

Short protocol, results and action plan of the Working Group 2

"EU policy, common position and activities in Europe"

{November 2012}

PROCEDURE:

1. Welcome (Harri Grünberg, Chairman Network Cuba Germany)
2. Introduction to topic and workshop facilitation, protocol (Edgar Göll, Deputy Chairman Network Cuba Germany)
3. Lecture by Wolfgang Gehrcke (Member of the German Bundestag, the Left Party, foreign affairs spokesperson)
4. Discussion, exchange of experiences and statements
5. Clarification of joint and coordinated activities

OBJECTIVES:

- To change the policy of the EU Member States and the EU and to abolish the common position of the EU.
- Give impetus to the development of bilateral relations of European states with Cuba.
- In addition, minimize effects of the US-blockade and negative influence of the (neo-conservative) EU and against Cuba. And to influence the EU to clearly and really work against the U.S. blockade.

LECTURE, EXPERIENCE AND DISCUSSION:

In his presentation MP Gehrcke highlighted that the "EU Common Position towards Cuba" is no more common, that the various governments in the EU have different views and different practices toward Cuba. Meanwhile, there are 14 bilateral agreements of EU countries with Cuba. And the Norwegian government pays its disaster aid for Haiti to Cuba, which they implement. It must be communicated more clearly that the EU position represents an exceptional right, that it is based on blatant double standards, and that it violates the right of self determination of Cuba.

In the future it would have to be worked out, how positive sustainable relations between the EU and EU member states with Cuba should look like, what qualities such future relations should include (e.g. ALBA as a model?). The German government is so far the strongest blocker in the EU for a termination of the common position, but since it is trying to get economically a stronger foothold in Latin America (raw materials, markets), but at the sub-continent there are reservations against Germany because of its destructive and unfair Cuba policy. Not least because of this situation a (slight) change seems possible - there are signs of this already. However, the federal government has been working hard for "regime change" in Cuba, is very active in supporting the opposition and media campaigns.

In the working group some examples were presented from the participating countries, including e.g. the paid advertisement in Le Monde diplomatique about the "Miami Five" (French organization), the annual public policy conference on EU-Cuba (Greek organization), the sister city program and joint-venture projects from Catalonia / Spain, actions against the U.S. blockade (effects for banks, Paypal, etc.). An overview was produced about previous activities against the EU's position or an alternative Cuba policy from the individual countries or groups, an exchange of experiences was practiced, including estimating the effects of those for the wider public in the countries.

ACTION PLAN:

The following major joint activities have been stimulated:

1. Joint letters to the respective current EU Presidency, which is every 6 months in office. Previously common letters already were sent to the EU-presidencies of Denmark and Cyprus, in 2013 the next will be Ireland). Here the groups of all countries should also send this letter to their respective foreign politicians and important personalities and institutions (with their own letterhead / logo)
[Responsible: Network Cuba Germany, Dr. Edgar Göll e.goell@web.de and info@netzwerk-cuba.de]
2. Calling on governments and parliaments to their positive votes for the Cuban resolution against the U.S. blockade in the UN General Assembly and to influence them to start act against the U.S. blockade. The recent vote in the UN was won by Cuba with 188 votes against the United States (11/13/2012).
3. Joint relief efforts for the elimination of the damage caused by Hurricane SANDY. Support should also be called for through the national governments and the EU. This also applies to future natural disasters in Cuba.
4. Implementation of "Action months" in national parliaments and the European Parliament, in which the European solidarity groups proceed together against the common position as well as the U.S. blockade
[Responsible: Network Cuba Germany, Harri Grünberg, harri.gruenberg@network-cuba.de and info@netzwerk-cuba.de]
5. Collection, analysis and development of appropriate information about the common position and the U.S. blockade, including concrete cases of Blockade effects in Europe
[Responsible: Amistad Luxemburgo, Danielle Gravel, che@vo.lu]
6. Support of economic relations with Cuba through concrete information on investment opportunities in the various states and cities in Europe.
[Responsible expected: Catalonia / Spain?]
7. Use of social media about selected current events and topics to reach and inform more, and especially young people (twitter, video clips, facebook, etc.)

The German Cuba Network will create a log about the discussions of the working group and add questions about support ("who wants to coordinate or support what activity?") and send it to all participants. This is to ensure that at least some of the proposals for action will be realized/implemented in the coming years.

For three items of the action plan some groups have already committed themselves: 1, 4 and 5. For some groups their need was articulated, to get feedback from their membership and board members before they can commit themselves for a coordination function.

The Cuba Network will also from time to time ask the person responsible for the actions whether the

proposed activities have been started and successful.

TASKS FOR ALL SOLIDARITY GROUPS:

Each organization will check whether it can accept any of the proposed activities as a responsible coordinator ("Kümmerer"). It does not have to work alone, but rather will have to coordinate activities with others ("together we are strong").

Each organization should feel free to participate in the various activities, as far as possible (i.e. send such information about U.S. blockade effects to the Luxembourg Compañera, who then will distribute the information material to all).

Every organization should consider what institutions and individuals for all of us could be important - for example, within the European Commission or Parliament, possibly in the UN, etc. The same goes for documents, records, investigations and scientific studies and excellent products. In his presentation, e.g. Gehrcke mentioned the "political and security committee" of the EU, in which all major foreign policy issues of the EU are discussed and settled. There as well at the Council of Ministers all our groups should intervene for Cuba.

The NETWORK CUBA Germany asks for feedback until November 30, 2012:

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