

INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI D'ESTUDIS EUROPEUS

Obs

Observatori de Política Exterior Europea



Working Paper n. 47
Mayo de 2003

The European Union Perception of Cuba: From Frustration to Irritation

Joaquín Roy

Catedrático 'Jean Monnet' y director del Centro de la Unión
Europea de la Universidad de Miami

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Edifici E-1
08193 Bellaterra
Barcelona (España)

On Friday May 16, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba summoned the newly-appointed charge-d'affairs of the European Commission in Havana and announced the withdrawal of the application procedure for membership in the Cotonou Agreement of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, and in fact renouncing to benefit from European development aid.¹ In a blistering note published in the *Granma* official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, the government blamed the EU Commission for exerting undue pressure, its alleged alignment with the policies of the United States, and censure for the measures taken by Cuba during the previous weeks.² In reality, Cuba avoided an embarrassing flat rejection for its application. This was the anti-climatic ending for a long process that can be traced back to the end of the Cold War, in a context where Cuba has been testing alternative grounds to substitute for the overwhelming protection of the Soviet Union.

I. An overall assessment³

In April 2003 an extremely serious crisis affected Cuba's international relations, and most especially its link with Europe. It was the result of the harshness of the reprisals against the dissidents and the death sentences imposed on three hijackers of a ferry. These developments pushed back a series of rapprochement measures maintained by the European Union and most of its member states with the expectation of contributing to facilitate the political transition at the expected end of the Castro regime. In spite of the fact that the Cuban government justified its action in view of the perceived threat presented by the an increased activity of the internal opposition and the backing provided by the U.S. government to the dissidents, the bluntness of the response (disproportionate imprisonment and summary executions by firing squad) was too much to swallow. It generated an unprecedented world-wide protest not limited to the usual conservative sectors in the United States and the Cuban exile community.

Traditionally tamed governments in Europe made explicit protests, while important backers of the Cuban regime abandoned their endorsement, changing it for a straight denunciation. In the European context, the serious deterioration caught the EU institutions flat-footed, with the result that once again a possible cooperative arrangement became doubtful.⁴ After careful consideration, preluded by intended measures to be taken by several member states, the institutional framework of the EU acted accordingly and the Commission announced on May 1, 2003, the freezing of the procedure to consider the admission of Cuba into the Africa-Pacific-Caribbean (ACP) Cotonou Agreement.⁵ In essence, this decision pushed back the EU-Cuba relationship to a low level similar to the one existing in 1996 when the EU voted a Common Position conditioning a European cooperation package to reforms to be taken by the Cuban regime.⁶ This time it was not the Cuban regime's withdraw of the application process, as it did in 2000, but the decision of the European Union not to continue with the negotiations. As expected, however, Cuba decided to withdraw again its application in order to avoid an embarrassing rejection. From a dubious attitude and the absence of a clear single policy on Cuba, now the EU appeared to have confirmed a common policy. From a policy of persuasion, the EU had expressed first frustration in expecting gestures of reform from Cuba, and finally issued unequivocal signs of irritation.⁷

In contrast, variation has been the order of the day regarding European national attitudes towards Cuba, explaining the lack of a cohesive, well-coordinated policy, to the frequent (behind the scenes) dismay of the staff of the European Commission. For example, while Belgium can be labeled as a neutral observer, more critical when led by conservatives than by Social Democrats, Austria prefers a cultural approach, and the most critical states are led by Sweden's "Nordic fundamentalism" based on pressures to respect human rights. Germany has opted for a gradual rapprochement and the UK tilts towards change through trade and cooperation. The special relationship between Spain and Cuba has neutralized most of the hard line attitude tested by Prime Minister José María Aznar after coming to power in 1996. Italy has replicated the engagement policy of France, while Portugal has inserted Cuba into its Latin American foreign policy. Direct government contacts have multiplied in recent years and only Finland does not have an embassy in Havana (only for economic reasons).⁸

In the meanwhile, the European media ceased to look at Cuba through the lenses of the Cold War, which has resulted in mixed views in the political analyses of the Castro regime. In general, European newspapers seem to recognize the advances of the Cuban Revolution, while they are more critical of the human rights violations and economic weaknesses of the regime. Understandably, this pattern has drastically changed since the incidents of April 2003. In terms of volume, Cuba seems to enjoy disproportionate attention in the European media considering the relative value of the country in global trade and economic terms. While the British press seems to be more objective, in Spain Cuban affairs can turn into the subject of debate at the level of internal politics. Political parties are equally subdivided into ultra conservatives rejecting direct contact with Castro, far-left nostalgics retaining loyalties to the Cuban Revolution, and the majority of the rest favoring a critical dialogue as the best way to guarantee a peaceful transition. Most lively on Cuban affairs are the European NGOs (Church organizations, universities, foundations) dealing with Cuba, as well as regional and local governments, especially in Spain and Italy.⁹ Pax Christi, one of the most vocal and influential church-related NGOs, has issued critical reports on the European links with Cuba.¹⁰ In any event, as we see in the last part of this study, media, intellectuals, and political forces exhausted their confidence in the Cuban potential for reform as a result of the serious April 2003, events.

On the economic scene, activities between Cuba and Europe have been increasing in the last decade. Trade has doubled. EU exports to Cuba topped €1.43 billion in 2001 (44% from Spain, followed by Italy and France). Cuban imports in Europe were in the amount of €581 million (54% in the Netherlands, followed by Spain). Two thirds of Cuba's imports from developed countries come from the EU. Bilateral development aid and tourism are two of the most important sources of European involvement in Cuba. Almost 70% of cooperation assistance comes from Europe, led by Spain (16.8%), followed by the Commission. Italian tourists are the leaders (13%) in a key sector for the Cuban economy. European direct investment in Cuba is over 50% of total foreign investment, with Spain covering 25%, followed by Italy with 13%.¹¹ Of the 400 investment consortia, 105 are with Spanish companies, followed by Canada (60) and Italy (57).¹² Considering this impressive level of engagement, it is not surprising that only Sweden does not have a bilateral cooperation agreement with Cuba, and ten European countries have investment protection agreements with Havana. Spain leads the European pack with the number of agreements of different kinds with the Cuban government, followed by Italy, the country that in 1993 inaugurated the investment protection pacts.¹³

II. The ACP: a back door to the EU?

Whatever is the evaluation of the relationship between Cuba and individual European countries, the stark reality is that Cuba is the only Latin American country that still does not enjoy a bilateral cooperation agreement with the EU. A search through the official EU web pages could (and does to a great extent) generate a sense of confusion and frustration because Cuba does not have a place like any other Latin American country in the External Relations structure of the Commission and until very recently did not occupy a specific place in the framework of the Directorate General for Development (formerly called DGVIII).¹⁴ With the derailment in the year 2000 of the process towards the signing of the post-Lomé agreements, EU officers dealing with the Cuba dossier used to joke that they were commissioned to take care of the ACP... and Cuba, with no documents, while all the files were frozen in the Directorate General of External Relations (formerly DGIb), and the EU Commission delegation in Mexico was in theory accredited to Havana.

This anomaly was further complicated when Cuba became a member of the ACP countries without being a signatory of the Cotonou agreements, successor of Lomé. Nonetheless, Europe as a whole has been Cuba's most important trade and investment source, replacing the Soviet Union as Havana's main commercial partner. With the vanishing of the Soviet Bloc, Europe has been able to afford to accept Cuban exceptionalism and has developed what can be labeled as

“conditioned constructive compromise” based more on the carrot than the stick. But Brussels has barely used its economic leverage to pressure Cuba on a political level. The peculiar political structure of the EU has helped reinforce this weakness. European persuasion has been reduced to the spirit and the content of the Common Position of 1996, which in turn owes its development to the aftermath of the confrontation over the Helms-Burton law.¹⁵

The Common Position, renewed every six months, is a pre-condition for a bilateral agreement between the EU and Cuba, a clause that has been explicitly rejected by Havana.¹⁶ It calls for a pacific transition to a pluralist democracy, preferably led from the top, with the benefit of development aid being channeled through European and Cuban NGOs. Observers have noted that this Common Position is void in view of the volume of bilateral relations with the majority of the most important member states. It has been basically violated by Cuba’s most important partner, Spain, both in terms of trade and aid, under both socialist and conservative governments. Only the Nordic countries seem to respect the terms of the position.

A rough picture of the attitudes of the different member states on Cuba’s prospective Cotonou membership shows a southern bloc composed of Spain, Portugal, Italy and France acting as main proponents. In contrast Germany, the UK and Sweden seem to distance themselves in the political dimension. Less influential in world affairs, Austria, Belgium and Finland don’t have much at stake in the Caribbean and Latin America. A group of “blockers” (Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK) seem to slow down the process of the post-Lomé arrangement, while “openers” (France, Portugal, Spain and Italy) favor a positive approach. “Mediators” (Austria, Belgium and Germany) remain ready to serve accordingly.¹⁷

It is also a fact that institutional relations have been difficult for two kinds of reasons. The first is composed of uncomfortable personal linkages and references, not by chance implicating Spanish officials. When a deal seemed to be close in 1996, the insistence of Commissioner Manuel Marín on the human rights issues became an insurmountable obstacle.¹⁸ The cloudy atmosphere has worsened since the new Commission was established. The new High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, was insulted by the Cuban leadership, claiming that he was endorsing the U.S. policies. At some times, there appeared to be friction between the EU officers and Cuban ministers during the Lomé negotiations. The second origin of difficulties seems to derive from external crises. Stemming back to the shooting down of the Brothers to the Rescue planes, the controversies over the Elián González crisis did not help, and at sometimes protests against U.S. interference were extended to cover all foreign activities in Cuba.

In any event, and in spite of all difficulties, the road to a post-Lomé deal was on a sure path, initiated in Brussels in September 1998¹⁹ and culminating in the signing of the new agreement on June 23, 2000, in Cotonou. Havana was not dealing now with one office in Brussels but with a multilateral outfit of 77 countries. However, Castro rejected the procedure, and withdrew the application intention, claiming the Resolution issued by the United Nations Human Rights Commission in its annual gathering was one-sided, and suspended the scheduled visit of the Troika.²⁰ Ironically, the overall climate for Cuban membership in Lomé was positive, shifting towards a normalization of the EU-Cuba relationship, this time anchored in the ACP multilateral context.²¹ Only some European governments seemed to oppose, led by the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden. According to evident signals, the UK apparently threatened to veto the arrangement once it would come to the Council. Consequently, Cuba then branded the EU conditions as “arrogant”, “unacceptable”, and dependent on the “U.S. policy”.²²

Supporters of Cuba’s membership and most neutral observers considered the Cuban reaction as unexpected and violent. In fact, the decision was a slap in the face of ACP members that advocated Cuba’s membership. ACP diplomats in Brussels confessed on the record to being surprised, although off-the-record seasoned ambassadors suspected the outcome and were not caught off guard.²³ EU Commission officers expressed tongue-in-cheek satisfaction for what

they feared was the result of hard work with high expectations. Evidence shows that the decision was taken after a complete internal debate on the cost and benefits. The Cuban government figured that the economic benefits were not an adequate compensation for the loss of political independence and the insertion into a multilateral dialogue of unforeseeable consequences when dealing with democracy and human rights. In a gathering of high government officials of the Caribbean and Central America, off the record, Castro called the deal “demasiado fastidio para tan poca plata” [too big of a nuisance for so little money].²⁴ This euphemistic *ocurrencia*, an apparently innocent incident, became an omen of a more serious incident to come in April of 2003, confirming the worst suspicions about the priorities of the Cuban regime regarding the European linkages.

However, some months later, in the sequel to this mini-drama, on December 14, 2000, and to the surprise of many observers, Cuba became the 78th member of the ACP group. The novelty of the event is that Cuba joined it without signing the Cotonou convention.²⁵ For the confusion of experts and unguarded observers, this anomaly led some to believe that Cuba had in fact obtained the same benefits. This is not the case.

In reality, the charter of this organization (in essence, an international organization as any other) had to be amended to provide for a new member that will not use the only and unique service of the organization: the trade and cooperation benefits from EU member states. In comparative metaphorical terms, Cuba's membership in the ACP is like belonging to an exclusive golf club without being able to play golf, only watching others play and walking around the facilities.²⁶ Seasoned observers may point out that this is another example of an EU compromise to accommodate for difficult circumstances and give the impression to the three parties (the EU member states, the ACP countries and Cuba) that they have won something in the preparation of Cuba becoming a full member some day. Harsher critics of the overall picture may claim that this only reveals a certain degree of absurdity with no substantial results.

III. EU standing showcases

During all this time, it has been reasonably expected that the EU would continue the policy of persuading Cuba towards a political reform. Brussels would also maintain a limited profile of normalcy with Havana in the diplomatic field, stressing that the door of opportunity regarding the ACP deal was open.

As an example of the obvious contradiction between bilateral engagement and supranational conditioning, the record shows that the EU has collectively demonstrated impressive coherence on two fronts in the context of the United Nations. On the one hand, the EU member states bloc has opposed the embargo and Helms-Burton. This is a sign of the slow but steady build up of an incipient EU common foreign policy. Europe can muster a much superior solidarity than the one that seems to be absent in Latin America. Moreover, in the annual conference of the Human Rights Commission, Europe is highly unified. In contrast, the Latin American countries seem to go their separate ways, although there was an improvement in the 2002 vote, but the split reappeared in 2003, in part further confused by the opposition of most Latin American governments to the war in Iraq. Since 1996, the year of the approval of Helms-Burton and the subsequent passage of the Common Position on Cuba, the European states have maintained a solid bloc attitude on both items. Not only have the EU members voted in unison, but they have done so in conjunction with the candidate countries that expect to join the Union in the near future, in compliance (although not legally binding) with the rule of coherence to foreign policy. It would be a sign of bad initiation rites if candidates voted differently in international settings than the EU member states. In contrast, Latin American governments seem to have at least three fronts regarding Cuba. Some vote for, some abstain, and some others oppose, according to circumstances or changes in the executives.²⁷

Other diplomatic moves show a certain degree of ambivalence and contradiction depending on the prevailing circumstances, who is holding the EU presidency, and what kind of individual

conflicts and priorities member states have regarding Cuba. For example, in one of the attempts to speed up the process of a closer relationship with Cuba, Belgium Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Louis Michel, holding the presidency of the EU, visited Havana in August of 2001, raising expectations in EU circles and irritation in Cuba, as well as concerns in the U.S. Department of State. The Cuban government officially considered the visit in its Belgium dimension, while Spain (as next EU presidency) demoted its representation in the Troika to the minimum. The visit, announced to the EU Commission with barely five days notice, served to somewhat smooth the friction between Brussels and Havana caused by the ballot casted in the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. The EU wanted to send a message of holding the door open and the Cuban government managed to show that it counted with Brussels, especially during the Belgium presidency. This linkage was predicted to be more difficult during the Spanish presidency in the first semester of 2002, with Madrid heavily pressed by crucial EU pending issues, such as the debate of the future of Europe, the plans for enlargement, and economic dimensions in the new euro era. A new run of disagreement with Brussels while Spain was at the wheel of the EU might not have been the most beneficial outcome for any party, but it might have tactically helped Castro as it has on other occasions.²⁸

In the absence of the standard bi-lateral cooperation agreement, the standing EU policy towards Cuba can be subdivided into three main areas. The first one is a relationship based on humanitarian grounds; the second is an attitude towards the anchoring of Cuba in its natural habitat; the third, and most complex, is the setting of the ACP framework.

Regarding humanitarian assistance, the EU record shows that the funds provided by the Commission have increased in the line of cooperation assistance delivered through NGOs during the past five years: from 0.6 M€ in 1997 to 5.4 M€ in 2001, with a peak of 8.2 M€ in 2000. Waiting for quality proposals, the Commission has been considering it essential to ensure that NGO projects meet the criteria of financial and institutional sustainability, to allow for long-term impact at the beneficiary level. In the view of Brussels, if properly conducted and monitored, NGO cooperation may therefore effectively contribute to the development of the incipient civil society in Cuba.²⁹

With respect to humanitarian aid and development assistance, this variance on a programmable basis was phased out. A comprehensive evaluation conducted in April/May 2000 concluded that Cuba was no longer in a state of emergency. A final humanitarian aid allocation of € 8 million was channeled through the 2001 European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) funds. In addition, the Commission allocated € 0.5 million to address the emergency needs of the affected population in the region of Matanzas, in the wake of Hurricane Michelle (November 4, 2001). In sum, the record shows that since 1993 the EU has financed close to € 125 million of assistance measures, of which nearly two thirds have been in the field of humanitarian aid. It is estimated that some 16% of the Cuban population has benefited from this aid. Following the Commission decision to phase out humanitarian aid, measures supporting economic reform and civil society development have been increasing. Assistance of this type to Cuba would continue as long as programmable funds are not available. It was expected that, on average, between € 15 and 18 million would be used for development programs in Cuba.³⁰

The exception made for this line of assistance was based on the logic of the seriousness of Hurricane Michelle's destruction, estimated at \$ 1.8 billion, considered as the worst natural calamity in Cuba in fifty years. Thus the justification for the use of € 0.5 million earmarked to provide medical and other emergency supplies for affected persons. As far as disaster prevention is concerned the Commission, in December 2001, approved funding for Cuba in the amount of € 0.92 million in the context of a regional program for the Caribbean.

The EU Commission and other EU entities have been well aware of the seriousness of the Cuban economic situation. In addition to the damage caused by natural disasters, the Cuban government has seen a severe drop in fiscal revenues and foreign exchange because of consequences of the September 11 attack. Tourism decreased by 13% in September 2001 and 20% in October 2001, and U.S. remittances were reduced by 60%. On top of that Russia's decision to close its Cuban 'spy station' represented an annual loss of some \$200 million. In this dark setting, Cuba must look for its natural geographical habitat. In consequence, the EU

Commission has been clearly in favor of promoting the regional integration of Cuba in the Caribbean, Latin American and ACP context. In this connection the opportunities that the follow-up to the I EU-Latin America-Caribbean Summit held in Rio in 1999 provided in terms of support measures and partnerships, were to be fully exploited. The Commission has been also willing to facilitate Cuba's participation in regional measures under the auspices of CARIFORUM (of which Cuba is a member since October 2001) through relevant budget lines. For example, a financial proposal under the 2002 budget was set foreseeing Cuba's participation in a regional Caribbean project to fight swine fever.

A more complex pending issue has been presented by the consequences of the impasse regarding the application for the Cotonou agreement. Following the 9th Evaluation of the Common Position the Council concluded on June 25, 2001, that the EU would welcome a constructive dialogue with Cuba on a future cooperation framework based on the respect for democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law. This conclusion was reiterated by the Council in its 10th Evaluation of the Common Position issued on December 10, 2001. It was doubly ratified in June and December of 2002, with the 11th and 12th evaluations.³¹ This EU procedure was explicitly rejected by Cuba.³² The Council deliberately chose this formulation as an implicit reference to Cotonou since the same text is contained in Art. 9 of the Agreement. As we will see later on, Cuba did not submit any other request for membership, even though Castro announced his intention to do so on December 12, 2002.

On a more politically-oriented level, during the EU Spanish presidency of the first semester of 2002, relations with Cuba reflected a freezing of the attempts made during the previous Belgian presidency. The end balance was mixed. What was perceived by Cuba as a "window of opportunity" (the presidencies of Spain, Denmark and Greece would not make Cuba-EU relations a priority in the sense expected by Havana) did not materialize beyond the trip taken by Belgian Foreign Minister Jean Louis Michel to Cuba in August of 2001, or the low-level troika trip of December 2001.³³

Meanwhile, the weight of Cuba's international activity and concerns seemed to have tilted towards the Western Hemisphere, away from Europe, perceived as concentrating on more pressing issues such as enlargement, the rise of the right, and immigration on top of the crucial disagreements over the consequences of the attacks of September 11. This thesis was confirmed by the absence of Castro in the II EU-Latin American-Caribbean Summit held in Madrid on May 17-18, 2002, replicating his decision of not attending the Ibero-American Summits held in Lima in 2001 and in the Dominican Republic in 2002, a yearly event where the Cuban leader has been the frequent main protagonist of polemics.³⁴ Among the reasons behind his decision was his calculation of not reaping the expected benefits and risking a losing confrontation with some vocal counterparts, and most especially Spain's Prime Minister José María Aznar.

It always remained to be seen if an (very unlikely) activation of Title III of Helms-Burton would cause a European reaction that would endanger the future of the World Trade Organization (WTO) besieged by a politically-loaded litigation, the main reason for the crafting of the 1997 and 1998 understandings between the EU Commission and the Clinton administration. But all of this reasonable logic seems to belong to the pre-September 11 world scene.

All things considered, in the event that the U.S.-Cuba relationship continues to follow the impasse of four decades while the inexorable biological transition proceeds in Havana, it was expected that the European attitude would not drastically change. The EU as an entity would continue to act in a fashion of conditioning a bilateral agreement to a minimum of progress in the political field, while the Common Position would be reduced to an endorsement of this policy. In fact, in the aftermath of Carter's visit to Cuba, this attitude was confirmed by EU Commissioner Chris Patten. In the context of the II EU-Latin American Summit, he qualified Cuba's respect for human rights as lacking.³⁵ The bulk of the available assistance was supposed to be dedicated to a minimum of anchoring Cuba in the market economy.³⁶ In contrast, Castro invested his political capital in courting his neighbors in the setting of CARICOM's summit held in Havana in December 2002, where Cuba would receive encouragement for a deeper relationship with the ACP group, an offer that the Cuban leader took upon himself with renewed energy.³⁷

IV. Before the storm

The year 2002 ended with two important developments on EU-Cuba relations. On the one hand, on December 8 Fidel Castro surprisingly announced that Cuba would reapply for accession to the Cotonou agreement.³⁸ On the other, the European Commission made official the opening of a full Delegation in Havana. Inaugurated in March 2003 by EU Commissioner Poul Nielson, it was entrusted to an experienced staff led by former Cuba desk chief in Brussels, Sven Von Burgsdorff, with direct knowledge of Cuba, under the expectation of positive, substantial developments.³⁹ The background to these twin details is a combination of interlaced developments involving more than the two basic actors.

As outlined above, after a six-year period of frosty relations presided by the Common Position of 1996, the Belgian presidency led the first modest troika approach in December 2001. However, the Spanish presidency during the first semester of 2002 did not take any initiative to further the dialogue with Havana (in spite of a wide consensus recommending consultations). The Danish presidency during the second part of 2002 decided to insert the dialogue with Cuba in a wider EU-Latin America setting. While several Member States expressed renewed interest in furthering bilateral commercial relations, a majority in both the Council and the European Parliament consider the Common Position as a limiting factor that conditions the potential use of available instruments in the fields of political, economic and development co-operation on progress in respecting civil and political rights in Cuba.

As a first move from the ACP Group, a request was made on September 26, 2002, to grant Cuba the status of an observer for the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiation process. Although the Member States were divided, a clear majority was in favor of the request advocating Cuba's regional political and economic integration. On November 4, 2002, the EU troika met with Cuba in Copenhagen, with the Commission represented by Poul Nielson. Both parties were frank, but not aggressive in their positions. Disagreement continued over the EU Common Position, the human rights situation in Cuba and co-operation on the area of human rights, while Cuba committed to pursue reforms to establish a more market-oriented economy. Cuba then hinted on probable candidature for membership in the Cotonou Agreement, a thought that was strongly encouraged by the Commission. Cuba then agreed to the Commission proposal to set up an EU-Cuba task force to identify solutions in the field of investment and trade. As a result of behind the scenes negotiations, a potential compromise solution suggested by the Commission and supported by the Member States was contemplated in which Cuba would be given an "informal" observer status during the "all-ACP" phase of the Economic Partnership negotiations.

Following the XII Evaluation of the EU Common Position all Member States, for the first time, were willing to reconsider the instruments available, with a view to making them more effective in the pursuit of the objectives of the Common Position. Following a Commission proposal the Council adopted on December 10, 2002, the Conclusions reconfirming the Common Position. However, they introduced two important modifications: (1) On the one hand, there were no limitations for development co-operation measures any more as long as the Cuban government attempts to meet the objectives of the Common Position (respect of human rights and democracy, improvement of living standards of the Cuban population and promotion of sustainable economic growth); (2) On the other, they extended the term for periodic reviews of the Common Position from six to twelve months, with the intention of giving both parties a longer term for pursuing a political dialogue.⁴⁰

Almost simultaneously, Castro announced in Havana before a meeting of all CARICOM Heads of Government (celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the opening of diplomatic relations between Cuba and four Caribbean states in frontal challenge of the U.S. embargo) that Cuba intended to join the Cotonou Agreement. However, two fundamental questions then were: How the EU would react to this? What were the Cuban expectations and real intentions?

Cuba, understandably, would like to receive an answer before it submits its application. The problem is that the EU will not reveal its decisions a priori (in the ACP context or in any other membership procedure). For months, after much give and take, EU Commission officers have

been successful in convincing their Cuban counterparts that the European Union history is full of examples of a cycle including applying, rejection, resubmitting application, and admission. The United Kingdom and Spain are among the countries that experienced such process, and Cuba would not be different.⁴¹ It must be understood that it is not EU policy to take an official position on a matter such as the admission of a new member to Cotonou unless the interested third party has formally introduced a membership request. The EU will therefore not be in a position to pronounce itself on Cuba's eventual membership in Cotonou before being in possession of the Cuban request. In consequence, if Cuba were to approach the ACP-EU Council of Ministers with a new request for accession to Cotonou then the competent EU institutional bodies would have to assess the matter on the basis of the relevant part of the Cotonou Agreement (Art 94) as any other third party request."

However, Cuba, if accepted by the ACP-EU Council of Ministers as a new member and subject to the conclusion of the ratification process in the Member States, would not automatically be in a position to enjoy the financial benefits under the Agreement. This is stipulated in Art. 94, dictating in consequence that Cuba's eventual accession would not infringe on the benefits enjoyed by the ACP States signatory to this Agreement under the provisions on development cooperation. Since the allocations for the 77 ACP Cotonou members have already been distributed on an indicative basis, Cuba would not receive funds under the present 9th European Development Fund (EDF). It would be feasible that the EU could decide to add a specific budget line, as was the case with South Africa, in order to finance cooperation measures benefiting Cuba under this Agreement. It is equally important to recall in this connection that Cuba, once a member, would have to meet the essential elements of the Cotonou acquis (as in the case of EU membership) in order to enjoy the eventual financial and commercial benefits deriving from the Agreement.

An intriguing subject related to this complex membership procedure is the attitude of some individual member states. It is a fact, never confirmed in public, that some EU Member States continue to object to Cuba's accession to Cotonou at this stage because, in their judgment, Cuba has not made progress in human rights improvements. EU officials are careful to point out that Art 94 sets out the formal requirements for membership to Cotonou. Eligible is any "independent State whose structural characteristics and economic and social situation are comparable to those in the ACP States". It is interesting to note that no other conditions are mentioned. If Cuba submits a request for accession this request will be assessed on no other grounds than the ones contained in the Cotonou Agreement.

However, the question if and to what extent Cuba meets the democracy and human rights criterion, as defined in Art 9, is to be discussed only once Cuba is a member of the Agreement. The award of financial and commercial benefits under the Agreement is subject to fully respecting the stipulations of Art 9. This, however, is not an issue while Cuba is not a Cotonou member state. It has to be understood that while the Common Position is a unilateral foreign policy statement of the EU, Cotonou is a multilateral partnership agreement constituting mutual rights and obligations under international law. This is separate from the annual UN Geneva evaluation of human rights, although it would be strange to note that while the EU Member States and candidates vote solidly to censure Cuba, it would look inconsistent if they would approve Cuba's credentials for Cotonou. However, it has to be recalled that the EU has consistently supported motions in the UN criticizing the human rights situation in countries with cooperation agreements, including Lomé and Cotonou signatories.

The decision to reapply for membership and its consequences need to be considered in a wider and more complex scenario. First, there was the financial exhaustion of Cuba by an accumulation of external shocks in 2001 (Hurricane Michelle, September 11 attacks, closing the Russian military intelligence station, global economic slowdown, oil price increases), with the result that Cuba faced in 2002 a sensible shortage in foreign hard currency, estimated at around \$500 million. As a remedy, the Cuban government made special efforts to attract more tourism and foreign direct investment as well as to agree with debtors on rescheduling arrangements. On the home front, however, measures to further liberalize the domestic economic environment, especially for the local entrepreneurial sector, have however not been improved accordingly. The economic gap between Cubans who have access to U.S. dollars and those who do not is increasing, as well as internal political dissidence. The crime rate has been obviously on the rise

in recent years but tight police and law and order control have clearly succeeded in reducing its more visible effects. Police forces have harassed political dissidents (especially the organizers of the Varela project) and independent journalists, leading to the drastic measures taken in March and April of 2003.

On the international front Cuba embarked, after striking a rather conciliatory tone with the United States following the September 11 attacks, on a double-edged strategy: pursuing a more confrontational course with the Bush Administration and engaging in a deliberate offensive towards the growing U.S. anti-embargo lobby both in Congress and in the business community. Following Cuba's narrow condemnation at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 2002, which was supported by several Latin American countries, including for the first time Mexico (with the taping of conversations held with President Fox), relations with the neighbors became rather sour (with insulting remarks against Uruguay's president). Relations with the Caribbean have been less problematic, with Cuba having signed partial free trade protocols with CARICOM in June 2001 and having joined CARIFORUM (the EU-ACP aid framework in the Caribbean area) in October 2001.

Because of the endemic economic crisis in Cuba the regime has been interested in improving its relations with the EU. In spite of the Geneva confrontation and rejection of the conditions of the EU Common Position, a positive attitude towards Brussels developed. Allowing Osvaldo Payá to travel to Europe to receive the Sakharov Prize was apparently part of the strategy. In the context of this mild EU-Cuba "honeymoon," the Commission has been accurately perceived by Cuba as a major, cohesive force for a deeper rapprochement. However, Brussels has been well aware that Havana's latest moves are dictated by a long-term strategic interest. Castro did not expect any special softening of the official U.S. attitude after the Republican victory in the mid-term elections. Hence, he always needs the Europeans for breathing space, pressed by financial shortfalls in Cuba and the rest of Latin America. The squeeze of oil from Venezuela has been only one of the troubles. The economic opening from the United States has not come without a price --food and medicine sales are costly since they have to be purchased on a cash basis.

In consequence, the EU Commission opted once again for a policy of "constructive engagement", as opposed to one based on coercion, hoping for preparing the foundations for change in the longer run. In this line of thought, the opening of the EU Delegation in Havana was supposed to serve as the proper setting for the inclusion of Cuba in the new Asia-Latin American (ALA) Regulation (in which Cuba is already inserted in its 1992 arrangement), including a technical framework agreement governing the implementation of EU aid. This new instrument would allow for substantially wider development assistance objectives than under the Common Position, although this measure remains the EU policy towards Cuba. The Council Conclusions of December 10 significantly widened the scope of EU development cooperation in Cuba, thus taking away the sector limitations imposed in 1996.

The new ALA Regulation establishes clear principles for programming through a Country Strategy Paper and multi-annual indicative program, and limits the role of Member States at the project approval stage and allows untying of aid at the regional level. It has to be noted that, in spite of the absence of a standard cooperation agreement and the lack of membership in the Cotonou structure, Cuba participates to some extent in several EU programs: INCO (the network of research institutes), ALFA (the network of universities), URB AL (the network of cities), and AL INVEST (the promotion of investments). Cuban partners can also apply to @LIS, a program of cooperation in the development of information and communication technologies in Latin American countries.⁴²

On balance, there was still a sense of moderate frustration, combined with some resignation, as a common denominator of the European attitude. This perception would survive provided the Cuban internal situation would not worsen beyond the tolerable limits of international impact. However, in the event that during the path to a definite transition the European policy of economic engagement renders the expected results, a sense of satisfaction would become visible. Meanwhile, each one of the member states will continue to proceed in the defense of their best interests and historical obligations. Frustration will diminish as long as the emphasis is put on lessening the tensions in preparing the way for a peaceful transition, under the

assumption that the future of Cuba is, after all, in the hands of the Cubans. A Declaration of the EU Spanish presidency welcoming the "Varela Project," was explicit in this line of thought widely shared by a majority of the decision-making and opinion circles of the EU: [The project] "will succeed in opening a debate in favor of the process of a peaceful transition towards a pluralist democracy and reconciled Cuban society."⁴³ The European Parliament's award of the Sakharov Prize to Oswaldo Payá,⁴⁴ the renewed offer of constructive engagement, and the opening of an EU Delegation in Havana were confirmation of this line of thought and policy. However, the serious events of April 2003 drastically changed the constructive EU approach.

V. The (other) empire strikes back

On the eve of the May 1 celebration, as important in Cuba as it is in most of the world with the exception of the United States, the European Commission, in its weekly meeting, considered the thorny topic of Cuba and decided to file the still pending petition of Cuba to become a member of the Cotonou Agreement. The Commission issued a statement indicating that the situation in Cuba "has strongly deteriorated in such a very serious manner that the Commission did not want to remain silent."⁴⁵ Commissioner Poul Nielson, whose portfolio includes development and humanitarian aid, directly overseeing the Cuban ACP project, recommended delaying the process some months waiting for a change made by the Cuban government. Other members of the Commission (led by Spain's Loyola de Palacio and UK's Chris Patten, in charge of external relations) pressed for an indefinite ban on membership. Nielsen declared that the reason for this drastic decision was that the cooperative agreement is not limited to commercial benefits, but it also includes the area of respect for human rights.⁴⁶ Moreover, Patten put the burden on Cuban authorities ("the ball is in their court") until they "repair the damage done to the most basic human rights". The Commission also contemplated the renewal of Cuba's membership in the UN Human Rights Commission.⁴⁷ For its part, the EU Council acted with a speedy condemnation, warning Cuba not to expect European aid.⁴⁸ The Latin American Group of the Council decided to endorse a Nicaraguan censure motion against Cuba presented at the Organization of American States (OAS), to issue instructions to governments to limit contacts and participation in programs to be held in Havana, and to carry out a special evaluation of the Common Position on Cuba in place since 1996.

These decisions were the expected official result of a series of European reactions, first to the imprisonment of dissidents and later to the summary executions implemented by the Cuban government.

Right after the announcement of the imprisonment of 76 dissidents, their organizations, led by leaders such as Elizardo Sánchez, Gustavo Arcos and Osvaldo Payá, opted for asking the help of the European Union institutions in their release.⁴⁹ European newspapers stepped up critical commentaries against the Cuban government, while intellectuals signed declarations of condemnation on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵⁰ Press activity became spectacular most especially in Spain, and it was not limited to the conservative press, a trend that has been evident since the mid 90s⁵¹. Moreover, op-ed pages in newspapers of all sorts of political inclinations have become frequent showcases of commentaries by Cuban anti-Castro exiles.⁵² Some notable desertions in the backing of the Cuban government, such as the case of Portuguese Nobel winner writer, Jose Saramago,⁵³ reminded observers of the spectacular alarm created by the Heberto Padilla "confession" in 1971.⁵⁴ The scandalous reaction reached an unprecedented level when the executions were announced.⁵⁵ In Spain, the alarm had reached unusual levels of censure in press reports, editorials, and columns published by leading opinion makers of all sorts of political inclinations.⁵⁶ PSOE leaders qualified the executions as "savage", while Izquierda Unida branded them as a "political mistake of great magnitude."⁵⁷ Former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González used harsh qualifiers on live TV interviews referring to Castro "in the last stages of a decrepit regime". Former Socialist leaders and prestigious diplomats with social democratic credentials were especially critical of the Cuban leadership.⁵⁸

The Spanish government and the leadership of the Partido Popular were especially noted for their blistering remarks.⁵⁹ Prime Minister Aznar, while invited to the White House, met with Cuban-American members of Congress and issued a condemnation of the Cuban regime.⁶⁰ The PP also used the occasion to create confrontation with the opposition,⁶¹ reviving the insertion of

the Cuban issue as an internal theme to be manipulated for electoral purposes.⁶² The Hispano-Cuban Foundation awarded its International Prizes for Human Rights to three distinguished Cuban dissidents in a ceremony to be held at the Spanish government setting of Casa América.⁶³ The Spanish Senate passed a motion to “withdraw” a medal given to Fidel Castro in 1987 on the occasion of a visit by its President.⁶⁴ A former President and current PSOE spokesman in the Senate lamented the lack of Spanish consensus on Cuba and potential loss of Spain’s influence in the Cuban transition.⁶⁵ The who-is-who of Spanish artists signed protest manifestos along worldwide figures, with the result that only Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez remained isolated in the group of famous writers siding with Castro.⁶⁶ In spite of the internal controversies, a survey revealed that an overwhelming majority of 90% of Spaniards believe that Castro should leave power, while 78% condemns the executions, figures similar to the popular opposition to the war in Iraq and to the U.S. embargo against Cuba.⁶⁷

Cuban authorities replied to this criticism and opposition by using hard expressions as “blackmail” and “soft” [on the United States] for the actions and attitudes of Europeans.⁶⁸ Cuban ambassador en Madrid branded Spanish politicians as “opportunists” seeking electoral gains.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, protests in Europe and Latin America degenerated in serious confrontations and aggressions inflicted on press members by Cuban diplomatic staff.⁷⁰ The EU Commission warned that the repressive measures could have a “devastating effect” on the relations with the EU.⁷¹ Several European countries cancelled or considerably downsized the level of scheduled participation in programs and activities to be held in Cuba.⁷² The French government, in spite of its spat with the United States over the war in Iraq, issued extremely critical statements against Castro, vouching for support of EU-wide measures,⁷³ while intellectuals signed letters of protest.⁷⁴ The Italian parliament and government, dominated by premier Berlusconi’s party, announced their intention of proposing what they called a European-wide embargo on Cuba, in anticipation of tougher measures to be implemented when holding the EU presidency in the second semester of 2003, while reducing the diplomatic relations between the two countries to the level maintained with Pinochet’s Chile from 1973 to 1990.⁷⁵

VI. Conclusion

The balance sheet of the experience of the European Union’s policies and attitudes on Cuba shows a mixed picture. It is composed of a coherent script of measures intended in the first place for maintaining the communication line open, and secondarily for contributing to facilitating the conditions for a sort of “soft landing” in the terrain of democracy and market economy in the event of a peaceful transition. This strategy does not come free of charge, as demonstrated by the persistent negative vote on Cuba in the UN Commission for Human Rights, and the maintenance of the Common Position imposed in 1996 conditioning any special cooperation and aid package to the implementation of political reforms.

This institutional policy contrasts, on the one hand, with the apparently uncoordinated policies of the member states that trade and invest in Cuba according to their individual interests. This makes the Common Position “neither common, nor a policy,” in the words of sarcastic EU insiders.⁷⁶ On the other hand, the EU strategy contrasts with the U.S. policy of confrontations and harassment. While the United States has been pursuing a path composed of the embargo and extraterritorial laws such as Helms-Burton, the EU has opted for a “constructive engagement”. While, the European pattern has been geared toward preparing for the transition, the United States policy has concentrated on regime change.⁷⁷ Both, however, share one dimension in common –Cuba has not changed or reformed according to the expected results. The European strategy can be labeled as one based on good intentions and reasonable (if not high) expectations, but at the end of any serious attempt to condition an offer of a special status in the EU structure (bilateral agreement, Lomé, Cotonou), the result has been a high degree of frustration. With the latest development of the arrests and executions, this sentiment has been translated into blunt irritation.

In view of the seriousness of the events of April 2003 and the unanimous condemnation and censure issued by the EU institutions, it is expected that the freezing of the consideration of Cuba’s membership in the ACP network and any other special economic benefits will continue. The strategy of giving Cuba a longer breathing space by extending the period of evaluation of

the Common Position from a semester to a year was scuttled, with the result of the renewal of the conditioning by the Council in June of 2003. The prospects of a harder EU attitude under the Italian presidency in the second part of the year were confirmed.

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.

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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

Table 1. EC Cooperation with Cuba 1997-2001 (Commitments)

EC Cooperation with Cuba 1997 - 2001 (in €millions)

Budget line	Sector	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
B-210	Humanitarian aid	10.3	9.8	11.4	2	8.5
B-219	Disaster prevention					0.9
B-20	Food security	0.2	0.2	0.7	1	0
B-6000	NGOs Co-Financing	0.6	2.4	2.8	8.2	5.4
B-311	Economic cooperation with LA countries	1.1	2	2.1	5.8	4.9
B-310	Financial & technical cooperation with LA countries	0	0	0	0	0
B-6200	Environment/tropical forests	0	0	0	0	0.5
Total		12.2	14.4	17	17	20.2

Source: European Commission, *Cuba y la Unión Europea* (2002).

¹ Anthony Boadle, "Cuba pulls request to join EU's Cotonou aid pact," Reuters, May 17, 2003; EFE, "Cuba retirará su solicitud de ingreso al Convenio de Cotonou," *El Mundo*, 19 mayo 2003; Pablo Alfonso, "Cuba pierde el respaldo económico de Europa," *El Nuevo Herald*, 20 mayo 2003; Nancy Sanb Martín, "Cuba withdraws from European pact," *The Miami Herald*, May 20, 2003 7A.

² Declaración del MINREX, 19 mayo 2003.

³ This section partially reflects a portion of the content of an article by Susanne Gratius, entitled "Cuba: un caso aparte en la política exterior de la Unión Europea", published as a chapter in the book entitled *Las relaciones exteriores de la Unión Europea*, Joaquín Roy and Roberto Domínguez, eds. (México: UNAM, 2000), Joaquín Roy and Roberto Domínguez, eds.

⁴ AFP, "Prisión a disidentes traba acuerdos con la Unión Europea," *El Nuevo Herald*, 1 abril 2003.

⁵ For general information, consult the web of the EU Commission: http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/development_old/cotonou/index_en.htm

⁶ For a review of these events, see my book entitled *Cuba, the United States and the Helms-Burton Doctrine: International Reactions* Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000.

⁷ See my commentary: "Unión Europea-Cuba: de la frustración a la irritación," *La Opinión de Los Angeles*, 20 mayo 2003.

⁸ IRELA, "Revision of European Policy on Cuba," pp. 17-21.

⁹ IRELA, "Revision," pp. 25-26.

¹⁰ The European Union and Cuba: Solidarity or Complicity?, September 2000.

http://www.cubacenter.org/media/recent_briefs/paxchristi.html

¹¹ IRELA, "Revision," pp. 27-34; Comisión Europea, *Cuba y la Unión Europea*, 2003.

¹² EFE, "Mayoría de inversores en Cuba provienen de la UE," *Diario las Américas*, 9 febrero 2003.

¹³ IRELA, "Revision," p. 34.

¹⁴ See current format (May 2003):

http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/country/country_home_en.cfm?cid=cu&lng=en&status=old#overview

See general web: <http://www.imf.org/external/country/index.htm>

¹⁵ Richard Nuccio, "The USA and Cuba", in Richard Haas (ed.), *Trans-Atlantic Tensions: The United States, Europe and Problem Countries*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1999, pp. 7-29.

- ¹⁶ Eduardo Perera, "Condicionalidad y condicionamientos previos en la cooperación al desarrollo de la Unión Europea" en Revista de Estudios Europeos, La Habana, núm. 53/54, 2000, pp. 3-33.
- ¹⁷ IRELA, "Revision of European Policy on Cuba?", p. 1.
- ¹⁸ Nuccio, Op. Cit.
- ¹⁹ Francesc Granell, "Cuba y la Unión Europea: del encuadre latinoamericano al ACP caribeño", in Revista Española de Desarrollo y Cooperación, núm. 3, Madrid 1998.
- ²⁰ Resolution on Cuba presented by Poland and the Czech Republic.
- ²¹ IRELA, Revision of the European Policy towards Cuba: Perceptions and Interests of the EU Member States, Madrid, 2000.
- ²² Granma, 29 abril de 2000.
- ²³ Interviews carried out in Brussels and the Caribbean during the months of July and August 2000.
- ²⁴ Literal quote from a Caribbean high government official.
- ²⁵ See statement in ACP web:
<http://www.acpsec.org/gb/press/146b034e.html>
- ²⁶ Georgetown Agreement of 1992.
- ²⁷ See my column "Coherencia europea, vacilación latinoamericana," El Nuevo Herald, 18 abril 2001.
- ²⁸ See my column entitled "Cuba y la Unión Europea," Diario16, 5 setiembre 2001.
- ²⁹ From EU Commission sources.
- ³⁰ Data and considerations from EU Commission sources.
- ³¹ AFP, "UE vuelve a pedir transición democrática y libertades en Cuba," 10 diciembre 2002.
- ³² AFP, "Desdeña La Habana las posiciones de la Unión Europea," 14 diciembre 2002.
- ³³ Mauricio Vicent, "La UE cree insuficiente," El País, 9 diciembre 2001.
- ³⁴ Peru Egurbide, "Fidel Castro pide visado," El País, 15 mayo 2002; Pablo Alfonso, "Castro decide no asistir," El Nuevo Herald, 17 mayo 2002.
- ³⁵ "EU would help Cuba more if it saw better respect for human rights," Sources Say (Brussels), May 16, 2002.
- ³⁶ Confirmed in a meeting between EU Commissioner Poul Nielson and Cuban Vice Minister for Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation, Rodrigo Malmierca (Agence France Press, "Europa ayudará a la economía de mercado," El Nuevo Herald, 5 marzo 2002, 17A).
- ³⁷ AFP, "ACP pide a UE estudiar 'sin condición previa' candidatura de Cuba a acuerdo de cooperación," 11 diciembre 2002; EFE, "Apoyan ingreso de Cuba a pacto de Cotonú," El Nuevo Herald, 10 diciembre 2002; Pablo Alfonso, "La diplomacia de La Habana hacia el Caribe anglófono," El Nuevo Herald, 8 diciembre 2002.
- ³⁸ AP, "Cuba to renew request to join aid pact," The Miami Herald, December 9, 2002.
- ³⁹ AFP, "La Comisión Europea favorece a la isla," El Nuevo Herald, 7 marzo 2003; Bosco Esteruelas, "La Comisión Europea abre la colaboración con Cuba," El País, 7 marzo 2003; Enrique Serbeto, "Castro podría abrir la puerta de salida a los cubanos a cambio de la ayuda de la UE," El País, 3 marzo 2003.
- ⁴⁰ General Affairs Council. XII Evaluation of the Common Position on Cuba. Conclusions. December 12, 2002.
- ⁴¹ From EU sources.
- ⁴² European Commission, Cuba and the European Union, 2003.
- ⁴³ Declaration by the EU regarding the "Varela Project" (May 20, 2002).
- ⁴⁴ For a selection of impact of the ceremony in the Miami press, see: EFE, "Aznar pedirá a Cuba que permita a Payá recoger el premio Sajarov," Diario las Américas, 3 diciembre 2002; AP, "Cuban dissident cleared to leave to accept award," The Miami Herald, December 15, 2002; Rui Ferreira, "El viaje de Payá causa entusiasmo y temores," El Nuevo Herald, 17 diciembre 2002; Nancy San Martín, "Castro foe's human rights award puts world spotlight on Cuba," The Miami Herald, December 17, 2002; Constant Brand, "EU honors Cuban dissident, back fight for democracy," The Miami Herald, 18 diciembre 2002; Editorial, "Payá's Freedom Prize," The Miami Herald, December 18, 2002; EFE, "Payá: existe un doble embargo en Cuba," Diario las Américas, 18 diciembre 2002; AFP, "Payá pide solidaridad a Europa," El Nuevo Herald, 24 diciembre 2002; EFE, "Payá espera que UE continúe apoyando la apertura pacífica de Cuba," Diario las Américas, 20 diciembre 2002; for text in Spanish: "Un premio para el pueblo cubano," El Nuevo Herald, 21 diciembre 2002; Diario las Américas, 22 diciembre 2002; in English: "Sakharov prize honors all Cuban people," The Miami Herald, December 22, 2002.

⁴⁵ EFE, "Congelan la petición cubana," El Nuevo Herald, 1 mayo 2003; Tim Johnson, "Senators want to let Americans visit and spend money in Cuba," The Miami Herald, May 1, 2003.

⁴⁶ Bosco Esteruelas, "La UE congela su relación con Cuba por la represión de disidentes," El País, 1 mayo 2003.

⁴⁷ From internal EU Commission sources.

⁴⁸ Amadeu Altafaj, "La UE emite una condena unánime," ABC, 15 abril 2003; Javier Jiménez, "La UE condena la tiranía de Castro," La Razón, 15 abril 2003.

⁴⁹ Mauricio Vicent, "Los disidentes de Cuba piden ayuda urgente a la Unión Europea," El País, 1 abril 2003.

⁵⁰ La Razón, "Miedo a la libertad en Cuba," 2 abril 2003; "Carta de los intelectuales a Castro," El País, 2 abril 2003; El País, "Nocturnidad y alevosía," 7 abril 2003; EFE, "Mas de 300 personalidades exigen a Castro que libere a los detenidos," 11 abril 2003; Wilfredo Cancio Isla, "Destacados intelectuales condenan ola represiva," El Nuevo Herald, 2 abril 2003.

⁵¹ Ernesto Sotomayor, "Vuelta de tuerca de Fidel Castro," Cambio16, 28 abril 2003.

⁵² César Leante, "Ser periodista (libre) en Cuba," El País, 13 mayo 2003.

⁵³ "Hasta aquí he llegado," El País, 14 abril 2003.

⁵⁴ Pablo Alfonso, "El mundo condena la represión en Cuba," El Nuevo Herald, 15 abril 2003.

⁵⁵ Antonio Elorza, "La ira del comandador," El País, 15 abril 2003; Fernando Jáuregui, "A vueltas con Castro," La Razón, 15 abril 2003; AFP, "Tormenta intelectual por la represión en Cuba," El Nuevo Herald, 5 mayo 2003.

⁵⁶ The bluntness of the language used can be traced back to the commentaries on the arrests of dissidents. See, for example, two classic editorials of El País, "Redada castrista," 2 abril 2003, and "Nocturnidad y alevosía," 7 abril 2003. As examples of early critical commentaries, see: Carlos Herrera, "Ahora le toca a Fidel," ABC, 4 abril 2003, and "Pues nada, ¡Viva la Revolución!" ABC, 11 abril 2003; Jorge Moragas, "Contraluz en La Habana," La Razón, 6 abril 2003; La Vanguardia, "Coletazos castristas," 8 abril 2003; César Alonso de los Ríos, "Cuba 2003," ABC, 10 abril 2003. After the executions, the sharpness of the style used reached unprecedented levels, both in editorials and informative pieces: El Mundo, "En el infierno cubano no hay consuelo para nadie," 14 abril 2003; Mauricio Vicent, "Castro ejecuta a tres secuestradores de un 'ferry' " El País, 12 abril 2003; Rosa Montero, "Cuba," El País, 15 abril 2003; Fernando Jáuregui, "A vueltas con Castro," La Razón, 15 abril 2003; Ignacio Sánchez Cámara, "Cuba: la tiranía consentida," ABC, 26 abril 2003.

⁵⁷ Alberto Pérez Giménez, "Castro ordena ejecutar a tres hombres tras un juicio sumarísimo sin ninguna garantía," ABC, 12 abril 2003; ABC, "Sangrienta vuelta de tuerca en Cuba," 12 abril 2003.

⁵⁸ El Nuevo Herald "De Cuba, nada sorprende a Semprún," 7 mayo 2003; Máximo Cajal, "Guantánamo," El País, 8 mayo 2003.

⁵⁹ EFE, "Gobierno español dice que las ejecuciones revelan que Castro sigue siendo un tirano," Diario las Américas, 13 abril 2003.

⁶⁰ Pablo Alfonso, "Condema Aznar la represión en Cuba," El Nuevo Herald, 9 mayo 2003.

⁶¹ Gabriela Galotti, AFP, "Aznar acusó a la oposición de no tener el coraje de poner la cara", Diario las Américas, 16 abril 2003

⁶² Alberto Míguez, "Zapatero, ausente en la concentración contra la tiranía de Castro ante la Embajada cubana," La Razón, 13 abril 2003; La Razón, "Los valedores del tirano," 13 abril 2003; Pilar Marcos, "Aznar reta a Zapatero a condenar 'con coraje' las tres ejecuciones de Cuba," El País, 13 abril 2003; E.I.P., "La oposición de izquierdas condena al régimen cubano y recuerda a Aznar la relación Fraga-Castro," La Razón, 15 abril 2003; Javier Pradera, "Y tú más...", El País, 30 abril 2003; El Mundo, "IU califica la manifestación contra el regimen cubano de 'manipulación' " 25 abril 2003; ABC, "La izquierda y el mito del castrismo," ABC, 26 abril 2003; El Mundo, "Del castrismo tenebroso al anticastrismo desquiciado," 27 abril 2003; Antonio Elorza, "Segurosos," El País, 9 mayo 2003; E.L. Palomera, "Zapatero y Llamazares guardan la pancarta contra Castro," La Razón, 23 abril 2003; Agustín Yanel, "a oposición acusa al PP de utilizar a Cuba," El Mundo, 30 abril 2003; Camilo Valdecantos, "El Congreso condena la repression castrista, pero sin lograr el consenso," El País, 30 abril 2003. For a panoramic review of Spain-Cuba relations, see my book entitled La siempre fiel (Madrid: Universidad Complutense/La Catarata, 1999).

⁶³ AFP, "Fundación Hispano-Cubana premia a tres disidentes," Diario las Américas, 10 mayo 2003.

⁶⁴ AFP, "Senado español estudia retirar medalla que le dio a Castro," Diario las Américas, 1 mayo 2003.

⁶⁵ Juan José Laborda, "Dividiendo inmisericordemente hasta con Cuba," El País, 6 mayo 2003.

⁶⁶ Reuters, "García Márquez rompe su silencio," El Nuevo Herald, 30 abril 2003; Carlos Fuentes, "Las infidelidades de Fidel," Diario las Américas, 4 mayo 2003; Enrique Krauze, "Gabo en su laberinto," El País, 9 mayo 2003; AP, "Respuesta de García Márquez no satisface a Sontag," El Nuevo Herald, 10 mayo 2003; Fabiola Santiago, "Bitter honeymoon," The Miami Herald, May 10, 2003, E1.

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⁶⁸ Joaquim Ibarz, "Castro arremete contra Aznar y González tras las críticas a las ejecuciones," La Vanguardia, 27 abril 2003; Mauricio Vicent, "Cuba acusa de chantaje y tibieza a la UE", 19 abril 2003; "Cuba ahonda su aislamiento y desprecia la relación con la UE", El País, 20 abril 2003.

⁶⁹ El Mundo, "La embajadora de Cuba acusa a los políticos españoles de oportunismo," 19 abril 2003.

⁷⁰ ABC, "España pide explicaciones," 25 abril 2003; Reuters, "Adversarios y simpatizantes de Castro chocan en Caracas," El Nuevo Herald, 27 abril 2003.

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⁷⁵ AFP, "Posible embargo de UE a Cuba," Diario las Américas, 30 abril 2003; Sources Say (Brussels), "Berlusconi wants EU to adopt Cuba embargo," April 30, 2003; AP, "Italia pide tratar a Castro como a Pinochet," El Nuevo Herald, 5 mayo 2003.

⁷⁶ From EU Commission and Council sources.

⁷⁷ For a review of the U.S. policy towards Cuba since the end of the Cold War, see Thomas Morley and Chris McGillion, Unfinished Business: America and Cuba after the Cold War, 1989-2001 (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002).