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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B6-0675/2005

pursuant to Rule 108(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, José Ribeiro e Castro, Gerardo Galeote Quecedo, João de Deus Pinheiro, Charles Tannock, Antonio Tajani and Camiel Eurlings

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the EU's policy towards the Cuban Government

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its earlier resolutions on the situation in Cuba, in particular that of 16 November 2004,
 - having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2005 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2004 and the EU's policy on the matter,
 - having regard to the Presidency Declaration of 14 December 2005 on the Damas de Blanco and the earlier Presidency Declarations of March 2003 and 5 June 2003 on the situation in Cuba,
 - having regard to EU Common Position 96/697/CFSP on Cuba, which was adopted on 2 December 1996 and has been periodically updated,
 - having regard to Rule 108(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) is still one of the EU's main objectives,
- B. whereas scores of independent journalists, peaceful dissidents and upholders of human rights (members of the democratic opposition and in most cases linked to the Varela project) are still being held in jail in subhuman conditions, and whereas some of them are seriously ill and many have direct family ties with the Damas de Blanco,
- C. whereas Parliament awarded the 2005 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the Damas de Blanco, to Hauwa Ibrahim and to the international organisation Reporters Without Borders,
- 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 contravenes one of the basic human rights, namely the right freely to enter and leave 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 EP President and by other European bodies, despite all the necessary arrangements having been made for the Damas de Blanco to attend the award ceremony,
- 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 EU bodies,
- G. whereas in 2005 no prisoners of conscience held in Cuba were released and whereas, far from decreasing, the number of political prisoners significantly increased,

1. Deplores the fact that the new policy of flexibility adopted by the EU Council towards the Cuban authorities has not produced the expected results and that, on the contrary, the human rights situation has deteriorated; condemns this new wave of repression and the increase in the number of prisoners of conscience;
2. Demands the immediate release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience being held in the country and once again condemns such detentions, which constitute an attack on the most basic human rights, particularly freedom of opinion, expression and political association;
3. Restates its opposition to the withdrawal by the Council of the supplementary measures accompanying the common position; considers that circumstances such as the refusal to allow the Damas de Blanco to travel, the new wave of repression against the peaceful opposition and the new imprisonments emphatically demonstrate the fact that the changes made by the EU Council in January 2005 have not only failed to have any positive impact but have proved wrong, ineffective and even counter-productive; calls accordingly on the Council to review its policy on Cuba;
4. Urges the Council and Commission to continue to take whatever action is necessary in order to seek 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. 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 asks its President to do all in his power to ensure that the prize winners are immediately authorised to travel to Europe to accept their prize;
6. Requests, should such approaches prove fruitless, that no later than three months after the adoption of this resolution a large European Parliament delegation be sent to Havana to award the prize, as has been requested by the prize winners;
7. Repeats its invitation to the winner of the European Parliament's 2002 Sakharov Prize, Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, and demands that the Cuban authorities permit him to travel to Europe to appear before the Community institutions;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and 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).