



R. Schuman

Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence

*The Cuban Revolution (1959-2009)
and the European Union:
a documentary selection of
Statements and Declarations*

Joaquín Roy



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These topics form part of the pressing agenda of the EU and represent the multifaceted and complex nature of the European integration process. These papers also seek to highlight the internal and external dynamics which influence the workings of the EU and its relationship with the rest the world.

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Index

- Appendix I Common Position of December 2, 1996, defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on the European Union on Cuba.
- Appendix II General Affairs Council. Conclusions X: Evaluation of the Common Position on Cuba Evaluation of December 10, 2001.
- Appendix III General Affairs Council. Conclusions XI: Evaluation of the Common Position of June 17, 2002.
- Appendix IV General Affairs Council. Conclusions XII Evaluation of the EU Common Position on Cuba, December 10, 2002.
- Appendix V European Parliament Resolution, April 10, 2003: Human Rights in Cuba.
- Appendix VI European Union Presidency: April 14, 2003.
- Appendix VII European Union Geneva, 16 April 2003: Final Draft – Commission on Human Rights, Fifty-ninth Session (Geneva, 17 March - 25 April 2003): General Comment before Taking Action on the Draft Resolution ‘Human Rights Situation in Cuba’ (L.2).
- Appendix VIII Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba
- Appendix IX Declaration of the Presidency, on behalf of the European Union, on Cuba (Brussels, June 5, 2003).
- Appendix X EU Policy on Cuba. Council Conclusions, 14 June 2007.
- Appendix XI It is the European Union that must rectify errors committed against Cuba: Statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on conclusions reached by the European Union’s External Relations Council regarding Cuba. June 22, 2007.
- Appendix XII Reflections of President Fidel Castro: An honorable Response. June 27, 2007.
- Appendix XIII Council of the European Union. CUBA – Council Conclusions 2881st Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting, Luxemburg, 23 & 24 June 2008.

Appendix I

COMMON POSITION
of December 2, 1996,
defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2
of the Treaty on the European Union on Cuba.

OFFICIAL JOURNAL NO. L 322 , 12/12/1996 P. 1

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the European Union and, in particular, Article J.2 thereof,

HAS DEFINED THE FOLLOWING COMMON POSITION:

1. The objective of the European Union in its relations with Cuba is to encourage a process of transition to pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as a sustainable recovery and improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people. A transition would most likely be peaceful if the present regime were itself to initiate or permit such a process. It is not European Union policy to try to bring about change by coercive measures with the effect of increasing the economic hardship of the Cuban people.
2. The European Union acknowledges the tentative economic opening undertaken in Cuba to date. It is its firm wish to be Cuba's partner in the progressive and irreversible opening of the Cuban economy. The European Union considers that full cooperation with Cuba will depend upon improvements in human rights and political freedom, as indicated by the European Council in Florence.
3. In order to facilitate peaceful change in Cuba, the European Union
 - a. Will intensify the present dialogue with the Cuban authorities and with all sectors of Cuban society in order to promote respect for human rights and real progress towards pluralist democracy;
 - b. Will seek out opportunities - even more actively than heretofore - to remind the Cuban authorities, both publicly and privately, of fundamental

- responsibilities regarding human rights, in particular freedom of speech and association;
- c. Will encourage the reform of internal legislation concerning political and civil rights, including the Cuban criminal code, and, consequently, the abolition of all political offences, the release of all political prisoners and the ending of the harassment and punishment of dissidents;
 - d. Will evaluate developments in Cuban internal and foreign policies according to the same standards that apply to European Union relations with other countries, in particular the ratification and observance of international human rights conventions;
 - e. Will remain willing in the meantime, through the member states, to provide ad hoc humanitarian aid, subject to prior agreement regarding distribution; currently applicable measures to ensure distribution through non-governmental organizations, the churches and international organizations will be maintained and, where appropriate, reinforced. It is noted that the Commission is proceeding on the same basis;
 - f. Will remain willing, through the member states, also to carry out focused economic cooperation actions in support of the economic opening being implemented. It is noted that the Commission is proceeding on the same basis.
4. As the Cuban authorities make progress towards democracy, the European Union will lend its support to that process and examine the appropriate use of the means at its disposal for that purpose, including:
 - The intensification of a constructive, result-oriented political dialogue between the European Union and Cuba,
 - The intensification of cooperation and, in particular, economic cooperation,
 - The deepening of the dialogue with the Cuban authorities, through the appropriate instances, in order to explore further the possibilities for future negotiation of a Cooperation Agreement with Cuba, on the basis of the relevant conclusions of the European Councils in Madrid and Florence.
 5. The implementation of this common position will be monitored by the Council. An evaluation of this common position will be undertaken after six months.
 6. This common position shall take effect on 2 December 1996.
 7. This common position shall be published in the Official Journal.

Done at Brussels, 2 December 1996.
For the Council
The President, R. QUINN

Appendix II

General Affairs Council. Conclusions X Evaluation of the Common Position on Cuba December 10, 2001

The Council took note of the tenth evaluation of the EU Common Position on Cuba and acknowledged the efforts made in recent months to open a constructive and frank dialogue on all issues of common interest, in keeping with its conclusions on the ninth evaluation of the Common Position last June.

The Council reiterated that the objectives of the European Union toward Cuba remain the encouragement of a process of transition to pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, a lasting economic recovery and a rise in living standards for the population.

Following a detailed examination and exchanges of information – notably during the recent political dialogue between the EU Troika and Cuba – the Council observes that the situation in that country is still seriously wanting as regards the recognition and application of civil and political freedoms and the refusal of the Cuban authorities to contemplate reforms leading to a political system based on those values.

However, it notes that there are a few signs of movement: greater religious freedom, the fact that the death penalty has not been carried out for two years, a marked decrease in the number of political prisoners and an increase in the number of United Nations human rights instruments ratified.

The Council also welcomes the decision taken by the Cuban Parliament at its sitting on 4 October to approve Cuba's accession to all the UN Conventions on terrorism.

The Council therefore considers that the Common Position is still valid and remains the basis of the European Union's policy toward Cuba. The Council considers it essential to continue the dialogue in order to produce tangible results, particularly as regards future cooperation based on respect for democratic principles, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. In that context, the Council would point out that it expects to see meaningful indications from the Cuban Government that it is moving to achieve the Common Position's objectives.

The Council points out that it is extremely important to the EU that Cuba should abide by the principles of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It hopes that Cuba will be able to sign these two Covenants at the earliest opportunity.

In connection with Cuba's current economic difficulties, the Council underlines the importance of the increased economic links, trade and tourism between the EU countries and Cuba in helping to improve the situation in the country. Accordingly, the Council urges Cuba to extend and develop the economic and legal reforms it has begun. In that connection, the Council considers that the EU

must step up cooperation in Cuba, in particular through civilian and non-governmental organizations.

Appendix III

General Affairs Council. Conclusions XI Evaluation of the Common Position June 17, 2002

The Council took note of the eleventh evaluation of the European Union common position on Cuba. Major changes on the part of the Cuban government toward the accomplishment of the aims of the common position are still lacking. Therefore, the common position remains the basis of the European Union's policy toward Cuba and the Council took note of its continued validity. However, the Council noted some positive signs, such as greater religious freedom, the decrease of political prisoners, the non application of the death penalty for two years and a half and the ratification of more instruments on human rights. The Council, recalling the UNCHR Resolution of 19 April 2002, invites Cuba to sign the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the earliest opportunity. The Council noted some recent signs of increased openness by the Cuban authorities but considered that these are only the first steps.

The Council reiterated that the objective of the European Union toward Cuba remains the encouragement of a process of transition to pluralist democracy, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, as well as an economic recovery that allows an improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people. The Council expects positive steps by the Cuban government, which will lead to real reforms toward a political system, based on democratic values. In this sense, the Council follows with interest the evolution of the Varela project, legally based on the constitution, and encourages the Cuban government to consider it as a legitimate initiative since it represents an important effort to introduce these reforms.

The Council reaffirms that it is essential to deepen the political dialogue resumed between the EU and the Cuban authorities in order to produce tangible results, particularly in the political, economic and civil rights spheres, with the aim of future cooperation based on the respect for democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law. The Council considers that the EU should reinforce its cooperation efforts in the country supporting meaningful economic and legal reform and the civil society.

Within the framework of this dialogue, the European Union will continue to monitor the evolution of the human rights situation and the various initiatives within the constitutional process in Cuba.

Appendix IV

General Affairs Council. Conclusions XII Evaluation of the EU Common Position on Cuba December 10, 2002

The Council took note of the twelve evaluation of the European Union Common Position on Cuba and acknowledged the continuation of an open and constructive dialogue with Cuba on all issues of common interest. The Council reiterated that the objectives of the European Union policy toward Cuba remain the encouragement of a process of transition to pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, a lasting economic recovery and an improvement in the living standards for the population.

The Council noted that since the previous evaluation last June, there have been no significant positive steps by the Cuban Government leading to the accomplishments of the aims of the Common Position. Although recognizing some positive signs in the field of greater religious freedom, no progress is observed in the implementation of reforms leading to a political system that respects civil and political freedom. All civil initiatives, claiming political freedom and respect for civil rights and aiming at a political system based on democratic values, such as the Varela project, should be encouraged. In addition the Council would strongly urge the Cuban Government to take the necessary steps to ratify the UN Covenant on Political and Civil Rights as well as on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Council therefore reaffirms that the Common Position is still valid and remains the basis of the European Union's policy toward Cuba. In order to promote a more efficient pursuit of the aims of the Common Position the Council considers that the political dialogue should be continued in order to promote tangible results, particularly in the political, economic and civil rights spheres. At the same time the Council encourages the strengthening of the EU development cooperation in Cuba in areas that promote the transition to pluralist democracy and respect for human rights as well as in areas that improve the standards of living of the Cuban population and promote sustainable economic growth. The Council welcomes the decision of the Commission to open an office in Havana as one instrument to strengthening this cooperation. The Council decided to evaluate the Common Position in December 2003.

Appendix V

European Parliament Resolution

April 10, 2003

Human rights in Cuba

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Cuba,
 - having regard to the declaration of 26 March 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union concerning the arrest of opposition members in Cuba,
 - having regard to the common position 96/697/CFSP of 2 December 1996, defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union, on Cuba¹, and periodically renewed,
 - having regard to the provisions of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement² (Cotonou Agreement),
- A. extremely concerned by the numerous arrests in Cuba, where 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, and trade unionists have been imprisoned since 18 March 2003,
- B. whereas these arrests are essentially based on offences such as dissenting from official Cuban policies and exercising the right of freedom of expression, and, for that reason, the individuals in question are accused of subversive activity under Law 88 on Defending National Independence,
- C. whereas the exercise of the freedom of expression is a fundamental human right,
- D. whereas the trials of these citizens were summary in the extreme, and whereas the trials are being held without even the minimum requirements of due process, in the total absence of international observers and members of the diplomatic corps; whereas the sentences requested are extremely severe, ranging from 20 years to life and even the death penalty,

¹ OJ L 322, 12.12.1996, p. 1.

² OJ L 317, 15.12.2000, p. 3.

- E. whereas various sentences have already been pronounced, including 27 years' imprisonment in some cases,
 - F. whereas the Commission, in accordance with normal procedure in such matters, is drawing up an evaluation report to be forwarded to the Member States with a view to taking a decision on whether to accept the Cuban Government's request to join the Cotonou Agreement,
 - G. whereas the Commission has recently opened an office in Havana,
 - H. whereas in December 2002, the European Parliament awarded the Sakharov Prize for freedom of expression to the Cuban dissident and opposition member Oswaldo Payá,
1. Strongly condemns the wave of arrests and sentences involving the Cuban opposition and independent press, since such repressive behaviour does not encourage a climate for peaceful change in the country;
 2. Calls on the Cuban authorities to release those arrested immediately;
 3. Believes that no law may restrict the right of freedom of expression and under no circumstances may it impose prison sentences on individuals exercising that freedom; stresses that the freedom of expression, organisation and information is one of the cornerstones of all democratic systems;
 4. Believes that the immediate release of all those arrested and the cessation of these arbitrary arrests would constitute a very clear and positive signal with regard to the Cuban Government's wish to engage in political dialogue with the EU and to bring about Cuba's accession to the Cotonou Agreement;
 5. Urges the Council and the 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;
 6. Calls on the Cuban authorities to stop hampering human rights and to remove all barriers to freedom of movement, expression, information and association and to party political involvement;
 7. Asks the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and its Delegation for Relations with the Countries of Central America to display firm resolve in tackling the issue of human rights in Cuba, and to monitor the situation very carefully;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, the ACP Council of Ministers, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Government and National People's Assembly of the Republic of Cuba, and to Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winner of the European Parliament's 2002 Sakharov Prize.

Appendix VI

European Union

Presidency

April 14, 2003.

Declaration

- The EU condemns the large-scale arrests, unfair summary prosecution and arbitrary and excessive sentences of numerous dissidents for peacefully expressing their political, religious and social views and for exercising their right to full and equal participation in public affairs.
- Consequently, the EU demands that those persons, whom it considers as prisoners of conscience, be released without delay and calls further for the immediate release of all political prisoners. It is also deeply concerned about the continued repression of members of the opposition.
- The EU strongly condemns the recent executions conducted after summary trials of Cuban citizens and deplores the end of the moratorium on death penalty in the country.
- These latest developments, which mark a further deterioration in the human rights situation in the country, will affect the EU's relationship with Cuba and the prospects for increased cooperation. Violations of civil and political rights will be monitored very closely by the EU and they will continue to influence the Union's relations with Cuba."

Appendix VII

EUROPEAN UNION

Geneva, 16 April 2003

FINAL DRAFT

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-ninth Session
(Geneva, 17 March-25 April 2003)

***GENERAL COMMENT BEFORE TAKING ACTION
ON THE DRAFT RESOLUTION
'HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN CUBA' (L.2)***

General comment on the draft resolution entitled "Human Rights Situation in Cuba"

.

The European Union wishes to stress its grave concern at the human rights situation in Cuba, which has significantly deteriorated during the last weeks. In this light, the EU would welcome a draft resolution reflecting in a stronger and more effective manner the recent unfortunate developments.

The EU condemns the large-scale arrests, unfair summary prosecution and arbitrary and excessive sentences of numerous dissidents for peacefully expressing their political, religious and social views and for exercising their right to full and equal participation in public affairs.

Consequently, the EU demands that those persons, whom it considers as prisoners of conscience, be released without delay and calls further for the immediate release of all political prisoners. It is also deeply concerned about the continued repression of members of the opposition.

The EU strongly condemns the recent executions conducted after summary trials of Cuban citizens and deplores the end of the moratorium on death penalty in the country.

These latest developments, which mark a further deterioration in the human rights situation in the country, will affect the EU's relationship with Cuba and the prospects for increased cooperation. Violations of civil and political rights will be monitored very closely by the EU and they will continue to influence the Union's relations with Cuba.

We would like to reiterate that the objective of the EU in its relations with Cuba is to encourage a process of transition to a pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as a sustainable recovery and improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people.

The EU recognises the efforts of the Government of Cuba to give effect to the social rights of the population despite an adverse international environment.

Lastly, the EU strongly urges the Government of Cuba to receive the personal representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and to provide all the facilities necessary for her to be able to fulfil the mandate contained in resolution 2002/18.

The EU will support the draft resolution L.2 [and the amendment L.74].

Appendix VIII

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

The Government of Cuba has once again found itself compelled to withdraw its request for accession to the Cotonou Agreement, which regulates economic and cooperation relations between the European Union and the 79 countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP).

This decision is Cuba's response to that of the European Commission, which last 30 April announced that it was indefinitely postponing all consideration on the Cuban request that such Commission should submit to the Council of Ministers of the 15 member countries of the European Union. The alleged pretext was a European disagreement over the just sentences imposed by Cuban Courts of Law on the mercenaries that were collaborating with the US Government and on the hijackers of *Baraguá* boat. In practice, such decision leaves Cuba's request in limbo and intends to exert pressure on our country by setting forth unacceptable conditionalities and adopting an intrusive position in relation to Cuba's internal affairs. As stated by spokesman Christopher Patten, EU Commissioner for External Relations, "as long as the situation doesn't move, obviously the Commission will have no reasons to change today's situation."

Cuba's first request for admission into the Cotonou Agreement was on 10 March 2000. It was then responding to the friendly interest by Caribbean countries – which insisted that Cuba should join, in a fraternal gesture of cordiality that our country will always appreciate. They considered such action to be instrumental in Cuba's integration into the Caribbean and conducive to improving the framework of relations with the European Union. Cuba was not after any access quotas for the European market or additional cooperation resources from the Union – meager as they are – because it was fully aware that its admission could not even slightly affect the legitimate interests of its Caribbean brothers and sisters. Cuba's motivation to apply for admission was exclusively in reciprocity to the support provided by the Caribbean countries at first and then by the whole ACP Group.

However, such application was thwarted when Cuba found itself compelled to withdraw it because several members of the European Union – led by the Spanish Government of José María Aznar and by the British Government – attempted to establish additional and discriminatory requirements for Cuba, while designing an inspection of our country as a prerequisite to our admission.

On the other hand, the European Union's applicable decision-making system, which requires the unanimous vote of the 15 member countries, made it easier

for the handful of nations opposing Cuba's admission from the outset to achieve their objective.

In turn, the countries that make up the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP), led by the Caribbean nations, have unflinchingly supported our country – and in a really exceptional act, they even decided to change Cuba into a full member of the ACP Group, although it was not a signatory of the Cotonou Agreement. Cuba will never forget that at every international forum Caribbean countries have spoken out against the blockade and the anti-Cuban aggressions and in favor of our right to independence.

For all of these reasons – and also taking into consideration that various European countries expressed their support for us, urging us to once again apply for accession; mindful as well of the positive position that has been maintained in this regard by Poul Nielson, European Commissioner for Cooperation, who visited our country and opened the EU Embassy in Havana, and as an expression of our will to further develop relations with the European Union – Cuba made a second attempt and again requested its admission into the Agreement on 8 January 2003.

However, the unjust and unacceptable Declaration issued by the Council of Ministers of the European Union, the shameful alignment of the European Union with the frustrated US attempt to condemn Cuba at the Commission on Human Rights and the sanctimonious decision by the European Commission to indefinitely postpone all consideration on the Cuban request, have convinced the Government of Cuba that there is no groundwork laid to keep the application for admission into the Cotonou Agreement – and in the course of the next few days, it will undertake the relevant procedures to effectively comply with its decision.

In doing so, Cuba does not forget that following the demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a unipolar world, in the harsh years when Cuba has had to also withstand the tightening of the blockade imposed by the hegemonic superpower, the European Union has not been capable of outlining its own policy towards Cuba on the basis of Europe's genuine interests.

Sufficient proof of it is the document entitled Common Position of the European Union towards Cuba – an intrusive text imposed by the Government of Aznar on its community partners at the behest of the United States. Let us recall the unexplainable European reaction to the Helms-Burton Act – preferring to agree on the so-called "Understanding" between the EU and the US (in a shameful chapter of such community's foreign policy) instead of leading the international rejection of a US law that violated their rights.

Cuba desires increasingly extensive relations with the European Union – with which it shares profound historical and cultural bonds; from where it receives nearly a million tourists and with whose countries it is engaged in trade for almost US\$ 1.9 billion per annum – but these must be based on mutual respect, on the

non-interference in internal affairs and on the recognition of the right of each Party to freely choose its socio-economic system, its institutions and its laws.

The recent decisions by the European Union on Cuba disregard the unquestionable fact that Cuba – in full compliance with its laws – has been compelled to adopt positions in order to face a plan leading up to a military conflagration with the United States; right after the aggression and occupation of Iraq, in which, by the way, some of Cuba's most feverish European critics were accomplices to the US "hawks" by disregarding the opinion of their peoples and the decisions of the European Union. Such stand also intends to overlook the fact that Cuba is coping with the attempt to subdue it by force – and that the Government that is attacking our country is looking forward to imposing a worldwide fascist dictatorship on the rest of the planet, including European countries as well.

If the representatives of the European Union lived under a blockade that has lasted for over 44 years and had had to endure – as have we – aggressions, armed invasions, terrorist attacks, assassination plots against its leaders and a ruthless campaign of slander and deceit, perhaps they would better understand the injustice committed against Cuba within the European Union.

Cuba has endured over 44 years of blockade, aggressions and threats from the United States without surrendering – and sees no reason whatsoever to accept pressures from any other.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

17 May 2003

Appendix IX

Declaration of the Presidency,
on behalf of the European Union,
on Cuba

Brussels, June 5, 2003

Following the recent deplorable actions of the Cuban authorities aiming not only at violating fundamental freedoms in Cuba, but also at depriving of the ultimate human right, that of life, the EU regrets that the Cuban authorities broke the de-facto moratorium on death penalty and wishes to inform the international community that on 5 June it addresses the following demarche to the Cuban authorities:

“The EU, deeply concerned about the continuing flagrant violation of human rights and of fundamental freedoms of member of the Cuban opposition and of independent journalists, being deprived of their freedom for having expresses freely their opinion, calls once again the Cuban authorities to release immediately all political prisoners.

While expecting a favorable response from Cuban authorities, the EU, mindful of increasing reports about detention conditions of prisoners with serious health problems, appeals to the Cuban authorities that, in the meantime, the prisoners do not suffer unduly and not exposed to inhumane treatment.”

Furthermore and vis-à-vis the current situation in Cuba, the EU has unanimously decided to:

- limit the bilateral high-level government visits
- reduce the profile of member states' participation in cultural events
- invite Cuban dissidents at national days celebrations
- proceed to the re-evaluation of the EU common position.

The Acceding Countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the Associated Countries Bulgaria and Romania and the EFTA countries,

members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

9961/03 (presse 157)

Appendix X.

EU POLICY ON CUBA

Council conclusions, 14 June 2007

1. Although the political, economic and social system in Cuba remains essentially unchanged, the Council has registered the first temporary transfer of power in 48 years from Fidel Castro to a collective leadership led by his brother Raúl Castro which constitutes a new situation. The Council urges the Cuban Government to undertake the necessary political and economic reforms for improving the daily life of the Cuban people.
2. The EU is following political developments in Cuba, including the human rights situation, very closely. The Council deplores that the human rights situation has not fundamentally changed, despite a decrease in the number of political prisoners and acts of harassment. The Cuban Government continues to deny its citizens internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms. The EU once again urges the Cuban Government, also in Cuba's capacity as a member of the Human Rights Council, to release unconditionally all political prisoners, and reaffirms that this issue constitutes a key priority in its policy towards Cuba. The EU also reiterates its call on the Cuban Government to grant freedom of information and expression and invites the Cuban Government to cooperate on this matter.
3. All those peacefully committed to freedom, democracy and respect for universal human rights may be assured of the solidarity and continued support of the EU. The EU will continue to pursue its dialogue with Cuba's civil society and to offer to all sectors of society practical support towards peaceful change in Cuba. In this context, the Council stresses the EU's worldwide policy of support to Human Rights Defenders according to the respective EU Guidelines.
4. The EU recognizes the right of the Cuban citizens to decide independently about their future and remains ready to contribute positively to the future development of all sectors of Cuban society, including through development cooperation instruments.
5. While equally maintaining its intensive dialogue with civil society and the peaceful opposition, the EU would be ready to resume a comprehensive and open political dialogue with the Cuban authorities on all topics of mutual interest. This dialogue should include the whole range of potential fields of co-operation, including in the political, human rights, economic, scientific and cultural spheres. It should take place on a reciprocal and non-discriminatory basis. In the context of this dialogue, the EU will outline to the Cuban Government its views on democracy, universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. For sounding out this, a Cuban delegation will be invited to Brussels.

Appendix XI

It is the European Union that must rectify errors committed against Cuba

- **Statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on conclusions reached by the European Union's External Relations Council regarding Cuba**

The European Union's Council of Foreign Ministers adopted several decisions on June 18 regarding Cuba.

A document published by the European Union (EU) titled "Conclusions on Cuba" contains a proposal for "comprehensive and open political dialogue with the Cuban authorities on all topics of mutual interest," which the Cuban Foreign Minister has noted, considering it a much-needed rectification.

However, the abovementioned document does not refer to the so-called sanctions that the EU attempted to impose on Cuba, unjustly and rashly, in 2003 and which for two years, out of arrogance, it maintains as "suspended" only.

With Cuba, the only dialogue possible is one between sovereign and equal parties, without any conditions or pending threats. If the EU wants a dialogue with Cuba, it must completely eliminate those sanctions, which have been inapplicable and unsustainable.

The "Conclusions" also do not mention the so-called "Common Position" reached hastily by the financial ministers of the EU in 1996, under pressure by Aznar and based on a draft written in the U.S. State Department.

After so many errors and failures, the only obvious conclusion the EU should reach is that its so-called "Common Position" should disappear, because there neither was nor is any reason whatsoever for its existence, and because it is an obstacle to normal, mutually respectful relations of common interest with our country.

It should be acknowledged that a group of influential European nations has made efforts to change this ridiculous situation. Others, like the Czech Republic, have devoted themselves to being U.S. peons on the European map.

In addition, the "Council Conclusions" meddle, in a slanderous way, in strictly internal Cuban affairs; they issue judgments and announce interventionist and hypocritical actions that Cuba considers to be offensive and unacceptable and rejects energetically.

We do not recognize any moral authority whatsoever on the part of the European Union to judge or advise Cuba.

If, in alluding to President Fidel Castro's temporary delegation of duties to comrade Raúl Castro and calling it "a new situation," they are expressing the illusion that contradictions or differences exist between the Revolution's leaders or that Cuba's revolutionaries are divided, they are wrong again. The Revolution is more solid and more united than ever.

Our country has risked its very existence; it has waged heroic resistance and has fought tirelessly for more than a century to defend its independence. Cuba is an independent and sovereign country, and the European Union is mistaken if it thinks that it can treat Cuba in any way other than as an equal.

The European Union has shown persistent and humiliating subordination to the United States, rendering it incapable of holding positions based on European interests and making it an accomplice — though it says otherwise — to the criminal and inhumane blockade imposed by that country on the Cuban people, something about which the "Conclusions" does not dare to say a single word. In a statement from the summit it held in April with the United States, the European Union bowed down, questioning Cuba and accepting a motion that gave legitimacy to the "Bush Plan." Its secret meetings with messengers from the empire are well-known, including with the illegitimate administrator appointed for Cuba by the United States, and its officials are often present in anti-Cuban events in Miami or held in Europe but budgeted in Washington.

The European Union is shamefully hypocritical when it unjustly addresses Cuba but remains silent about the torture carried out by the United States on its illegal naval base in Guantánamo, which usurps Cuban territory, and Abu Ghraib, which is even used against European citizens. It remains silent, with impunity, about the kidnappings of individuals by the U.S. special services in third countries, and it has provided its territory for collaborating with secret CIA flights and for sheltering illegal prisons. It has not said anything either about the dozens of people who have disappeared under those circumstances, nor about the hundreds of thousands of civilians murdered in Iraq.

It is the European Union that must rectify errors committed against Cuba. Every step in the right direction will be appropriately welcomed. But there is no hurry: we have all the time in the world.

Havana, June 22, 2007

Translated by Granma International

Appendix XII

Reflections of President Fidel Castro

An honorable response

EVENTS follow each other at an incredible pace. Sometimes, several occur simultaneously. Their inherent significance and usefulness as examples is what I wish to, or, better, feel compelled to comment on. I am not referring, today, to what occurred in Geneva, which is considered a well-deserved revolutionary victory for Third World nations. Rather, I shall refer to Cuba's response to the European Council on Foreign Relations, published last Friday, June 22, on Granma's front page.

The statement was a response worthy of our Revolution and its high political leadership. One by one, all points calling for an immediate response from Cuba were addressed and clarified. Allow me to enumerate and go over them again:

"A dialogue between sovereign and equal partners, devoid of any conditions or impending threats, is the only possible dialogue with Cuba. If the European Union wishes to engage in any form of dialogue with Cuba, it must definitively eliminate those sanctions, which have since proved impracticable and unsustainable".

"The 'Conclusions' also failed to mention the so-called 'Common Position', hastily agreed upon by EU Ministers of Finance in 1996 under pressures from Aznar and on the basis of a draft drawn up by the US State Department".

"After so many mistakes and failures, the only obvious conclusion that the European Union should fittingly draw is that the so-called 'Common Position' must disappear, since there were and there are no reasons whatsoever for its existence and because it hinders any normal, mutually respectful relationship of common interest with our country".

"A group of influential European nations have tried to change this ludicrous situation. Others, such as the Czech Republic, have confirmed to be American pawns on the European map. The 'Conclusions of the Council' slanderously meddle in matters that are of Cuba's strict concern, pass judgment and announce intrusive and hypocritical actions that Cuba regards as offensive and unacceptable and strongly repudiates".

"Cuba is an independent and sovereign country and the European Union is wrong if it believes it can treat it as anything other than an equal".

“The European Union has shown persistent and humiliating subordination to the United States, of a kind that renders it incapable of holding positions based on European interests and turns it into an accomplice, despite all talk to the contrary, to the criminal and inhuman blockade that the US imposes on the Cuban people, and about which the ‘Conclusions’ did not even dare say a single word”.

“In the European Union Summit with the United States last April, it stooped to questioning Cuba and accepted a reference that acknowledges the legitimacy of the “Bush Plan.” Known are its collusion with the Empire's envoys and even with the spurious inspector for Cuba appointed by the United States”.

“The European Union is shamelessly hypocritical when it unjustly points its finger at Cuba while it remains silent about acts of US-coordinated torture at the illegal Guantánamo Naval Base, which encroaches upon Cuban territory, and at Abu Ghraib, where these are even administered to European citizens”.

“It impudently remains silent about kidnappings by US Special Forces in third countries and has offered its territory to cooperate with the CIA's secret flights and to harbor illegal prisons. Nor has it said anything about the hundreds of persons who have disappeared as a result of these actions or about the hundreds of thousands of civilians murdered in Iraq”.

“It is the European Union which must rectify the mistakes it has made with respect to Cuba”.

At the risk of turning this into an extensive reflection, I wish to add a number of facts. The European Union has been led by Washington to a mighty cul-de-sac. The Cold War ended with the triumph of the real consumerism of developed capitalism, and the frantic impulse to consume that had been awakened in broad sectors of the populations of the socialist block and Soviet Union. They had lost the battle of ideas. The Russian people, the main moving force behind the October Revolution, were violently deprived of important commitments which encompassed agreements and guarantees for its security and sovereignty: Europe was stripped of over 400 SS-20 missiles, as NATO described them. These mobile missiles, fitted with three nuclear warheads each, were pointed to every corner in Europe where US military bases and NATO forces were located. In its triumphalist intoxication, the aggressive military alliance had taken under its wing many former socialist republics of Europe, a number of which, seeking economic benefits, have made the rest of Europe a hostage of their foreign policy, which unconditionally serves the strategic interests of the United States.

All European Union members have the right to veto a decision. This system is politically dysfunctional and curtails, in practice, the sovereignty of all members. The European Union is today in worse shape than the former socialist block ever was. The vain Tony Blair, manufacturer of sophisticated submarines and a friend

of Bush, is already being announced as a potential future candidate to chair the European Union. The cables bring the news today that he was appointed special envoy for the Middle East, where he so amply contributed to that disastrous war unleashed by the United States.

In the energy sector, we see European governments beg for oil in the few regions in the world where the empire has not forcibly appropriated this resource, in much the same way it purchases, with worthless bills, any European company it pleases.

The euro, however, is a stable currency, much more than the dollar, which is constantly being devalued. Even though the dollar is defended by the holders of US bonds and bills, the empire faces the risk of an economic disaster of dramatic repercussions.

Europe, on the other hand, would be one of the areas most severely affected by global warming. Its well-known and modern port facilities would end up underwater.

Today, it desperately proposes free trade agreements with Latin America which are worse than Washington's, in search of raw materials and bio-diesel. We are beginning to hear criticisms about this. But Europe's money is not in the hands of the Community, it belongs to transnational corporations which may relocate to countries where labor is cheap in search of profits.

Cuba's proud and honorable response has underscored the essentials.

Though every good strategy includes a good tactic, neither of the two are sound if arrogance and smugness are tolerated.

Europeans themselves will one day come to understand the absurd situation they were led to by imperialism and will realize that a Caribbean country pointed out some necessary truths for them. The wild horse of consumerism cannot continue to gallop madly ahead, for such a race is unsustainable.

The last European Union meeting held to address the future community treaty was further proof of the demoralization of Europe. Last Sunday, June 24, the AFP reported that Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi expressed his "bitterness" over the Brussels summit, where he accused European Union leaders of staging the spectacle of an emotionless Europe, in an interview for La Repubblica newspaper.

"As a European, allow me to be embittered for the spectacle I find myself in front of", Prodi, ex-chairman of the European Commission, said.

"The doggedness of some governments to negate every emotional aspect of Europe has hurt me', he added, referring to Poland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Great Britain.

"And then these are the same governments that rebuke Europe for being far from citizens', he affirmed. "But how can you involve citizens without involving their emotions? How can you give them pride to be European if the symbols of its pride [such as the flag and hymn] are negated?' he asked".

"Prodi lambasted [Tony Blair] for 'conducting a battle' against the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights".

"He criticized Polish President Lech Kaczynski, who said he could not share his stances because Italy and Poland were 'very different nations'".

"Prodi concluded by saying that 'never before had Eurosceptics expressed themselves so explicitly and programmatically' as in the last Summit".

At the last G-8 meeting, Bush had sent Europeans a chilly message.

At this decisive point in time, the number of enemies one has, which will be fewer and fewer with time, is of no importance. What is important is "the stars we carry on our foreheads."

Fidel Castro Ruz

June 27, 2007

Appendix XIII

Council of the European Union

Cuba – *Council conclusions*

2881st Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting Luxemburg, 23 & 24 June 2008

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council:

The Council notes the changes undertaken so far by the Cuban Government. The Council supports liberalizing changes in Cuba and encourages the government to introduce them.

The Council called upon the Cuban Government to improve effectively the human rights situation by, inter alia, releasing unconditionally all political prisoners, including those who were detained and sentenced in 2003. This remains a key priority for the EU. It also calls on the Cuban Government to facilitate access of international humanitarian organizations to Cuban prisons. The Council further called upon the Cuban authorities to ratify and implement the recently signed International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and urged again the Cuban Government to make real the commitment to human rights it has demonstrated through the signing of these two human rights covenants.

The Council confirmed its renewed commitment to and the relevance of the Common Position of 1996, and reaffirmed its determination to pursue a dialogue with the Cuban authorities as well as with representatives of civil society and democratic opposition, in accordance with EU policies, in order to promote respect for human rights and real progress towards a pluralist democracy. The Council underlined that the EU will continue to offer to all sectors of society practical support towards peaceful change in Cuba. The EU also reiterated its call on the Cuban Government to grant freedom of information and expression including access to the Internet and invited the Cuban Government to cooperate on this matter.

The EU reiterates the right of the Cuban citizens to decide independently about their future and remains ready to contribute positively to the future development of all sectors of Cuban society including through development cooperation instruments.

As stated in the Council Conclusions of 18 June 2007, the EU stands ready to resume a comprehensive and open dialogue with the Cuban authorities on all

topics of mutual interest. Since June 2007, preliminary discussions on the possibility to launch such a dialogue have taken place at Ministerial level between the EU and Cuba and bilaterally. This process of dialogue should include the whole range of potential fields of cooperation including the political, human rights, economic, scientific and cultural spheres and should take place on a reciprocal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and result-oriented basis. Within the framework of this dialogue, the EU will outline to the Cuban Government its views on democracy, universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Council reaffirmed that its policy for EU contacts with the democratic opposition remains valid. During high level visits, human rights issues should always be addressed; when appropriate, meetings with the democratic opposition will be part of high level visits.

The Council therefore agreed to pursue the above mentioned comprehensive political dialogue with the Cuban Government. In this context, the Council agreed to the lifting of the already suspended 2003 measures as a means to facilitate the political dialogue process and enable the full use of the instruments of the 1996 Common Position.

On the occasion of the annual review of the Common Position, the Council will proceed in June 2009 to an evaluation of its relations with Cuba including the effectiveness of the political dialogue process. Following that date, the dialogue will continue if the Council decides that it has been effective, taking into account in particular the elements contained in paragr. 2 above."