

P5_TA(2003)0374

EU-Cuba relations

European Parliament resolution on Cuba

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Cuba generally, and, in particular, that of 25 April 2002 on promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries¹ and that of 10 April 2003 on human rights in Cuba²,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the External Relations Council of 21 July 2003 concerning the situation in Cuba,
 - having regard to the Commission's statement of 27 July 2003 concerning Cuba's refusal of the humanitarian aid provided by the EU,
 - having regard to the declarations of 26 March and 5 June 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union concerning the continuing flagrant violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba,
 - having regard to the common position 96/697/CFSP of 2 December 1996 on Cuba³, defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union, and periodically renewed,
- A. whereas one of the main objectives of the European Union continues to be to uphold the universality and indivisibility of human rights – including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights – as proclaimed by the 1993 World Conference in Vienna on human rights,
- B. whereas the recent events in Cuba, such as the numerous arrests, imprisonments and severe sentences after summary trials affecting more than 70 dissidents and human rights activists, as well as the resumed use of the death penalty, have led the Commission to suspend the evaluation report on the Cuban request for accession to the Cotonou Agreement,
- C. whereas the Government of Cuba from its side has decided to withdraw, for the second time, its request for accession to the Cotonou Agreement,
- D. whereas the European Union has recently decided to limit bilateral high-level governmental visits; to reduce the profile of Member States' participation in cultural events; to invite Cuban dissidents to national day celebrations; and to proceed to the re-evaluation of its common position,

¹ OJ C 131 E, 5.6.2003, p. 147.

² P5_TA(2003)0191.

³ OJ L 322, 12.12.1996, p. 1.

- E. whereas the US policy of confrontation over more than 44 years (embargo, extraterritorial laws such as Helms-Burton, etc) is not a constructive approach to promoting change or reform of the Cuban regime,
 - F. whereas freedom of expression is a fundamental human right,
 - G. extremely concerned at the state of health of several dissidents currently imprisoned in Cuba,
 - H. profoundly concerned that the Cuban authorities have re-introduced the death penalty,
 - I. whereas, in the meantime, the Cuban population continues to suffer the consequences of the human rights violations,
 - J. whereas the European Parliament awarded the 2002 Sakharov Prize to the dissident and member of the opposition to the Cuban regime, Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas,
1. Reiterates its firm condemnation of the continuing flagrant violation of the civil and political human rights and the fundamental freedoms of members of the Cuban opposition and of independent journalists, and calls on the Cuban authorities to release all political prisoners immediately;
 2. Calls on the Commission and the Council to monitor the issue of political prisoners in Cuban jails and to take all necessary steps to ensure the immediate release of all of them;
 3. Reminds the Cuban authorities that no law may restrict the right of freedom of expression and that under no circumstances may they impose prison sentences on individuals exercising that freedom; stresses that respect for, and the defence of, human rights and democratisation promote the political, social and economic conditions necessary to guarantee peace and stability and ensure that everyone can live in dignity;
 4. Notes that since the previous evaluation in December 2002, not only have no positive steps been taken by the Cuban government, but the human rights situation has severely deteriorated;
 5. Calls on the Council and the Commission, as soon as all the prisoners are freed and arbitrary arrests have ceased, to determine a global policy towards Cuba, free from ambiguities;
 6. Reiterates that the objectives of the EU's external policy are based on promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, encouragement of processes of transition to pluralist democracy, and support for lasting economic recovery aimed at improving the living standards of the population;
 7. Believes that the EU can play a key role by maintaining a policy aimed at the adoption of positive measures such as the signing, ratification and application of international human rights instruments (in particular the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as that on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), by encouraging both authorities and democratic opposition to work together for a peaceful transition to democracy, and by

intensifying the dialogue of the High Representative for the CFSP with the authorities and with the democratic opposition in Cuba; in addition, considers that such a policy should fully incorporate other possible positive incentives, including generous cooperation programmes, so as to improve respect for human rights at all levels;

8. Deplores the Cuban regime's decision to reject EU aid, and recalls the Union's willingness and permanent commitment to provide aid to help the Cuban people;
9. Deeply regrets the behaviour of the Cuban authorities towards Community institutions, Member States and accession countries, even more so now that the Commission has recently opened an office in Havana; also regrets the closure of the Spanish cultural centre; and expects a new and constructive attitude from Cuba's authorities, based on reform efforts;
10. Regrets the lack of economic and social reforms, which is making the daily lives of Cuban citizens harder;
11. Reiterates its condemnation of the US embargo on Cuba, and calls for it to be lifted forthwith, as the UN General Assembly has repeatedly demanded;
12. Asks that Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought 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 and the relevant Commissioners; supports the decision taken by its Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy to invite Mr Sardiñas, and asks the Cuban authorities not to prevent his presence;
13. Instructs its Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico, in line with this resolution, to tackle more firmly the issue of human rights in Cuba, and to undertake a special monitoring of developments;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, to the Government and National People's Assembly of the Republic of Cuba, and to Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas.