

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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B5-0368/2003

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

further to Oral Questions B5-0271/2003 and B5-0272/2003

pursuant to Rule 42(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Luís Queiró, José Ribeiro e Castro and Gerard Collins

on behalf of the UEN Group

on Cuba

**European Parliament resolution on Cuba**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to all of its resolutions on Cuba,
  - having regard to all of the Council's statements on Cuba,
- A. whereas the promotion of the rights of the individual, democracy, civil liberties and the rule of law is of fundamental importance to the Member States of the European Union and forms an essential element of the Union's policy on third countries,
- B. whereas it is necessary to make the distinction between the dictatorship of Fidel Castro and the Cuban people, who have suffered decades of all kinds of hardships and restrictions resulting from a policy that runs totally counter to the interests of the population in its disregard for Western values and for the most basic political, economic and social rights of the Cuban people,
- C. whereas Parliament is greatly concerned by the arrests between 18 and 21 March of almost 80 human rights activists, independent personalities and opponents of the regime, including more than twenty journalists, accused of attempted 'conspiracy', 'crimes against the independence and territorial integrity of the State', 'publishing subversive and counter-revolutionary articles' and 'treason',
- D. whereas they were prosecuted under Law 88 on the 'defence of national independence', in force since 1999, which, until now, had not been invoked,
- E. whereas this trial represents the most large-scale repression of freedom of expression since the regime was installed in 1959,
- F. whereas Parliament is concerned by the trial proceedings, the constraints on the defendants' rights - they did not even have the opportunity to contact their lawyers -, the conditions of imprisonment and the co-defendants' state of health,
- G. whereas the European Parliament awarded the 2002 Sakharov Prize to the dissident and member of the opposition to the Cuban regime, Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas,
- H. whereas the Cuban authorities submitted an application to join the Cotonou Agreement on 23 January,
- I. whereas the Varela Project, a reform project supported by several opposition members, is a democratic and peaceful constitutional alternative, able therefore to provide a valid basis for the integration of Cuba into the community of democratic nations;

1. Strongly condemns the wave of arrests carried out by Fidel Castro's regime, targeting the opposition and the independent Cuban press;
2. Calls for the immediate release of all individuals considered to be prisoners of conscience, and of all other Cuban political prisoners;
3. Considers that conditions must be created that allow all Cubans to live in freedom, dignity and prosperity, and the Cuban state to exist at peace with its neighbours and become an active member of the international community;
4. Asks of the Cuban authorities that any trial take place in strict observance of the rule of law, and that the accused are afforded specific treatment to guarantee their safety, health and rights as defendants;
5. Calls on the Cuban authorities to lift all restrictions on human rights and to remove all obstacles to freedom of movement, expression, information and association and the right to engage in political activities within a party;
6. Calls for democratic reforms and greater respect for human rights, whilst stressing that infringements of fundamental civil and political rights, particularly freedom of expression, assembly and association, will be closely monitored and will continue to have an impact on the Union's relations with Cuba, especially regarding the Cotonou Agreement;
7. Expresses its full support for the Cuban individuals, associations, organisations and prominent figures that have called for the law to be duly respected;
8. Asks that Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winner of the Sakharov Prize in 2002, be officially invited to Europe at the earliest opportunity in order to meet in person with the EU Presidency, the High Representative for the CFSP, the President of the Commission, the relevant committees and the President of the European Parliament, and to put forward his point of view on Cuba before Parliament in plenary;
9. Instructs its Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America to tackle more firmly the issue of the rights of the individual in Cuba, and to follow carefully the developments in this situation;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the ACP Council of Ministers, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the winner of the 2002 Sakharov Prize, the Cuban Government and Parliament and all those who support the Varela Project.