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**EIN-A4**

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**EIN Seminar on: "The peace process in Colombia: New horizons for opportunities in Latin America"**

*European Parliament, Brussels*

**Introduction:**

- **Paulo RANGEL MEP**, *EIN President, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the EP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP*

**Chair:**

- **Luis de GRANDES PASCUAL MEP**, *Chair of the Delegation for relations with countries of the Andean Community, EPP Eurolat Assembly Coordinator*

**Speakers:**

- **Antonio TAJANI MEP**, *First Vice-President of the European Parliament, responsible for relations with Latin America, Former Vice- President of the EC*
- **Ramón JÁUREGUI ATONDO MEP**, *S&D Group, Chair of the Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly in the EP*
- **Carlos Holmes TRUJILLO GARCÍA**, *Former candidate for Vice-President of Colombia, Democratic Centre party, Former Minister, Former ambassador of Colombia to the EU and the Kingdom of Belgium*
- **Rodrigo RIVERA**, *Ambassador of Colombia to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg*
- **Eamon GILMORE**, *HRVP's Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Colombia, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ireland from 2011 to 2014*

- This historical moment for Colombia is an opportunity for a permanent peace in the region as long as everybody who was engaged in the plebiscite agreed to the result. Any failure in the implementation of the peace agreement would lead to its re-opening in the future and could be used as a negative argument in the upcoming elections.
- The EU stood for the agreement since its very beginning, supporting a view where any peace would be better than no peace at all. The same view was not shared by the majority of the Colombian people, which resulted in a shock for the western world. Therefore, last October's result was surely unexpected.
- The whole process has deeply transformed Colombia; only four years ago, the dialogue would not be possible and today Colombia is on the verge of reaching an agreement that puts an end not only to years of war, but also integrates the FARC members in the society. However, the agreement proposed on October's plebiscite, although historical, was seen as too indulgent on the perpetrators.
- Even though the NO won the plebiscite, the grounds for a new dialogue were established, and the reaction from both parts was extraordinary. To ensure peace, the Colombian people will need to forgive, to make concessions, regarding a common purpose: establish a sustainable peace in Colombia. However, the peace should not be bought at any price. Nonetheless, there is a general positive feeling towards the new arrangement. That idea is easily expressed by the success of the last six weeks: only a Government truly committed to find peace would succeed in such short time.
- There were doubts regarding the political future of FARC members. The idea that there was no alternative to the agreement proposed, after four years of negotiations, seems now to have been overcome. Colombia is now moving from a practical agreement to a sustainable one; this new arrangement was said to be more realistic. In spite of the changes, the new agreement has to combine both the general feeling that FARC members should face a fair judgement, but also guarantee a political future for FARC. Peace would only be achieved if FARC hand over the weapons and pursue their politics through political means.
- Colombia is key player in the region, geopolitically speaking. It is the most promising country in the region, both politically and economically and, therefore, has an important role to play towards the neighbouring countries, with a particular focus on Venezuela. The European economic and political help was said to be of great importance, a bond that should not be moderated for now.

*The 'EIN-A4' represents a summary of EIN seminar initiatives. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the EPP Group political line.*