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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Marco Cappato, Marco Pannella, Marios Matsakis, Johan Van Hecke

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on EU's policy towards the Cuban Government

European Parliament resolution on EU's policy towards the Cuban Government

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Cuba and, in particular, those of 17 November 2004 and of 2 February 2006,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2004, 2005 and 2006 and the EU's policy on the matter,
 - having regard to Council Common Position 96/697/CFSP on Cuba, which was adopted on 2 December 1996 and has been periodically updated,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas protecting the universality and the indivisibility of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, remains one of the European Union's main objectives,
- B. whereas dozens of independent journalists, peaceful dissidents and defenders of human rights (members of the democratic opposition and in most cases linked to the Varela project) are still being held in jail,
- C. whereas Parliament awarded the 2005 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the Damas de Blanco,
- D. whereas the refusal of the Cuban authorities to allow the Damas de Blanco to travel to the seat of the European Parliament to receive their award violates one of the basic human rights, namely the right freely to leave and return to one's own country, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- E. whereas the Cuban authorities ignored the requests and approaches made by the President of the European Parliament and by other European Union bodies, despite all the necessary arrangements having been made for the Damas de Blanco to receive their prize in person,
- F. whereas, furthermore, the winner of the European Parliament's 2002 Sakharov Prize, Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, has been systematically denied the freedom to leave Cuba and to accept the invitations issued by this Parliament and by other European Union bodies,
1. Regrets the absence of any significant signs on the part of the Cuban authorities in response to the European Union's calls for full respect for fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of expression and political association;

2. Considers it inconceivable that people continue to be imprisoned in Cuba for their ideals and peaceful political activity, and calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners of conscience;
3. Condemns the travel ban on the Damas de Blanco, the worsening repression against the peaceful opposition and the wave of imprisonments; considers that these developments run counter to the aspirations for a better relationship between the European Union and Cuba, and calls on the Council to act accordingly with its Common position on Cuba;
4. Urges the Council and the Commission to continue to take whatever action is necessary in order to require the release of political prisoners and to ensure that an immediate stop is put to the harassment of political opponents and human rights defenders;
5. Welcomes the agreement recently reached by Cuban opposition's groups under the document "Unitad por la Libertad";
6. Calls on the Commission to prepare an action plan to disseminate amongst the Cuban people the above-mentioned document;
7. Urges the Cuban authorities immediately to allow the Damas de Blanco to leave the island so that they can accept the invitation of the European Parliament, and instructs its President to take all possible steps to ensure that the prize winners can indeed receive the Sakharov Prize in person;
8. Renews its invitation to the Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, and demands that the Cuban authorities permit him to travel to Europe to appear before the Community institutions;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, to Cuba's Government and National Assembly of People's Power and to the Damas de Blanco and Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winners of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize.