

SUCCESSFUL EUROPEAN ACTION DAYS AGAINST THE US-BLOCKADE ON CUBA

On **November 29 and 30**, Cubanismo.be, a Belgian solidarity organization, organized - in cooperation with representatives of the European solidarity movements with Cuba and with the GUE/NGL faction in the European Parliament in Brussels - two European Action Days against the US-blockade against Cuba. This was the first pan-European common action on this topic.

Twenty-five representatives from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and Sweden have met with members of the European Parliament. The representatives exposed the consequences of the blockade for Cuba and also for Europe, due to the illegal extraterritorial application of the US blockade laws.

They denounce e.g. the fact that several European banks refuse transferring money for urgent relief after the hurricane Irma, and even within Europe they block money transfers to solidarity organizations and even close down bank accounts.

The representatives have asked the members of parliament to endeavour that Europe opposes the blockade not only in words but also in actions. In fact, the European laws say that Member States should sanction companies or persons that apply the blockade laws in Europe.

US threatens European entities with big fines – and banks and companies already have paid millions of dollars to the US treasury in past years – but the European institutions barely react to these illegal extraterritorial sanctions. This proves that the US-blockade against Cuba is not only a threat to Cuban sovereignty, but also to the sovereignty of EU and its member states.

These facts are nearly unknown to the public and these lobby days aimed also to raise awareness about it to European politicians and public.

The representatives have met with the following members of the European Parliament:

- Bart Staes (Belgium)
- Kathleen Van Brempt (Belgium)
- Hilde Vautmans (Belgium)
- Malin Björk (Sweden)
- Bodil Valero (Sweden)
- Luke Ming Flanagan (Ireland)
- Matt Carthy, Martina Anderson, Lynn Boylan and Liadh Ni Riada (Ireland)
- Joachim Schuster (Germany)
- Sabine Lösing (Germany)
- Helmut Scholz (Germany)
- Joëlle Bergeron (France)
- Marie-Pierre Vieu (France)

Several members of parliament made suggestions for further action, e.g.: send letters, co-signed by several members of parliament, to Federica Mogherini and Moscovici, file a petition to the European Parliament in order to defend their case and to put the struggle against the blockade on the agenda, and to work even closer between all democratic forces who want to have the Cuban and the European right on sovereignty respected.

European solidarity organizations will now elaborate these suggestions and turn them into appropriate action in order to get answers from the European Commission and the Parliament. We aim to inspire them to more assertive reaction against the extraterritorial consequences that the US imposes on European citizens, companies and institutions. The action days were a first step in a campaign for getting the anti-Cuba blockade on the European agenda. European solidarity organizations will continue to endeavour involving all democratic forces that respect the Cuban and European right to sovereignty and therefore demand an immediate end to the blockade.

GUE/NGL and Cubanismo.be also organized two conferences with international experts – amongst them Camilo Guevara, one of Che's sons –, a cultural evening and concert with Tumbao Cubano and a short public manifestation at the Luxemburgplein in front of the EP concluding these two Action Days against the blockade.

In the next days, reports of these two action days will be released on the websites of all participating organizations. Cubanismo.be wishes to thank them once again and particularly the members of parliament and collaborators of the GUE/NGL for their political, financial and logistical support.

USA: END THE BLOCKADE NOW!

EUROPE: ACT NOW TO STOP ALL EXTRATERRITORIAL APPLICATIONS THE BLOCKADE!