

## EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



**Javier NIÑO PEREZ**  
Acting Managing Director for the Americas

Brussels,  
*ARES(2020)5045967*

**Netzwerk Cuba**  
**Weydingerstr. 14-16 · 10178 Berlin**  
**Germany**

Thank you for your letter of 16 June in which you express your rejection of the US embargo on Cuba.

This is a position fully shared by the European Union. Our objective in our partnership with Cuba is to support economic and social reforms in Cuba, to promote sustainable development of the island, to find common solutions to global challenges, whilst promoting democracy and respect for human rights.

The US embargo has a damaging effect on the economic situation of the country and is having a negative impact on the living standards of the Cuban people, and therefore hinders this objective. It also constitutes a serious obstacle to closer EU relations with Cuba, particularly in the field of economic ties, but also in that of development cooperation. The EU is therefore firmly opposed to the embargo. It moreover considers that the extraterritorial effects of the Helms-Burton Act are not compatible with international law. The EU expresses this view inter alia in the context of the annual debate on the embargo at the United Nations.<sup>1</sup>

Within the EU, the so-called EU blocking statute (Regulation (EC) No 2271/96) allows us to take action against measures under Helms-Burton Title III. This has contributed to limiting the number of lawsuits launched in the US against European companies. EU services are looking at ways to make the blocking statute even more effective, as well as at other options to address Title III, including in the context of the WTO. The US embargo, its effects and possible courses of action against it also are the subject of a specific dialogue between the EU and Cuba.

---

<sup>1</sup> See [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/cuba/70107/node/70107\\_vi](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/cuba/70107/node/70107_vi).

I agree with you that the US embargo, in addition to its usual harmful effects, threatens the supply of urgently needed medical and humanitarian supplies to the island during the COVID-19 pandemic. As High Representative Borrell stressed in his statement of 3 April, the supply of essential equipment and materials necessary to combat the coronavirus and limit its spread worldwide should not be hindered by sanctions.<sup>2</sup> This is a demand which we have also reiterated on several occasions in our dialogue with the US, specifically on the Cuban case.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Borrell', is centered on the page.

---

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/de/press/press-releases/2020/04/03/declaration-by-the-high-representative-josep-borrell-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-un-secretary-general-s-appeal-for-an-immediate-global-ceasefire>