

The EU-Latin America submarine cable: Boosting the connection between our continents

The European Commission is supporting a new submarine fibre-optic cable between Europe and Latin America, linking Lisbon (Portugal) with Fortaleza (Brazil). This initiative will bring our continents closer and boost education, research and innovation as well as business exchanges. It will reduce connection costs and provide many more households, organisations and companies with a high-speed Internet connection. This cable will empower our continents to benefit fully from the opportunities offered by new technologies. Works should start this year and the cable should be operational at the end of 2017.

It was one of the topics discussed at the EU High level Summit with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

EU investment will aim at:

- ensuring a very **high-capacity bandwidth for research and education**. This will reinforce the exchanges between research and education networks on our continents. For example, it will make it easier for researchers in Latin America to access the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva (Switzerland), and for researchers in Europe to access the Astronomical and Cosmic Ray Observatories in the Atacama Desert (northern Chile).
- developing the **broadband infrastructure in Latin America** to make the most out of the new transatlantic connection. Broadband access is essential for economic and social development: estimates show that 10% increase in broadband penetration brings around 1.4% increase in terms of growth.

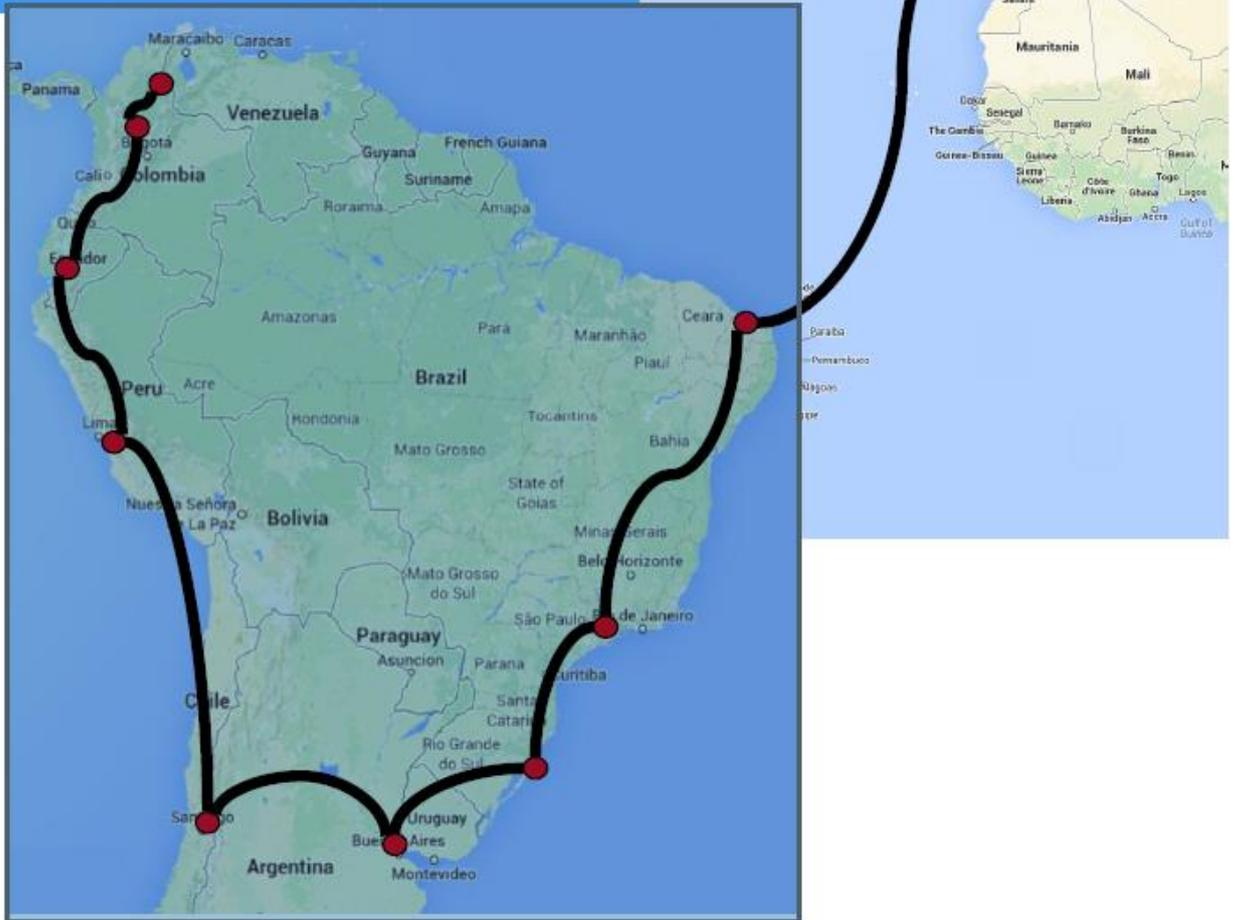
Today Latin America relies on undersea cables going to the U.S. to carry almost all (85-90%) of its communications to Europe. The existing cable between Latin America and Europe is outdated and only used for voice transmission.

Private and public actors hand in hand

The cable between Europe and Latin America will be built by a private consortium (led by Brazilian telecom provider Telebras and Spanish cable operator Islalink).

The EU and Latin American research and education networks (led by RedCLARA in cooperation with DANTE) have put forward a project proposal (BELLA: Building Europe Link to Latin America) to take advantage of the new cable. EU investment will be made via this project. The financial contribution by the European Commission would be estimated to around €25 million. Discussions are ongoing.

BELLA Network Layout



Background

More on EU-CELAC relations

Background video

EC relations with the Americas on digital and ICT issues

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