Resolution on Cuba

2007/2579(RSP) - 21/06/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution on Cuba by 50 votes in favour to 21 against with 3 abstentions. Parliament regretted the fact that, despite a first temporary transfer of power in 48 years from Fidel Castro to a collective leadership headed by his brother Raúl Castro, the political, economic and social system in Cuba remained essentially unchanged. It also regretted the absence of any significant signs on the part of the Cuban authorities in response to the EU's calls for full respect for fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of expression and political association, and the release of political prisoners.

Parliament noted that dozens of independent journalists, peaceful dissidents and defenders of human rights, who were members of the democratic opposition and, in most cases, linked to the Varela project were still being held in jail, some of them seriously ill and many of them close relatives of the Damas de Blanco. It urged the EU institutions to give their unconditional support and full encouragement to launching a peaceful process of political transition to a multi-party democracy in Cuba

It stressed that Council Common Position 96/697/CFSP remained entirely valid, as did its objectives. Members deeply regretted the fact that the high-level visits of the EU institutions and the Member States that had taken place had involved talks with all the authorities of the Cuban regime but no direct meetings with the representatives of the peaceful democratic opposition or political prisoners' relatives.

The European Parliament's Sakharov Prize was awarded in 2002 to Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas and in 2005 to Damas de Blanco, both of Cuba, but in neither case were the winners allowed to leave the country to receive their prize. Parliament tried to send a delegation to investigate the situation but the Cuban authorities refused to issue visas to the MEPs. The resolution urged the authorities to alter their stance on both these matters, demanding also that the Cuban authorities permit members of the political opposition, human rights activists and all citizens to travel abroad freely and return freely to Cuba.

MEPs also note that the Council has decided to invite a Cuban delegation to Brussels in order to resume a comprehensive and open political dialogue with the Cuban authorities. Parliament hoped that when that visit is prepared the Council will include in the talks with the Cuban government the invitations of the EU institutions to the Damas de Blanco and Oswaldo Payá, as well as Parliament's desire to send a delegation to Cuba.

Lastly, Parliament considered it extremely important that any strengthening of political and economic relations - including development aid - between the EU and the Cuban authorities that might derive from a comprehensive and open political dialogue be linked to concrete and verifiable improvements of the human rights conditions of all Cuban citizens, starting with the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.