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To:

Dalia Grybauskaite
Republic of Lithuania
The Presidency of the Council of the EU
and other decisionmakers of the EU and member countries



June 26, 2013

Dear President Grybauskaite,
dear excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow us to congratulate you to the "International Charlemagne Prize" you received on May 9 in the city of Aachen, Germany. In your speech you underlined the role of Europe "in advancing peace, reconciliation, democracy, and human rights."

We citizens engaged in friendship and solidarity work for Cuba with our national organisations in many European countries, address this letter to you due to your position as current Head of the Council of the European Union.

As you know, more than 51 years ago the U.S. administration started its blockade against Cuba, 16 years ago the U.S. administration hardened the blockade laws, 11 years ago the U.S. administration established a prison-camp at Guantanamo Bay on Cuban territory containing more than 700 human beings and practiced torture. For more than 53 years the U.S. administration has been trying to topple the legitimate Cuban government and the political system which the Cubans have chosen and created for themselves.

For 17 years now the EU has followed the "Common Position of the EU on Cuba" which – intended or not – functions as a mere complement to the Cold War strategy of the U.S. administration against Cuba, runs counter to principles of international law, violates the sovereignty of the Cuban people, and brings hardship to the people.

More and more citizens in the EU find that Position unacceptable. We in Europe should act more fairly and be more future-oriented and constructive towards Cuba. We are looking forward to you as our representative taking steps in this direction.

We regard the votes at the UN General Assembly of all member governments of the EU against the US-blockade as a positive symbol and an important message. But we also recognize, that within the EU this vote has so far led to very limited practical results, and that it is high time for the EU as a whole to go from word to action.

We urge you to prepare and organise the immediate cancellation of the counterproductive "Common Position of the EU on Cuba". It is long overdue to lift this un-diplomatic approach which violates international principles like that of self-determination.

We, active citizens and civil society organizations from all over Europe urge you to intensify fair contacts and respectful cooperation with Cuba, and we would be pleased to see you taking such initiatives. Pressing issues like climate change, desertification, biodiversity, fair trade, MDGs and SDGs, technology transfer, etc. are currently dealt with far below the urgently needed level of cooperation required.

Yours Sincerely,

- AUSTRIA: *Michael Wögerer* (President), Österreichisch-Kubanische Gesellschaft and *Prof. Albrecht Konecny* (President of the Board of Trustees)
- BELGIUM: *Katrien Demuynck*, Iniciativa Cuba Socialista – Belgium
- BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: *Sead Halilovic* (President), Association of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian-Cuban Friendship
- DENMARK: *Helene Caprani* (President), Association Denmark – Cuba
- FRANCE: *Jacques Milhas*, Pour Cuba Si France
- GERMANY: *Harri Grünberg* (President), Netzwerk Cuba e.V. (42 member groups)
- GREECE: Greek-Cuban Association of Thessaloniki
- ITALIA: *Sergio Marinoni* (presidente), Associazione Nazionale di Amicizia Italia-Cuba
- IRELAND: *Simon McGuinness* (National Coordinator), Cuba Support Group
- MALTA: *Michael Camilleri* (President) and *Mario Mifsud* (Secretary) Malta Cuba Society
- NORWAY: *Terje Enger*, Cubaforeningen
- PORTUGAL: *Armada C. Fonseca*, Associcao Portugal-Cuba
- ROMANIA: *Vasile Orleanu* (Presedinte) Fundatia AVANGARDA;
- SERBIA: *Prof. Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar* (President) Serbian-Cuban Association
- SLOVENIA: *Igor JURIŠIČ*, president of Slovene - Cuban friendship association
- SWEDEN: *Martin Österlin* (President), Swedish-Cuban Association
- UNITED KINGDOM: *Rob Miller* (Director) and *Bernard Regan* (Secretary) Cuba Solidarity Campaign