



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESSE 60

## **Council adopts Negotiating directives for bilateral Political Dialogue and Co-operation Agreement with Cuba**

The Council today adopted Negotiating Directives for a bilateral Political Dialogue and Co-operation Agreement with Cuba.

Welcoming the decision, High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton said: *"I am confident these negotiations will help consolidate our engagement with Cuba. I hope Cuba will take up this offer, and that we can work soon towards a stronger relationship. This is not a policy change from the past. Just as we want to support reform and modernisation in Cuba, we have consistently raised human rights concerns which will remain at the core of this relationship. I also hope that Cuba will do what is necessary on its side, especially on the question of human rights. The pace of our negotiations will reflect this."*

A bilateral Agreement would strengthen the EU–Cuba relationship and provide a robust framework for constructive dialogue and improved co-operation. It will help to effectively promote EU interests and values in Cuba and ensure continuity in EU policies objectives including support for the on-going reform and modernisation process, the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the strengthening of development cooperation.

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**P R E S S**

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