

Advocating for reinforced opportunities and more engagement in EU-LAC collaboration

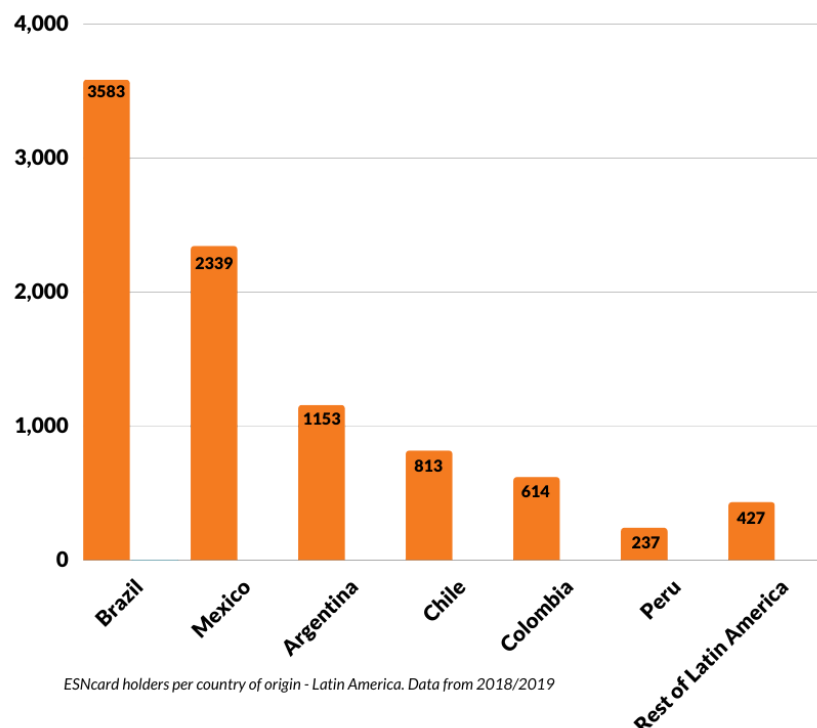
ESN's engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean

The Erasmus Student Network has among its key policy priorities increasing the availability of international opportunities for students from all over the world, and in the last few years, ESN has developed strong connections with partners from different regions. The growing interest in internationalisation and mobility brings a unique opportunity to advocate for inclusive opportunities for all students and for a more student-centred approach to internationalisation where students become used to collaborating with their peers across borders and become engaged global citizens.

In January, ESN published a [reaction to the EU Youth Action Plan in External Action](#), laying out the key components of the organisation's global engagement strategy. ESN believes in a more global Erasmus+ programme that is implemented in better coordination with the educational opportunities

provided by Member States, resulting in a higher impact for the European Union as a whole and more opportunities.

The Erasmus Student Network has had strong ties with Latin America and the Caribbean for years, thanks to the



increase in exchange opportunities.

In the 2018/2019 academic year, ESN sections supported more than 9000 students from the region. Brazil, Mexico and Argentina were the countries with more outgoing mobilities ESN expects these mobility numbers to go back to similar levels in the next few years.

Despite the interest among students coming to Europe, data by UNESCO shows that Latin America and the Caribbean are one of regions with less student mobility, both within the region and across the world.

Through collaboration with key stakeholders active in bi-regional cooperation, ESN has been advocating for more opportunities for students, prioritising mobility but also broader collaboration formats such as internationalisation at home and the participation of students in student associations.

In light of the upcoming EU - LAC Summit that will take place in July, ESN has been engaging in a number of initiatives to push for student-centred internationalisation as a key priority in the discussions about education and youth.

EU-LAC Knowledge Forum in Montevideo

In April, ESN's president Juan Rayón González participated in the [Knowledge Forum organised by the EU-LAC Foundation in Montevideo, Uruguay](#). The Forum brought together stakeholders from both regions to develop concrete proposals in the fields of Higher Education and science that could be presented to the governmental representatives at the Summit in July.

ESN took part in the Working Group focusing on the common Higher Education space. The Working Group discussed internationalisation policies and programmes, the collaboration between Universities and the challenges related to access to international opportunities among Latin American students, as well the importance of fostering the attractiveness of Higher Education institutions.

ESN advocated for the importance of better data on the participation of students in international opportunities, closer intra-regional collaboration and more institutional support for internationalisation from national governments in both regions.



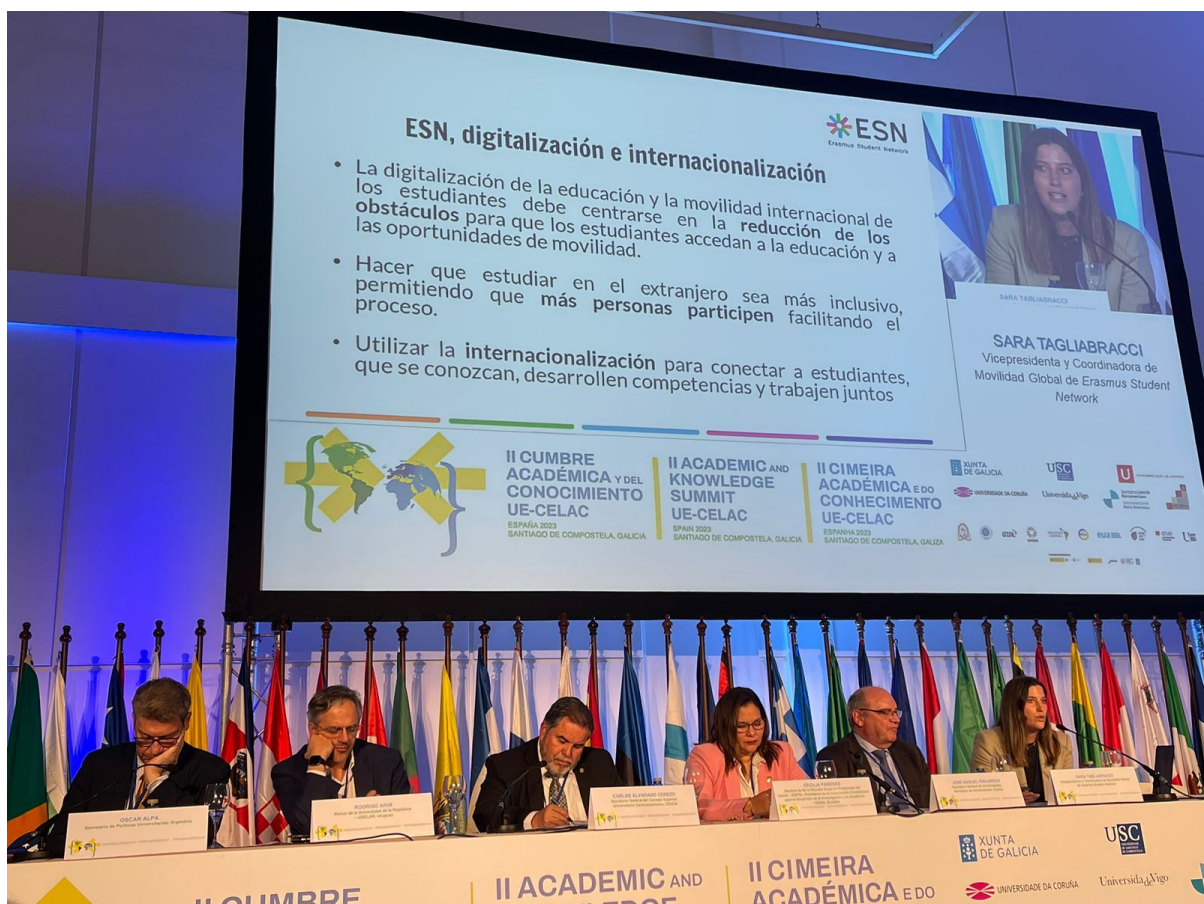
UE-CELAC Knowledge Summit in Santiago de Compostela

In May, ESN's Global Mobility Coordinator Sara Tagliabracci participated in the [II Cumbre del Conocimiento UE-CELAC in Santiago de Compostela, Spain](#). During this Summit, European universities, as well as political authorities and representatives of civil society participated. Its main objective was to promote the construction of a common Euro-Latin American and Caribbean space for higher education, science, technology and innovation through the design of common lines of action, the establishment of alliances and stable promotion capacities, integration and bi-regional strategic cooperation.

The Summit was organised around the following specific objectives: design strategies and instruments that promote the creation of a common Euro-Latin American and Caribbean space for higher education, science, technology and innovation and the exchange of knowledge; influence the formulation of public policies, plans and national programmes through the

creation of discussion spaces; guide academic action and the generation of knowledge towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

ESN was invited to talk in the panel “The digital transformation of higher education in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean”, in particular about actions that, as a student network, we propose to Higher Education Institutions to make education and mobility accessible and inclusive through digitalisation. The use of the Erasmus+ App, OLA was also discussed with the European Student Card initiative and the concept of internationalisation at home, which is key in order to guarantee access to information and education and to promote the establishment of a network of students.



Youth Advisory Committee EU-LAC

In occasion of the EU LAC Youth Days, organised as a framework of the “EU-LAC Days” (EU-LAC Civil Society and Local Authorities Forum, including a Youth Day) envisaged on 13-14 July in Brussels, as part of the side-event of the CELAC-EU Leaders Summit on 17-18 July 2023, a Youth Advisory Committee was established thanks to a call to action that the DG INTPA did to all the youth networks collaborating with the European Commission. As ESN, we were nominated to take part in the Committee in order to engage with EU-LAC youth organisations and young leaders from all over the world, to represent the needs of young students.

The main objectives for the “EU-LAC Youth Day” are to create a space that allows youth engagement in the bi-regional dialogue, and an exchange with the EU, in line with the [Youth Action Plan in EU external action for 2022-2027](#); and to ensure a meaningful and inclusive youth participation in high-level events and gather inputs from young people on strategic matters. The outcome of the “EU-LAC Youth Day” would be the adoption of declarations and/or recommendations, to be eventually shared, together with other recommendations issued by civil society and local authority stakeholders, to the leaders participating in the Summit.

The future of EU-LAC collaboration and the new agenda for Latin America

In the framework of the relations between the European Union and Latin America, the following conference [“V Cumbre Académica ALC-UE”](#) will be held in Alcalá de Henares, Spain, the days 7 and 8 July, where Sara Tagliabracchi as Global Mobility Coordinator of ESN, will participate as a speaker and moderator in a panel named: “Students’ vision of the EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation”.

On this occasion, giving continuity to the agreements of the previous Academic Summits the V Summit will focus on the analysis and approval of a proposal for an EU-LAC academic integration agreement for the creation of the EU-LAC common area of higher education, science, technology and innovation to be submitted to the CELAC-EU Heads of State and

Government who will meet in Brussels on July 17 and 18. Indeed, this last summit will be held in the context of the Spanish presidency of the European Union.

AS ESN, we totally support the decision of delivering [a new agenda to strengthen the EU's partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean](#), in particular in the points regarding the *promotion of democracy and human rights*, and the objective of *building a vibrant people-to-people partnership*. We agree that these countries demand a much more increased attention, and a more developed network of collaboration between institutions and partners; in our case, Higher Education institutions and institutional stakeholders. What we aim, being the biggest student-led organisation in Europe working in the field of internationalisation, is to foster cooperation on research and education, for instance, with programs that provide international mobility such as the Erasmus+, and to promote circular mobility by encouraging international networks and the participation of youth to more accessible and inclusive opportunities.

Document created by Juan Rayón González and Sara Tagliabracci on behalf of the *Erasmus Student Network AISBL*.