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From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
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Subject:	Joint Declaration of the Ministers for home affairs of the Member States of the European Union and the Ministers with responsibility for security matters of the Member States of the Latin American Committee on Internal Security (EU-CLASI Joint Declaration)

Following the information provided to Coreper on 12 July 2023¹, Spain as the Member State holding the Presidency reached out to the relevant external partner countries to discuss with them a joint text of the Joint Declaration of the Ministers for home affairs of the Member States of the European Union and the Ministers with responsibility for security matters of the Member States of the Latin American Committee on Internal Security (EU-CLASI Joint Declaration) on the basis of the draft EU-CLASI joint declaration prepared by Spain taking into account written contributions from COSI Support Group delegations.

¹ 11301/23

Based on the comments received from the relevant external partner countries and another round of consultations with COSI Support Group delegations in September 2023, Spain informs Coreper and the Council about the text of the final EU-CLASI joint declaration in preparation of the ministerial lunch with CLASI countries attached to the Home Affairs Council meeting in Brussels on 28 September 2023.

Joint Declaration of the Ministers for home affairs of the Member States of the European Union and the Ministers with responsibility for security matters of the Member States of the Latin American Committee on Internal Security (EU-CLASI Joint Declaration)

1. We, the Ministers for home affairs of the Member States of the European Union and the Ministers with responsibility for security matters of the Member States of the Latin American Committee on Internal Security (CLASI), meeting for the second time with the aim of consolidating relations on security matters in both regions;
2. Aware that the criminal threats facing our countries and their impact on the security and well-being of our citizens compel us to join forces in order to provide timely responses;
3. Aware of the flexibility, increasingly violent and transnational nature of criminal networks and the use of corruption violating rights, and affecting our societies and our economies as well as the environment;
4. Recognising that concerted and coordinated efforts are key to tackling common criminal threats to the security of our citizens, in particular the production, financing and illicit trafficking of drugs, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings, trafficking in firearms, ammunition and explosives, financial crime, cybercrime and environmental crime;
5. Recognising the importance of working together to strengthen cooperation against hybrid threats, energy security and the protection of critical infrastructures and public spaces in response to the growing challenges of transnational threats, and their impact and increasing risks to internal security;

6. Recognising that the rule of law and the respect for human rights are of key importance for our cooperation, noting in this regard that the protection of personal data is essential to allow for the exchange of information in the area of law enforcement and criminal justice;
7. Acknowledging that our cooperation on internal security issues is a key element to address the global and regional challenges threatening the security of our societies, the protection of the environment and the sustainable development of our countries;
8. Reiterating our determination to continue working together in the interest of political dialogue and the development of regional and international cooperation within and between the two regions;
9. Stressing the ambition by Latin American ministers to create CLASI, a regional forum for high-level dialogue which coordinates, at the political, strategic and operational levels, the definition and implementation of public security policies in the Latin American region in order to effectively address threats arising from transnational organised crime, always with due regard for human rights, shared responsibility and the principle of non-interference;
10. Reaffirming our mutual commitment to continue implementing existing instruments and to assess the added value of the creation of additional instruments for the purpose of cooperation on internal security and justice among our countries, as a means of strengthening the ties between the two regions and making progress on shared objectives;

11. Recalling that effective instruments have been established like the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), which incorporates mechanisms to facilitate bilateral and multilateral dialogue, as well as operational cooperation, including with Latin American partners, to tackle priority crime areas through EMPACT operational action plans (OAPs) and several agencies which promote cooperation with third countries on the fight against serious and organised crime, such as Europol, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)², Eurojust, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), and the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre -Narcotics (MAOC-N), as well as bilateral and regional dialogues and cooperation programmes, such as the Cooperation Programme on Drugs Policies (COPOLAD), the Europe Latin America Programme of Assistance against Transnational Organised Crime (EL PAcCTO), and the component projects of the Global Illicit Flows Programme (GIFP), and networks for international cooperation on asset recovery and confiscation such as the Camden Inter-Agency Asset Recovery Network (CARIN), which facilitates exchanges with third country asset recovery offices as well as regional asset recovery interagency networks such as the Latin America Financial Action Task Force (GAFILAT);
12. Celebrating the important work carried out by the EL PAcCTO programme on the bi-regional partnership between Latin America and the European Union and encouraging the continuation of this task;
13. Celebrating the accession of new Latin American members to CLASI, welcoming Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Colombia and Honduras and their intention to contribute to the common aims of this committee;

² The future European Union Drugs Agency

14. Having regard to the declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the European Union (EU) and of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) made on 18 July 2023 in Brussels, Belgium;
15. Highlighting the adoption of operational action plans (OAPs) under the coordination of CLASI, following the EMPACT model, as part of the CLASI Policy Cycle and Working Methodology, with the aim of aligning strategic, tactical and operational measures in the region;
16. We, the Ministers for home affairs of the Member States of the European Union and of CLASI, agree to consolidate and strengthen efforts in order to tackle transnational organised crime and its negative impact on societies, through a multi-disciplinary approach, including through innovation and by building effective capacities to fight the illicit trafficking and financing of drugs, trafficking in human beings, the smuggling of migrants, the design, manufacture and illicit trafficking of firearms, child sexual abuse, cyber, environmental and financial crimes, illegal trade in cultural goods, including money laundering and the criminal use of cryptocurrencies, as well as corruption, and the illicit profits generated by such crime;
17. Express our full support for the continuity and further development of CLASI;
18. Undertake to work with the Latin American security cycle, following a similar working methodology as in EMPACT and aligned with EMPACT whenever appropriate, including a monitoring mechanism through CLASI;
19. Undertake to increase cooperation between competent agencies in our respective regions, while fostering active cooperation between EMPACT and the CLASI OAPs, which remain self-standing, involving the responsible stakeholders, so as to jointly make progress on shared objectives and encourage the participation of law enforcement experts in the respective planned operational actions whenever appropriate;

20. Undertake to coordinate the timing of the launch of the Latin American Documentation and Threat Assessment Instrument (IDEAL) in Latin America with that of the already established European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) to optimise the results of the respective security cycles;
21. Undertake to step up the cooperation to tackle the global drug situation affecting both regions by addressing in an integrated, balanced and evidence-based way reducing not only drug supply but also demand and the harm drugs cause to public health, including through an increased exchange of information and intelligence, joint operations involving financial investigations and the promotion of development-oriented drug policy measures, including Alternative Development;
22. Welcome the establishment of the Bi-Regional Counter-Narcotics Task Force on combating drug trafficking³, the first operational meeting of which was held in October 2022 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, demonstrating that political commitments made at strategic level lead to concrete operational results, and call on the Task Force to launch joint operations, taking into account the findings from SOCTA and IDEAL; recall its vocation to evolve into a network of experts and invite Member States to participate therein;
23. Affirm the importance of supporting the process of giving institutional status to AMERIPOL, which will help strengthen its role in the fight against serious and organised crime in the Latin American region;

³ The EU-CLASI Joint Declaration (3 March 2022) called for the establishment of a Counter-Narcotics Task Force to launch joint operations.

24. Urge the inclusion of the gender approach as an important aspect in the joint fight against serious and organised crime, through the instigation of institutional strategies that promote the leadership of women in this field, as well as a shared analysis of the role of women in crime and the impact of crime on women and the promotion of best practice and approaches for action;
 25. Call for regular meetings, including at the level of senior officials, to build on the dialogue which began with the creation of CLASI, and which we reaffirm by this joint declaration at political, strategic, technical and operational level, and for this to enable the development of a shared culture of cooperation, so as to attain greater security and well-being for our citizens;
 26. We, the Ministers for home affairs of the Member States of the European Union and of CLASI, look forward to meeting again in the same configuration to review the progress made in implementing this joint declaration at a date to be determined.
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