



**Ελληνική Επιτροπή για τη Διεθνή Υφεση και Ειρήνη**  
**Greek Committee for International Detente and Peace**

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To:

the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Universal Periodic Review (Third Cycle) concerning the Republic of Cuba 30th UPR Working Group session (May 2018)

Dear Sir/ Madame

Introduction

The **Greek Committee for International Détente and Peace (EEDYE)** was founded on May 15, 1955. The Founding Declaration was signed by 77 prominent figures of public life. Vice President of it was Grigoris Lambrakis who, with few other fellow marchers and despite the ban and pogrom imposed by the state, on April 21, 1963 organized and executed the 1<sup>st</sup> Marathon Peace March. A month later, on May 22, 1963 Grigoris Lambrakis was assassinated in Thessaloniki. Historical members of EEDYE were the composer Mikis Theodorakis and the poet Giannis Ritsos.

Today the Greek Committee for International Détente and Peace (EEDYE) continues its struggle for peace, against war and nuclear weapons, with speeches, rallies and other cultural and athletic events. It has local peace committees all over Greece, and it is a member of the World Peace Council (WPC).

Every year EEDYE organizes, at the path drawn by Grigoris Lambrakis, the Marathon Peace March starting from the Marathon Tomb and ending at the center of Athens. Peace Marches are also organized in many other Greek cities.

In condemnation of the atomic bombs crime against Hiroshima and Nagasaki the Acropolis event is organized in Athens every August.

Also Since May 9, 1958 EEDYE publishes the magazine "Paths of Peace" with thousands of copies circulated amongst the Greek people as well as available on the website [www.eedye.gr](http://www.eedye.gr)

## Regarding the UPR about the Republic of Cuba

Our organization has direct knowledge about the situation in Cuba, from exchanges, meetings, visits, with the most recent being the participation of our delegation to the IV. International Seminar against the Foreign Military Bases which was held in November 2015 in the Cuban province of Guantanamo. Our Organisation maintains friendly working relations with the Cuban Movement for Peace and the Sovereignty of the peoples (MOVPAZ) and a close cooperation within the margins of the World Peace Council (WPC).

The Constitution of Cuba provides for and protects the basic social and political rights of the Cuban people. Undeniably, significant progress has been made in Cuba, even more so when one take into account that in other countries of Latin America the people's problems are very intense and unemployment, poverty, employer and state repression are at very high levels.

We note certain aspects more specifically

### **A. The right to education**

The organizations of the UN (UNDP) recognize that despite the fact that Latin America is the continent with the highest level of inequality in the world, Cuba has the highest level of social equality. Cuba is the only country in Latin America that has fulfilled the general goals of Education for All 2000- 2015, which had been set by the UN. Cuba has eradicated illiteracy and school attendance is 99.7%, while in 2009-2013 Cuba invested 12.9% of its GDP in education.

### **B. On the protection of persons with disabilities**

Since 1961, Cuba has taken significant steps in education and the protection of children with special needs. Despite the enormous problems caused in education as well by the 55 year blockade imposed by the USA between 2,030 and 2,050 school students graduate from 360 special schools. Of these a significant number continues on to university, while for the rest work is guaranteed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. At the same time, a serious effort is being made to integrate them socially which is reflected in the significant number of medals in the Para-Olympic Games: 145 gold medals, 133 silver and 62 bronze, won by 251 athletes in 19 international competitions.

### **C. Child Mortality**

Cuba is consistently amongst the countries in the world with lowest levels of infant mortality..In 2016 and 2015, the level of infant mortality was 4.3 in 1,000, when in 1960 it was 37.3. The percentage for mortality of children under 5 years old was reduced from 5.7 to 5.5 in every 1,000 children that are born alive. The percentage of pre-school mortality fell from 3.6 to 2.9 (in 1000). The mortality of school age children is 2.2 for every 10,000.

### **D. Right to health-care**

The health system of Cuba is universally recognized, to which all its citizens have free access. Vaccine coverage remains at 99%, while in 2015 Cuba was the first country to eradicate the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to embryo. Despite the significant problems created by the US blockade, Cuba provides medical assistance to many countries all over the world. Indeed on January 31 2017, it was awarded the Public Health Prize by the World Health Organization in recognition of the international

assistance it has provided in natural disasters and serious epidemics. Since 2005, 7,254 such missions have been carried out, assisting 19 countries and treating 3.5 million people.

## **E. Elections and political system**

Political rights of the working people in essence did not exist in Cuba before 1959.

The social and political system that prevailed after the revolution and the workers' state that was created established these rights.

The mass organizations and popular participation play an important role in the political system of Cuba. The Mass Organisations of Workers, Women, Youth, Students and Children have a special role in the decision making process in Cuba along with the local assemblies on grass root level where citizens participate and elect their representatives to the higher levels of the administration.

In this period, Cuba is in an election period, where these features can be observed.

The previous elections took place on 19 and 25 of April 2015. In the first round over 7,553,000 voters took part, i.e. 88.3 % of those eligible to vote. 90% of the ballots were valid, 4.54% were blank and 4.92% invalid. In the first round 11,425 representatives were elected to the organs of power at all levels, while in 1,164 electoral districts a 2nd round was held on April 26 as none of the candidates had received 50+1% in the first round. Participation in elections is voluntary.

The Cuban people have been facing the suffocating US blockade for over half a century, which constitutes a direct and systematic violation of their sovereignty, rights and freedom, which indeed has intensified over recent decades with the so-called extra-territorial laws of the blockade. At the same time, the people of Cuba are facing the interventionist policies of other powers like the EU, which openly dispute its right to determine its own future and development path.

A crucial matter for the sovereignty of Cuba remains the "de facto" occupation of the sovereign territory of Guantanamo where the USA maintain a naval base and a illegal prison which has been actually converted into a "concentration camp" for prisoners under the "campaign against terror" after 2001. The USA refuse to withdraw from Guantanamo despite the expiry of the agreement signed more than 100 years ago, for the use of the area for 99 years and despite the unanimous will of the government and people of Cuba who are demanding the return of the territory to Cuba.

Athens, September 26, 2017

For the Secretariat of EEDYE

Stavros Tassos    Elpida Pantelaki

Chairman        General Secretary