Resolution on the state of the EU-Cuba PDCA in the light of the recent visit of the High Representative to the island

2023/2744(RSP) - 12/07/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 359 votes to 226, with 50 abstentions, a resolution on the state of the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) in the light of the recent visit of the High Representative to the island.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, Renew and ECR groups.

In 2017, Parliament gave its consent to the PDCA, including clear conditions linked to the improvement of human rights and democracy in Cuba. The EU recalled, during the third formal Human Rights Dialogue with Cuba on 26 February 2021, the need to respect international human rights law obligations. Its ratification process has not been fully completed and the agreement provisionally applies.

Parliament has repeatedly condemned human rights violations in Cuba. It has also repeatedly reminded the EEAS that the participation of representatives of independent civil society in the political dialogues and the agreement's cooperation projects is an essential part of the PDCA and that excluding representatives of independent civil society from cooperation funds and/or participation in the agreement while, on the contrary, allowing participation and access to cooperation funds exclusively for companies in which the state participates or which it controls, as has been the case since the signing of the agreement, should be remedied immediately.

In its resolution of 22 June 2023, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recognises Cuba as an ally of Putin's regime and 'calls on the parliaments of Council of Europe member States to withdraw from the pending ratification of free trade agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cuba (PDCA)'.

Despite years of insisting on the need to visit the island, the Cuban authorities systematically refuse to allow official committees, delegations and some political groups from the European Parliament, international human rights organisations and other independent observers of the human rights situation, including UN special rapporteurs, to enter Cuba.

It should also be noted that the Cuban regime has deepened its relationship with the Putin regime since the start of Russia's illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine.

In its resolution, Parliament considered that, despite the time that has elapsed since the entry into force of the PDCA, the lack of democracy and freedoms in Cuba has not improved at all. It noted that, on the contrary, the human rights situation on the island has been **further aggravated and has further deteriorated**, in clear and systematic violation of the basic provisions of the PDCA.

The resolution condemned in the strongest terms the systematic human rights violations and abuses against protesters, political dissidents, religious leaders, human rights activists and independent artists, among others, perpetrated by the Cuban regime. It urged the Cuban authorities to immediately put an end to the policy of repression and condemned the lack of religious freedom in Cuba.

The Cuban authorities are called on to:

- protect human rights and ensure the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, without discrimination based on political views;

- put an immediate end to their extensive censorship of the media and to their control of the internet;

- grant access to a European Parliament, EU and Member State delegation and independent human rights organisations to monitor the trials of and conduct prison visits to the hundreds of activists and ordinary Cubans who remain detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly.

Parliament deplored the VP/HR's failure to use his presence in the country to meet with independent civil society representatives, political prisoners or their relatives, which represents a missed opportunity. It deeply regretted that the VP/HR squandered the chance to support democracy through Cuban civil society and the political prisoners and to send a clear message about the EU's concerns regarding human rights violations in Cuba.

Parliament reiterated its call for the EU to trigger Article 85(3)(b) of the PDCA to request an immediate meeting of the joint committee owing to the Cuban Government's breaches of the agreement, which constitute a '**case of special urgency**' that may lead to the **suspension of the agreement**.

Lastly, the Council is once again called on to apply the provisions of the EU Global Human Rights Sanction Regime (the EU Magnitsky Act) and adopt sanctions against those responsible for the persistent human rights violations in Cuba.