European Union Parliament Ratifies Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement with Cuba

Strasbourg, July 5 (RHC)-- The European Parliament has ratified the first ever deal between the European Union and Cuba as the continental bloc makes overtures to the island nation despite U.S. President Donald Trump's hard-line stance against Havana.

Lawmakers of the European Parliament, gathered in Strasbourg, agreed that the provisional implementation of the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement will begin in the coming months. The vote was 567 in favor, 61 votes against and 31 abstentions.

However, the deal, which was signed in December 2016 after two years of EU-Cuba negotiations, would go into full implementation after ratification by the EU's 28 member countries, a complex process that can take years.

The European legislature voted for a non-binding resolution, noting that the pact "will help expand bilateral

trade, promote dialogue and economic cooperation and provide for joint action on the world scene."

In response to Washington's new hard-line policy toward Havana, MEP Elena Valenciano, the rapporteur of the EU-Cuba agreement, said: "Europe has a great opportunity to demonstrate to the United States, that it is possible to maintain the highest level of expectations with Cuba," adding that such a move could be a major step to normalize relations with Havana.

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