

REPORT ON ICDC CONFERENCE IN STOCKHOLM WORKING DOCUMENT

Between the 6th and 7th of February 2006, we met in Stockholm, Sweden, to support the struggle for democratic change in Cuba. Conference participants included members of the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba, representatives from ministries of the European Union member states, leaders from international and regional organizations, human rights activists and members of non governmental organizations and representatives of the Cuban civic movement.

The goal of the meeting followed on from the Prague memorandum which states: "Our goal is to help create the conditions so that the Cuban people can bring about democracy through a non-violent transition. Our priority is to strengthen civil society and the civic movement that are bringing about that democracy. In order to accomplish this, we seek to set out common objectives for a general plan of support for democracy in Cuba that can be implemented in a coordinated manner at different levels and from different parts of the world." The general coordination of and support for this plan corresponds to the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba and its meetings.

One of the aims of this conference was to facilitate communication between representatives of the European Ministries of Foreign Affairs with the objective of sharing their experiences of their work. The countries of Europe are not united on the position towards Cuba and this conference attempted to bring together representatives of different countries to discuss the common European position towards the regime in Cuba. Additionally, the conference served to provide the Cuban democratic opposition and non-governmental organizations working on the island with the space to present their work and discuss the possibility of cooperation.

During the ICDC meeting in Stockholm, the following measures, initiatives and campaigns were suggested and discussed.

1. To compose a list of prominent politicians and significant personalities who were denied access to Cuba (through being denied a visa by Cuban officials or being expelled from the island for meeting with civil society leaders).
2. To support the "No Estáis Solos" (You are not alone) initiative, which aims to convey the solidarity and support of European politicians and civil society to all Cuban democrats, especially following the change in policy by the Council of the European Union in June 2005.
3. To support the Sakharov initiative which demands that the Sakharov prize winners – Oswaldo Payá in 2002 and the Damas de Blanco movement in 2005 – are allowed to travel to Europe to meet with European politicians and the public and speak about the situation in Cuba
4. To demand a report from the European Commission about specific civil society projects in Cuba supported by its funds and to demand changes in European Union funding of all civil society projects in Cuba
5. To call on European Union member state representatives in Havana to communicate with independent civil society in Cuba, to participate in their activities both in Havana and the provinces and to report to their home governments. In addition, they should

facilitate access to free information (through the distribution of books, newspapers, and other materials) and access to internet for civil society members.

6. To prepare information materials about dissent in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to distribute it on the island in order to inform Cuban dissidents about the activities of their former European counterparts.
7. To explore new possibilities of channels of free information to Cuba. This includes establishing more radio broadcasts in Spanish to Cuba from various countries, usually the only source of free information for all Cubans, and also new channels for printed or electronic materials.
8. Regarding the work of NGOs in Cuba, all organizations should attempt to gather feedback on their projects. In addition, humanitarian aid projects should be strengthened as the economic situation on the island has become progressively worse, a situation which strongly influences dissent.
9. In civil society projects in Cuba, special focus should be given to Cuban youth and their activities as they are the future promoters of democracy on the island
10. Attention should be also given to the changing political situation in the whole region of Latin America.

The secretariat of the ICDC, alongside other organizations, will begin to coordinate some of these initiatives and all participants are welcome to take part in any initiative.

The secretariat of ICDC would like to express its gratitude to the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Sweden and to Ambassador Marie Chatardová for their support of this conference. Thanks also to our partner organizations in Sweden who co-organized this event – the Swedish International Liberal Centre, the Christian Democratic International Centre and the Olof Palme International Centre.