

# *Cuba, European Union Sign Political Dialog and Cooperation Accord*

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Havana, December 12 (RHC/wires)-- The European Union and Cuba signed a deal on Monday that seeks to normalize political and cooperation relations.

Cuba was the only Latin American country not to have a "dialogue and cooperation" deal with the 28-nation EU covering issues such as trade, human rights and migration.

E.U. ministers last week dropped a policy in place since 1996, which came to be known as the "common position" and which placed unwarranted demands on Cuba before relations with the bloc were to be improved.

Monday's accord was signed by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, E.U. foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini and representatives from the E.U. member states, at a Brussels ceremony capping years of negotiations.

At the signing ceremony, Mogherini said she was encouraged by dialogue with Havana.

Minister Bruno Rodriguez, for his part, stated that economic links with Europe would continue to be a priority for Cuba as it builds its socialist economy.

He recalled a speech in 2003 in which then Cuban President Fidel Castro hailed the historical importance of the E.U. as a counterweight to the United States which kept a policy of blockade against Cuba.

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