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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Oral Questions B5-0271/2003 and B5-0272/2003

pursuant to Rule 42(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Gerardo Galeote Quecedo and
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on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on relations between EU and Cuba

European Parliament resolution on relations between EU and Cuba

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the political situation in Cuba, and particularly the latest resolution of 10 April 2003,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the External Relations Council of 21 July 2003 concerning the situation in Cuba,
 - having regard to the Commission's statement of 27 July 2003 concerning Cuba's refusal of the humanitarian aid provided by the EU,
 - having regard to the declarations of 26 March and 5 June 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the EU concerning the continuing flagrant violation of human rights and of fundamental freedoms in Cuba,
 - having regard to the common position 96/697/CFSP of 2 December 1996, on Cuba, defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union and periodically renewed,
- A. whereas the recent events in Cuba, such as the numerous arrests, imprisonments and severe sentences after summary trials affecting more than 70 dissidents and human rights activists and the resumed use of the death penalty, have led the European Commission to suspend the evaluation report on the Cuban request for accession to the Cotonou Agreement;
- B. whereas the Government of Cuba from its side has decided to withdraw, for the second time, its request for accession to the Cotonou Agreement;
- C. whereas the European Union has recently decided to limit bilateral high-level governmental visits; to reduce the profile of Member States' participation in cultural events; to invite Cuban dissidents to national day celebrations; and to proceed to the re-evaluation of the EU common position;
- D. whereas over 70 human rights activists, members of the political opposition, intellectuals, independent journalists, Varela project promoters and members of other groups supporting democracy in Cuba have been imprisoned since 18 March, on charges such as dissenting from official Cuban policies and exercising the right of freedom of expression, being accused of subversive activity;
- E. extremely concerned at the state of health of several dissidents currently imprisoned on the island;

- F. whereas the exercise of the freedom of expression is a fundamental human right;
- G. whereas, in the meantime, the Cuban population continues to suffer the consequences not only of the human rights violations but also of the economic and social weaknesses of Castro's regime;
1. Reiterates its firm protest at and censure of the continuing and flagrant violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba perpetrated by the regime, and calls on the Cuban authorities to effect the immediate release of all political prisoners;
 2. Calls on the Council and Commission to monitor the issue of political prisoners in Cuban jails and to take all necessary steps to secure the immediate release of all of them;
 3. Urges the Council and Commission to continue their efforts to promote positive change in Fidel Castro's regime on the basis of the universal principles concerning respect for human rights and democratic values;
 4. Notes that since the previous evaluation of last December, not only have there been no positive steps by the Cuban government leading to the accomplishment of the aims of the Common Position, but the human rights situation in Cuba has severely deteriorated;
 5. Deplores Castro's calls for EU aid to Cuba to be rejected, even though the EU has not yet been officially notified, and recalls the EU's willingness and permanent commitment to provide aid to help the Cuban people, particularly those in greatest need;
 6. Supports the decision taken by its Committee on Foreign Affairs to invite Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winner of the European Parliament's 2002 Sakharov Prize, and asks the Cuban authorities not to prevent his presence;
 7. Considers that during the future interparliamentary meetings to be held between representatives of the European Union and Latin America, those members of delegations without democratic legitimacy and not defending the validity of universal and recognised democratic values such as respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms should be prevented from participating in those forums;
 8. Deeply regrets the behaviour of the Cuban authorities towards Community institutions, Member States and accession countries, even more so now that the European Commission has recently opened an office in Havana; also regrets the closure of the Spanish Cultural Centre and expects a new attitude from the authorities and major reform efforts that might lead the country through a peaceful transition to a full democracy, political pluralism and respect for the rule of law;
 9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, to the Government of the Republic of Cuba, and to Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winner of the European Parliament's 2002 Sakharov Prize.