Resolution on the critical situation in Cuba

2024/2584(RSP) - 29/02/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 285 votes to 172, with 46 abstentions, a resolution on the critical situation in Cuba.

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

Parliament gave its consent to the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) between the EU and Cuba on 5 July 2017, with clear conditions linked to the improvement of human rights and democracy in Cuba, including a suspension clause in the event of a violation of the human rights provisions. 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 or to visit prisons.

Moreover, the resolution noted that the number of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Cuba has risen dramatically, reaching 1 066 on 31 January 2024, including 33 who were minors at the time of detention, an eightfold increase since 2018, rising by 170 in the last 12 months, equivalent to a monthly average of more than 14 politically motivated detentions.

Therefore, Parliament considered that the PDCA has failed in its core aim of improving fundamental freedoms in Cuba.

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

Members also called for:

- the immediate and unconditional release of individuals detained solely for exercising their human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;

- the dismissal of unjust criminal charges and supports the facilitation of the return of those in exile;

- access to be granted to the country by the European Parliament (which is the sole European institution denied access to Cuban territory).

Furthermore, Parliament declared is unacceptable that the EEAS and the EU Delegation in Havana agreed to exclude the Cuban democratic opposition and independent and legitimate civil society organisations, both European and Cuban, from political dialogues because of the lack of endorsement by the Cuban authorities.

The Council is called on to apply the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (the EU Magnitsky Act) and adopt sanctions against those responsible for the persistent human rights violations in Cuba, starting by sanctioning Miguel Díaz-Canel, as the most senior figure in the chain of command of the Cuban security forces, along with other high-ranking officials within the Cuban Government and all those responsible for the imprisonment of political prisoners.

Lastly, 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'. It stressed that the Cuban regime's failure to address such breaches despite repeated calls from Parliament to do so should lead to the suspension of the agreement.