digital model, European companies have more opportunities to do business, creating more jobs for citizens.

### **Dig deeper**

Digital in the EU-US Trade and Technology Council

The EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC) is a transatlantic forum fostering cooperation on trade- and technology-related issues, based on shared democratic values.

## **See Also**

EU Neighbours

The European Commission works closely with third countries geographically close to the European Union.

Africa

The digital transformation offers Africa tremendous opportunities.

The Global Internet Policy Observatory (GIPO)

The Global Internet Policy Observatory (GIPO) is an online platform aimed at making it easier to understand the influence and the development of the Internet.

Regional and bilateral relations

Regional and bilateral relations focus on market access for European companies and on promoting a sound and transparent regulatory global environment.

Global Internet and telecommunications

The European Commission works at international level with other global players to shape the developments of the Internet and the telecommunications world.

International organisations and multilateral fora

The EU seeks to advance the European approach to the digital transformation through agreements reached with international organisations and fora.

Asia-Pacific

Asia is a vibrant economic region of the world, with dynamic markets and a strong innovation capacity.