Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Cuba, of the other

2017/2036(INI) - 05/07/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 497 votes to 107, with 79 abstentions, a resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Cuba, of the other part.

Reiterating the high strategic value of the relationship between the EU and Cuba, Parliament **welcomed the signing** in Brussels, on 12 December 2016, of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) between the EU and Cuba. It considered that it constitutes an instrument that will offer a **new framework** for relations between the EU and Cuba.

Human Rights: emphasising the importance of the human rights dialogue between the EU and Cuba, Members reiterated that the EU's policy towards Cuba include the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and facilitating the economic and social modernisation aimed at improving the living standards of the Cuban population.

However, Parliament noted that the human rights dialogue has not to date put an end to arbitrary politically motivated detentions in Cuba and that, on the contrary, there have been **more and more crackdowns** in recent years.

The resolution stressed that the Agreement should contribute to improving the living conditions and social rights of Cuban citizens. Consequently, Cuba is urged to:

- **ratify the United Nations' human rights conventions** which are still pending, more specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- **align its human rights policy with the international standards** defined in the charters, declarations and international instruments to which Cuba is a signatory.

Members recalled that the Agreement includes a **provision for the suspension of the agreement** in the event of a violation of the provisions on human rights.

Moreover, welcoming the explicit references to civil society as an actor of cooperation, the resolution encouraged both parties to promote an active role for Cuban civil society during the implementation phase of the agreement.

Measures having extraterritorial effects: Parliament recalled its long-standing position, adopted on numerous occasions and shared by the European institutions, is contrary to extraterritoriality laws, given that they are directly harmful to the Cuban people and affect the activities of European undertakings.

According to Members, the Agreement can **contribute to the reform, adjustment and modernisation processes** already being proposed in Cuba, in particular with regard to the diversification of Cuba's international partners and the establishment of a general framework of political and economic development. They urged the European institutions and the Member States to assist the economic and political transition in Cuba.

Social rights: Parliament called on Cuba to ratify and comply with the regulations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Decent Work Agenda, and to proscribe all forms of labour exploitation. In this context, all workers need to enjoy a core set of labour rights as well as adequate social protection.

Trade: highlighting that the Agreement does not provide any trade preferences for Cuba, Parliament reiterated that the Agreement provides a platform for **expanding the bilateral trade** and investment relationship.

Cuba, as a member of the WTO, needs to respect the basic principles of the WTO, such as trade facilitation, agreements on trade barriers, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and trade defence instruments.

Moreover, **customs cooperation** is a crucial area that needs to be developed in order to address important challenges such as border security, public health, the protection of geographical indications, the fight against counterfeit goods and the fight against terrorism.

The Commission is invited to create **ad-hoc trade desks** in order to exchange best practices and provide Cuban exporters with the knowledge required to improve the access of goods onto the EU market.

Members considered that the country's situation as a developing island state and the economic circumstances it is facing, which are exacerbated by the adverse impact of unilateral coercive measures, justify the adoption of measures that will enable EU assistance to Cuba to be continued, under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI).

Lastly, Parliament called on the Commission and the EEAS to ensure the establishment of a **regular exchange with Parliament** on the implementation of the Agreement, in particular as regards the realisation of all human, environmental and labour rights provisions.