

Leaders Arrive in Brussels Ahead of EU-CELAC Summit



EU-CELAC
Summit **2015** Brussels

Brussels, June 10 (teleSUR-RHC)-- World leaders arrived in Brussels to participate in the EU-CELAC summit starting Wednesday, aimed at uniting heads of state from across Europe, Latin America and Caribbean for dialogue and cooperation.

The conference includes the participation of some 60 heads of states or government representatives to tackle the issues of climate change, investment, and the Colombian peace talks. The theme of the event this year is "Shaping our common future: working for prosperous, cohesive and sustainable societies for our citizens."

CELAC, established in 2010 as an alternative to U.S.-run bodies like the Organization of American States and Summit of the Americas, has now cemented its significance and met with the E.U. in 2013 in Chile. "It will be the occasion to underline the importance of EU-CELAC cooperation in a complex, rapidly changing world," the organizers of the event said in a statement.

Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa, whose country holds the pro tempore presidency of the CELAC bloc, met with his EU counterpart Donald Tusk in the Belgian capital on Tuesday ahead of the conference.

Meanwhile, EU Foreign Policy Chief Federica Mogherini also met with Ecuador's Foreign Affairs Minister, Ricardo Patiño to sign a draft agreement to forge stronger links between Latin America and Europe. "Today, we have jointly signed the establishment of a EU-Latin American-Caribbean Foundation on the basis of transforming it into an international body that, we believe, will help us work even more among our societies," Mogherini said.

On the eve of the beginning of the conference, Bolivian President Evo Morales urged Europe to see CELAC as a peaceful body. "According to the technical team of foreign ministers, the Europeans don't want to recognize CELAC as a region of peace. If they are thinking of invading us, dominating us ... there are profound differences in the political character and ideology," he said. The summit is expected to conclude with a joint political declaration and a widened action plan.

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