

Welcome Speech on the occasion of the XVI. European Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba by Bettina Juergensen, President of the Communist Party of Germany

Berlin, 10.11.2012

Compañeras and Compañeros,

dear comrades,

I would very much like to express my thanks for the invitation to this XVI. European Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba.

This is a very important meeting not only to maintain, but to keep pushing and developing the solidarity with Cuba under the conditions of a worldwide crisis of capitalism. In the short time I have, I would like to mention just some points:

In the United States of America, President Obama has been reelected. The experience of his first period of government has shown, that he did not fulfil the hopes and expectations in many fields. We must state, however, that President Obama is a lot more receptive towards pressure of the different movements in his country and that he must and will react internationally in order to keep some of his promises and thus his electors.

This could also be meaningful for the solidarity with Cuba by organizations and individuals, especially the activities with regard to the release – and I explicitly express also the exit of the United States – of the five illegitimately imprisoned Cuban citizens must be developed. The international solidarity must never cease, it has to be strengthened.

For us communists, members of the Communist Party of Germany, the solidarity with Cuba has always been an important task, being a matter of comprehension and of heart.

On one hand it is a question of international solidarity that we show to all people and peoples that struggle for their independence go their own way detached from the influence of the capitalist states and try to decide their own future.

For communists, however, it is also a question of cooperation between the Communist Parties. It is not just about material solidarity that the Communist Party of Germany has been organizing for a long time. In coordination with our Cuban comrades and in mutual effort, we have developed projects in the province of Matanzas in the field of health, which resulted for example in a family doctor's practice, a rehabilitation facility and the participation in the renovation of a hospital.

We practice financial solidarity so that for example we have collected 5100 Euro of donations within a week for the damages caused by hurricane Sandy. For our small party, a huge sign of solidarity! And these are just a few examples.

Very important for us is that the material and practical solidarity always goes hand in hand with the political solidarity. A political solidarity with the population of Cuba but also with the Communist Party of

Cuba, trying under very hard conditions to develop and build up a socialist society.

One of the difficult conditions is the geographic position of Cuba in a region which is struck by forces of nature and makes solidarity, like in the case of hurricanes, even more necessary.

Another condition, which is a lot more profound economically and politically, is the blockade by the United States of America and its Allies which exists just as long as the Republic of Cuba.

We believe that solidarity with Cuba also means to struggle for an end of the blockade because it is the only way to make our solidarity effective in the end.

In order to achieve this, we must put pressure on the individual European governments – for us the government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The position of the European Union with its “Common Point of View”, which is nothing but the adaptation and extension of the US-blockade within Europe, must be altered towards economic exchange and collaboration with Cuba. This is the way to finally increase pressure towards the United States to end its policy of blockade.

Political solidarity for us also means to inform in our country about life, work and politics and Cuba and we do so. We must not leave the highness of information to the civic media. We do so by organizing events with guests from Cuba. We do this by informing about the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba and the concluded process of actualization of economic and social processes in Cuba. With huge interest we perceive the changes, showing us how the party, the government and the population of Cuba is finding answers and ways to maintain the revolution and further develop its society within the present international context. This gives us impulses for our own development as well.

The Communist Party of Germany will maintain, extend and develop all these different forms of solidarity. We understand us as a part of the solidarity movement and will always cooperate with other movements, organizations and parties showing solidarity with Cuba. The cooperation with others is an absolute necessity !

The XVI. Encounter of the European Networks of Solidarity with Cuba is not just an example of solidarity – it also shows us that it is possible to develop collective targets and demands within the European countries. This becomes more and more necessary also in other democratic and social struggles within our continent. So let's show our own common point of view !

I wish the conference a lot of success !