

# Common Goals, Different Strategies? Options for a Transatlantic Agenda on Cuba

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# Introduction

This report reflects the contributions and debates of panel members during the Conference “Common Goals, Different Strategies? Options for a Transatlantic Agenda on Cuba”, co-organised by FRIDE in Madrid and by Freedom House in Washington DC. The conference was held on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005, in Brussels. Logistical support was provided by the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) and the conference was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This report is based on transcriptions of the contributions by panel members and the public, and has been drafted and edited by Susanne Gratius and Laura Herrán Rosemberg, researcher and research assistant at FRIDE, respectively.

For over four decades, Cuba has been a controversial subject on the transatlantic agenda. Although the EU and the US both support a peaceful transition towards democracy in Cuba, the goals, means and instruments of their policies are very different. While the EU promotes democratic change through economic engagement and political dialogue with the Cuban government, US policy is aimed at collapsing the current regime by means of economic and political sanctions.

These divergent policies have rarely been coordinated and, taken as a whole, may have contributed to consolidating Fidel Castro’s regime. While the EU policy of economic engagement compensates the effects of US policy, Washington’s sanctions are used by Fidel Castro to justify political deadlock and repression of the opposition. Ultimately, neither strategy has succeeded in bringing about democratic change in Cuba.

Faced with these contradictions, FRIDE and Freedom House decided to analyse EU and US policies over and beyond the traditional debate between “sanctions or engagement”. The organisers’ initial idea was to contrast EU and US points of view on a peaceful and democratic transition in Cuba and to identify, within a new regional and international context, the possibilities of creating a common agenda on the island. The first two roundtables analysed EU and US policies towards Cuba, separately, and from different points of view. Finally, the panellists of the last roundtable identified possibilities and limits in defining transatlantic policy towards Cuba.

The dialogue between panel members and the public took place in a frank and open atmosphere. In this way, the conference contributed to opening new channels of communication between European and American representatives, which could serve to bring positions closer in the future. A number of proposals were suggested for cooperating in certain areas (e.g. supporting the Cuban democratic movement). However, it became clear that the different views on Cuba that prevail in the EU and the US make it difficult, at present, to create a common agenda which would promote democracy and a future transition in Cuba.

Finally, it was agreed to continue the debates on democracy promotion in Cuba and, as far as possible, to extend the agenda to representatives of other countries, such as Canada, Brazil, Mexico and some Caribbean nations. In this sense, it is our firm desire that this conference should be seen as only the first step towards resuming international debate on Cuba’s future during and after Fidel Castro.

*Susanne Gratius*  
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# EU Policy towards Cuba: Goals, Instruments and Partners

## The Common Position: A Policy or a Declaration of Principles?

José Ignacio Salafranca, member of the European Parliament (EP) for the Popular Party Group stated that the EU Common Position on Cuba, in force since

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1996, seeks to encourage a transition towards a pluralist democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as sustainable economic recovery and an improvement in the standard of living of the Cuban people. He explained that this position is reviewed every six months and, if the Cuban authorities have made progress in these areas, aid, cooperation and political dialogue are increased. He considered that, on reviewing events since 1996, it was obvious that no progress had been made in Cuba.

Karl Buck, a high-ranking official of the EU Council, recalled the circumstances surrounding the moment when the Common Position on Cuba was unanimously approved: 1) the experience of the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) and 2) the EU's failure to reach an agreement with Cuba at the end of 1995. The then Commissioner Manuel Marín was not able to convince Castro to introduce democratic changes, and this was followed by the "light aircraft crisis" in February 1996. Karl Buck explained that in 1996 the EU had civil power, but not military power. This explains why its procedures and instruments were so different to those of the US, despite sharing some common goals. He emphasised that the Common Position, which is a page and a half long document, explicitly says that it is not EU policy

to provoke changes by coercive means. The EU's limited capacity to implement coercive measures, and its preference for incentives, gave rise to this approach. Therefore, the EU is in favour of contributing to political change through dialogue and trade.

Susanne Gratius outlined three reasons why Cuba is a special case within EU policy:

- 1) It is one of the few countries for which there is a Common Position, despite the fact that Cuba is not of strategic interest to the EU;
- 2) Cuba is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of States (ACP), although it has not signed the Cotonou agreement with the EU;
- 3) Despite the democratic clause, Cuba still participates in the European Union-Latin America Summits and in other inter-regional political forums.

In Susanne Gratius' opinion, the rather general framework of the Common Position has given rise to a wide range of diverse policies in the EU. She considered that the Common Position was more a declaration of shared principles than a common policy. In order to develop a true Common Position, the EU needed to choose one of the following: a policy of rapprochement without conditionality, the democratic clause, or the development of other incentives.

Luis Yáñez Barnuevo, member of the European Parliament for the Socialist Group, insisted on the need to elaborate a common policy towards Cuba supported by all countries and political currents within the EU. He considered that, at present, neither the Common Position nor the policy promoted by the Spanish government have the backing of the whole EU. In reference to the dispute along party lines, both in Spain and within the EP, he believed that a common policy would prevent Cuba turning into a fight between conservatives and progressives within the EU.

Eusebio Mujal-León, Professor at Georgetown University, expressed surprise at the fact that there was a Common Position without a common policy, given

that this undermined EU credibility in the eyes of the US, the Cuban authorities and the Cuban people. By way of answer, Javier Sandomingo, Director-General for Ibero-American Affairs at the Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, admitted that the EU scarcely has any common policies. Instead, it has a few common positions on some subjects. He explained that even when it has a Common Position, this does not exclude the fact that each State may have its own policy. On the issue of Cuba, there are 25 European policies, or perhaps fewer, because there are more than five States that have no interest in Cuba. He considered that it was very difficult to formulate common policies between a country such as Spain, which has long-standing and far-reaching interests in the island, and others that hardly know where Cuba is.

Susanne Gratius pointed out that, while at European Commission level the democratic clause prevents the signing of a cooperation agreement, member States each apply their own individual policy towards Cuba. By way of example, she mentioned Germany and the fact that in the previous government there had been a conflict between the Ministry for Cooperation and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs insisted more on the theme of human rights and conditionality and the Ministry for Cooperation on the path of cooperation and dialogue with Castro's regime. Francesc Bayo mentioned the example of Spain, where internal debate regarding Cuban policy has created ideological polarisation between the conservative right-wing and some left-wing groups that still cherish a nostalgic idea about Latin American revolutions. This gives rise to an insurmountable contradiction which limits the possibility of critical political dialogue, as the right-wing insists on conditionality and confrontation, while the left-wing is more well-disposed towards the situation in Cuba.

Karl Buck recognised that within the EU there were differences regarding Cuba, but he pointed out that there were also differences in the US. He explained that recently, and after having agreed on a Common Position within the EU, some member States (among them the Czech Republic) publicly announced that they

would apply a different policy. This same phenomenon also exists in the US: the states with substantial agricultural exports to Cuba differ from the Bush government's official policy. He considered that, compared to the US, EU strategy is fairly clear regarding the application of instruments and in its rejection of sanctions.

José Ignacio Salafranca was surprised that some European representatives should say that the EU does not have a Cuban policy. In his opinion, the EU does have a common policy towards Cuba. The absence of a cooperation agreement with Cuba is a relevant political fact as well as the fact that the country does not currently receive substantial funds in the form of humanitarian or economic aid. Salafranca considered that the existence of a Common Position, recognised by the 25 member States, which favours a relationship with Cuba on the basis of critical dialogue, is a reasonable policy. On the other hand, and in response to a question from the audience, Salafranca explained that there were several schools of thought within the European Commission. By way of example he referred to, on the one hand, the Commissioner for Cooperation, Louis Michel, who had come out in favour of dialogue with the government and, on the other hand, the former Commissioner Manuel Marín, who had decided that the conditions for signing a cooperation agreement with Cuba did not exist.

## Difficult Dialogue with the Cuban Government

José Ignacio Salafranca pointed out that the European Parliament has a strong commitment to human rights. He emphasised the fact that when he was president of the Commission responsible for relations with Central America and Cuba, he worked hard at maintaining the dialogue with both the Cuban authorities and the Cuban people, in line with EU philosophy. However, he considered that it was difficult to fulfil this objective when one of the parts, in this case the Cuban government, did not want to dialogue. The EU defends

a critical dialogue and this has not been broken by the action of any member State or by dissidents. Instead, dialogue has always been undermined by the Cuban regime. Salafranca said that he had been to Cuba and had met Fidel Castro. He stated that in two interviews he had told Fidel Castro that it was up to him "to make a move", but that he had not wanted to.

He said that the EU has exhausted all possibilities of dialogue with the authorities but that it has not been possible to take full advantage of this dialogue. He also recalled that the former Commissioner Manuel Marín travelled to Cuba in February 1996. Marín spoke to Fidel Castro and with great resolution decided that he could not fulfil the Council of Ministers' mandate, nor present negotiation guidelines for a cooperation agreement, because the Cuban authorities were not prepared to budge an inch. In the audience, Carlos Vidal, Lecturer of Constitutional Law at the National University of Distance Education (UNED) in Madrid, also expressed his doubts regarding dialogue with the regime. In his opinion, the only logic that authoritarian regimes obey is that of perpetuating themselves in power.

In Salafranca's opinion, critical dialogue has not meant at any point that the EU has been institutionally linked to Cuba. He recalled that Cuba is the only Latin American country that, owing to the democratic clause, does not have any type of agreement (regarding cooperation, association or political dialogue) with the EU. He recalled that the democratic clause arose in March 1990 when Patricio Aylwin, the first democratic President after General Pinochet's regime, took office. At that moment, Domingo Cavallo, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs in Argentina, asked the EU to include a democratic clause in the future agreement, that would restrain his country from any reactionary temptations. The democratic clause was included in the agreement signed in Luxembourg in June 1990 and, since then, it has been included in all EU treaties with third countries. Cuba has not fulfilled that clause.

Javier Sandomingo considered that dialogue with the Cuban government is difficult, because the regime

intends perpetuating itself in power. He explained that communication channels have not been reopened to reward the Castro regime but because it is in the EU's interests, on the one hand to be able to use all instruments in Cuba and, on the other, so as not to become an irrelevant actor. Sandomingo also recalled that Spain and the EU have maintained a long-standing relationship with dissidents since the times when the exiled Cubans considered that they were all agents for Castro. He emphasised the fact that they had all decided to back the opposition and they supported it actively.

José Ignacio Salafranca denounced repression in Cuba. By way of example, he reported that the regime holds prisoner eight independent trade union members, with sentences totalling over 150 years in prison. In his opinion, the Cuban government has applied a repressive policy against groups who oppose State policy, and particularly against all those who want to initiate a dialogue to improve their working conditions, or who demand collective negotiation and the right to strike for Cuban workers.

In this context, Joel Brito, an exiled Cuban trade unionist, referred to the responsibility that foreign investors have. Among them there are many Europeans who, in his opinion, contribute to labour rights violations in Cuba. From the audience, Liduine Zampolle, of the Fundación Cuba Futuro, considered that investors in Cuba contributed to maintaining the Castro regime in power and to financing repression on the island. Francesc Bayo pointed out that when Spanish companies invest in any country, they accept the established rules of the game, and Cuba was not an exception. Although some businessmen provide incentives as compensation for the workers, and in private they complain about government interference, they still abide by the prevailing labour laws.

Joel Brito explained that the Group for Corporate Social Responsibility in Cuba directed from Miami, has used all international means and tribunals to denounce labour and trade union rights violations in Cuba.

However, as the Cuban government was not willing to lower its guard against those who seek democracy in Cuba, both from within and outside, Joel Brito believed that establishing a dialogue with the Cuban government was an unprofitable exercise. Referring to his personal experience as a Cuban official, he pointed out that Castro's government was not interested in any type of contact with either the International Labour Organisation (ILO) nor with international trade unions which defend independent and democratic trade unionism as it exists in Europe and the US.

Susanne Gratius, on the other hand, pronounced in favour of dialogue with the authorities in Havana, rather than an isolationist approach which, in her opinion, would lead to greater political closure. She recalled that even the US maintains a (sectoral) dialogue with Castro in the areas of cooperation on drugs and migration. Likewise, several members of the US Congress have travelled to Cuba to speak to Fidel Castro, among others.

## The Four “Sanctions” and Dissidence

José Ignacio Salafranca pointed out that the arrest of 75 peaceful dissidents in March 2003 contributed to adding complementary measures to the 1996 Common Position, the so-called “four EU sanctions”, which were suspended in January 2005. Javier Sandomingo recalled that the most controversial measure was inviting dissidents to European embassies in Cuba on the occasion of national celebrations. Salafranca, for his part, emphasised the fact that, by means of a Resolution, the European Parliament overwhelmingly rejected the lifting of these sanctions because it considered that it was a fundamental contradiction to ask for, on the one hand, the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners and, on the other, the lifting of the complementary measures. In his opinion, this release has not occurred given that many political prisoners still remain in prison.

For all these reasons, he considered it “absolutely disgraceful” for the EU to lift these measures leaving people in Cuba who fight for their freedom and dignity “under the horses’ feet”. Salafranca considered the suspension of the four measures to be “a sign of weakness” on the part of the EU, given that it had not firmly demanded the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners. Finally, he recalled a recent statement by the Czech Minister for Foreign Affairs, requesting a debate in the Council of Ministers about the stiffening of measures against Cuba, when he was not able to invite dissidents to the Czech Republic's national celebration.

Petr Mikyska, of the Department of the Americas of the Czech Ministry for Foreign Affairs, coincided with Salafranca's position. He emphasised that within the EU, Spain and the Czech Republic are on “opposite sides”. Spain's policy or approach is one of rapprochement, while the Czech Republic's view is based on its own democratic transition and evolution over the last 15 years. He explained that they did not differ regarding the goal. Instead, it was more in the way of dealing with the Cuban government. He pointed out that the Czech government's policy is one of total support for the opposition. In his opinion, dialogue with the government does not achieve results for civil society, nor does the cooperation authorised by Fidel Castro.

Referring to the recent celebration of the Czech Republic's national holiday, when Cuban dissidents were invited, the Czech member-of-parliament highlighted the importance of the “cocktail crisis”. He recalled that some years before 1989, Western politicians organised several meetings with Czech opponents, which had very significant repercussions on society. Likewise, EU embassies in Prague invited dissidents to their national celebrations. These measures helped to spread the idea of internal dissidence. For this reason, he considered it very important that European embassies in Cuba should continue to invite dissidents. He denied accusations that the Czech Republic was violating the common policy by inviting dissidents, given that before the

complementary measures, there was no rule that banned it.

Javier Sandomingo and Karl Buck provided a counterpoint to this point of view. Sandomingo considered that the measures taken in the summer 2003 were useless, because a year and a half after adopting them none of the prisoners had been released, and others had ended up in prison. He also considered them to be counterproductive, because they entailed the breaking of communication between EU embassies and the Cuban regime. This in turn had left governments without instruments to work towards the Common Position's goals.

Javier Sandomingo explained that the Cuban government, in reaction to the measures taken in June 2003, cut cooperation and official EU humanitarian aid. He considered that this measure "was very unhelpful" because one of the Common Position's goals is to contribute to improving conditions for the Cuban people and international cooperation is a useful instrument for this purpose. According to Sandomingo, Zapatero's government succeeded in eliminating these EU measures in order to renew dialogue. Invitations to national celebrations had a positive effect on the work of dissidents in terms of visibility. In order to make up for loss of visibility, a new working relationship was established with dissident groups at EU level – a relationship which had already been in place with EU countries and with Spain over the previous 10 or even 20 years. The aim was, through regular meetings, to facilitate a consensus between the different dissident groups.

Karl Buck considered that the EU had been unjustly accused of not being active enough in relation to peaceful opposition in Cuba. However, in its decision taken on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005, the EU also committed itself to strengthening contacts with opponents, although not publicly. He mentioned the fact that in the first semester of 2005, in addition to the many regular contacts maintained with member States' embassies, the European Commission established over 100 contacts with the opposition in Havana and 60 in the

provinces. He also explained that the Council's decision, taken in January 2005, stipulates that human rights (and labour) issues must be raised on each high-level political visit and he does not believe that this can be a pleasant situation for any Cuban minister.

José Ignacio Salafranca pointed out the European Parliament's strong commitment to the human rights cause in Cuba. He recalled that in 2003, and promoted by Salafranca himself, the Parliament awarded the Sakharov Award for freedom of conscience to the President of the Christian Liberation Movement, Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas. He also underscored his support in awarding, two years later, the Sakharov Award to the *Damas de Blanco* (Ladies in White, the wives of Cuban political prisoners). He stated that, as the prestigious Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov had said "very often the most important voices are the voices that are not heard". For his part, Caleb McCarry, Cuba Transition Coordinator for the Department of State, considered that the EU has had and will have a very important role in the Cuban process. According to him, an example of this has been the awarding of the Sakharov Prize to the *Damas de Blanco*, who "sent a message of hope to the Cuban people".

Anabelle Rodríguez, President of the Asociación Encuentro de la Cultura Cubana, added that, apart from dialogue with the government – with which, in her opinion, there exists a consensus that there is nothing to talk about – there is the dialogue with the Cuban society, which had cooled down when relations with the European embassies were frozen. Contacts with Cuban musicians, artists and intellectuals were also forbidden. In her opinion, and based on her contacts with the Cuban society, the lifting of the restrictive measures was a step forward in trying to re-establish communication with society as a whole, without abandoning opposition.

Karl Buck did not share Salafranca's view regarding "sanctions" either. He recalled that EU policy towards Cuba is based on three elements: dialogue, incentives and cooperation (at least until 2003, when the EU approved the four measures). In his opinion, diplomatic

sanctions limited the range of possible EU interventions in Cuba by eliminating the opportunities of: 1) representing national interests, which is the embassies' main task and 2) intervening in favour of the release of political prisoners because of not having access to the Cuban authorities. He admitted that lifting the sanctions did not imply any guarantee of success either, but there existed a need to reopen channels of dialogue and influence with the Cuban government.

## Spain's New Policy

Javier Sandomingo denied the idea of a fundamental change in EU policy towards Cuba when José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's government took over in Spain. Sandomingo explained that the Spanish government's "new" policy has been heavily criticised and it has been accused of giving Fidel Castro breathing space and legitimacy. He concluded that it was not Spain's intention to legitimate the regime but rather to create conditions for a peaceful transition by means of dialogue and cooperation. He stated that the essential lines of Spanish policy towards Cuba have not changed. Rather, it was a question of nuances that he considered to be a matter of tactics. By means of explanation, he emphasised that the EU still maintains the Common Position adopted on the initiative of the Popular Party, and which Rodríguez Zapatero's current government supported. Nevertheless, it had proposed suspending the sanctions adopted by the EU in June 2003.

Finally, Javier Sandomingo admitted that Spanish and American policies towards Cuba had failed. In the case of US policy, this was because its objective was to remove Fidel Castro from power. Although Spanish policy has not been very successful either, he was of the opinion that the constructive engagement strategy implemented by previous Spanish governments was, if not the cause, at least a dynamizing factor in the process of economic reforms initiated by the Cuban regime in 1993 (permission to freely possess dollars, the opening of private agricultural markets and permission for self-employment). Despite the fact that

this economic reform process did not bring democracy to Cuba, it did substantially improve the lives of tens of thousands of Cubans. He argued that this achievement should not be underestimated and, furthermore, it brought with it a differentiation of interests in sectors of the Cuban population which, from the Spanish point of view, could become an instrument for change. He pointed out that this latter interpretation is shared by the Cuban government and, as a result, in recent years, it has applied a reversion policy affecting economic reforms in an attempt to control their consequences.

Francesc Bayo explained that Spain's relations with Cuba are perhaps the most complex. He referred, among other factors, to the wide variety of active actors in Cuba, such as businessmen, NGOs, town councils, regional governments, development cooperation organisations, government and opposition. He thought that the rather provocative title of the conference could also be applied to the Spaniards who shared common goals but who applied different strategies towards Cuba. He considered that in Spain's recent policy there were two specific events which highlighted its relationship with Cuba. The first was under the first Spanish Socialist governments in the nineties, when the policy of constructive engagement was initiated, and the second was the political change introduced by José María Aznar's government, when it proposed the EU Common Position on Cuba. Similarly, Francesc Bayo recalled that in 1998, the Popular Party adapted its policy on Cuba by sending trade delegations and its foremost ministers to rebuild the relationship, because its disintegration would have been negative for Spain.

Currently, Rodríguez Zapatero's government is trying to rebuild the relationship with the Cuban authorities, but it would be idealistic to think that it is possible to return to the constructive engagement of the nineties. In his opinion, a serious debate on Cuba is lacking in Spain and political differences, which result in polarisation, hinder a clear Spanish foreign policy. He warned that this situation favours the Castro regime because an authoritarian regime like the Cuban one, which controls its foreign policy, can indulge in

“playing the field”. Susanne Gratius shared this point of view and added that, for domestic and party political reasons, Cuba is a matter of national interest for Spain. And there is also a projection of this debate in the EU because, at this critical juncture for the Union, there is a tendency to return to national agendas.

Eusebio Mujal-León posed a question regarding interests in Cuba, both at EU level and at member State level. He suggested that there could be other interests, for example, economic ones, behind the (declared) EU common policy. Javier Sandomingo emphasised the fact that Spain’s interests are far-reaching. Its primary interest is that the Cuban people should regain – that is if they ever had it – the capacity to choose their own future. He explained that, since it had been difficult for his own country to do so, and to be able to recognise its value, he hoped that the Cuban people would be able to do likewise. Spain would like the transition in Cuba to be a stabilising element in the region, taking into account the importance the Cuban transition process could have for the rest of Latin America. Finally, he emphasised that his country defended certain economic interests on the island, but that they were not very significant. In fact, they were rather modest with regards to the volume of investment and trade. He recalled that Spain is not Cuba’s main trading partner. In fact, with the exception of Venezuela, the US is probably the country that sells most commodities (food and medicine) to Cuba. He stated that Spain is not the main investor in Cuba either, as Canada invests more, and neither is it the main source of tourists as more tourists from Italy and the United Kingdom visit Cuba.

Karl Buck added that it is legitimate for the EU to defend its economic interests in Cuba as well as certain standards in international law, in reference to the extraterritorial sanctions of the Helms-Burton Law and the *Understanding* between the EU and the US, which solved their economic conflict in Cuba. Regarding other EU interests, he considered that perhaps, except in the case of Spain, their role in any transition process would be quite limited. Similarly, he

explained that, as opposed to the US, Cuba is not a domestic policy issue but one of foreign policy in the EU, except in the case of some States.

Thomas Melia, Deputy Executive Director of Freedom House, maintained that EU institutions are undergoing a process of restructuring. This affects decision-making and how policy is made and, therefore, its relations with Cuba. Regarding this question, he requested more information from José Ignacio Salafranca, whom he considered to be a representative at both national and community level. Salafranca answered that the EU is the foremost economic, commercial, industrial and financial power in the planet, but he observed that it still lacked political authority. Lastly, Thomas Melia summed up the debate on EU policy towards Cuba by underscoring the similarities with the situation in the US: “they seem to have policies like ours, there are different views and a certain mix of idealism and realism with dashes of high and low politics.”

# US Policy towards Cuba: Goals, Instruments and Partners

## ¿Fighting Against the Enemy?

Several panel members referred to the origin of the conflict between Cuba and the US. Some considered that it was convenient for Castro to have the US as an enemy. Stephen Johnson, from the Heritage Foundation, considered that Castro's obsession is to defeat the US, and this has produced a hardening of Washington's position towards the regime. He added that the Castro brothers perceived Cuba and its place in the world in personal terms. From their point of view, politics was a continual fight against an enemy which, since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, had been the US. He recalled that the Eisenhower administration's initial recognition of the Castro government offered tacit support to the Cuban regime. However, after the seizing of properties, including those of American citizens, Washington restricted trade and broke diplomatic relations with Cuba which, at the same time, allied itself with the former Soviet Union. And that began a series of tit for tat relations, which have since characterised dealings between the US and Cuba: retaliations, provocations, attempts at reconciliation and then revenge.

Johnson recalled that during the missile crisis, Cuba represented a threat for the US, which explained its important role in Washington policy. He explained that the embargo against Cuba should be understood in this historical context, which served at the time to send signals to Havana that Washington disapproved of the events that were happening on the island. However, the end of the Cold War and new security challenges changed this panorama. It was at this point that the US began to apply, parallel with the embargo

and the Helms-Burton Bill, a policy of "rapprochement".

Juan Antonio Blanco, Cuban academic and Director of the Human Rights Internet organisation in Ottawa, considered that the conflict between the Cuban government and the US is a secondary conflict, which arose as a result of the original internal conflict when the Cuban Revolution began. He explained that the people who were against the communist regime in Cuba, both from the US and within Cuba, started a civil war in the early sixties. The outcome of this internal conflict was the government's military victory over the opposition. In his opinion, both the solution to the internal conflict in Cuba, and to the conflict with the US, would require the re-establishment of the Cuban people's national sovereignty over that of the State.

Referring to the conflict's emotional character, Luis Yañez observed that Fidel Castro "becomes a racial Hispanic and a Galician when he wants to attack the US". In this context, he recalled the example of the Numantines, the citizens of a small city in Soria, Spain, who resisted the Roman invasion and fought to the death before surrendering to the Roman Empire. He considered that Fidel lays claim to his Numantine character in opposing the "American Empire". Luis Yañez recalled the words of the Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes who said: "The day that a United States president travels to Havana and embraces Fidel Castro, the Castro regime will be finished". Karl Buck added that the former President of the Spanish government, Felipe González, even said to Castro that without the "US embargo" he would not still be in power.

Caleb McCarry explained the US' current policy. He said that George W. Bush's government believed that the moment for change in Cuba has arrived. He recalled that on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005, President Bush explained his mission with the following words:

"There's only one force of history that can break the reign of hatred and resentment and expose the

pretensions of tyrants and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant and that is the force of human freedom. All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know. The United States will not ignore your oppression or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you. Democratic reformers facing repression, prison or exile can know. America sees you for who you are, the future leaders of your free country". He considered that these words were a message of hope for the Cuban people who had suffered 46 years of dictatorship. Caleb McCarry explained that under President Bush's government the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba was created, with the aim of focussing and furthering this support for transition on the island. This Commission, which was headed by the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, published its first report in May 2004. According to one of the Commission's recommendations, in July 2005, Caleb McCarry was named Cuba Transition Coordinator.

Shelley McConnell, Senior Fellow at the Carter Center, offered a different view. She explained that during his visit to Cuba in 2002, former President Jimmy Carter stated that the White House and the Carter Center coincided in their goals but they differed in their strategies. On the basis that US policy towards Cuba had failed, she explained the reasons for this. She recalled that there are some who think that it has failed because it was not hard enough and that there are "gaps" in the embargo which enable remittances to maintain Castro. Others consider that Cuba's isolation has not worked because Latin Americans and Europeans trade with and invest in the island. A third group considers that US hostility has propped up the Castro regime politically by promoting nationalism on both sides and by providing opportunities for Latin American neighbours to use Cuba to create independent policies. If for all these reasons US policy has failed, McConnell suggested undertaking a strategy of engagement and political contacts as an alternative. Likewise, she proposed that American policy for promoting democracy should conform to the definitions of international organisations, such as the United Nations.

Shelley McConnell continued by recalling Jimmy Carter's speech at the University of Havana which was broadcast by the Cuban media. She mentioned that Carter held conversations with dissidents at the headquarters of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a politically neutral location. She reported that during the visit a number of unscheduled encounters took place and a dialogue with academic representatives. While emphasising that the Carter Center was disappointed with the Castro regime's overall record on human rights, she stated that through rapprochement, their institution had accomplished some goals, such as understanding the Cuban reality through direct dialogue with Cubans and placing the subject of human rights on the official agenda, as well as supporting the Varela project mentioned by Carter in his speech in Havana. She insisted on the importance of keeping open the channels of communication with the Cuban government as well as with the opposition, and also with the organised community of Cuban-Americans in the US. Finally, she recalled a number of changes in the exiled community. The Cuban-Americans who arrived in the US after 1980 represent 59% of the total of exiles, and they are in favour of allowing trips to Cuba and of sending money to relatives on the island. On the other hand, only 37% of those who arrived after 1980 can vote, while of the previous generation 90% can. Therefore, this change has not been reflected in US policy.

## Measures taken by the Bush Government

Caleb McCarry explained that the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba's report included a package of practical assistance for a Cuba without Fidel Castro, according to "our democratic values". This package includes basic human needs such as health, education, housing, the setting up of democratic institutions, respect for human rights, rule of law, national justice and reconciliation. He also envisaged the establishment of key institutions for a free

economy, modernising infrastructure and tackling environmental degradation.

Regarding the future, he reported that his government is considering other complementary measures to speed up the transition in Cuba, taking into account the regime's actions in relation to repression and compliance with migratory treaties that Cuba and the US signed in 1994 and 1995. He explained that Washington's position towards the regime would continue to be firm, while the approach seeking a genuine transition needs to be flexible and respectful towards the Cuban people's legitimate aspirations to define the future of "a free Cuba".

In his opinion, the Havana regime is the only obstacle to a new and vibrant relationship between the US and Cuba. The way forward is "through a genuine transition to political and economic liberty for the Cuban people". He explained that this would be the moment when the US could contribute to transforming their failed economic system. In his opinion, both countries' economic interests will coincide and will be mutually strengthened once Cuba is free. He maintained that a transition towards a free and sovereign Cuba needs to be defined by the Cubans on the island, "with the support of their brothers and sisters from around the world who, forced by the dictatorship to abandon their homeland, found freedom in the United States and other democracies". He considered that the Cuban community around the world is an extraordinary reserve of talent and creativity. In his opinion, reuniting the Cuban family in freedom will be crucial to Cuba's transformation into a genuine democracy. This is not an imposition but a promise and the US is preparing to respectfully offer its full support to help Cuba to achieve that transition towards political and economic freedom.

Marifeli Pérez-Stable, Vice-President of Inter American Dialogue with headquarters in Washington, criticised the package of measures approved by the US government based on the report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba. Among other things, from June 2004, travel to Cuba was restricted to once a year and only visits by close family members are permitted.

Marifeli Pérez-Stable considered that this measure affects the Cuban-American community especially, and prevents the reuniting of families. She also criticised the fact that limiting remittances to close family members affects the island's citizens and the interests of Cuban-Americans in economically supporting Cuban relatives and friends.

David Mutchler, Director of the USAID Cuba Programme, explained that the USAID goal in Cuba is to promote a speedy and peaceful transition towards democracy. More concretely, this means increasing the mutual flow of detailed information on democracy, human rights, and the private sector in relation to Cuba. Behind all this is the goal of helping Cubans to build a civil society independent of the State. Referring to the experience of Solidarnosc and Lech Walesa in Poland, USAID seeks both to foster solidarity ties with human rights activists and to support independent political organisations, including trade unions. According to its statistics, USAID supports more than 125 independent journalists in Cuba. Lastly, USAID is supporting the Bush government's plan of assistance for a future transition government in Cuba. He rated the 500 page report, published in May 2004 by the Commission, as the first attempt by the Bush government to organise and systemise their policy towards Cuba. Similarly, he informed that Caleb McCarry will start a revision of the document which will be extended at a later date.

Dan Erikson, Senior Associate of Inter American Dialogue, pointed out that there is a contradiction regarding the USAID goal of promoting information in Cuba and the Bush government's recent measures that limit trips and exchanges with the island. Apart from supporting dissidence groups, Erikson suggested extending this commitment to university bodies, groups of artists and other members of Cuban civil society who perhaps are not openly opposed to Castro's government, but who could play a constructive role in the country's future. On the other hand, Erikson did not consider that US policy had failed. He said that perhaps it had failed to promote democracy, but it had been successful in two regards. Firstly, regarding the

aim of the embargo; during the thirty years of the Cold War, it contained Communism in the Western hemisphere. Secondly, from the nineties to the present day, policy towards Cuba has been very successful in terms of national electoral policy in the US. He emphasised that US policy towards Cuba has been defended by the two main political parties, as was revealed by the Helms-Burton Bill approved by Bill Clinton and by the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba. Therefore, he recalled the importance of domestic factors in US policy towards Cuba. Similarly, he drew attention to convergence between the internal lobby that influences policy towards Cuba and Bush's doctrine of bringing freedom to the world and putting an end to dictatorships. In this way, he considered that the strategy towards Cuba is becoming a more defined foreign policy, although the consequences are uncertain.

Susan Kaufman Purcell, Director of the Center for Hemispheric Policy at the University of Miami, considered, on the contrary, that in the US there was no political agreement regarding Cuba. In her opinion, the embargo has been undermined by the selling of food and remittances. However, she explained that, although the US has economic relations with Cuba, there are two fundamental differences compared to the EU. First, owing to the embargo, there is no investment and sales are not dependent on credit, as Cuba has to pay cash. Secondly, regarding remittances, it is a factor coherent with the "bottom-up" approach of US policy towards Cuba, as it benefits the Cuban people and not the Castro regime.

Finally, Susan Kaufman Purcell considered that US policy might change. Before the next legislative elections in her country, which will be held in fall 2006, she believed that, bearing in mind the private sector's economic interests, even within the Republican Party there are sectors in favour of lifting the embargo against Cuba. She was of the opinion that if the Democrats won, a political change would be even more likely. She explained that in the US, a certain fatigue about the sanctions imposed on Cuba is evident and that "we do not know who will die first, whether it will be Fidel Castro or the embargo".

## The Transatlantic Dimension

### The Limitations of External Actors

Christian Freres, Consultant for the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI) and Associate Researcher with the Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales (ICEI), warned that, although several decades have passed since the last wave of democratisation, it must be admitted that little is known about which promotion mechanisms work, what lessons can be drawn from those experiences and what are the best practices. Knowledge is particularly scarce regarding the recurring subject of civil society. He recalled that at the end of the eighties and nineties, it was considered that fostering civil society was a key means for strengthening democracies or for supporting political change in different countries. However, when comparing experiences globally, cases are very different, and the lessons that can be drawn are contradictory.

Christian Freres emphasised that a consensus is taking shape in that changes in Cuba will come from within and not from outside. In his opinion, no Cuban wants anybody from outside to tell him what the political change should be like. He warned, therefore, that it is necessary to be cautious when proposing changes or suggesting socio-economic models, given that the Cubans themselves are the ones who have to decide. He considered that although there is dissent and many desire political change, they do not want it at any price nor do they want just any type of change. Caleb McCarry also considered that a political change should be defined by the Cubans themselves although it should have the support of the US and the EU, and so did Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, leader of the Christian Liberation Movement, who, from Cuba, sent a message to the conference.

Dan Erikson believed that a sustainable democratic government in Cuba requires national reconciliation as a first step. Looking to the island's future, both the US and the EU should facilitate dialogue and national reconciliation in Cuba. Juan Antonio Blanco wondered if it would be possible to organise political dialogue that does not entail formal roundtables but that would involve contacts with people and groups, in order to isolate "spoilers like Fidel Castro". He thought that such an initiative, jointly backed by the EU and the US, requires creativity and a much more complex conflict map than the current one.

Mujal-León observed that, in his view, a consensus was taking shape at this conference, and in other circles, that neither EU policy nor US policy towards Cuba has worked. One of the possible reasons for this could be that the main aim of both external actors in the last 25-30 years has not been the democratisation of Cuba. In his opinion, different foreign policy, geo-strategic and democratisation goals coexist. Marifeli Pérez Stable summed up by saying that the Cuban regime has not given rise to the international consensus that the apartheid regime in South Africa did.

## Differences between the US and the EU

Tomás Duplá del Moral, Director for Latin America of the Directorate General for External Relations of the European Commission, held that the US and the EU start from a very similar analysis of the situation in Cuba. He pointed out that, even though there is an attitude of actively promoting democracy and human rights, explicitly expressed in the EU's Common Position, the situation in Cuba is extremely deficient regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms. He also said that the EU believes that the Cuban economic system is "totally inefficient" and that "it produces hardship and suffering in the population that could be avoided." Therefore, the Common Position suggests promoting sustainable economic recovery and improving the standard of living of the Cuban people.

Another point in common consists of the need to propose a democratic transition in Cuba in order to avoid a turbulent situation that could be detrimental to Cubans. According to the EU's Common Position, a peaceful transition process to a pluralist democracy must be encouraged. Another shared objective is support for Cuban civil society and opposition to repression by the Cuban government.

Finally, Tomás Duplá del Moral reflected that, although both the EU and the US support a peaceful and constructive transition, which would bring about a democratic Cuba, their tactics do not necessarily coincide. He explained that the EU believes that openness to foreign investment has beneficial effects for the population, because it creates employment and offers opportunities for economic survival. Similarly, it could have the added benefit of opening the minds of those who work with foreign companies. He recalled that the Bush government does not share this opinion and that the extraterritorial sanctions of the Helms-Burton Bill passed in 1996 in the US make this task more complicated and that they are rejected by the EU.

Similarly, the EU thinks that constructive engagement with the Cuban government is useful, despite the frustrations that this policy has given rise to. Although dialogue with the Cuban authorities is not an end in itself, unlike the US, the EU does not believe in isolating Cuba. Another EU idea not shared by the US is that the presence of tourists can contribute to an openness of views on Cuba.

Duplá del Moral maintained that, for different reasons, not only in the US but also in many European countries, Cuba is a matter of internal policy. He considered that this factor contributed to creating difficulties in finding a common ground between the US and the EU. In conclusion, Tomás Duplá del Moral believed that, although there are points in common in their approaches, it would probably not be useful nor even appropriate to include them in a common transatlantic agenda. However, Duplá del Moral considered that dialogue between the two sides was

absolutely necessary and useful so that, at least, “friends and allies can put their disagreements on the table”. He also held that this dialogue should not necessarily be held in forums that are very visible such as the Transatlantic Summits, but rather in a more discreet format. By way of explanation, he said that he did not think that it was useful to create the perception in Cuba that a conspiracy against the country existed or that external actors were trying to determine a transition or the agenda after Castro. He reported that this dialogue was already taking place within the framework of meetings that the US and the EU hold on Latin America.

According to Susanne Gratius, the Cuban case indicated that the application of different policies does not promote democracy and that it can even block this path. Therefore, the EU policy of engagement and dialogue stabilised the Castro regime economically, while the US provided the image of the perfect enemy thus legitimating the Castro regime politically. In this context of counterproductive policies, the EU policy of engagement has not been able to work nor has the US coercive policy. Then Susanne Gratius highlighted the following points:

- The transatlantic debate “sanctions versus engagement” is a myth, because neither the EU has a policy which is only engagement, because it is conditioned engagement, nor does the US only apply a sanctions policy, as it is the main supplier of food to Cuba.
- As a promoter of democracy in Cuba, the EU has maintained a low profile compared with the US’ “confrontational stance”. In her opinion, the European approach has not helped encourage openness on the island nor has it provided a counterweight to US policy.
- EU policy has been reactive depending on three factors: 1) Spain’s attitude, 2) the political situation of the moment in Cuba, 3) Cuba’s relationship with the US at any given moment.

Regarding goals, dialogue partners and instruments, Susanne Gratius expressed her doubts as to whether

the EU and the US share the same goals. She explained that EU policy is aimed at a peaceful transition towards democracy with a reformist approach rather than one of “rupture” with the present regime. Unlike the US – which only speaks to internal and external dissidence –, the EU’s main dialogue partner is the Castro regime.

Dan Erikson also questioned the idea that the US and the EU share the same aims in relation to Cuba. In his opinion, the differences begin even when trying to define the sort of democracy that they each want to promote on the island. The US seeks a rapid transition, and putting an end to the Castro regime is an important goal in itself. The EU does not share this objective. Another difference is that the US wants Cuban-Americans to play a significant role in a Cuban democratic transition.

Marifeli Pérez-Stable stated that the Cuban diaspora, especially in Miami, is important, although in a secondary role. Currently, the diaspora has become more pluralist and should be another EU dialogue partner. Dan Erikson said that, although in Spain or in the EU there may be people who think that the exiled community could play a constructive role, in his opinion they would have a secondary role.

Erikson stated that in the EU there was a greater acceptance for the type of socialist democracy that could emerge in Cuba, while in the US, socialism is still “a dirty word”. Lastly, the US insists in some type of compensation for its properties, which were nationalised by the Cuban Revolution, while urging Europeans to forgive Cuba its external debt, once the democratic transition starts. He considered that these important differences even affect the way the US and the EU support civil society in Cuba. The US tends to be supportive of groups that favour the return of some properties and who are not so engaged in socialist politics. While Europeans tend to favour groups who do not support a greater role for the exiled community.

Officially, at least, the US still considers Cuba to be a threat to its security and it appears on its list of six

countries classified by the Department of State as sponsors of terrorism, because Cuba was alleged to be financing a biological weapons programme. Likewise, the US is concerned that Castro is conspiring with Hugo Chávez to destabilise other countries in the Americas by fomenting left-wing groups. These views are not widely shared in the EU. Summing up, the US seeks the end of the regime as it represents a potential threat, followed by a democratic transition in which exiled Cubans would play a major role and compensation for expropriated properties. The EU favours a gradual transition towards democratic socialism that would respect European investment and it is not very interested in either property compensations nor in the involvement of the Cuban-American community in the transition process. Given these differences, Erikson considered that the US is more like Mars, and Europe Venus. The good news is that they are still in the same solar system, but they are not neighbouring planets.

Laurence Whitehead, Professor at Nuffield College, Oxford University, also believed, regarding dialogue with Cuban civil society, that the US and the EU have different approaches. By way of example, he went back to Margaret Crahan's ideas of supporting Afro-Cuban religious networks, among others, with the aim of forming a contrast with a secular society. This idea could find support in the US but probably less so in the EU. Another point about which the two external actors do not necessarily coincide, is the interest in a free market economy without State intervention, and its direct correlation with political freedom.

In the audience, Milan Nic, of the Slovakian Pontis Foundation, pointed out that a fundamental difference between EU and US policy towards Cuba is tourism, permitted by the former and banned by the latter. He wondered what impact European tourism has on the Cuban economy, civil society and the political regime and suggested carrying out a detailed study of this. By way of answer, and based on the example of the Spanish transition, Tomás Duplá del Moral pointed out that the mass influx of tourists can further a process of economic opening and also opening in the minds of

people, as well as encouraging a less strict political control of society.

Luis Yáñez Barnuevo, European Parliament member for the Socialist Group, held that the US and the EU coincide in their basic goals of wanting Cuba to be free, democratic, open to the world and developed. Both also coincide in criticising the Castro regime, human rights violations, the situation of political prisoners and the fight for freedom. However, the EU and its member States consider that the US embargo against Cuba "has not been an effective method for fighting against the dictatorship". Instead, it has been "an enormous historical fiasco". In fact, the embargo was a powerful means of defence in the Castro regime's rhetoric for remaining in and retaining political power. Ironically, it has proved detrimental for those it was intended to benefit, the Cuban people. Similarly, for ethical reasons and from the point of view of effectiveness, the EU strongly opposes violent methods in overthrowing the Castro regime.

Christian Freres observed that the US and the EU do not have much in common, neither in their goals nor in their approaches towards Cuba. Although they coincide on the idea of promoting democracy, differences begin when they try to define the type of democracy, or the socio-economic system. This is where their paths diverge. He believed that despite the social welfare state crisis in Europe, all countries are convinced that the State should play an important role and this idea is also shared by the post-Washington Consensus Latin American countries.

Susanne Gratius pointed out that United States' policy focuses too much on the "bottom-up" approach, and denies the possibility of a continuity scenario. While United States policy is too futuristic and relies on an unlikely scenario, EU policy is too focussed on the present and does not take into account at all the possibility of rupture, even if it is not very likely. Susanne Gratius urged both the EU and the US to aim their policies more towards Cuba's future, because neither of the external actors has considered what will happen when Fidel dies and who will succeed him.

Several panel members observed that, neither in the EU nor the US is there a roadmap based on realistic political scenarios, once Fidel Castro disappears from politics. Looking to the future more than to the present, they considered it necessary to encourage debate between the US, the EU and Latin American countries.

Eusebio Mujal-León insisted on the fact that internal contradictions between EU and US policies are not so different and that this fact should encourage us not to demonise each other. He denied that the US has a Manichean or stupid view but rather that American policy arises from a number of contexts and variables which influence its design. He considered that the US' problem is that it finds it hard to understand the nationalism of other countries and that the EU's problem is a tendency to underrate dissidence in countries with authoritarian regimes. In his opinion, the EU tends to seek a "top-down" agreement (if it is not possible with Fidel, then it will be with Raúl Castro or Ricardo Alarcón) and this has not worked.

## Posibilities and Limits of Cooperation

Eusebio Mujal-León thought it was necessary to build a dialogue between the EU and the US given that, in his opinion, they shared common values and views regarding Cuba. However, he pointed out that change will happen within the island and that a hypothetical transatlantic alliance on Cuba will not bring about political change. Dennis Hays, former Coordinator for Cuban Affairs at the US Department of State, also insisted on the need for the US and the EU to have a shared view. As a possible common denominator he offered his own view of a free, independent and democratic Cuba that protects its citizens' rights and creates opportunities for economic growth. In second place, he pointed out that a change could happen in Cuba at any moment, so therefore it was necessary to act quickly. On the other hand, he considered that both the US and the EU needed a long-term view of between

ten and twenty years, including the period before the transition and the transition itself.

By way of example, Marifeli Pérez-Stable referred to the "Understanding", signed by the US and the EU in 1998, concerning the Helms-Burton Bill to apply sanctions to foreign companies that invested in Cuba, that had been passed in March 1996 by Bill Clinton's government. She explained that that agreement illustrated that both sides have to be willing to concede something in their positions in order to construct a common agenda.

Insisting on the Cuban people's national sovereignty and rejecting unilateral measures by the US against the island, Javier Fernández, representative for the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, ruled out the possibility of a common agenda between the US and the EU in this area. By way of example, he referred to the Central American crisis (civil wars) in the early eighties, when the EU and the US did not create a transatlantic agenda, but rather their positions diverged. He recalled that then there had also been a conservative American administration, President Ronald Reagan's. At that time, and without even having developed the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the EU played a specific role of supporting the regional peace process in Central America. He considered that it is on the basis of supporting endogenous processes, in this case the Cuban's, that the international community can best lend its support. He observed that the peace process in Central America, through the creation of the regional Contadora group and the so-called San José Process with the EU, could be a good example for supporting political changes in Cuba.

Luis Yáñez Barnuevo considered that a certain unity within the EU in relation to Cuba would be a precondition for seeking agreement or, at least, "an agreement to disagree" with the US. Regarding greater cooperation between both parties, he recalled that in the eighties, the former Spanish President of Government, Felipe González, maintained good relations with Fidel Castro and this caused discomfort

for the then US President, George Bush senior. But they reached an agreement: each time he spoke to Fidel Castro, Felipe González would immediately call President Bush and explain the conversation he had had.

In the same vein, Petr Mikyska observed that before his country joined the EU, there was close cooperation between the Czech Republic and the US on Cuba, particularly in the area of supporting dissidence. Starting from this basis, he admitted that for his government, it was rather difficult to adapt to the EU's common policy, which is not aimed at cooperation with the US in this area. He believed that the EU should have more flexible contacts with US representatives and should try to find ways to cooperate on the Cuba issue.

José Ignacio Salafranca emphasised that, despite sharing the same goals, the US and the EU do not coincide one hundred percent in other subjects nor in their approaches to these problems. By way of example, he recalled that the EU is opposed to the death penalty, as well as being against the US position towards the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto protocol and extraterritorial laws. As to a transatlantic agenda on Cuba, José Ignacio Salafranca proposed focussing on a structured dialogue with dissidents as a common point between the US and the EU.

This idea was supported by Stephen Johnson, who considered that one of the areas in which they should act jointly was in supporting dissidents and the recently created civil society, by paying more attention to them than to Fidel Castro. Likewise, the EU and the US could share their expectations regarding a future Cuban government in the areas of human rights, civil liberties, competitive elections, separation of powers and a society based on rules. He explained that without being Castro's enemies and without having an embargo against the regime, European diplomats and businessmen have much more freedom to travel and engage in dialogue with Cuban representatives than their US counterparts. This knowledge *in situ* is important with a view to a post-Castro future, and

could be taken advantage of to support the work of opponents and human rights activists by providing them with radios, books and other materials that would enable them to be in contact with abroad.

David Mutchler added that one could already see a growing cooperation between the US and the EU with regards to moral and logistical support for the Cuban opposition, which he considered to be significant and promising. Caleb McCarry also maintained that a wide-ranging consensus is emerging between democratic leaders both within and outside the island concerning political and economic freedom for the Cuban people. He maintained that "our common purpose must be to support those Cubans who are committed to a future in which the country belongs to everyone". In response to accusations from the Cuban regime that opponents supported by the US are puppets of Washington, David Mutchler proposed creating a mechanism to contribute funds jointly with the EU as a means of offering some protection to opposition groups.

Likewise, Caleb McCarry said that his government will try to ensure that the community of democracies does not concentrate on a pessimistic succession scenario, but that they will actively seek to work for a transition towards political and economic freedom for the Cuban people. He revealed his government's marked interest in creating a common position with democratic allies all over the world in favour of a genuine transition towards freedom for the Cuban people.

Looking to the future, Richard Youngs, Co-director of FRIDE, suggested five concrete points indicating why transatlantic dialogue would be useful:

There are several cases in which transatlantic cooperation was possible and played a positive role in promoting democracy. In his opinion, the Ukraine, Syria and Belarus are good examples. The lesson that can be learnt from these experiences is that coordination can accomplish positive results, even in countries in which the political process is deadlocked. A division of labour between the EU and the US *in situ*

would be particularly useful. For example, in the Ukraine, the EU assumed an important role in the area of governance, while the US concentrated more on civic education programmes. This division of labour provided an example of what could be done in Cuba in the future.

He recalled that Larry Diamond maintained recently that the US has to learn to lead “from behind”. His argument is that the US could achieve more without a massive, dominating presence, which in the case of Cuba is obvious. Other examples of this are Turkey, and the *Greater Middle East Initiative*. If the US stayed behind the scenes, and did not act unilaterally, a lot more progress would be made on the democratic agenda. This would enable European civil society to play a more proactive role in political affairs.

In his opinion, political instruments would have to be more efficient, especially those provided by the EU. He insisted on the fact that instruments and projects must be sustainable in the long term. He recalled that in other parts of the world, such as Indonesia or Nigeria, where the EU had approved measures in support of democratic transitions, these measures had not been maintained over the years and this had resulted in a negative impact.

He commented that, looking at other parts of the world, one challenge that arises is the difficulty that international actors have in moving from a policy focussed on human rights, dissidents and NGOs, towards a strategy centred on building the basic capacities of a democratic State. The EU has been criticised for acting in a very slow and ad hoc way in response to the transformations in Eastern Europe. He considered that it would be necessary to combine the “bottom-up” approach with the “top-down” one as they are not exclusive.

He suggested that one possible scenario in Cuba might be that economic openness could be greater than political openness. In other parts of the world it has been observed that, given this scenario, the US and the EU tend to support economic reforms with greater

enthusiasm, as a means of leading to political reforms. In practice, both the EU and US have not made good use of their economic instruments, bearing in mind that economic reforms do not automatically lead to political openness.

Francesc Bayo stressed that the Common Position forms part of the community *acquis* and therefore the position is the same as for the US embargo: although it is an unsuitable policy, it would be very difficult to suspend the Common Position. He thinks that the US should begin with less pretentious policies such as freedom to travel and not restricting remittances. Europe is in a situation in which adjustments could be made to the Common Position but it would be difficult to question it altogether.

# The Cuban Transition in the Internal, Regional and Global Context

## Internal Conditions for Transition

In David Mutchler's opinion, a political change in Cuba does not now appear to be such a distant scenario. He reported that during his journeys to the island he had perceived "the Cubans' enormous desire for change in favour of freedom of expression and religion". He said that during his conversations in Cuba he had observed that all women were, in one way or another, religious. Similarly, in his opinion, especially in the Eastern rural areas of the island, many independent evangelical churches are emerging. Margaret Crahan, Professor at the City University of New York, observed that Cuba before the Revolution was the most secular country in all Latin America. However, she informed that surveys prior to 1959 and current ones indicate that between 75% and 85% of Cubans believe in divinity even if they do not practise any religion.

Juan Antonio Blanco presented a complex picture of internal Cuban conflict. In the first place, he differentiated between dissent (silent and passive) and dissidence (visible and active). Based on the idea that neither governments nor the opposition are single actors, he considered that in the first place, the original and current causes of the conflict would have to be identified, to determine whether their origin was internal or external. As a result of this reflection, he observed that it would be necessary to closely examine the positions of the different actors involved in the conflict. He then analysed the different groups within the government, the military and other actors, while indicating that in each one of these sectors there are moderate actors who are in favour of political and/or economic change.

Finally, Juan Antonio Blanco concluded that one of the future uncertainties is whether Fidel Castro is the only opponent to a democratic transition and whether government officials keep silent but do not agree with the current situation. Returning to his initial thesis, he explained that dissidence consists of organised and verbal groups who play an active political role, while dissent in Cuba can range vertically from the Political Bureau to the grassroots because, in his opinion, hardly anyone, except the Castro brothers, is satisfied with Cuba's current situation. Likewise, he observed that there is not just one single project for change. Instead there are different reform proposals, some more radical, entailing a change of regime and system, and others that scarcely differ from a "Chinese model" of economic liberalisation within a totalitarian State.

Margaret Crahan considered that national reconciliation would be an essential task in Cuba. She also maintained that civil society would have to contribute to reducing people's fears in the face of a transition which, according to many Cubans, could lead to them suffering levels of poverty and violence similar to those in other Caribbean countries. Finally, she recommended that religious leaders, who until now have not identified themselves with any political group, should play a more prominent role in the country's public policy.

Lastly, Margaret Crahan observed that an important element in political change is the disintegration of authoritarian practices. In Cuba, a growing delegitimisation of the regime can be seen because, according to its citizens, it has not been able to satisfy socio-economic needs. However, other factors are necessary, among them, a space for creating alternative discourse and an articulate civil society. For this to happen in Cuba there must not only be political opposition, there must also be a variety of independent and official NGOs, civil associations and grassroots organisations, as well as academic centres and networks of people within the government. In this context, she informed that Afro-Cuban networks covering the whole Cuban territory play an extremely important role regarding the population's basic needs. She considered

that these non-organised networks are the most important in Cuba and those which, quite possibly, most affect the people's daily lives. She stated that, according to her experience of the Eastern European transitions, both the US and the EU should maintain a dialogue with the whole of Cuban civil society, including networks that are not very organised, thus enabling the building of transnational links and financial resources.

Finally, in his message to the conference, the general coordinator of the Varela Project, Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, declared that:

"A transatlantic agenda for Cuba is only acceptable if its sole content is to support the Cubans' right to make their own agenda in Cuba, with the participation of the Cubans in exile. If economic isolation is negative, it is also negative to turn Cuba into a destination for leisure and investment, creating an atmosphere that excludes the Cubans themselves. Do not ask the Cuban opposition to define itself according to one or another line conceived from the outside; you (on the outside) should define yourselves in favour of the Cuban people, and this means supporting the agenda of peaceful change, democracy, reconciliation and respect for human rights. The correct thing, more than making an agenda for Cuba, or a programme for Cuba, is to help the Cuban people to find their own voice in their own land so that they can define their own agenda for themselves." Oswaldo Payá also considered the release of all political prisoners to be a priority in the agenda of all governments in their relations with Cuba.<sup>1</sup>

## Global and Regional Experiences

Several panel members referred to the experiences of other countries in the process of democratic transition, such as the Central and Eastern European countries, and their relevance for Cuba's future. José Ignacio Salafranca pointed out that the way freedom had been achieved could be clearly appreciated in the Eastern

European countries. Not long ago, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Polish trade union Solidarnosc was celebrated: Solidarnosc "wrote one of the most beautiful pages about freedom, not only in the European continent but in the whole world".

From this point of view, Eusebio Mujal-León was interested in the lessons that Europeans could draw from their "top-down" approach in this group of countries, or the US from its "bottom-up" policy. Karl Buck answered that personal contacts were decisive in putting an end to communist systems. He also emphasised that the arms race between the former USSR and the US, and Gorbachov's conviction that he could not win it, was another important element in the downfall of the socialist bloc. Francesc Bayo thought that Cuba was probably an example where the "bottom-up" scheme did not work, on the one hand, because of the regimes' characteristics and, on the other, because our societies tend to be extremely paternalistic.

On the other hand, Eusebio Mujal-León recalled that many Cubans believed that certain basic needs such as housing, education or health, should continue to be free and guaranteed by the State. Although these expectations were not compatible with a free market economy, he considered that these demands would have to be satisfied because, if not, abnormal situations could arise like those that occurred in some Eastern European countries. Susan Kaufman Purcell thought that maintaining social benefits or not in Cuba is really a theoretical debate because she considered that there would not be any resources to do so, unless the EU were willing to invest millions of dollars in the island.

Karl Buck believed that a lesson from the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC), and any regime change, is that it is essential to work on the basis of the middle and lower levels of public administration. One cannot start from zero. Regarding the armed forces, he doubted that Raúl Castro might become a "Cuban Gorbachov". In his opinion, the lessons from Eastern Europe are contradictory especially if one bears in mind that, apart from isolated incidents, the armies stood by without firing a single shot as Communism

<sup>1</sup> Christian Liberation Movement, Message to the Conference "Common Goals, Different Strategies? Options for a Transatlantic Agenda on Cuba", November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

ended. He recalled that the situation in Iraq or Afghanistan was very different. Therefore, it would be very difficult to judge beforehand what the situation in Cuba might be like.

Although Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo expressed his support for a non-violent democratic transition, Dennis Hays recalled the case of Serbia and the end of the Milosevic era, which was mainly brought about by an armed intervention. In his opinion, and referring to the Castro regime, political changes can give rise to undesirable scenarios. In this context, he recalled the words of John F. Kennedy, who said: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable."

Laurence Whitehead drew attention to the most recent changes in Europe and in Latin America which have influenced Cuba. He recalled that in 2004, eight post-Communist countries joined the EU and inherited the Common Position, although they had not formed part of it. He explained that this fact could cause problems in the future, because the Common Position can only be modified unanimously. On the other hand, the Common Position would now be different if it had been approved by the current EU member States. A second new factor he mentioned was the Iraq occupation which, if it had been successful, would have had an enormous exemplary effect on Cuba. At present, the fact that the Iraq war has not brought with it the desired results, but instead an unclear and rather polarised situation, is also exemplary. In general, Iraq has had enormous effects on the prospects for cooperation between the EU and the US in the area of democracy promotion. Lastly, Laurence Whitehead emphasised that the Cuban regime is fighting for survival with the help of Hugo Chávez, and a whole Latin American movement, and that this allows the Cuban regime more room for manoeuvre than before.

Stephen Johnson considered that as long as personalism and a rigid hierarchical social order continue dominating in certain Latin American countries, the region will neither be stable nor prosperous, nor will it be a good trading partner nor a secure one. Similarly, he believed that Cuba is currently the most extreme expression of

authoritarian and patrimonialist values and that these values are also present in other Latin American countries such as Bolivia or Ecuador. In this sense, he considered that democracy promotion in Cuba is a test scheme to show the rest of the hemisphere and the whole world that "the days of self-sufficient autocrats and dictators are numbered".

The Cuba-Venezuela alliance was a recurring theme, as well as Venezuela's support for political movements in different Latin American countries. Laurence Whitehead considered that even the post-Castro regime could maintain close links with a Venezuela still governed by Hugo Chávez. Regarding the present moment in Latin America and President Hugo Chávez's petrol leadership, Marifeli Pérez-Stable admitted that there was tension and even confrontation between representative democracy and populist democracy. Solving these problems, or the thorny subject of fiscal reform, are internal affairs of the Latin American countries in which neither the EU nor the US can intervene, although they can contribute with advice and financial resources.

Several speakers referred to the importance of including Latin American countries in the debate about Cuba. Shelley McConnell emphasised the importance of initiating a trilateral dialogue on Cuba. Tomás Duplá del Moral and Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo considered that Cuba should not only be discussed by the EU and the US, but that countries like Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela should be included. In this context – recalling the Ibero-American Summit held in Salamanca (14-15<sup>th</sup> October 2005) and the Summit of the Americas held in Mar del Plata (November 4<sup>th</sup> 2005) –, Yáñez-Barnuevo pointed out that the vast majority of Latin American countries are opposed to the US' view on what should be done with Cuba. When talking post-Castro, this new political tendency in Latin America would have to be considered. Laurence Whitehead also believed that a supposed transatlantic cooperation on Cuba's future should not be limited to a dialogue between Brussels and Washington, but should be extended to other actors, such as Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Future Scenarios

Eusebio Mujal-Léon predicted an interesting and very turbulent period in Cuba. According to him, a political change is imminent. He considered that the path and substance of the change in Cuba would have a similar impact in Latin America to that of the Cuban Revolution in 1959. In his opinion, Cuba's democratisation is not only a problem for Cubans. It will have consequences in all Latin America, taking into account the battle in the region between those who wish to consolidate democracy and those who are fully satisfied by its absence.

Susanne Gratius contrasted this point of view by considering that once Fidel Castro was no longer there, Cuba would not be so important for the region. When a transition process starts, Cuba will not then be a country of strategic interest and it will no longer be a scenario for fierce ideological debates. Along the same lines, Marifeli Pérez-Stable recognised the special importance that Cuba has had in Latin America because of the 1959 Revolution and what it still represents in the imagination of Latin America. However, she advised that the Cuban issue should not be exaggerated. She recalled that José Martí said at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that "what happens in Cuba decides the future of Latin America" and Fidel Castro still acts in this way. She considered that it would be better to concentrate on what is best for Cuba and on how to improve civic coexistence for Cubans and their material welfare.

On the other hand, Margaret Crahan argued that it is very difficult to hold a dialogue with a civil society as fragmented as the Cuban one. She recalled that even before 1959, organised civil society did not elaborate a consensual agenda, and this enabled Fidel Castro to fill that gap. Therefore, one of the pending tasks is to create a consensus about a future agenda and possible common representatives within Cuban civil society. Stephen Johnson described the project for national dialogue led by Oswaldo Payá as a possible roadmap

for a transition from an authoritarian regime to a "democratic socialist" society. By maintaining certain socialist elements, his project could serve as a bridge for going from a society led by Fidel Castro to a more open, democratic and participative society.

Faced with the fear of change, a factor that several participants referred to, Eusebio Mujal-León underlined the importance of fostering measures for creating confidence, aimed especially at Cuban society, but also at the government. Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo added that any transition scenario would also have to take into account the reformist sectors of the current regime which, although difficult to identify, did exist.

Laurence Whitehead pointed out that it is unknown when a transition in Cuba could take place: it could be tomorrow or within ten years. And the type of transition that would take place was also unknown: a rupture – favoured by the US – or a reform of the current system – the EU option. In his opinion, these uncertainties were an added difficulty for the EU and the US when formulating future policies and agreeing on points in common.

Professor Whitehead observed that the Cuban regime is not expecting change but rather strengthening its position in the region. In his opinion, indicators of this are the recent political changes in Latin America, Fidel Castro's alliance with Hugo Chávez and Latin American discontent with George W. Bush's government. Therefore, he was sceptical about any political change happening quickly in Cuba, or in a way that would please Europeans and Americans.

Susan Kaufman Purcell maintained that one of the possible scenarios was Fidel's succession by Raúl Castro. In this way an essentially military type regime would arise because, even though the Armed Forces maintain a low profile at present, tomorrow they could be in a stronger position. She reported that some authors think that Raúl Castro is not such a hard-line Communist and that he would try to find some way of coexisting with the US. Susan Kaufman Purcell observed that political stability does not necessarily

mean “democratic transition”, and the political outcome could be the consolidation of a military regime in Cuba.

As far as US policy goes, Susan Kaufman Purcell recalled that the Helms-Burton Bill explicitly bans lifting the embargo in a political scenario with Raúl Castro. Therefore, it was very doubtful whether US policy would change even if Raúl called democratic elections in the island. She drew attention to the power of the Cuban Armed Forces, which, according to her information, dominated 60% of the Cuban economy. In her opinion, the army and its interests would be a key issue in any post-Castro future transition in Cuba. She considered that Raúl Castro did not have any charisma, which raised serious doubts about his staying in power.

A second scenario she referred to would be a civil war in Cuba. Kaufman Purcell confessed that before Hugo Chávez assumed the Presidency in Venezuela, she did not believe in the possibility of a violent political outcome in Cuba. In her opinion, Chávez’s role in Latin America and his alliance with Fidel Castro increase the possibility of a civil war in Cuba given that, in political and financial terms, the Venezuelan President would support the sectors loyal to the current regime.

The third scenario would be, in Purcell’s opinion, a type of democratic transition, which she considered to be the most favourable panorama for cooperation between the US and the EU. In her opinion, Cuba would be a case of “nation-building”, to some extent similar to Iraq, given that the key question would be how to build democratic institutions after an authoritarian regime which, with the exception of the Catholic church, did not allow independent groups.

Marifeli Pérez-Stable pointed out that most experts were of the opinion that political changes in Cuba would occur after Fidel Castro’s death. In her opinion, his disappearance would have a psychological impact on all political sectors and on the Cuban people and that this would influence events. Looking to the future, Marifeli Pérez-Stable observed that owing to the

Castro regime, Cubans had inherited a personalist political culture. Anabelle Rodríguez considered that the moment that Fidel disappeared, and according to other similar experiences, an initial phase of continuity would start and, later, one of transition towards democracy.

Regarding economic scenarios, Kaufman Purcell considered that they were more negative, as the traditional sugar industry had practically collapsed. In the area of tourism, Cuba would have to compete with Mexico and other Caribbean countries. She believed that Cuba would not regain the third economic position in Latin America, as had been the case before the 1959 Revolution. Dennis Hays and Karl Buck predicted several future crises with a very negative impact within and outside Cuba. One of them would be the internal migration of unemployed young people towards the cities, a phenomenon that had been limited up until now by the regimes’ laws. Other crises would be caused by basic infrastructure problems: water and electricity supplies, etc. A third point would be military mafias. In fourth place, Dennis Hays raised the issue of property as one of the key challenges in a future transition on the island. In his opinion, it would not be easy to find a solution to this matter. Recalling the German case after reunification, when the then government of Helmut Kohl gave priority to restoring property rather than compensation, Hays considered that the necessary investment was delayed in the face of uncertainty regarding property and that, in some cases, up to eight different owners were identified for the same property. Something similar could happen in Cuba, even more so bearing in mind recent European investment on the island.

Salafranca added that in the first phase, transition processes tended to be very short. From this point of view, he considered that it would be very difficult for the dominating class to ensure a peaceful transition from within. Referring to the Spanish case, and bearing in mind that the democratic transition was initiated by the Head of State who was named by the dictator, Javier Sandomingo emphasised that, in his opinion, change in Cuba would be a mixture of succession and

transition. He did not believe that Raúl Castro as a successor would be a lasting solution. He explained that, depending on what the transition process' goals were, Spain would not object to accepting transitory mechanisms, as long as they were acceptable for Cuban civil society and for the main international actors who had the interest and capacity to influence Cuban issues.

Marifeli Pérez-Stable suggested that both EU and US policy needed to develop alternative roadmaps. The US ought to have an alternative roadmap flexible enough to include a possible government of succession in Cuba that would open the way to transition. In this context, she observed that Manicheism between transition and succession is mistaken, given that succession could lead to transition. The EU should have an alternative roadmap that would allow it to react firmly in the event that a supposed succession government tried to maintain the hard-line which has been intensified since 2003.

Laurence Whitehead concluded that reconciliation instead of revenge would be the basis for a future political change in Cuba. In his opinion, both in Spain and in the US, and in Cuba itself, the subject had a strong emotional component. In Spain, because of the "disasters" in 1898; in Cuba and the US because of complex bilateral relations. In his opinion, this emotional factor, present in the exiled community, and in the Castro regime, is one of the most significant obstacles to solving the Cuban problem. So as to reduce sentimentalism and promote reconciliation, support from those outside is required as they are not so emotionally involved. That was why, in order to go beyond the polarised debate, there would have to be a wide-ranging and balanced transatlantic dialogue on Cuba, including other countries in the Americas.

During the conference closure, José Manuel Romero, Vice-President of FRIDE, described his personal experience of the transition process in Spain. As a law

student in Louvaine, in 1957, José Manuel Romero began to fight against the Franco regime. He confessed that, back then, during a meeting about the future of Spain, he had the sensation that it was absolutely impossible to put an end to the dictatorship. Later, Spain's isolation came to an end, but not Franco's regime. He recalled that in 1972, Franco was still in power and still executed people. However, at that point, the social fabric had changed and there was a democratic and active civil society that contributed to the democratic transition process which started after the dictator's death.

In his closing remarks, Thomas Melia summed up by saying that this transatlantic dialogue on Cuba had been a very useful exercise and that, although a common agenda had not yet been defined in this area, it would be very desirable to debate, in greater depth, many of the themes mentioned. Similarly, Thomas Melia wondered if closer coordination between the US and the EU, or different approaches, would be more useful for a future transition in Cuba. He observed that the experience acquired in other transition processes in the world, over the last few decades, did not help to clarify this key question. He stressed that, in view of the differences between the US and the EU regarding Cuba and other countries, such as Iraq, it is the aim of Freedom House to strengthen dialogue within the transatlantic democratic community and to find ways of working together. In this sense, he considered the conference to be the beginning of a conversation that should continue in the future, either in the EU, or in the US, or in other places in the Americas, including the other countries involved. For his part, José Manuel Romero restated FRIDE's commitment to continue cooperating with Freedom House, both on Cuban issues as well as other possible themes of the transatlantic agenda.

Translated by:  
Fionnuala Ní Eigearthaigh

# Anex: Conference Programme



## Programme

“Common Goals, Different Strategies? Options for a Transatlantic Agenda on Cuba”

## Conference

Brussels, 8 November 2005

(Fondation Universitaire  
Salle Cattier  
11, Rue d’Egmont)

Logistical support provided by:



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Cuba is still the only Latin American country that has not accepted democratic openness. According to the Freedom House index, Cuba belongs to the group of the eight “least free” countries in the world. The greatest obstacle to a transition on the island is Fidel Castro, who is still unwilling to accept any changes in his *sui generis* socialist system. Nevertheless, a limited economic openness took place after the collapse of the socialist bloc and, despite repression, an informal civil society arose, including a democratic movement with growing political influence both within and outside the island.

Although both the EU and the US support a peaceful transition in Cuba, the means and instruments towards this goal vary considerably. While the EU promotes democratic change through economic engagement, US policy is aimed at collapsing the regime by means of political and economic sanctions, as well as designing a transition agenda without Fidel and Raúl Castro. EU policy of conditional but “constructive” engagement towards Cuba contrasts with the US sanctions policy, based on international isolation of the Cuban government, strengthening of the US embargo, condemnation of human rights violations, the existence of Radio and TV Martí and support for the democratic movement. EU and US policies have rarely been coordinated. As a result, EU economic engagement in Cuba, to a large extent, compensates for the effect of US sanctions and the collapse of the Soviet Union and, US sanctions are used by the Castro regime to justify its repressive policy. In short, neither European nor American strategies towards Cuba have managed to fulfil their objectives.

Since the passing of the Common Position on Cuba, in December 1996, EU policy has undergone a continual seesawing between convergence with and withdrawal from the regime. According to the political climate in Cuba, the EU has opted for a policy of constructive engagement or light diplomatic sanctions. Traditionally, Spain has been a key actor in this chess game. Following a Spanish government initiative – and responding to the release of 75 dissidents imprisoned in March 2003 – the EU eased its policy towards Cuba, after two years of frozen diplomatic relations

and cooperation. Currently, the EU and Cuba have returned to the “status quo ante”: in June 2005, the EU Council confirmed the Common Position for a year.

Under Bush’s government, the US strengthened its sanctions policy with a view to “accelerating the transition in Cuba”. The Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, created by the President in October 2003, introduced several changes in US policy, such as restrictions on travel, remittances and packages to Cuba, as well as an increase in the resources allocated to the democratic movement and civil society organisations on the island. Likewise, the Commission recommended strengthening diplomatic efforts with the aim of creating an international platform to accelerate a democratic transition in Cuba. In order to implement this new policy, the Secretary of State named Caleb McCarry as the Cuba Transition Coordinator on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

Despite the Common Position, which is binding for EU member States, a coherent strategy still does not exist which would contribute to a future democratic transition in Cuba. One of the internal contradictions within the EU – that is, the European Commission and member States – is that while Cuba has not signed a cooperation agreement with the EU, more than 20 bilateral treaties exist. There are also contradictions in US policy. First, the embargo policy has been undermined by remittances sent by Cuban-Americans to their relatives on the island. Second, since the restrictions on exporting food and medicines were lifted in the year 2000, the US has become the main supplier of food to Cuba.

Although there are a wide range of positions in the EU and the US regarding Cuba, these differences have been sidelined by the traditional and sometimes fierce debate over engagement versus isolation. In this context, the conference addresses three main themes: What are the most effective instruments and strategies to contribute to democratic change in Cuba? How can a more coherent European - US policy towards Cuba be defined? Is there a common ground for a transatlantic policy towards the island?

# Programme

## 8 November 2005

### 8.30 Registration

### 9.00 Welcome Address by Organisers

- Thomas O. Melia, Freedom House, Washington DC
- Richard Youngs, FRIDE, Madrid

### 9.30 First Roundtable EU Policy towards Cuba: Goals, Instruments and Partners

Chair: Thomas O. Melia, Freedom House, Washington DC

- Javier Sandomingo, Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Madrid
- Joel Brito, Group for Corporate Social Responsibility in Cuba (GRSCC), Miami
- José Ignacio Salafranca, European Parliament (EPP)
- Karl Buck, Council of the European Union, Brussels
- Susanne Gratius, FRIDE, Madrid
- Francesc Bayo, Fundació CIDOB, Barcelona

Discussant: Eusebio Mujal-León, Georgetown University, Washington DC

### 11.30 Coffee Break

### 12.00 Second Roundtable US Policy towards Cuba: Goals, Instruments and Partners

Chair: Eusebio Mujal-León, Georgetown University, Washington DC

- David Mutchler, USAID, Washington DC
- Shelley McConnell, Carter Center, Atlanta
- Dan Erikson, Inter American Dialogue, Washington DC
- Susan Kaufman Purcell, University of Miami, Miami

- Juan Antonio Blanco, Human Rights Internet, Ottawa
- Margaret Crahan, City University of New York-Hunter College, New York
- Stephen Johnson, Heritage Foundation, Washington DC

Discussant: Christian Freres, Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales (ICEI), Madrid

### 14.00 Lunch

### 15.00 Third Roundtable Is a Transatlantic Agenda on Cuba Possible?

Chair: Anabelle Rodríguez, Encuentro de la Cultura Cubana, Madrid

- Caleb McCarry, Cuba Transition Coordinator, US Department of State, Washington DC
- Dennis Hays, former Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, Department of State, Washington DC
- Tomás Duplá del Moral, European Commission, Brussels
- Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo, European Parliament (SOC)
- Richard Youngs, FRIDE, Madrid
- Marifeli Pérez-Stable, Inter American Dialogue, Washington DC

Discussant: Laurence Whitehead, Nuffield College, Oxford

### 17.00 Closing Session

- José Manuel Romero, FRIDE, Madrid
- Thomas O. Melia, Freedom House, Washington DC

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