



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING, Luxembourg 13 June 2005

Council Conclusions concerning Cuba

"The Council reaffirmed the relevance and validity of the Common Position of 1996 which, in the context of the European Union's relations with Cuba, sets out to encourage a process of transition to pluralist democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and a sustainable recovery and improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people.

Similarly, the Council reiterated its willingness to maintain a constructive dialogue with the Cuban authorities, on a reciprocal and non-discriminatory basis, including on the issue of granting visas to the members of the respective governments for visits, with the aim of achieving tangible results with regard to human rights, democratisation and the release of political prisoners, as well as in the political, economic and cooperation spheres. The human rights issue should be raised by every high-level visitor.

In line with its decisions of 31 January 2005, the Council reiterated its urgent request to Cuba to release unconditionally all political prisoners of the group of 75 and urged the Cuban authorities to release all other political prisoners still being detained and to stop political persecutions.

In this connection, the Council expressed regret at the lack of any further advance since the release, in June and November 2004, of a number of the 75 political prisoners detained in March 2003 who, moreover, have not been released unconditionally. It condemned the action taken by the Cuban authorities to curb the freedom of expression and assembly and the freedom of the press.

The Council welcomed the progress made to date in the development of closer relations with the peaceful political opposition and broader sectors of Cuban civil society through intense and regular dialogue. The Council decided to maintain this dialogue and indeed intensify it according to the agreed guidelines. It reiterated the need to continue meetings of representatives of the EU and of the Member States with the peaceful opposition.

P R E S S

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The Council welcomed with particular satisfaction the "Asamblea para Promover la Sociedad Civil" (Assembly to Promote Civil Society) held in Havana on 20 May 2005. However, it categorically condemned Cuba's unacceptable attitude towards foreign parliamentarians and journalists who attended the Assembly and who were either expelled from or denied entry into Cuba. The Council called on the Cuban authorities to refrain in future from such action which would jeopardise normal relations between Cuba and the European Union.

The Council noted that there was no satisfactory progress on human rights in Cuba. The Council decided to maintain constant monitoring of Cuba's progress towards pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and to reconsider its position in the context of the evaluation of the Common Position in June 2006.

The measures taken on 5 June 2003 remain suspended."

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