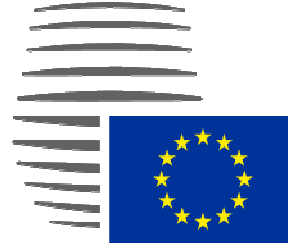


June 21, 2023



Dear Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón,
dear Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares,
dear President Charles Michel,
dear High Representative Josep Borrell Fontelles,
dear President Ursula von der Leyen,

We are writing to urge you and the European Union to continue its welcome policy of developing positive and beneficial relationships with Cuba based on mutual respect and understanding.

The recent years have seen another significant negative change in the attitude of the United States government towards Cuba which has included the reduction of diplomatic relations, communications and overall relations between the two countries. Among those activities even the inclusion of Cuba in the State Department's unilateral list of countries that allegedly do not fully cooperate with US efforts against terrorism, "SSOT" (which is pure nonsense). This has to be removed immediately.

At the same time, we have seen the US increase its use of their unilateral extraterritorial laws through the application of Titles III and IV of the so-called Helms-Burton-legislation which negatively affect hundreds of businesses, banks and even NGOs in European countries and across the globe. This kind of "policy of fear" is undermining free and fair trade, is violating international law, and is destroying solidarity and peaceful development – which is today more important and needed than ever before.

In November 2022, for the 30th consecutive year (!), the United Nations General Assembly voted 185-2, in support of a resolution calling for an end of the U.S. blockade on Cuba. The whole world demands the U.S. administration to stop its destructive and unlawful activities against its neighbour Cuba. At the same time there have been visits to Cuba by a number of European politicians and reciprocal visits by Cuban politicians to Europe. These developments are to be welcomed. There has been welcome progress in the relationships between the EU and Cuba through the signing of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement in March 2016. We hope that this agreement will be filled with many more progressive activities and sustainable projects.

The European Union has the right and the capacity to play an independent and constructive, future-oriented role in encouraging the practical implementation of the will and desire of the peoples of Europe, and to strengthen multilateralism and fair cooperation.

There are now very valuable preconditions laid out for Spain's Presidency of the Council of the European Union between 1 July – 31 December 2023. One focus will be the new Sustainability Plan to ensure that the presidency is sustainable, in line with the 2030 Agenda, and with political priorities such as the ecological transition, inclusion and equality. This will include the competitiveness of European industry, the reduction of energy costs and trade agreements. A special relevance is intended on deepening relations with Latin America.

These important intentions can and should be utilised for strengthening and improving the relations between the EU and Cuba. Cuba is leading sustainable development in many ways, for instance through greening the industry, sustainable agriculture, e-mobility, its pharmaceutical research, and its medical internationalism. Cuba has sent the Henry Reeve Brigades to more than 30 countries, saving many lives and reducing suffering of patients. Cuba has sent medical brigades to European countries such as Italy and Ireland very recently.

With such activities and many others Cuba helps to strengthen multilateralism and solidarity, and even the rule of law internationally. Therefore, it is a scandal and a shame, that at the very same time it has had to deal with increased unilateral sanctions and subversion by the Trump administration and its agencies, which even blocked medical supplies from reaching Cuba. And President Biden's government is continuing those crimes.

Another important goal in the new Presidency is to combat climate change and to advancing global climate action under the Paris Agreement. In this regard Cuba is very advanced and continues to make efforts to develop a 'sustainable and green' economy. All its efforts over recent decades illustrate an amazingly ambitious and progressive strategic program for a systemic policy of climate protection. Cuba's national climate plan "Tarea Vida" (Program for Life) began in July 2017 and is being implemented across Cuba at every level.

In our view, it would be decisive for the development of better bilateral relations for the European Union to have a clear and unequivocal stance against the punitive and indefensible policies embodied in the unilateral U.S. anti-Cuban Blockade legislation and the numerous sanctions. All Latin American and Caribbean countries are favouring an end to the U.S. blockade; clear steps by the E.U. in this regard would enhance the trust in the European policies and its self-confident politics.

The stance of the EU should include a clear statement informing the US administration of the EU's intentions to strongly support the rights of the member states to trade with Cuba without the threat of fines being imposed by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). Further, we believe that the EU should clearly endorse the right to trade with Cuba and the refusal of any EU companies to pay any fines which OFAC might seek to impose on them for trading with Cuba. Such actions would help to implement "Council Regulation (EC) No 2271/96 of 22 November 1996". In this regard, the European Commission should call upon the World Trade Organisation to indict the U.S. government for its violations of international trade laws and principles. With such action the EU would support many other countries, companies and organisations, in their perfectly legal desire to do business with Cuba.

We also believe that it is of utmost importance, that the EU strengthens the rule of law in international relations. Therefore, it should recognise the independence and sovereignty of

Cuba by declaring its full support for the complete and unconditional withdrawal by the United States of America and its military from its illegal occupation of Guantanamo Bay. The EU should support Cuba's rights and demand for full restoration of the land to Cuba and adequate compensation for the many decades of occupation.

We are a broad and diverse group of organisations of citizens based in Europe working to develop friendship, mutual understanding and solidarity between Cuba and our respective countries, as well as with the European Union itself. It is our view that the European Union has an important role to play in developing positive relations with Cuba based on mutual respect and understanding between sovereign nations and diverse cultures, and we hope that your Presidency will see these policies developed further,

Sincerely yours,

The undersigned from 19 countries/entities are listed on the next page



The undersigned

(members and non-members of the EU)

- AUSTRIA: Michael Wögerer (President), Österreichisch-Kubanische Gesellschaft and Prof. Alfred Kohlbacher (President of the Board of Trustees)
- BELGIUM: Wim Leysens (Secretary), Coordinación para el levantamiento del bloqueo contra Cuba (40 member organisations); Regi Rotty (President), "Amigos de Cuba Belgica"; Isabelle Vanbrabant (President), Cubanismo.be
- BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: Sead Halilovic (President), Association of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian-Cuban Friendship
- CYPRUS: Vera Polycarpou (Secretaria), La Asociación de Amistad Chipre-Cuba
- DENMARK: Susanne Wind (President), Dansk-Cubansk Forening
- EUROPE: Franco Cavalli (Presidente), mediCuba – Europa
- FINLAND: Paula Pere (President), Suomi-Kuuba-seura ry (Asociación de Amistad Finlandia-Cuba)
- GERMANY: Angelika Becker (President), Netzwerk Cuba e.V. (40 member groups)
- GREECE: Alekos Chalvatzis (Coordinator), "Jose Marti" Cultural Association - Solidarity with Cuba (Greece); Ioannis Tsalavoutas (Cordinador), La Red Solidaria Griega; Andreas Chaicalis (President) - Greek Cuban Association Venceremos" of Kalamata
- ICELAND: Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdottir (President), Vináttufélag Islands og Kúbu (VIK) (Iceland-Cuba Friendship Association)
- IRELAND: Simon McGuinness (National Coordinator), Cuba Support Group
- ITALY: Marco Papacci Irma Dioli (President), Asociacion Nacional de Amistad Italia-Cuba
- The NETHERLANDS: Mark Koster (University of Amsterdam) and Paul Jonas (University of Leiden), members of inter-university Cuba-Europa Education and Science Exchange group (CEESE)
- SERBIA: Sveto Dobrijević (President), Serbian-Cuban Friendship Association
- SLOVENIA: Igor JURIŠIČ (President) Slovene - Cuban friendship association
- SPAIN: Manuel García, MESC - Movimiento estatal de solidaridad con Cuba del estado español (63 member groups); David Rodríguez, Asociación valenciana de amistad con Cuba José Martí
- SWEDEN: Matias Diessler (President), La Asociación Sueco Cubana de Solidaridad con Cuba
- SWITZERLAND: Samuel Wanitsch, Asociation Switzerland-Cuba
- UNITED KINGDOM: Rob Miller (Director) and Bernard Regan (Secretary), Cuba Solidarity Campaign