Basic information

1995/2208(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Relations between the European Union/Cuba **Subject** 6.40.10 Relations with Latin America, Central America, Caribbean islands **Geographical area** Cuba	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	NEWENS Arthur Stanley (PSE)	06/06/1995

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
RELA External Economic Relations	KREISSL-DÖRFLER Wolfgang (V)	07/09/1995
DEVE Development and Cooperation	SALAFRANCA SÁNCHEZ-NEYRA José Ignacio (PPE)	17/10/1995

Council of the European Union

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
28/06/1995	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1995)0306	Summary
18/09/1995	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
29/11/1995	Vote in committee		Summary
29/11/1995	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0312/1995	
17/01/1996	Debate in Parliament		Summary
18/01/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		
05/02/1996	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1995/2208(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/4/06853

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0312/1995 OJ C 017 22.01.1996, p. 0005	29/11/1995	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0013/1996 OJ C 032 05.02.1996, p. 0070-0085	18/01/1996	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1995)0306	28/06/1995	Summary

Relations between the European Union/Cuba

1995/2208(COS) - 28/06/1995 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to provide an initial idea of current relations between the European Union and Cuba, focusing on the economic and political situation in Cuba and the potential for instituting a dialogue between the EU and Cuba. CONTENT: this communication explains why Cuba needs a new international and regional profile and why the European Union needs to use its specific weight to exert a dynamic force here if this country is to make a peaceful and successful transition to a market economy and political pluralism. . Economic and political situation: changes have taken place in Cuba following the abolition of COMECON in 1989. Economic reforms have already been adopted and other reforms have been announced (mainly in agriculture, foreign investment, small independent companies and corporate restructuring). As far as respect for human rights in concerned, Cuba is still a long way from meeting European democratic criteria, but the situation appears to be changing for the better since an information mission on prisoners of conscience was set up, followed by the release of Sebastian Arcos. . As far as relations between the Union and Cuba are concerned, Cuba is currently the only Latin American country with which the Community has no cooperation agreement. However, there is free trade between the parties (Cuba benefits from the SPG) and diplomatic relations exist through the ambassadors of 11 Member States resident in Cuba and the head of the Commission delegation based in Mexico. The European Parliament, for its part, has set out its position vis-à-vis this country in 2 resolutions (condemning the Torricelli law strengthening the embargo in 1993 and in a resolution on the "balseros" crisis in 1994, in which it called on the Community to start negotiations with a view to concluding a cooperation agreement). As far as specific Community action is concerned, regular humanitarian aid is organized, together with one-off projects to support the reforms started in 1993 (humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable sections of the Cuban population, training programmes for bosses of Cuban companies) with the result that total cooperation aid rose from ECU 500,000 in 1994 to ECU 5 million in 1995. . The communication also gives a summary description of relations between Cuba and the United States. Although still strained, relations are evolving slowly and are firmly on the political agenda. The embargo is not conducive to the rapid development of Cuba and trade between the two states would without doubt help the system to change. The Commission draws particular attention to the fact that any hardening of the situation (especially the Helms-Burton bill) would be fatal for Cuba, although the Clinton administration does, for its part, appear to be in favour of a less black-and-white policy. . As far as future relations between the EC and Cuba are concerned, the Commission feels that the Union is in the best position to launch an initiative to support reform in Cuba and could, in agreement with Cuba's neighbouring partners, launch a dialogue which might bring other countries such as Mexico on board. This dialogue would take the form of consultations with Cuban contacts, taking account of the economic and institutional reforms under way, and would cover reforms and the development of civil society, guarantees of greater private initiative

and more individual freedoms and the form and content of future relations between the EU and Cuba. In conclusion, the Commission could, if the Council agreed, start exploratory discussions with a view to identifying a framework for future relations between the EU and Cuba.

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.