

Declaration of Brussels
Europe says "no" to repression in Cuba

One year to the day after it began, we, members of the European Parliament, reiterate our strongest condemnation of the wave of arrests in Cuba that led to the imprisonment of 75 peaceful dissidents, including journalists, human rights activists, trade unionists and librarians.

Believing that for any political prisoner in the world, being forgotten is a second imprisonment, we remind the Cuban authorities that:

WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN the 75 people arrested between 18 and 20 March 2003.

WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN the hasty trials at which 75 peaceful dissidents were each sentenced to between six and 28 years imprisonment for exercising their basic human rights.

WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN their transfer at the end of April 2003 to prisons sometimes hundreds of kilometres from their homes, making it harder for their families to visit them – visits that were mostly allowed only every three months.

WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN their wretched conditions of detention in dirty cells, without medical care and harassed by prison guards or fellow prisoners. Some, including human rights campaigner Oscar Elias Biscet, economist Martha Beatriz Roque and journalist Oscar Espinosa Chepe, are seriously ill.

We expressed support for Cuba's peaceful and democratic opposition by awarding the European Parliament's Sakharov Human Rights Prize to dissident Oswaldo Paya Sardiñas on 17 December 2002. Today we reaffirm our stand by asking the Cuban authorities to free immediately the 75 dissidents and all other political prisoners.

We will continue to call on the Cuban government to release them and we urge the European Commission and Council of Ministers to adopt policies to this end.

We set aside our different political opinions to state our belief that
no government should obstruct freedom of expression
or the right of its people to uncensored news
and that nothing justifies the detention of these 75 peaceful dissidents

Brussels, 18 March 2004

Name of MP

Signature

Nationality

Political grouping