

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 21

THIRD EUROPEAN COMMUNITY LATIN AMERICA INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY/LATIN AMERICA

24-27 July 1977 - Mexico

## REPORT

on

the execution of the agreements  
approved by the II interparliamentary  
conference European Parliament/  
Latin American Parliament

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Report on the implementation of the conclusions adopted by the second European Community/Latin America Inter-parliamentary Conference  
(Luxembourg, 19-21 November 1975)

The conclusions adopted in November 1975 by the second European Community/Latin America Inter-parliamentary Conference were forwarded to the national parliaments which are members of the Latin-American Parliament and the points they contained received general approval.

However, official endorsement of these conclusions was considerably delayed by the regrettable developments in March 1976 - illustrating the hazards to which parliamentary institutions in Latin America are subject - when, two months before the date on which the Eighth Assembly of the Latin-American Parliament was to be held in Buenos Aires, there was a coup d'état resulting in the dissolution of the Argentinian Congress and the establishment of a de facto government which is still in power in this important country.

When the Argentinian Congress was dissolved as a result of this coup d'état, the Latin-American Parliament lost its President, Senator Italo Luder, its Vice-President, Mr Luis A. León, and the venue for its forthcoming Assembly.

The Bureau of the Latin-American Parliament, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure, elected Senator Ricardo Elhage, from the Netherlands Antilles, formerly Vice-President of the Parliament, to replace Senator Luder. In April 1976 the Eighth Assembly met in Curaçao and was attended by a large number of Members of Parliament. All the national parliaments and most of the political parties currently represented in these parliaments sent delegates to the Curacao meeting.

On that occasion the Eighth Assembly unanimously decided to approve the conclusions of the second European Community/Latin-America Inter-parliamentary Conference held in Luxembourg.

At the same time it decided to recommend maintaining the institutional links established with the European Parliament, giving full support to the third conference to be held in Mexico the following July.

Clearly the Latin-American Parliament Members were convinced of the importance of relations between the European Parliament and the Latin-American Parliament, now placed on an institutional footing.

The fact that the Parliament is a pluralistic body representing virtually all the political parties with substantial popular support gives the European Members a broader, more direct and more accurate picture of the currents of Latin-American opinion than would normally be the case with official meetings.

The parliamentary conferences offer scope for a dialogue without diplomatic restrictions and a more flexible and probably more lasting structure for relations between the two regional groups is now being created.

Although the results achieved since the end of 1975 have not been spectacular, there have been a few major achievements which will be outlined in this report and give some hope for the future and confirm the desirability and value of the links established.

(i) Economic relations between the European Community and Latin America

The most important subject considered at both the first and second Conferences, in Bogota and Luxembourg respectively - and also the area in which differences are most marked - has been that of economic relations.

In Luxembourg, the Latin-American delegation outlined a number of practical problems which were hampering economic relations, in particular, the problem of meat originating in certain producer countries in Latin-America to which the Community market was closed, with the result that their economies were severely jeopardized.

An encouraging development that should be noted is that in April 1977 the European Community abolished the safeguard clauses in respect of meat, which had been in effect since July 1974.

We feel that the unanimous position adopted by the Latin-American Parliament delegation might have been instrumental in bringing about this decision, as happened some years ago with coffee prices.

Nevertheless, considered as a whole, economic relations between Latin America and the Community are gradually deteriorating, as will be explained at the Mexico Conference.

The Latin-American Parliament will also be reporting on the question of transnational companies, already discussed in Luxembourg.

This and other problems will be considered in the context of the new international economic order proposed in Luxembourg by the Latin-American Parliament, and given a favourable reception in the conclusions of the meeting.

(ii) Defence of parliamentary democracy

The solidarity between the European Parliament and the freely and democratically elected Latin-American parliamentary institutions has provided useful moral support for those who are fighting to establish and maintain democracy in our countries.

That democracy in Latin America needs this valuable cooperation and support is only too apparent from the events that have occurred since the Luxembourg meeting, namely the dissolution of the Argentinian Congress - for the second time in the history of the Latin-American Parliament - and the assassination of the former President of the Uruguayan House of Representatives, Dr Hector Gutierrez Ruiz.

Dr Ruiz was assassinated in May 1976 and it is quite possible that the statement on the situation in Uruguay made by this eminent politician at the Luxembourg Conference was one of the reasons for his tragic assassination. The prospects for a return to democracy and parliamentary government in Latin America, despite the events mentioned above, are more encouraged in some other countries. At its Eighth Assembly the Latin-American Parliament welcomed the fact that the military government in Ecuador had decided to hand over power to a civilian government in 1978. It also expressed hopes of a democratic solution in Peru - where the Latin-American Parliament was founded in 1964 - along the lines of the solution proposed by the armed services government in its recent political manifesto. The military government in Bolivia has also begun to talk about the possibility of elections by 1980.

The clear pronouncements by the European Parliament, which have helped to increase international awareness of the need for democracy in Latin America, have been useful in establishing a trend towards representative government in our region.

Furthermore the stand taken by the Luxembourg Conference in support of democracy and its rejection of any form of corporative government is of considerable topical importance in the light of the trend in countries that do not at present have parliamentary government towards elections on a selective basis, in other words representation for certain interests or groups but not the public as a whole.

(iii) The European Parliament's programme of grants

The eighth Assembly of the Latin-American Parliament approved the conclusions of the Cultural and Educational Committee as regards the administration of the programme of grants generously awarded by the European Parliament. It was asked that at least two grants be awarded for each of the countries concerned.





