

**Notes from the Steering Group meeting
LAC-EU Civil Society Forum 2025**

Online, 29-10-2025

1. Meeting Objectives

The eighth meeting of the Steering Group of the LAC-EU Civil Society Forum aimed to report on the latest changes in some sessions of the Forum; share the draft of the Joint Declaration, agree on how to work on it until its close at the end of the Forum, and agree on the choreography of the Conclusions session.

2. Content

Welcome and introduction

Participants were welcomed, and the agenda for the day was presented.

Updates on minor changes in some sessions Civil Society Forum

The following changes were reported:

- Food Systems Session: FAO speaker to be confirmed
- Social Cohesion Session: cancellation of CSA as speaker; FORUS (promoter of the session) is asked to inform the moderator and the speakers so that they incorporate the messages on informality, decent work, incorporation into the labour market, etc.
- Organized Crime Session: the review of messages agreed with the speakers has been shared
- Financing session: change of speaker by Latimpacto
- Care Pact Session: incorporation into the panel of a representative of the Government of Colombia (institution and person to be decided), and elimination of Row Zero.

It is reported that two people have already been identified who are going to act as master of ceremonies.

Civil Society Forum Joint Statement

The progress and comments received on the draft Joint Declaration prepared by the group of volunteers were shared, including the contributions discussed by the rapporteurs with the panelists of the different sessions. There are two documents: a shorter one, 2 pages, 9 points plus an introduction and a closing, and a longer one.

It was reported that, if confirmed, the space scheduled for the reading of the Joint Declaration of the Civil Society Forum will be 2 minutes. This would be equivalent to reading a text of about 300-400 words, which must be prepared.

Possible ways to incorporate possible necessary adjustments into the Declaration during the Forum, and ways to validate the text by participating organizations, were discussed. See agreements reached in the following point.

Conclusions session

The need to agree on the objectives and choreography of this session was discussed, which will be moderated by the masters of ceremonies, and aims to share the conclusions and recommendations of the sessions and validate the Joint Declaration. The importance of working with session moderators was noted on questions to panelists, which could include:

- How has the common thread of the event been reflected in the sessions? (Remember the thread: closing spaces for civil society, weakened democracies, declining funding, more unequal societies). Do not encroach on the issues of civil society participation that are discussed in the next session.
- What has been the central core (theme) of the discussion in your session?
- What have been the conclusions and recommendations for the future of your session? What are the challenges and what opportunities are opening up?
- What is the path of these Civil Society Forums until 2025, and what next steps are expected after this Forum?

The possibility of making the conclusions more participatory, or that they be recorded the day before, was evaluated, but these options were rejected due to their complexity with a very wide audience. The importance of not repeating what was discussed in each session was emphasized (many are plenary, and all participants attended). Speakers were encouraged to reflect on the guiding questions of each session. In addition, ideas were shared on how to validate the text of the Joint Declaration during this session.

3. Agreements

The agreements reached were:

- Allow a few more days to finish gathering inputs from civil society panelists for each session on key messages for the Joint Statement.
- Share the Declaration as a draft with all participants before the Forum, by mail, and generate a space for comments during the Forum and validation during the Conclusions session.
- Work with the moderators of the conclusion session on the choreography

4. Next steps

- The rapporteurs of each session have until Friday 31 to discuss and validate the main messages of their sessions with the civil society panelists and transmit them to the volunteers working on the draft of the Declaration.
- The CJE representative leads the consolidation of the comments, and the final proposal for a draft joint statement (2 pages with 9-12 points and a text of 300-400 words), which must be agreed with the entire Group and sent to the PFD on Tuesday 4
- The representative of La Coordinadora prepares the text of the email to be sent to all participants next week (before the Forum) with the draft of the Declaration and the process for modifications and signatures.
- PFD supports GOPA in the translations of the draft Declaration and mail, and the mailing (Tuesday 4th or Wednesday 5th)
- Steering Group shares proposal of second civil society speaker for institutional closure

5. AOB

It was requested:

- the list of organizations participating in the Forum, and their composition (number of organizations of each type, percentage of organizations by region and country, etc.)
- information on the site of the Forum. It was suggested that it should be included in the agenda

The next meeting will take place in person in Santa Marta on November 6, 2025 at 3 p.m. The agenda of the Forum will be reviewed, the spaces will be visited and the pending details will be finalized.

Participants

Members of the Steering Group

1. International Co-operative Alliance (ICA Américas)
2. Articulación Feminista Marcosur (AFM)
3. COICA
4. Spanish Youth Council (CJE)/European Youth Forum
5. Forus International
6. GIFE
7. GNDR
8. Juventudes Diversas por la Vida (Colombia)
9. La Coordinadora
10. MESA de Articulación
11. RED UE-LAT
12. Transparency International
13. European Union: DG. INTPA (European Commission)

Observers

14. EU External Action Service (EEAS)

Technical Assistance

- Policy Forum for Development (PFD)

Absences:

15. CSA / ITUC Américas
16. Ministry of Equality and Equity (Colombia)