

## **The Colombian Commission for the Clarification of Truth (CEV) presents its Final Report to European institutions**

From Thursday 30 June 2022, Commissioners **Carlos Martín Beristain and Alejandro Valencia**, from the Colombian Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition (CEV), will be in Brussels. The aim of their visit is to present to European institutions the comprehensive process of listening and clarification conducted by this extrajudicial institution, created after the signing of the Peace Agreement between the National Government and the former FARC-EP guerrillas. They will also present the findings and recommendations for non-repetition set out in the CEV Final Report.

The CEV report was presented in Bogotá (Colombia) on 28 June, at an official public event, with the participation of Eámon Gilmore, the European Union Special Envoy for Peace in Colombia, Ambassador Gilles Bertrand, victims of the armed conflict, social organisations, representatives of Colombian public institutions, academia and members of the international community, among others.

The Final Report of the Colombian Truth Commission seeks to clarify what happened in the Colombian armed conflict and to formulate recommendations for non-repetition. The Peace Agreement between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government was signed in 2016, but ongoing questions such as *What were the causes of the conflict? What factors led to its persistence? and What are the guarantees that it will not happen again?* continue to polarize Colombian society. The challenge of building a narrative integrating the diverse experiences of the victims, perpetrators and other sources, has been immense, and the result presented by the Commission is a historic achievement.

The presentation of the report to the European Union institutions is important because of the support that the EU has given to the Colombian peace process since its negotiation stages. The EU has supported the peace process and the implementation of the Peace Agreement through its Special Envoy, Mr. Eámon Gilmore, and through the Peace Trust Fund. The EU has a policy framework for supporting transitional justice processes throughout the world, and also directly supports the Commission through cooperation projects. In Europe there is a significant population of Colombian victims in exile, who have participated throughout the entire report drafting process.

On the afternoon of Thursday 30 June, Commissioners Carlos Martín Beristain and Alejandro Valencia will be appearing at an event at the European Parliament in Brussels, with the participation of MEPs Ibán García del Blanco (SD), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI), Izaskun Bilbao (RENEW), Jordi Solé (Greens) and Stelios Kouloglou

(GUE). The Commissioners will also meet with members of other European institutions, including the European Council, the External Action Service and permanent representations to the European Union and other countries.

In recent years, the CEV has faced opposition and obstacles to its work. These have included instances of defamation and delegitimization, theft of information, and a lack of security guarantees and confidentiality to conduct interviews with important witnesses. Currently, during the report's publication and dissemination phase, the risk of attacks on its legitimacy and the integrity of the members of the CEV persists.

Continued support from the international community, including the European Union, its member countries and international civil society, is therefore also fundamental during this time. The report aims to be an active instrument for reconciliation and the non-repetition of the conflict. It is also a tool which can be used in Colombia for building a culture of peace and for peace education. To achieve this, the active participation and support of all parties who have so far accompanied and participated in this process is still required, including first and foremost the victims and Colombian society, and also the international community.

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