

EU approves strategy on citizen security in Central America and the Caribbean

The Council today adopted an EU strategy on citizen security in Central America and the Caribbean, based on a joint proposal from the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission.

Pervasive insecurity for citizens in the region threatens economic and social development and weakens the region's response to organized crime and illegal trafficking. The strategy offers support by combining political dialogue, coordinated capacity building and closer cooperation with international partners.

EU High Representative Catherine Ashton said on this occasion: *"Today's decision puts the plight of ordinary citizens in Central America and the Caribbean at the core of our long-standing relation. Both Central America and the Caribbean are already coordinating their efforts through regional security strategies. The European Union supports them, as we wish to push for sustainable development and stem illegal trafficking across the Atlantic."*

Andris Piebalgs, EU Commissioner for Development, commented: *"The EU is a long-standing partner for peaceful and sustainable development in Central America and the Caribbean. Insecurity threatens EU development policies. Our partners frequently point to insecurity as a major obstacle to their development prospects, and indeed: Sustainable development cannot be successful without citizen security."*

The EU will work to consolidate a shared reform agenda with the concerned countries, building on past experience, the existing regional strategies and intensive consultation. The strategy will also provide a framework for cooperation and coordination with international partners. It follows a comprehensive approach, taking into account a large number of factors which create or sustain insecurity for the citizens: Organized crime, gang activities and wide-spread violence; governance and rule of law deficiencies like corruption, lack of institutional resources and unfair taxation; and underlying economic and social factors such as poverty and social inequality.

A common action plan, negotiated with the states of the two regions, could be presented at the next summit with Latin America and the Caribbean in June 2015 in Brussels.
