

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0112/05/rev.1

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Graham Watson, Cecilia Malmström, Emma Bonino and Marco Pannella, on behalf of the ALDE Group  
to the Council

Subject: EU position towards the Cuban Government

For the EP, it remains inconceivable that people continue to be imprisoned in Cuba for their ideals and peaceful political activity. It is particularly unacceptable and shocking that some of these political prisoners are not receiving the help they need and are in very poor medical condition. Some of them are actually dying.

The EP, in line with former firm positions, stressed, in its resolution of November 2004, that 'the upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential condition for any revision of the EU's Common Position on Cuba and the measures adopted unanimously on 5 June 2003' (i.e. sanctions imposed following the arrest and imprisonment of 75 dissidents and the subsequent summary executions of three hijackers).

In January 2005, the Council changed its policy towards the Cuban Government. The hope of a more open attitude from the Castro regime side has apparently not been fulfilled. On the contrary, the human rights situation has deteriorated.

The Council states, in its declaration of 13 June 2005, that 'there was no satisfactory progress on human rights in Cuba'. It nevertheless concludes that 'the measures taken on 5 June 2003 remain suspended'. What kind of initiatives is the Council willing to take in order to promote respect for human rights and real progress towards a pluralist democracy in Cuba?

After recent events (expulsion of European parliamentarians, ongoing repression of dissidents), does the Council still think that the results of its new policy are satisfactory and that its present policy with the Cuban authorities is the correct approach to improve the situation in Cuba?

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Deadline for reply: 29.12.2005