Resolution on Cuba

2004/2605(RSP) - 17/11/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 376 votes to 281 with 26 abstentions a resolution on Cuba.

The resolution had been tabled by the EPP-ED, UEN, and ALDE groups.

Noting that scores of independent journalists, peaceful dissidents and upholders of human rights (members of the democratic opposition and in most cases linked to the Varela project) are still being held in jail in subhuman conditions, and some of them are seriously ill, Parliament calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience who are being held in the country and condemns such detentions, which constitute an attack on the most basic human rights, in particular freedom of expression and freedom of political association. Members urge the Council and the Commission to continue to **take whatever action is necessary in order to seek the release of the above individuals.**

Parliament vehemently condemns the Cuban authorities' expulsion of three parliamentarians from the EU Member States and of two representatives of NGOs who were trying to enter the country with a view to meeting members of the democratic opposition and of the Varela project, in order to demonstrate to them their support and solidarity in the upholding of democratic values. It expresses its support for them and for the members of the democratic opposition.

Parliament goes on to repeat its invitation to the winner of the European Parliament's 2002 Sakharov Prize, Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, who has been systematically denied the freedom to leave Cuba. It urges the Cuban authorities to grant him the necessary permits in order to enable him to appear before the Community institutions.

Parliament reiterates that the objectives of the EU's policy towards Cuba continue to be respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, encouragement of a process of transition to a pluralist democracy and a lasting economic recovery aimed at improving the living standards of the Cuban population.

Parliament stresses that the current embargo imposed on Cuba by the USA is counterproductive and should be lifted.

Lastly, Members emphasise that the political future of Cuba must rest on the sole will of its citizens.