

# *Cuba-EU Hold High-level Human Rights Debate in Brussels*

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Brussels, May 23 (RHC)-- Cuba and the European Union (EU) held their third high-level debate on human rights Tuesday in Brussels.

Both sides had an extensive discussion on constitutional, legal and administrative aspects of citizens' participation in public affairs, notably with regard to the recent and forthcoming elections in the EU and in Cuba, where municipal elections will take place in 2017 and a new President will be elected in 2018.

In the area of economic and social rights, the EU and Cuba addressed the coverage of social protection systems and the promotion of social dialogue. The respect for core labor standards, the fight against discrimination and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups were also raised.

The two sides discussed the protection of human rights of migrants and refugees in the context of migration flows involving Cuba and the EU, and the promotion and protection of the right to health, in particular for persons in vulnerable situations.

Both sides agreed to explore the possibility of setting up a sectoral dialogue on social issues, as well as trilateral cooperation on global health in line with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez, Director General for Multilateral Issues and International Law of the Cuban

Ministry for Foreign Affairs led the Cuban delegation. He was accompanied by Cuban Ambassador and Head of the Mission to the EU Norma Goicochea Estenoz, as well as other officials of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The EU delegation was headed by EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis and included the Managing Director for the Americas of the European External Action Service (EEAS), Edita Hrdá, as well as other representatives of the EEAS, the European Commission and the EU Delegation to Cuba.

The two sides also explored opportunities for closer EU-Cuba cooperation in multilateral human rights forums.

The talks reconfirmed the wish of both sides to deepen their dialogue and understanding in the area of human rights, with a view to developing cooperation to attain the objectives of the EU-Cuba partnership. The EU and Cuba affirmed their commitment for even closer engagement under the EU-Cuba Agreement on Political Dialogue and Cooperation.

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