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Session document

21 April 2004

B5-0192 }
B5-0201 }
B5-0207 }
B5-0214 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- Concepció Ferrer, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Bernd Posselt and Lennart Sacrédeus, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Cecilia Malmström and Bob van den Bos, on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Luís Queiró and José Ribeiro e Castro, on behalf of the UEN Group
- Bastiaan Belder, on behalf of the EDD Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- PPE-DE (B5-0192),
- ELDR (B5-0201),
- EDD (B5-0207),
- UEN (B5-0214),

on Cuba

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PE 344.668}
PE 344.747}
PE 344.753}
PE 344.760} RC1

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European Parliament resolution on Cuba

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its earlier resolutions on the situation in Cuba, and in particular its resolution of 4 September 2003,
 - having regard to the resolutions adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,
 - having regard to the declaration of 26 March 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the arrests of opposition figures and dissidents in Cuba,
 - having regard to Common Position 96/697/CFSP on Cuba, adopted on 2 December 1996, defined by the Council pursuant to Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union and regularly renewed,
 - having regard to the provisions of the ACP-EU Association Agreement (the Cotonou Agreement),
 - having regard to Rule 50(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the defence of the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, remains one of the principal objectives of the European Union,
- B. having regard to the arrest over a year ago of 75 dissidents belonging to the democratic opposition to the Castro regime, mostly linked to the Varela Project,
- C. whereas in June 2003 the EU decided to step up political pressure on Havana following these arrests,
- D. whereas the above citizens were, after summary trials, sentenced to harsh prison terms of between 14 and 27 years,
- E. whereas they are being held in inhuman conditions, hundreds of kilometres from their homes, with restrictions on visits and inadequate hygiene and medical care; whereas the case of the seriously ill Oscar Espinosa Chepe gives especial cause for concern,
- F. whereas the exercise of the right to free expression is a fundamental human right,
- G. recalling its appeal to the Council and Commission to keep a close watch on the situation of political prisoners in Cuban jails,
- H. regretting the fact that Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, who was awarded the Sakharov Prize by the European Parliament in 2002, was recently denied the permits which would have allowed him to leave Cuba and accept an invitation from this Parliament,

- I. having regard to the ‘Sakharov Initiative’, which was signed by 206 MEPs even prior to the invitation to Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas to visit Europe issued by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the Conference of Presidents, and which was welcomed by the Presidency of the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council,
- J. having regard to the present situation concerning respect for human rights in Cuba,
 1. Reiterates its condemnation of these arrests, which constitute a breach of the most elementary human rights, especially as regards freedom of expression and political association;
 2. Calls once more on the Cuban authorities to release all political prisoners immediately, and calls on the Council and Commission to continue to take all necessary initiatives to demand their release;
 3. Welcomes the release on health grounds of Julio Antonio Valdés;
 4. Calls on the Cuban authorities to make significant changes with a view to moving towards full respect for fundamental freedoms and, in particular, freedom of expression and political association;
 5. Expects the Cuban authorities to resume the de facto moratorium on the death penalty;
 6. Calls for maximum respect for the constitutional process of collection of signatures undertaken by the Varela Project under Article 88 of the present Cuban constitution, which authorises citizens to submit a legislative initiative subject to the collection of at least 10 000 signatures;
 7. Stresses once more the continuing full validity of the EU’s commitment and willingness as regards aid for the Cuban people;
 8. Recalls that the objectives of the EU’s external policy are based on the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, encouragement of processes of transition to pluralist democracy, and support for sustainable economic development aimed at improving the living standards of the people;
 9. Calls on all the Community institutions to endorse the ‘open invitation’ to Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, the 2002 Sakharov Prize winner, as recently embodied in the ‘Sakharov Initiative’ with the support of the Presidency of Parliament, and calls on the Cuban authorities not to put further obstacles in the way of his visiting Europe;
 10. Calls on the Member States to exert unequivocal pressure on the Cuban authorities to promote the defence of democracy and respect for human rights, and to receive Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas at the highest level when he visits Europe;
 11. Welcomes the adoption last Thursday of the resolution of the UN Commission on Human Rights condemning last year’s harsh sentences against dissidents;

12. Calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico to take up the issue of human rights in Cuba with all due firmness and to monitor developments particularly closely as from their first meetings after the June 2004 elections to the European Parliament;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, to the Government and the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba, and to the European Parliament Sakharov Prize laureate Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas.