

**Luz María de la Mora Sánchez, *Institutional Obstacles to Mexico's Contribution to International Cooperation***

At different points in time, Mexico has played a leading role in international cooperation for development. However, our contribution has been erratic due to the lack of an effective institutional framework. According to Luz María de la Mora Sánchez, if Mexico is to fully exploit its efforts in this area, far-reaching structural reforms are required, namely the creation of a legal framework that defines organizational mechanisms and participating institutions, and allocates resources for the implementation and development of cooperation initiatives.

But while the International Cooperation for Development Law presented to the Mexican Senate in 2007 is a step in the right direction, providing as it does for the setting up of a cooperation agency, a fund, a register and an information system, the author believes this is not sufficient. There are a whole series of budget, tax, government purchases and customs laws and regulations that have a direct impact on cooperation received and given by Mexico and which need to be amended.

A new legal and institutional framework, she concludes, would go a long way to helping the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs guarantee cooperation is used effectively as a foreign policy tool in keeping with national interests. It would also facilitate the drawing up of a constructive cooperation agenda, which, in turn would shore up Mexico's image abroad by demonstrating that we are capable of helping solve global problems.

**Claudia Franco Hijuelos, *The EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership: Origin and Outlook***

In October 2008, the Council of the European Union (EU), at the recommendation of the European Commission, decided to strengthen EU-Mexico relations by means of a strategic partnership based on existing legal and institutional ties. After explaining what strategic partnerships with third countries imply for the EU and how such a partnership fits into the context of bilateral relations between the EU and Mexico, the author goes on to discuss why an agreement of this nature is in Mexico's interests. As per the 2007-2012 National Development Plan, this partnership helps diversify Mexico's foreign relations, since the 27 countries that belong to the EU constitute a major international market and concentrate a significant proportion of global wealth, technological know-how and political influence. Mexico and the EU have shown the political will to identify priority areas that are of mutual interest and a readiness to take a fresh approach to old problems, but whether or not the strategic partnership stands the test of time and proves effective (as a framework to strengthen bilateral relations with the EU, which are set out in the Global Agreement) will depend of the ability of both parties to sustain political momentum by carefully selecting topics of common interest on which to focus their efforts.

**Ana Teresa Gutiérrez del Cid, *EU Energy Security in the Context of Russia's Geopolitical Repositioning***

The crisis between Russia and the Ukraine in January 2009 resulted in the cutting off of gas natural supplies to the European Union (EU), underlining the need to seek out alterna-

tives, given that the EU is not self-sufficient in non-renewable fuels and depends heavily on imports. A massive 80% of Russia's gas exports to Europe pass through the Ukraine, hence the need to find new routes. Construction on the Nord Stream and South Stream projects, spearheaded by Russia, has been stepped up, but while these pipelines will guarantee an uninterrupted flow of gas via the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, they do not constitute an alternative to Russian gas.

One possible option for Central and Eastern European countries is the so-called Nabucco Project, which would transport gas from member states in the basin of the Caspian Sea and, in the foreseeable future, perhaps even Iran, Iraq and Egypt. Five gas companies in Central and Southeast Europe—Botas of Turkey, Bulgargaz of Bulgaria, Trabsgaz of Rumania, Mol of Hungary and OMV of Austria—have agreed to study the feasibility of the pipeline, which would cross Turkey to the Austrian city of Baumgarten. However, stronger, more industrialized member states, like Germany and France, which cannot survive on fewer imports, have put their national interests over community ones. This is especially true in the case of Germany, which has offered to purchase natural gas from Russia at a higher price than Eastern European countries can afford.

If this scenario plays out, it would undermine the European alternative and further Russia's strategy to secure a dominant position on the larger European markets, thereby discouraging attempts to seek out other supply options that might threaten its monopoly over smaller Central European and Central Asian markets.

**Adolfo García Estrada, *The Legacy of the Celtic Tiger: Background and Outlook to Ireland's Economic and Financial Crisis***

In the early nineties and right up to 2007, Ireland enjoyed a period of rapid growth that radically transformed the country. Initially, this growth was chalked up to increased productivity and exports, but as of 2000, it began to rely heavily on domestic demand, mainly in the construction sector. When the real-estate bubble burst in 2007, public finances, banks and employment were hit hard, which, compounded by the international financial crisis, led to a severe economic downturn in 2008 and 2009. Thanks to the swift and drastic measures taken by the Irish government to control the tax deficit, prevent the collapse of the banking system and lay the foundations for renewed economic growth, Ireland is now on the path to recovery and has a favorable outlook.

**Rodolfo Díaz Ortega, *Mexico and Canada Require a Negotiation Strategy***

Over the last five years or so, relations between Mexico and Canada have flourished, due mainly to common economic interests, shared views on a great many international issues and similar foreign policy priorities. Despite their undeniable relevance, these three factors clearly have their limitations, which means it would be erroneous, if not counterproductive, to conclude that the bilateral relationship functions partially or entirely under its own steam. Rather, its future will depend on the conscious efforts of both governments and their citizens to promote cooperation and bilateral negotiations. Immigration, security and public perception of Mexico in Canada and

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*vice-versa* are variables that could determine the context in which the relationship evolves in coming years. In this essay, the author focuses on the issue of immigration, given its current relevance and importance. More specifically, he refers to major changes in migratory laws introduced by the current Canadian administration, with a view to establishing Mexico's position *vis-à-vis* Canadian interests and concerns and supporting his view that cooperation is not a naturally occurring phenomena, but requires a negotiation strategy capable of reconciling the interests of both parties based on a careful analysis of their respective needs. The bilateral relationship recently took a blow with Canada's decision to impose visa requirements on Mexicans, revealing the need to remain vigilant. Issues like immigration, which weren't previously paid much attention, may now require additional effort on the part of both countries and ties of friendship are not always to be taken for granted. In short, a negotiation strategy is crucial to fostering good bilateral relations, especially if we are to make progress on common problems like migration.