Relations between the European Union/Cuba

1995/2208(COS) - 18/01/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Stanley NEWENS (PSE, UK) on relations between the European Union and Cuba, the European Parliament welcomed the Commission's communication provided that it led to a genuine dialogue with Cuba and the establishment of a contractual framework which was compatible with European Union doctrine on cooperation, respect for human rights and democracy. It considered that whilst the European Union could help Cuba through a revival of the dialogue, Cuba should round out its economic opening-up with a political opening-up leading to free elections. Parliament believed that dialogue was 'the most positive means of encouraging evolution' in Cuba towards the achievement of those political and economic changes which would enable the country fully to integrate itself into the international community. To support the democratic process in Cuba, at all levels, Parliament proposed: - increasing humanitarian and food aid (as far as possible through the NGOs emanating from Cuban civil society) as well as those projects which supported current reforms; - paying special attention to the development of Cuban civil society by supporting the work of NGOs and favouring their international contacts; - regularizing the legal status of the NGOs working in Cuba in the interests of making their work more efficient; - calling on the Member States to consider measures to reduce or cancel the debt which Cuba owed to them; - calling on the Commission to provide Cuba with technical assistance in introducing new institutional and structural measures. But other international action was also needed. Hence the call on the US authorities for a total lifting of the economic embargo against Cuba. Furthermore, the US should not impose penalties on undertakings which traded with Cuba. Whilst the European Parliament's desire to see the Union contribute to an improvement of the situation in Cuba was clear, its Members also trusted that Cuba would take decisive steps towards democratic reform: - Cuba should take decisive steps towards a democratization of its political system, beginning with a reconsideration of the cases of all its prisoners of conscience; - the Cuban penal code should be reformed; - Cuba should recognize the right of Cuban workers to exercise their right to strike, to set up independent trade unions and to deal directly with employers; - the right of European undertakings to develop trading relations and conduct business operations in Cuba and with Cuban partners should be guaranteed; - equality of treatment for Cuban businessmen compared with foreign business men when staff are being taken on should be guaranteed. It also emphasized the importance of granting the request of the Centre for European Studies in Havana to be given the status of 'Centre for European Documentation' in collaboration with IRELA.