

- › **November 2011:** Paypal Europe, has agreed to a settlement in dispute over frozen accounts of German online traders who trade with Cuban goods. The payment processor Paypal had tried to prevent the publication of this legal agreement.
- › **May 2013:** The British NGO “Cuba Solidarity Campaign” has been prohibited the payment of an invoice from the publisher Monthly Review Foundation in the U.S. The British bank that undertook the bank transfer, informed that the money was withheld and could possibly be recovered by payment of bank charges.
- › **June 28, 2013:** The Italian bank Intesa Sanpaolo had to pay 3 million U.S. Dollar to the U.S. because they made from 2004 to 2008 a total of 53 money transfers to Cuba.
- › **2009 – 2012:** The Luxembourg NGO Solidarité Luxembourg–Cuba wants to buy a microscope in Germany which is required for brain surgery in Havana. The German manufacturer is denied the sale.
- › **2010:** Amistad Luxemburgo–Cuba receives the bill of a cultural center that conducts its banking with ING Luxembourg. After the transfer the money comes back. Via a phone call Amistad



UN-Vote against the US-blockade

Luxemburgo–Cuba gets informed that no active transactions would be possible that have to do with Cuba.

- › **Fall 2013:** Paypal damaged the German heavy metal band COR. The musicians wanted to collect about 8,000 euros for a tour to Cuba through an internet donation platform – but Paypal froze the account and at the same time almost half of the already pledged donations.

Consequences

of the U.S. blockade and the “Common position” of the EU against Cuba



The “Common Position of the European Union on Cuba”

The so-called “common position of the European Union concerning Cuba” was enforced in 1996. This was done under pressure from the U.S. government and was pushed through by the controversial former President Aznar (Spain). The EU has no such unilateral policy basis against any other state than against Cuba.

The arrogant and imperious character of the common position is clear in its first sentence: *“The EU has in its relations with Cuba the goal to promote a process of transition to pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as a sustainable recovery and improvement of the to promote living standards of the Cuban population.”* And again, *“the EU’s position represents the stance that full cooperation with Cuba depends on progress in the field of*

human rights and political freedom.” With this intention the sovereignty of Cuba is being attacked, because the Cuban people has chosen freely its societal form and government.

The EU calls with their position that Cuba has to change its social system to capitalism, to open it for capitalist exploitation and that it takes its place within the lines of the states “blessed” with neo-liberalism. That’s why this position is so important to EU elites, and they try to get this – in collaboration with the U.S. administration. It is an instrument for pressure against Cuba and a sign of arrogance and presumption.

Tools of the cold war

The common position is the main obstacle to the practical design of normal relations between the EU and Cuba. Whenever it has been tried to improve relations with Cuba, to normalize or modify the common posi-

tion, this will massively be torpedoed from political right, with backing by the U.S. Administration. Most of them will fuel the sentiment against Cuba with provocation, disinformation messages and media campaigns and continued the Cold War.

As for any other country this imperial offensive is unacceptable for Cuba, because it would mean that the country gives up its sovereignty, which the Cubans have fought for through hard and bloody struggles, and which they until today defend courageously, persevering it with great sacrifices.

Unlike many other countries with which the EU partly maintains friendly relations, Cuba respects human rights and is pursuing a sustainable development. It operates mainly in social terms model, has already fulfilled many of the Millennium Development Goals of the UN, gives immense international assistance to countries in need (proportionally much higher than the EU), and performs no wars. Therefore, the double standard of the EU policy is a scandal.

Alternative Future

In contrast, it is time that the EU abandons its cold war against Cuba and finally build fair, future-oriented relations with Cuba to benefit all sides. The EU must confidently toward the United States develop and implement a new and sustainable policy towards Cuba in view of the positive developments in Latin America.

The several hundred groups of the solidarity movements with Cuba in Europe therefore call on the EU and European countries, to initiate and implement the following steps:

- The “common position of the European Union, on Cuba” from 1996 is to abandon immediately.



- We deem the EU Member States obliged to stand up against their transatlantic partner U.S. and convince the U.S. government to end its inhumane and illegal under international blockade against Cuba at last, as the EU-supported UN resolutions are calling for almost unanimously for 20 years.
- The EU and the European countries have to strongly press the U.S. administration for a halt of the subtle destabilization activities against Cuba and advocate that the United States stop its internationally wrongful acts against Cuba (subversion, occupation of Guantánamo, etc.).
- The EU and the European countries must instead develop a fair and sustainable Cuba policy and put it into practice. They have to recognize that the sovereign Cuba has the right to follow a self-determined and socialist path of development.

The Cuba Solidarity movements in European countries will step up its action to enforce these claims.

- **Contact:** Netzwerk Cuba e.V.
www.netzwerk-cuba.de

The blockade (“embargo”) of the United States against Cuba

The blockade (Spanish for “el bloqueo”, in the West incorrectly called embargo) is a trade, economic and financial blockade consisting of several measures, which are directed against the government and people of Cuba. In addition, it has negative effects for companies and institutions of other states – hence it is a “blockade”. The first measures were imposed in 1960 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower after the Cuban government – i.e. – had expropriated the property of oil corporations in the U.S. because they had refused to refine urgently needed oil from the USSR. The U.S. blockade has since been strengthened and expanded in several steps.

In 1992, the blockade has been written as a law of the United States. Accordingly, the objective is formulated in the so-called Cuban Democracy Act (or Torricelli Act) “to bring the Cuban people’s democracy”. Another law, the Helms- Burton Act, adopted in 1996 by the U.S. Congress, further restricts the possibilities of U.S. citizens to do business with Cuba. It contains restrictions for any public or private support for the Cuban government, until demands essential to U.S. are fulfilled by the Cuban government. The trade embargo has the effect that foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies cease trading with Cuba and ships are not allowed to come into U.S. ports if they have visited Cuba in the last three months. U.S.

President Bill Clinton in 1999 allowed the sale of various U.S. products (e.g. cereals, chicken) to Cuba.

Currently (winter 2013/2014), the blockade for U.S. companies or those foreign companies with U.S. capital is still in force. It is the longest-running “trade embargo” (blockade) in modern history.

This blockade has to this day caused more than 1 000 billion U.S. dollars of damage to the Cuban state, and thus the population.

Suggested reading:

Salim Lamrani: „The Economic War against Cuba. A Historical and Legal Perspective on the U.S. Blockade”,

New York: Monthly Review Press, 2013,
<http://monthlyreview.org/press/books/pb3409/>

The Blockade effects the EU, too

- **February 2011:** The Bank ING Luxembourg denied one of its customers, the remittance of money to the NGO Solidarité Luxembourg – Cuba. On demand, the Bank informs that it must adhere to the blockade of the U.S. and the “EU Common Position”.
- **April 13, 2007:** The Austrian bank BA-WAG announces all accounts of their Cuban clients on the grounds that the sale of the bank to the U.S. bank CERBERUS requires it. The Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnick on 26 April opens a criminal complaint. At 4th May 2007 the BA-WAG redrew its decision and CERBERUS received a special exception from the United States.