

# *All EU Member States Agree to Normalize Relations with Cuba*

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Havana, December 6 (RHC)-- All 28 member states of the European Union (EU) have agreed to the signing of a political dialogue and cooperation agreement with Cuba towards normalizing EU-Cuba ties.

According to the EU official website, the will of the EU members, was expressed Tuesday in Brussels, Belgium, during a session of the European Union Council.

The Council also decided to provisionally apply parts of the agreement. The agreement will be transmitted to the European Parliament for its consent.

The agreement will be officially signed on Monday, December 12, 2016, by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, EU foreign ministers and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez.

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said: "We are truly at a turning point in the relations between the EU and Cuba. Together, we are moving towards a closer and more constructive partnership, one that reflects strong historic, economic and cultural ties that unite Europe and Cuba. Through the new agreement, the EU is ready to support Cuba's process of economic and social modernization, and I am looking forward to further advancing our bilateral relations."

The political dialogue and cooperation agreement, the first agreement between the EU and Cuba, will constitute the new legal framework for EU-Cuba relations. It foresees an enhanced political dialogue, improved bilateral cooperation and the development of joint action in multilateral fora.

The European Union and Cuba established diplomatic relations in 1988.

Since 1996 the EU relations with Cuba have been governed by the so-called Common Position, a punitive measure adopted on the initiative of then Spanish President José María Aznar. However, bilateral EU-Cuba ties have deepened significantly since the re-launch of political dialogue and cooperation in 2008.

The repeal of the Common Position and the upcoming signature of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) between the EU and Cuba will mark an important new phase of bilateral relations.

All 28 EU Member States maintain bilateral diplomatic relations with Cuba. An EU representation office was opened in Havana in 2003, and upgraded into a fully-fledged Delegation in 2008.

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