

STATEMENT

EU must support the compliance of Human Rights principles in Cuba

November 2012

The Europe-Cuba NGO Network /further only Network/ calls upon the European Union to officially support the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights in Cuba. The Network is deeply concerned about the increase in human rights abuses in Cuba. On the occasion of the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels on 19/11/2012 we would like to draw the attention to the ongoing problems and human rights abuses still taking place on the island and we feel it necessary to make an appeal on the EUs rather indecisive position.

For decades the Cuban government has repressed all forms of political dissent. Even though the Cuban government has implemented some economic reforms in the recent years, the human rights records remain dire. Prohibition of freedom of expression, forced exile, persecution of human rights-defenders, short-term detentions, harassments, “actos de repudio”, brutal physical attacks remain the main strategy of the government to keep the opposition under control. In the period of January to May 2012 there were 3 227 documented detentions. In 2011 there were over 3 500 and in 2010 more than 2 000 detentions. The government increasingly relies on arbitrary arrests and short-term detentions in order to harass and intimidate individuals who exercise their fundamental rights, including the right to assemble and move about freely. Dissidents are being detained for hours in order to prevent them from attending oppositional activities.

We feel it necessary to draw the attention to the following issues:

1. Growing number of arrests and arbitrary detentions and the frequent use of short-term imprisonment in the past year.
2. The fact that the undertaken reforms have not been resulted in any real improvement of the situation of human rights and democracy in Cuba.
3. The EU must actively support human right principals in order to guarantee greater respect for human rights and political openness on the island.
4. The difficulties of obtaining EU support in the sphere of human rights and democracy for civil society organisations.
5. The ratification of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, was recently demanded by Cubans in the „Demanda ciudadana por otra Cuba“, which resulted in brutal arrests on November 7th and 8th. The leading person of this campaign Antonio Rodiles is still in custody.

Therefore we suggest:

1. The EU should support human rights principals in order to guarantee greater respect for human rights and political openness on the island.

2. The EU should reconsider its policy for grants, which usually require the receiving NGOs to be registered in Cuba. In reality this means working with or for the government (for example: “Agentes No Estatales y Autoridades Locales en el Desarrollo”).
3. The EU should demand that the Cuban government ratify the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, signed in 2008.
4. EU should remain committed to its common position on Cuba in order to achieve improvement of the respect for human rights in Cuba. However, if the EU decides to open negotiations regarding a bilateral agreement, the mandate for such negotiations should include strong writings in order to protect human rights; especially freedom of association, speech and expression.

The Network calls upon the member states of the European Union to formally adopt necessary measures, like the ones mentioned above. The European Union must take a united, clear and principled stand in support of human rights and democratisation in Cuba.

This statement has been endorsed by the following organisations:

People in Need, Czech Republic
 Christian Solidarity Worldwide, United Kingdom and Belgium
 Christian Democratic International Centre, Sweden
 Nadacia Pontis/Pontis Foundation, Slovakia
 Solidaridad Espanola Con Cuba, Spain
 Fundación Hispano Cubana, Spain
 International Society for Human Rights, Germany
 Cuba Futuro, Netherlands



Kristdemokratiskt Internationellt Center
 Christian Democratic International Center

