



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on Evaluation of the EU Common Position on Cuba

*2951st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 15 Juin 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomes the resumption of the political dialogue with Cuba that allowed both sides to discuss openly issues of mutual interest including the respect and promotion of human rights. The Council believes that the political dialogue with Cuba should be pursued and deepened on a comprehensive, equal and result-oriented basis. Within the framework of this dialogue, the EU will give high priority to the principles of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Council confirms its renewed commitment to and relevance of the Common Position of 1996.
2. The Council takes positive note of the renewal of development cooperation with Cuba as a tool for improving the lives of the Cuban people. The Council considers focused development cooperation in accordance with the objectives and principles of the EC development policy to be an important part of the relations between the EU and Cuba.
3. The Council reaffirms its determination to pursue a result-oriented comprehensive dialogue with the Cuban authorities as well as with representatives of civil society and peaceful pro-democracy opposition in accordance with EU policies. The EU reiterates the right of the Cuban citizens to decide independently about their future.

The Council reaffirms that its policy for EU contacts with the peaceful pro-democracy opposition remains valid. During high-level visits, human rights issues should always be addressed; when appropriate, meetings with the peaceful pro-democracy opposition will be part of high level visits. In this context the Council calls upon the Cuban government to allow for unimpeded contacts with civil society in the margin of high level visits.

P R E S S

4. The Council remains seriously concerned about the lack of progress in the situation of human rights in Cuba, in particular in the field of civil and political rights, and political reforms. This issue is one of the EU's key priorities. The Council reaffirms that the EU will further continue to offer support to all sectors of society in order to promote respect for human rights and real progress towards pluralist democracy in Cuba. The Council urges the Cuban Government to release unconditionally all political prisoners, including those who were detained and sentenced in 2003. For humanitarian reasons, the Council expresses its particular concern for prisoners with serious health conditions. The Council calls upon the Cuban authorities to facilitate immediate access of international humanitarian organizations to Cuban prisons.
5. The Council also underlines the importance of structural economic and social reforms in order to improve living conditions of the Cuban people and encourages the Cuban Government to take necessary steps. The EU stands ready to support Cuba in these efforts.
6. The Council welcomes the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the invitation of UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and looks forward to the fixing of an early date for a visit by UN Special Rapporteur. The Council calls upon Cuban authorities to ratify and implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
7. The Council reiterates its call on the Cuban Government to grant freedom of information and expression including access to the Internet to the Cuban people.
8. The Council adopts this evaluation of the Common Position on Cuba. The Council will decide in June 2010 on the annual review of the Common Position including an assessment of the future of the political dialogue, taking into account progress as to the elements of these Council conclusions, in particular in the field of human rights.
9. In this context, the EU notes that Cuba rejoined the Rio Group in November 2008 and also notes the decision taken by the General Assembly of the OAS on June 3rd 2009 to terminate the resolution of 1962 which excluded the Government of Cuba from its participation in the Inter-American system."
