

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3146/05
by Emma Bonino (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Human rights violations in Cuba and the EU's policy of dialogue

Last January the European Union suspended the sanctions adopted on 5 June 2003 with a view to establishing a 'policy of dialogue' with Cuba, and on 27 July Amadeu Altafaj, the European Commission's development spokesperson, stated that, in comparison with the previous situation, the EU's political dialogue with Cuba increased its margins for manoeuvre and possibilities of intervention.

Since the suspension of sanctions, only 14 of the 75 dissidents imprisoned in April 2003 have been released and several thousand people are still being detained for crimes of opinion or conscience.

In May the Government of Cuba expelled several European and national Members of Parliament, as well as a number of journalists, who were planning to attend the Assembly to promote civil rights in Cuba (APSC).

The members of the APSC's executive board are subject to constant harassment by the Cuban political police, in particular Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, who is still under house arrest for health reasons.

On 13 July some twenty people were arrested while taking part in a peaceful demonstration in Havana, six of whom are still being held in solitary confinement.

On 22 July about thirty people who had been demonstrating outside the French Embassy were arrested, and among the nine people still detained are the freelance journalists René Gómez Manzano, Oscar Mario González and Julio César López Rodríguez.

On 5 August obstacles were placed in the way of relatives of political prisoners and APSC executives who were due to visit the headquarters of the European Commission in Havana.

On 8 August a number of dissidents due to attend an APSC meeting – including Vladimiro Roca, leader of Todos Unidos, Ana Rosa Veitía, Ángel Polanco, Ernesto Roque, Carlos Raúl Jiménez, Humberto Guerra Perruguría and Jacqueline Montes De Oca – were visited in their homes and threatened.

On 19 August the Cuban authorities confiscated property belonging to dissidents Félix Bonne Carcassés and his wife María Domínguez Díaz where the APSC Congress had been held on 20 May.

Could the Commission say:

- whether it is aware of the above facts, and what steps it has taken or intends to take;
- what the EU's current margins for manoeuvre and possibilities of intervention are in response to the human rights violations in Cuba?