

3^o European Union – Mexico Joint Committee
Joint press release

1. On November 11th 2003, the third meeting of the Joint Committee established by the Economic Association, Political Co-ordination and Co-operation Agreement signed between Mexico and the European Union was held in Brussels, Belgium.
2. The Mexican Delegation was chaired by Ambassador Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, Head of the Mexican Mission to the EU and also included Mrs. María de Lourdes Dieck Assad, Under Secretary for Economic Relations and International Co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mrs. Luz María de la Mora, Representative of the Ministry of Economy to Europe, and officials representing five Mexican government institutions.
3. The Delegation from the European Union was led by Mr. Hervé Jouanjean, Deputy Director General of External Relations responsible for Latin America and Asia. Trade issues were covered by Mr. Karl Falkenberg, Director for Free Trade Agreements, Agricultural Trade Questions, ACP and Bilateral Trade Relations in the Trade Directorate-General. The Presidency of the European Union was represented by Mr Giulio Piccirilli, Head of the Unit for the EU Presidency, Directorate General for Americas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
4. The parties reviewed activities carried out during the third year of operation of the Global Agreement in the three areas of coverage: political dialogue, trade and co-operation.
5. Within the framework of Political Dialogue, representatives of the Mexican Government and of the European Union acknowledged with satisfaction the excellent level of bilateral relations and exchanged views on recent developments in both regions. The European Union presented, in particular, the state of the Intergovernmental Conference and its implications for the future of the Union. The issue of human rights protection was also addressed. Preparations of the Third Summit between Heads of State and Government of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union, to be held in Guadalajara in May 2004, were finally discussed in a very constructive manner.
6. Current bilateral co-operation projects and the programmes were reviewed, in particular the recently approved projects in the field of social development in Chiapas (31 m€) and support to SMEs (24 M€), that will be co-financed by both parties.

7. Mexico and the European Union renewed their commitment to the implementation of the Human Rights cooperation programme financed by both parties. In the framework of this programme, a new project with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will help the Interministerial Commission on Governmental Human Rights Policy to harmonize Mexican legislation with international instruments to protect human rights, and to promote an environment for dialogue among the public authorities and civil society in this matter.
8. The European Commission also expressed its concerns regarding the cancellation by the autonomous Mexican Federation of Human Rights Public Organisations of the project aiming at the reinforcement of the Federation, mainly through the establishment of networks, creation of an internet space and training.
9. It was also emphasized that 80% of EC co-operation with Mexico is accounted for by participation in horizontal programmes. Mexico is one of the main beneficiaries of these programmes, especially ALFA and AL-INVEST. This data shows the dynamism of Mexican institutions and their relations with their European counterparts.
10. The parties also exchanged views on the future technical, economic and social cooperation between Mexico and the EU in view of the particular needs of Mexico and its level of socio-economic development.
11. Moreover, Mexico and the European Union welcomed the conclusion of the negotiations of the sectoral agreement for scientific and technological cooperation which should be signed in the near future.
12. The parties also agreed to continue discussions regarding the possibility of concluding a sectoral agreement covering education, youth and training, as a complement to existing programmes in this sector such as ALFA and ALBAN.
13. Mexico and the European Union emphasised the importance of the Dialogue with Civil Society. They reviewed the conclusions of the first civil society forum held on November 26th 2002 in Brussels, exchanged views on the organisation of a second forum in Mexico and discussed how this dialogue could be taken forwards.
14. In the commercial field, the parties reviewed the state of implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Mexico and the European Union. The delegates noted that since its entry into force, in accordance with import figures from both parties, trade flows within the FTA grew 25.5%.
15. During this 3-year period, Mexican exports to the EU increased 19%, while EU sales to Mexico expanded 28.1% (July 1999/June 2000 vs. July 2002/June 2003). Focusing on the last year of implementation, delegates noted that, excluding variations due to the appreciation of the euro, trade performance remained substantially stable in a difficult world economic environment.

16. The FTA has also promoted investment flows with the number of companies doing business in Mexico with EU capital reaching 5.688. It was also acknowledged with optimism, that Mexican businesses are investing in the European Union.
17. Consequently, parties emphasised the importance of their daily engagement in promoting relations between European and Mexican businesses. The forthcoming bilateral co-operation project for support to Small and Medium Enterprises will contribute to this goal.
18. The parties took stock of the work done over the last year on the fulfilment of the commercial commitments taken on the occasion of the second meeting of the Joint Committee, held in Puebla in 2002. In this context, both delegations noted with satisfaction that, since their last meeting, competent authorities have actively cooperated and found reciprocally satisfactory solutions.
19. Moreover, most of the Technical Committees, such as Standards and Technical Regulations, Government Procurements, Steel Products and Rules of Origin & Customs Procedures, have been active during the year, with the objective of ensuring the development of commercial flows and deepening administrative co-operation. Both parties emphasised their engagement for timely and constructive solution of any trade issue emerging from their bilateral preferential trade relations.
20. Mexico and the European Union also exchanged points of view about the new opportunities for bilateral trade and investments that could offer an enlarged European market following the accession of the 10 new Member States in 2004. The Parties analysed those aspects of the FTA that have to be adapted as a result of the enlargement of the EU. Furthermore, parties exchanged views on the different review clauses foreseen in the FTA with the intention of further liberalising their respective markets.
21. The Joint Committee was also an opportunity to exchange opinions on the way ahead for the WTO negotiations. The EU and Mexico expressed their joint disappointment for the lack of results at the Cancun WTO ministerial conference. They underlined their commitment to the multilateral approach to trade policy and confirmed their openness to an early resumption of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) stressing that a commitment by all will be indispensable to any successful negotiations.
22. Finally it was agreed that the fourth meeting of the Joint Committee will be held in México, in the last quarter of 2004.