Resolution on the human rights situation in Cuba

2018/2926(RSP) - 15/11/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 325 votes to 240 with 44 abstentions a resolution on the human rights situation in Cuba.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, ECR, and ALDE groups.

Parliament condemned the arbitrary detention and persecution of peaceful dissidents, independent journalists, human rights defenders and political opposition in Cuba, with specific reference to Eduardo Cardet, a national coordinator of the Christian Liberation Movement (MCL) who was sentenced to three years in prison for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Member States, the EEAS and the EU's delegation in Cuba were asked to take all necessary action to **protect political opponents** and human rights defenders.

Members called for fulfilment of the **binding obligations established in the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA)** regarding Cuba's observance of human rights, stating that the situation regarding human rights and democracy in Ciba has not improved since the adoption of the Agreement. They invited VP/HR Federica Mogherini to inform Parliament in detail in plenary about the concrete steps being taken with the aim of meeting the requirements on human rights and democracy, noting at the same time that the PDCA includes a **provision for the suspension of the Agreement** that should be applied in the event of a violation of the provisions on human rights. Parliament required regular reports on this issue.

The VP/HR was also asked to recognise the existence of a political opposition to the Cuban Government and to support its inclusion in the political dialogue between the EU and Cuba. Parliament called on all EU Member State representatives to raise human rights concerns during visits with the Cuban authorities and to meet with the Sakharov Prize laureates (Oswaldo Payá, the Ladies in White and Guillermo Fariñas) when visiting Cuba in order to ensure the internal and external coherence of EU human rights policy.

The resolution urged the Cuban government to:

- stop imposing online censorship and stop blocking internet sites for the sole purpose of limiting political criticism and restricting access to information;
- redefine its policy on human rights by aligning it with international human rights law and to allow active participation in political and social life by all civil society and opposition political actors, without imposing any restrictions;
- guarantee the full independence of its judicial system and to set up an independent National Institution of Human Rights in line with the Paris Principles;
- abolish the death penalty for all crimes;
- allow churches to conduct their social care activities freely in Cuban society; calls for freedom of religion and conscience to be fully guaranteed;

Parliament expressed concern about the **constitutional referendum** due to take place on 24 February 2019, stating that the process lacks proper nationwide consultation, thereby ensuring that the Communist Party maintains its powerful role in society without a multi-party system, basic freedoms and political and civil rights. It urged the European institutions and Member States to assist the economic and political transition in Cuba, using the various **EU foreign policy instruments,** and in particular the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), in order to reinforce the EU's dialogue with Cuban civil society.

Lastly, Parliament regretted the Cuban authorities' refusal to allow European Parliament committees, delegations and some political groups to visit Cuba despite Parliament granting its consent to the PDCA, and called on the authorities to allow entry to the country, particularly during the constitutional referendum.