

## General Context of Colombia



Map: Relief Map of Colombia  
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### Basic facts

**Surface area:** 1,141,748 km<sup>2</sup> with access to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Borders with Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Panama.

**Population:** 45.5 million inhabitants.

**Capital:** Bogotá; 7.2 million inhabitants.

**Other main cities:** Medellín (2.4 million), Cali (1.9 million), Barranquilla (1.2 million).

**Language:** Spanish; 65 indigenous languages and 2 Creole languages

**Religion:** catholic, protestant and evangelical.

**Administrative organisation:** 32 departments.

**Current president (2018-2022):** Iván Duque Márquez, democratically elected.

### Geography

Colombia is crossed from South to North by the Andes. Near the southern border, the Andes are divided into three branches: the Western, Central and Eastern Ranges. There are six summits higher than 5,000 metres.

Colombia has 12% of the plant wealth on Earth and the greatest biodiversity in terms of bird and orchid species. It has high mountains, coastal plains, rain forest, deserts, wetlands, high moorlands, etc. 52% of the national territory is forest. It has the 7th greatest availability of water resources in the world. It has the sixth highest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Latin America.

### Human Rights in Colombia

Initially, after the Peace Agreement was signed between the Government and the FARC-EP, rates of violence decreased, as did civilian and combatant victims. However, respect for human rights has not improved. Killings of human rights defenders has increased at alarming levels: 155 murders in 2018 in 26 of the 32 departments, that is to say, in 81.2% of the territory. In the 2018 Universal Periodic Review carried out by the United Nations Human Rights Council, Colombia received 211 recommendations to improve the human rights situation in the country. Recommendations from UN countries included measures to improve the situation of overcrowding in prisons, the repression of social protest, enforced disappearance, gender-based violence and impunity for human rights violations.

### Inequality and ESC Rights

Colombia is a middle-income country, but is also one of the most unequal countries in the world and in the region. According to the OECD, Colombia has very low social mobility. There is a gap in development between rural or remote areas, and urban or central areas. According to the DANE (National Administrative Department of Statistics), the overall poverty rate in the country is 27% but, for example, 58.7% of the population in the department of Chocó lives in poverty. 346 children under 5 died of malnutrition and treatable diseases in Colombia in 2018.

Human development index	0.747 in 2017
Life expectancy	74.6 years
Gender inequality index	0.383
Economically active population	24.470.000
Unemployment rate	9.0 %
Informal labour	65.7 %
Gross Domestic Product	302.560 million USD
GINI coefficient for 2018	0.52

## Political system

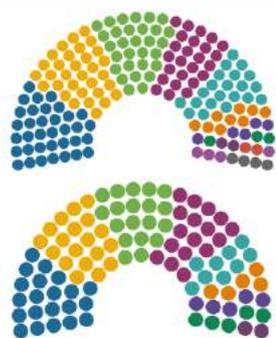
Colombia is organised in the form of a unitary, decentralised Republic which is democratic, participatory and pluralist, and which is comprised of autonomous territorial entities. It has three branches of power: executive, legislative and judicial.

**Executive branch:** The president is elected by universal suffrage, for a period of four years. The president is head of state, head of government, supreme administrative authority and head of the Armed Forces.

**Legislative branch:** The Congress, elected for a period of four years, is composed of the Senate, which has 102 members elected by the national constituency, and the House of Representatives, whose number of members depends on the number of inhabitants in the regional constituencies.

**Judicial branch:** At the head of the judiciary are the "High Courts": the Constitutional Court (ensures compliance with the Constitution), the Supreme Court of Justice (ensures compliance with Ordinary Jurisdiction) and the State Council (the Supreme Court for Contentious-Administrative Jurisdiction).

## Legislative Elections 2018



### Chamber of Representatives 2018

● Partido Liberal 35. ● Partido Centro Democrático 32. ● Cambio Radical 30. ● Partido de la U 25. ● Partido Conservador 21. ● Partido Alianza Verde 9. ● FARC 5 ● Decentes 3. ● Partido Opción Ciudadana 2. ● Polo Democrático Alternativo 2. ● Other parties 4. ● Constituencies of indigenous/ afrodescendant / colombians abroad 4.

### Senate 2018

● Partido de la U 21. ● Partido Conservador 19. ● Centro Democrático 19. ● Partido Liberal 17. ● Cambio Radical 9. ● Polo Democrático Alternativo 5. ● Partido Verde 5. ● Opción Ciudadana 5. ● Constituencies of indigenous 2.

**Presidential Elections 2018.** Iván Duque Márquez from the Centro Democrático Party won the second round of presidential elections in 2018, with 53.98% of the vote against Gustavo Petro from the Colombia Humana party. The electoral campaign around the issue of Peace polarised society. The participation rate was historically high (53% of the electoral roll).

## EU – Colombia Relations

- The EU is Colombia's second-largest trading partner. Colombia's main export products to Europe are coal (37%), banana (17%), coffee (11%), oil (7%), and palm oil (5%). Since 2013, a trade agreement has been in provisional application between the EU - Colombia, Peru and Ecuador. Belgium is the last country to decide on the ratification of this agreement. Colombia's trade balance in the years that the Trade Agreement has been applied is negative.
- The EU and Colombia engage in political dialogue and human rights dialogue. The latter is held twice a year. One of the main follow-up issues is the situation for human rights defenders.
- The EU supports the implementation of the Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP through a Trust Fund for Peace in Colombia and via its Special Representative Eámon Gilmore.
- There is an office of the European Union Delegation in Colombia (Bogotá).

Given the trade relationship between Colombia and the European Union, as well as the worrying human rights situation in Colombia, we call upon the institutions of the European Union and its Member States to include Colombia in their agendas.

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