



PROPOSALS FOR

THE BI-REGIONAL PACT

ON CARE

Relevance and Context

- Persistent socio-economic and gender gaps — including class, age, disability, sexual diversity, and country of origin — in the distribution of time use in both contexts.
- Significant contribution of care to GDP in both regions. It is necessary to differentiate between the contribution to GDP from formal care employment (despite its precariousness) and the unrecognized and invisible portion of care that is not accounted for in GDP calculations. In both cases, care makes a significant contribution to the economy, and this contribution must be acknowledged in public policies.
- Severe violations of the rights of domestic and care workers are a common issue in both regions. Domestic and care workers, including those engaged in community-based care, face informal working conditions, precariousness, lack of access to labor and social rights, and discrimination.
- Global care chains connecting both regions reflect an unequal web of relationships, evidenced in the precarious access to rights, migration status, and labor precarity/economic exploitation of women from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in Europe.
- The climate crisis further increases the burden of unpaid care work on women and girls.
- Amid rising violence, it is crucial to activate drivers for advancing social justice, social cohesion, and peace. The caregiving burden strains interpersonal relationships, community relationships, and the relationship between caregivers and the State. Investment in care generates significant returns not only in tax revenues and economic reactivation, but also in violence prevention and social peace.

- The fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities, as established by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), including the right to support and care (such as parenting support when required), is essential to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in society. This entails ensuring access to quality care that promotes autonomy, dignity, and independence.
- Assistive technologies for the independence of persons with disabilities. Investing in assistive technologies and specialized equipment can enhance independence and reduce caregivers' burden. However, it is essential to promote a balance between technological advances and the human component of care. Technological progress must complement the practical and human interaction that characterizes caregiving work. States must allocate budgets for the development of such technologies and promote these developments in universities, particularly public ones, in coordination with persons with disabilities as users and rights holders.
- Care is a key instrument for social co-responsibility in addressing needs arising at different stages of the life cycle (childhood, old age) or conditions (disability), which are increasing due to socio-demographic challenges such as population ageing and rising conflicts.
- Support and care systems are essential to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully, actively, and meaningfully in society, with equal opportunities, and to live with dignity, autonomy, and independence, as established in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Investment in technologies and equipment for persons with disabilities is required to enhance their independence and reduce the workload of caregivers, including when persons with disabilities themselves provide care. However, the balance between technological advances and the human/emotional component inherent in care must always be preserved to avoid dehumanization.
- Prevailing stereotypes must be challenged, including age- and disability-based stereotypes that portray these groups solely as recipients of care or deny them agency. These stereotypes can coexist with gender biases. Special attention must be given to professionals in the health and justice sectors, as their actions disproportionately impact the lives of caregivers and care recipients, and they often make decisions that separate children from their mothers on the assumption that they cannot provide care, even when no actual risk exists in most cases.

The Care Pact: Key to the Future of Bi-Regional Relations

- “Rights and justice in response to initiatives such as Global Gateway. This bi-regional pact offers an alternative grounded in rights and justice, countering the European Commission’s Global Gateway initiative with a comprehensive well-being approach that upholds human rights, including the autonomy and dignity of persons with disabilities.”
- Opportunity to build a rights-based and justice-oriented alternative to the European Commission’s Global Gateway initiative.
- Interest already expressed in several bi-regional forums, including statements from the EuroLat Assembly, conclusions from bi-regional spaces of the EU–LAC Foundation, the Board of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRM-LAC), and European Parliament committees.
- It responds to a shared need. Both regions face common challenges related to population ageing, the feminization of poverty, and the increasing precariousness of care work.
- Strengthening social and institutional dialogue. Integrating the issue of care into the bi-regional relations framework enables a participatory approach involving governments, women’s movements, trade unions, civil society, academia, and the private sector, “ensuring the inclusion of the voices of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes.”
- Need to expand social protection systems to guarantee the provision and reception of quality care, as well as the economic security, well-being, and rights of those who receive and provide care, taking into account the additional costs associated with disability — such as access to transport, housing, technology, and employment — so that persons with disabilities and their families may enjoy a standard of living equal to that of others.

Proposals and Recommendations

We propose that the bi-regional pact include three key objectives:

- To adopt a common political framework between the EU and LAC based on the principles of the European Care Strategy (2022); the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III); the Tlatelolco (2025) and Buenos Aires (2022) Commitments (Compromisos de Tlatelolco and Buenos Aires); the Advisory Opinion (OC-31/25) of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2025), which recognizes care, caregiving, and self-care as an autonomous and universal right, and urges Sta-

tes to guarantee this right effectively and progressively through an intersectional approach; the United Nations Resolutions 54/6 (2023) and ECOSOC Resolution of February 2024, E/CN.5/2024/L.5; and the essential standards and conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO) related to decent work and care, equality, universal access to social protection, and the full participation of women and girls in all their diversity, as well as the rights of persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children, human rights defenders, afro-descendants, and other groups in situations of vulnerability.

- To develop a bi-regional cooperation mechanism on care, involving both technical cooperation (to, among others, strengthen care systems, adopt joint and coordinated measures on taxation and care, etc.) and financial cooperation (ODA, South-South cooperation, etc.). This mechanism should include strengthening care systems for persons with disabilities and promoting an inclusive approach that ensures all individuals, regardless of ability, can access the care and support they need—including support for caregivers themselves.
- To create a bi-regional and multi-stakeholder coordination body that urges governments, civil society, and key actors to take part in the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and accountability of the pact, ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities are prioritized in every phase of the process.

Additionally, we propose the following recommendations by area:

- **Participation and Accountability**

—— “To establish a bi-regional observatory on the care economy that incorporates the perspective of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, ensuring that their rights are a priority in public policies.” In the design, monitoring, and evaluation of care



policies, it is essential to establish a sustained mechanism for civil society and the feminist movement to participate and be accountable throughout the policy cycle.

—— To ensure that the pact's roadmap includes specific targets to improve accessibility and the quality of care for persons with disabilities, from direct care services to access to assistive technologies.

Roadmap and Action Plan

—— It is necessary to establish a roadmap that includes a concrete action plan, objectives, measurable targets, and sustainable financing to implement care systems in both regions.

—— It is crucial to promote the adoption of common regulatory frameworks that guarantee social protection and decent work in the care sector.

Sustainable and Inclusive Financing

—— Financing instrument: it must move beyond Eurocentric approaches (such as triangular cooperation that places knowledge predominantly in Europe), enabling the development of a political agenda and the exchange of learning and understanding between European civil society and that of Latin America and the Caribbean LAC, to also decolonize the European concept of care. Care should not be framed solely in terms of formal employment or economic growth, but should be somewhat grounded in an approach of interdependence between people and the planet. It is also essential to fund studies, evidence gathering, and research — not only academia-driven research, but also research led by civil society organizations (CSOs), which play a key role in knowledge generation. This implies prioritizing resources for research and evidence collection on the socio-economic impact of care and its contribution to gender equality and to women's economic autonomy. Equally, studies must prioritize the disability perspective, encompassing both persons who receive care and those who provide it under these conditions.

—— To develop financing instruments that integrate the perspective of interdependence, whereby care is not viewed solely as a matter of formal employment or economic growth, but as a universal and inclusive right for all persons on an equal basis.

Shifting Social Narratives and Public Campaigns

—— It is vital that the pact also supports interventions aimed at transforming imaginaries, narratives, and social norms, and strengthening public demand for the right to care. To this end, communication, awareness-raising, and public actions must be undertaken — not only through institutional channels, but also through engagement with the media, academia, and other relevant actors. It is essential that, in campaigns, training processes, and media commu-

nications, the perspective of people with disabilities be conveyed, with a focus on autonomy, accessibility, dignity, and support.

—— To implement communication strategies to raise awareness of the right to care and to promote co-responsibility among the State, civil society, and the private sector.

—— The pact should also contribute financially, together with governments, to create community-based support and respite services. These services are key to rebalancing the responsibility for unpaid care work and fostering social co-responsibility for care, including digital technologies such as tele-education and telemedicine, which can increase equitable access to care services.

—— It is necessary to support governments in creating assisted living facilities so that persons with disabilities who are unable to live autonomously with their families, or who do not have families, can be included in the community, with full respect for their autonomy to make their own decisions.



Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining

—— To promote social dialogue among trade unions, women's movements, social networks and movements, organizations of persons with disabilities, employers, and governments to advance the formalization of care work and improve labor conditions in both regions.

—— To encourage collective bargaining to guarantee labor rights and social protection for care workers.

—— To support dialogue on the implementation of public policies and processes that foresee the representation of specific groups, whether directly or through organizations, trade unions, and cooperatives, paying particular attention to groups that are at greater risk of being ignored or underserved.

These proposals will help consolidate a bi-regional pact on care that strengthens relations between LAC and the European Union, grounded in the principles of equity, dignity, autonomy, social justice, and decent work.



Additional Information and Reference Documents

- Resolución sobre promoción de sistemas de cuidados y apoyo para el desarrollo social adopted por ECOSOC in February 2024:
<https://docs.un.org/es/E/CN.5/2024/L.5>
- La declaración de organizaciones, redes y plataformas de la sociedad civil y sindicatos de América Latina y el Caribe y la Unión Europea recommend “promoting a bi-regional care pact based on the European Care Strategy and the Declaración de Buenos Aires sobre la Sociedad de los Cuidados”.
- During the session of the Board of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), held on October 30, 2023, the importance of advancing a bi-regional care pact was highlighted, as reflected in paragraph 35 of its declaration: “35. We underline the need to adopt a gender approach within the framework of EU-CELAC relations, promoting a bi-regional care pact based on the European Care Strategy and the Buenos Aires Commitment, which enhances cooperation on public policies and comprehensive care systems.” (T/N: text translated from the document quoted here). In October 2023, the Board of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, during its 65th Meeting, adopted agreements which include: “Encouraging the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in coordination with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the EU-LAC Foundation, to promote a bi-regional care pact between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, to promote cooperation on public policies and comprehensive care systems with a gender perspective between the countries of both regions, within the framework of the implementation of the Buenos Aires Commitment and the European Care Strategy, and to foster cooperation initiatives in this area with other regions of the world.” (T/N: text translated from the document quoted here).
- The International Labor Organization (ILO) issued a resolution on the care economy, adopted in June 2024. This resolution, which represents the first international tripartite agreement on this subject, highlights the importance of the care economy, gender equality, and decent work. It recognizes the significance of this sector and the need to take concrete measures to improve working conditions and promote equality. (Resolution concerning decent work and the care economy | International Labor Organization).
- Oxfam Brief on Global Gateway: [https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/OXFAM%20BRIEF%20-%20UE%20CELAC%20-%20JULIO%202023%20\(1\).pdf](https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/OXFAM%20BRIEF%20-%20UE%20CELAC%20-%20JULIO%202023%20(1).pdf)

- Research by Eurodad, Counterbalance, and Oxfam on Global Gateway: <https://www.oxfam.org/es/node/24887>
- Comparative analysis of comprehensive care systems in key countries from the EU, Latin America, and the Caribbean (Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo).
- Oxfam blog on the bi-regional care pact: <https://views-voices.oxfam.org.uk/2023/11/care-pact-latin-america-and-europe/>
- Oxfam LAC regional report on care in Latin America and the Caribbean: “Los cuidados en LAC, entre la crisis y las redes comunitarias”
https://oi-files-cng-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/lac.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/Informe_Los%20cuidados%20en%20LAC,%20entre%20la%20crisis%20y%20las%20redes%20comunitarias.pdf
- Comparative study by Oxfam Intermón on the role of civil society and care councils in advocating for the implementation of care laws and systems in LAC:
https://www.oxfamintermon.org/es/publicacion/analisis_trayectorias_trenzando_cuidados
- Oxfam LAC briefing note on fiscal pacts for care: <https://lac.oxfam.org/informes/los-cuidados-en-el-centro/>
- Report 52/52 – Support systems to ensure community inclusion of persons with disabilities:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5252-support-systems-ensure-community-inclusion-persons-disabilities>
- Report 55/34 – Good practices for support systems enabling community inclusion:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5534-good-practices-support-systems-enabling-community-inclusion>
- United Nations policy document:
https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/FINAL_10-07-2024_TRANSFORMAR%20LOS%20SISTEMAS%20DE%20CUIDADOS%20%28Policy%20paper%29_2024.pdf





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