

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002998/24
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Maciej Wąsik (ECR), Mariusz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 December 2024)

Subject: Human rights violations by the Cuban regime in the light of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Cuba

In 2016, the EU signed the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement with Cuba (PDACA), which aims, among other things, to ensure respect for human rights in Cuba. Eight years after it was signed, it has become clear that the regime in Havana is using the agreement to consolidate its power, without offering any reforms in return and even stepping up repression and persecution. The communist authorities continue to carry out arbitrary arrests, acts of violence and politically motivated killings. The perpetrators of the murder of Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas remain unpunished. The number of political prisoners reached 1148 in November. Many of them are being held in extremely harsh conditions and subjected to torture. The recent death in custody of the opposition activist Manuel Guillén, for which the Cuban regime authorities bear full responsibility, is symbolic of this ominous situation.

In this regard, during the Transatlantic Forum held on 12 November 2024 in the EP, parliamentarians from a dozen countries adopted the Declaration for a Free Cuba, in which they expressed their firm opposition to the persecution of Cuban opposition activists and the widespread human rights violations committed by the current regime.

We call on the Vice-President/High Representative to examine the situation as a matter of urgency and to answer the following questions:

1. Since 2016, how much money has the EU transferred to Cuba in indirect support of the communist regime?
2. Which of the priorities promoted by the EU under the PDACA have been implemented?
3. Do the repeated killings of opposition figures in Cuba and the increasing number of political prisoners since 2016 not provide sufficient grounds to suspend the transfer of funds?

Submitted: 17.12.2024

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(17 March 2025)

1. EU development cooperation aims at improving the living conditions of the Cuban population, in the framework of the partnership established under the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement ⁽¹⁾. No EU funds are channelled through the Cuban authorities. EU funding is directly transmitted to the implementing agencies in charge of the various EU projects, be it United Nations (UN) agencies, agencies of the Member States or European non-governmental organisations.
2. There has been some progress on each of the priorities agreed in the framework of the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement and enumerated in its Article 2. In particular, the Agreement has framed EU-Cuba relations through a critical yet constructive engagement. It has supported Cuba's economic modernisation through the progressive expansion of its private sector, and fostered improvements in human rights, including the adoption of the Family Code ⁽²⁾, the acceptance of 81% of recommendations under the UN Universal Periodic Review, and the recent decision by Cuba to free 553 detainees. It has also encouraged Cuba to advance towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, facilitated dialogue on trade and economic relations, as well as to address the impact of the United States embargo on the island, which also affects EU companies and citizens. The EU is committed to pursue its efforts to achieve additional, more significant results in all areas, with emphasis on the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to promote EU interests.
3. As indicated, no funds are directed at the Cuban Government. The objective of all EU cooperation initiatives is to support the Cuban population as a whole, which is currently enduring a particularly severe economic crisis, combined recently with other natural hazards such as hurricanes and earthquakes.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision (EU) 2016/2232 of 6/12/2016 — OJ L337.

⁽²⁾ Law 156/2022, Of. Gazette 99 of 27/09/22.