



Latin America and Caribbean Initiative

to Promote Stability, Democracy and the Rules-Based International Order (LAK-FSDRIO)

Background

Latin America and the Caribbean are politically, culturally and economically important cooperation partners for Germany and Europe. To support cooperation with the region and strengthen regional stabilisation efforts, the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO) launched a Latin America and Caribbean Initiative (LAC-Initiative) in 2019. It sets a framework for political relations and joint projects on issues such as the rule of law, women’s rights and digital transformation.

GIZ has a number of project activities that support the efforts of the Federal Foreign Office:

Women’s network Unidas

The [women’s network Unidas](#) was launched in May 2019 with the aim of fostering dialogue among its members on women’s rights and gender justice. Around 290 members and nine partner organisations from Latin America, the Caribbean and Germany have joined the network so far. Unidas has been under the patronage of German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock since March 2022. Through its close ties to the German Federal Foreign Office, Unidas is also part of and a contribution to a feminist foreign policy.

GIZ works with member organisations and individuals to coordinate the network’s activities, which include network meetings, workshops and events on Unidas’s focus areas:

- Women’s rights and democracy
- Women and peacekeeping (Women, Peace and Security Agenda)
- Violence against women and femicide
- Women’s participation in the economy



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Opening Event of the Unidas Week 2022, on 22-25 March, in Berlin.

The network also supports its members’ projects, by providing online courses on digital media safety and personal data security for example. A virtual training course on communication for women's rights defenders and organisations was conducted in conjunction with journalists from the #NiUnaMenos movement. In collaboration with the [Data-Pop Alliance](#), a project on Big Data was implemented to identify capacities for reporting domestic violence in Bogotá, Colombia, and São Paulo, Brazil.

Cooperation on the rule of law

By focusing on the rule of law in the region, the LAC-Initiative supports partners in strengthening legal procedures and access to equal rights. This work includes introducing legal practices in criminal justice with selected LAC countries and sharing knowledge in this field. The project offers online training formats based on regional good practice in collaboration with the [Justice Studies Center of the Americas](#), which is a think tank created by the Inter-American system following a resolution of the Organization of American States (OAS). The online courses

are targeting crimes in the area of gender-based violence and are accessible for the public. The online courses, which are accessible to the public, address crimes involving gender-based violence. They are based on mutual learning and good practice and aim to improve the performance of criminal investigators in criminal justice proceedings. They include exercises designed to increase awareness for the needs of victims, to strengthen objective methods, to evaluate risks and to pool expertise across governmental units during the investigation process. During the online training, public officers (prosecutors and investigative authorities) are given examples of measures used in local systems that can improve the processing of offences.



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Screenshot of the online training course developed in the project

Future Affairs Forum

Digital transformation has become an important geopolitical factor in international relations, including between the EU and the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The [first Future Affairs Forum](#) addressed this subject in May 2019, focusing on the political effects of digital power and the impacts of digitalisation on democracy. Following this dialogue forum, a [second event](#) took place at the fringes of the EU-LAC Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting in December 2020 ([Joint Communiqué](#)). The dialogue covered bi-regional cooperation in cybersecurity resilience and data protection.

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The subject of the 2021 Future Affairs Compact was [Chances and Risks of Social Media for Democracy](#); it focused on the relevance of social media for democracy and the threat posed by disinformation. The dialogue formats raise questions on the impacts of digital transformation on a political and technical level and facilitate discussions with representatives of governments and civil society.

Dialogue on the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe effect on the LAC region; a very high incidence of cases in several countries put health systems under extreme pressure. In an attempt to stem the pandemic, FFO and the [Institute of Virology at the Charité](#) hospital organised a scientific Pandemic-Dialogue, which ran between June 2020 and January 2022. Activities included several scientific missions to the region, two regional symposia and workshops on laboratory diagnostics, and national vaccination strategies. A community of experts (scientific network) was formed to share knowledge and analyses and provide information on policies for dealing with the pandemic in the region.

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