

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Division for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

Brussels, 29 June 2023

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Netzwerk Cuba

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Dear all,

Thank you for your letter of 21 June 2023 addressed to the High Representative Borrell on the state of play of the diplomatic relations between the EU and Cuba. I have been asked to reply on his behalf.

As you well know, the PDCA between Cuba and the EU is the expression of our policy towards the island, based on a critical but constructive dialogue. We believe that - in the current context of serious economic and social crisis in Cuba, and of global geopolitical instability caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine - **the objectives of the Agreement remain all the more pertinent:** strengthening our relations in the areas of political dialogue, cooperation and trade, and accompanying the process of economic and social modernization of Cuba, with the ultimate goal of contributing to improving the lives of all Cubans.

The PDCA also aims to institutionalize and expand our relationship to new areas of crucial interest for the EU, such as **non-proliferation and sustainable development**. Most importantly, what the PDCA provides us is a unique space for frank dialogue on issues in which we have similar interests, such as the fight against climate change, but also in areas in which our positions diverge, such as human rights and the Russian invasion.

Moreover, as pointed out in several occasions by the High Representative Borrell, also during his last recent mission to Cuba on May 26-27¹ in the occasion of the Third Cuba-EU Joint Council - the annual ministerial meeting in the framework of the PDCA, **the EU's view remains that the embargo and extraterritorial sanctions are morally wrong (despite some exemptions, they harm the population more than the regime) and politically counter-productive.**

To be specific, the EU strongly rejects the US activation of **Title III and IV** of the Helms-Burton Act in April 2019. This breaches the commitments made by the US in the US-EU agreements of 1997 and 1998. We will draw on all appropriate measures to address the effects of the Helms-Burton Act, including in relation to **our WTO rights** and through the use of **the EU Blocking**

¹ <https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/20230526-eu-cuba-joint-council>

Statute, which protects against the extra-territorial application of those US sanctions to EU citizens, businesses and NGOs operating in Cuba. Therefore, we welcome the measures announced by the US Administration in 2022 to ease restrictions on family remittances and travel to the island, and to fully resume consular services.

Furthermore, the re-designation of Cuba as a **state sponsor of terrorism** by the previous US Administration without presenting any new facts and its maintenance on the list has introduced obstacles to international financial transactions with the island.

The EU remains in fact committed to its policy of critical but constructive engagement with Cuba, pressing for the implementation of all pillars of the PDCA.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JH', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a small upward tick at the end.

Jonathan Hatwell

Head of Division
AMERICAS.2 - Mexico, Central America and Caribbean