



## The project

The Europe-Cuba Forum is an initiative born in 2017 composed of a consortium of [eleven institutions](#) from Europe and Cuba. The purpose of the project is to consolidate a joint and multidisciplinary research between European and Cuban researchers in order to promote cooperative relations between Cuba and Europe and contribute to boost relations within the framework of the new stage of constructive engagement in relations between Cuba and the European Union (EU) after the signing of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) in December 2016 from an academic perspective, but also with proposals for action.

In 2018 the [Europe Cuba Forum Jean Monnet Network](#) was set up, co-funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme, which for 4 years has allowed the members of the network to develop numerous publications, seminars, webinars, research stays, academic exchanges and many other activities related to the generation of knowledge around the current Cuban situation and its relations with Europe and the rest of the world.

The work plan was structured in three thematic blocks:

- [Cooperation to support economic reforms and sustainable development.](#)
- [Cooperation for institutional reform and social policies.](#)
- [Interregional cooperation and global insertion.](#)

On 31 August 2022, the funding of the Jean Monnet Network comes to an end after having been extended by one year as a result of the difficulties that arose due to COVID 19, which forced not only changes in the implementation schedule, but also changes in the format of the offline and online activities. The network has not stopped, but increased its activities and incorporated new formats that have allowed to reach a wider audience.

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During these four years, the international context has changed and become more complex, and this has also had an impact on the internal Cuban context, which is facing a difficult economic and social situation with negative effects on the development of the expected reforms. In these circumstances, relations with the EU and cooperation are of strategic value in order to give continuity to the reforms that are even more necessary. The new international cooperation instruments developed by the EU, the [EU's Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027](#) in Cuba, the new approach of the Team Europe initiative and the post-Cotonou context open windows of opportunity for cooperation with Cuba to acquire a more strategic and shared vision with the Member States in order to support internal structural changes that contribute to a better international insertion of the island and to offer opportunities to Cuban citizens who are currently facing an uncertain situation.

At the end of the Europe-Cuba Forum Jean Monnet Network project, three Policy Briefs have been drafted that attempt to offer some recommendations for the relations in the three areas worked on, based on the 36 research works carried out by the network's researchers. Beyond the end of the Jean Monnet Network's funding, the Europe-Cuba Forum will continue to analyse the situation on the island, combining perspectives and academic disciplines, in accordance with the vocation with which this network was created. Below, we explain the results and developments of the last year of the project.

## Our activities

The last year of the project involved moving from virtual mode to face-to-face mode. First of all, a webinar was held in December 2021 to exchange views on the changing international context in order to enrich the research work of the third thematic block that was underway. In spring 2022, face-to-face activities were resumed, and the third international seminar was held to present the results of the second thematic block on institutional reforms and social policies that could not be presented in person in 2021 and those of the third thematic block with working sessions to discuss the working papers on international cooperation and global insertion. As dissemination activities: firstly, with regard to the academic community, several members of the Europe Cuba Forum Jean Monnet Network participated in the 2022 Congress of the European Council for Social Research in Latin America (CEISAL) held in Helsinki and others participated in the XI Latin American Congress of Political Science, ALACIP 2022; a final working day of the Forum was held in June 2022 at the Casa de América in Madrid.

## Webinar “EU-Cuba relations: challenges and potential for the development of stable, long-term ties”

On 10 December 2021, the webinar [“EU-Cuba relations: challenges and potential for the development of stable, long-term ties”](#) was held, an event organised by CIDOB within the framework of the Europe-Cuba Forum and with the collaboration of the CIPI and the CIEI in Havana. The event was attended by a series of academics and experts from both sides of the Atlantic, who discussed about the challenges and potential for the development of stable, long-term links between the EU and Cuba.

The Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between Cuba, the EU and its Member States, in force since 2017, established the conditions for the development of stable and long-term ties between the parties. The new instrument formally replaced the 1996 Common Position, overcoming a policy of unilateral conditionalities that were inefficient for the development of bilateral relations and for the achievement of the objectives that the parties set out in that framework. As a result of the ADPC, EU policy has achieved a better correspondence with the level of ties that its Member States have maintained with the island in the economic, political and cooperation spheres.

However, Cuba's external insertion is taking place in an extremely complex international political context, determined in the first place by the increase in US sanctions against the island, which aggravated the severe socio-economic impacts caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, conservative forces in the European Parliament are questioning the effectiveness of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, and are trying to confront the Council with a dilemma: to accompany the updating of the



Cuban economic model and its external insertion, from a constructive position of mutual respect, or to undermine the existing framework agreement with the island and return to unsuccessful unilateral policies and pressure.

With this Webinar, the Europe Cuba Forum Jean Monnet Network invites to reflect on the state of economic, cooperation and political relations between the EU and Cuba, highlighting the challenges faced by the island to transform its pattern of external insertion, an indispensable component for overcoming the structural obstacles that hinder the achievement of a prosperous and sustainable society; as well as the potential for developing a respectful, mutually beneficial, stable and long-term relationship.

The webinar addressed these issues through two discussion panels. The first was devoted to the international context of EU-Cuba relations. The second focused on the opportunities for cooperation between the EU and Cuba. The recording of the session is [available here](#).

## Barcelona 2022: 3rd International Seminar of the “Europe Cuba Forum Jean Monnet Network” project

On 6, 7 and 8 April 2022, the third international seminar of the Jean Monnet Network project Europe-Cuba Forum was held at the CIDOB headquarters in Barcelona. The event brought together in person, after two years of pandemic, the European and Cuban members of the Forum, who debated the results of the sectors in which the Forum’s research has been carried out: the economy, social policies and interregional and global cooperation, with an emphasis on the latter.

On the first day, the seminar opened with a public presentation of the Forum’s third book “[Cuba and the European Union: Interregional Cooperation and Global Insertion](#)”, which was followed by a debate aimed at informing the elaboration of three policy briefs focusing on the themes: a) economic reforms and sustainable development, b) social policies and institutional reforms, and c) interregional cooperation and global insertion. The recording of the session is [available here](#).

In the following days, the Network’s experts addressed, through a series of [working seminars](#), the current state of play of cooperation between the EU and Cuba in the three aforementioned areas.

The first panel addressed the issue of social policies and socio-economic change in post-COVID Cuba. The second dealt with institutional transformation in Cuba. The third panel discussed EU-Cuba inter-regional cooperation in the international context. The fourth panel addressed Cuba’s regional and global insertion. Finally, panel 5 developed the topic of economic reforms and sustainable development in Cuba.

In parallel to the seminar, five Cuban researchers undertook short research stays in Barcelona to deepen their research on economic issues in the Cuban context and its relations with the European continent. The results of these stays are published on the [Forum’s website](#) in Working Paper format and will be collected in a book published within the framework of the project by the University of Havana.

An image of the opening session of the seminar



## Closing day of the project of the Europe-Cuba Forum in Madrid

On 21 June 2022, a new discussion organised within the framework of the Europe-Cuba Forum was held at Casa de América in Madrid. Under the title [EU-Cuba relations five years after the entry into force of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement](#), the event, organised by the Complutense University of Madrid and CIDOB, brought together a series of experts from the academic and institutional spheres to address the state of economic, cooperation and political relations between the EU and Cuba. The recording of the session is [available here](#).

José Antonio Alonso, Gloria Iniesta and Anna Ayuso during the inaugural session of the seminar

After the opening of the conference by Enrique Ojeda, Director General of Casa de América, the introductory session took place with the participation of José Antonio Alonso, Professor of Applied Economics at the UCM and member of the Forum, Anna Ayuso, Coordinator of the Europe Cuba Forum and Gloria Iniesta of the European External Action Service. The speakers put into context the state of relations between the EU and Cuba, highlighting the most recent changes in the regional and inter-regional context for Cuba's international insertion.

This topic was discussed in depth at the first round table on "[Challenges and opportunities for EU-Cuba cooperation](#)", with the participation of Laura Oroz Ulibarri, Director of Cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Katarzyna Dembiczyk, Professor, Institute of Iberian and Ibero-American Studies,

University of Warsaw, and Susanne Gratius, Professor and Director of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Law, Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM), moderated by Francisco Sánchez, Director, Institute of Ibero-American Studies, University of Salamanca (USAL). The session reflected on the state of cooperation between Spain and Cuba, cooperation at the regional Caribbean level and Cuba's insertion from an international relations perspective.

The afternoon session focused on the "[prospects for economic cooperation between the EU and Cuba](#)". It began with a presentation by Pavel Vidal, professor and researcher at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Cali, on the state of economic reforms in Cuba and perspectives in the current context. Next, Professor Javier Velázquez from the Department of Applied Economics II of the UCM spoke about the Cuban tourism sector and its evolution in recent years. Marta Blanco, President of CEOE International, gave an overview of international relations from a business perspective, with special emphasis on bilateral relations between Spain and Cuba. Finally, José Antonio Alonso, gave a presentation that shared a global logic of the current situation in the Cuban economic sphere. All the sessions concluded with a final space for interaction with the audience in which questions related to the topics covered during the presentations were addressed and discussed in depth. The recording of the session is [available here](#).

The objective of this event was to share the results of the research with European and Spanish institutions and other actors relevant to European-Cuban relations and thus contribute to the dissemination of the results in general and of the policy briefs with their recommendations.

José Antonio Alonso, Gloria Iniesta and Anna Ayuso during the inaugural session of the seminar



## News

### The three prizes of the Europe Cuba Forum awarded to young researchers

Following the Forum's third international seminar in Barcelona, the last of the three €300 prizes awarded by the Europe Cuba Forum to young researchers for their research work on topics related to the thematic blocks of the project was presented. The winner of the prize in the third block competition was Claudia Sánchez Savín, a young Cuban researcher, for her article "[Las relaciones bilaterales Cuba-Italia en el contexto de la política euroatlántica en tiempos de Covid-19. Perspectivas en el marco del ADPC](#)". The winners of the other blocks were Ruxandra Ana for the paper "[Being / becoming professional: Emerging work practices and the politics of cultural heritage in light of legislative change in Cuba \(An ethnographic approach\)](#)" and Henry Colina for the paper "[Actualizando el sistema de pensiones de la Seguridad Social en Cuba](#)".

### XI ALACIP Congress 2022, 21-23 July organised by the Chilean Association of Political Science

Several members of the Europe Cuba Forum participated in the [XI Latin American Congress of Political Science](#) of the Latin American Association of Political Science (ALACIP) sponsored by the Chilean Association of Political Science and held virtually from 21 to 23 July. Specifically, on Saturday 21 July, Susanne Gratus took part in round table 172 "Cuba: still a reference for Latin America?" as moderator and speaker, and Anna Ayuso and Yanina Welp as speakers. The results of the work on Cuba's international insertion and on Cuba in the framework of the Latin American protests with a comparative perspective were presented.

ALACIP2022

## XI Congreso Latinoamericano de Ciencia Política - ALACIP 2022

21-23 de julio de 2022 - Organizado por la Asociación Chilena de Ciencia Política (ACCP) en formato 100% online

### 10th CEISAL Congress 2022 in HELSINKI, 13-15 June

Several members of the Forum Europe Cuba Jean Monnet Network participated in [the CEISAL 2022 Congress](#) that took place from 13-15 June 2022 in Helsinki with the theme "Uncertain trajectories: Latin America after globalisation". The tenth edition of the three-day CEISAL (European Council for Social Research in Latin America) International Congress brought together academics and experts from all over the world to share reflections on the future of Latin America. The Europe Cuba Forum contributed to this exchange with the Panel "A Changing Cuba in a Changing World". Three Forum researchers took part: Anna Ayuso, who spoke about Cuba's insertion model in Latin America and the Caribbean; Katarzyna Dembiczy who focused her presentation on the revolution as an inherent aspect of Cuban society; and Bert Hoffmann who presented the implications of Cuba's COVID vaccines on its international insertion.

Anna Ayuso, Bert Hoffmann and Katarzyna Dembiczy during the CEISAL 2022 Congress in Helsinki.



## Publications of the project

### Book of the third thematic block of the project: “Cuba and the European Union. Interregional Cooperation and Global Insertion”.

In March 2022 the [third book](#) published in the framework of the project Foro Europa Cuba Jean Monnet Network on interregional cooperation and Cuba’s global insertion was published. The editors of the book are Susanne Gradius, professor and director of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Faculty of Law of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM) and Raynier Pellón Azopardo, senior researcher at the Centro de Investigaciones de Política Internacional (CIPI) in Havana.

The relationship between Cuba and the EU continues to be conditioned by asymmetries, the different nature of the political and economic systems, the costly strategic calculation imposed by US policy against Cuba, as well as the limitations derived from the global crisis, today aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and international conflicts. The sui generis models of regional and international insertion of Cuba as a socialist country and of the European Union itself as a process of integration under construction represent another particularity of a relationship that has developed gradually, since it was made official in 1988, until the signing of a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement in 2016. The latter made it possible to broaden and deepen cooperation and political, social and economic relations between the two parties. To date, the island has implemented various reforms with the aim of strengthening its international insertion, within a framework of efficiency and in line with its national interests. European and Cuban academics, members of the Europe-Cuba Jean Monnet Network Forum, contribute with this book an interesting analysis of the factors that hinder or enhance Cuba’s insertion in the current international political scenario and the EU’s constructive accompaniment of this process, which takes place within the framework of renewed bilateral, interregional and global cooperation.

This volume is also available in [Spanish](#).

[Consult here](#) all the working papers on interregional cooperation and global insertion.

### New Working Papers on the theme of cooperation for economic reforms and sustainable development

The Europe-Cuba Forum recently published four new working papers written by researchers from the University of Havana. These articles are part of the result of the academic exchange that took place in April 2022 between European and Cuban researchers in the framework of the research stays that took place in Barcelona in concomitance with the third International Seminar of the project.

The working papers are part of the first thematic block on economics and sustainable development. More specifically, the [working paper](#) written by Dr. C. Betsy Anaya and Dr. C. Anicia García, focuses on the strategic importance of the agricultural sector for the Cuban economy with an analysis that aims to investigate the possible consequences for guaranteeing food security on the island.

From a [social policy perspective](#), Dr. Silvia Odriozola Guitart analyses the challenges of social policy in the post-pandemic period and proposes how to address the widening of existing social equity gaps caused by the pandemic, as well as the appearance of new ones, through specific policies aimed at addressing and eliminating them.

Dr. Lázaro Peña Castellanos’ [Working Paper](#) analyses the dynamics of the global model of accumulation in the first two decades of the 21st century: the post-COVID-19 agenda and the “new regionalisation” as a foundation for the elaboration of a development agenda in Latin America. The article also presents some considerations regarding the external insertion of the Cuban economy in the dynamic scenario of the global economy.

Finally, Dr. Vilma Hidalgo de los Santos and Dr. Juan Triana Cordoví’s [article](#) offers an analysis of macroeconomics and growth in the transformation agenda of the Cuban economic model in the post-pandemic period.

All these articles will be collected in the second volume of the block book on economics, edited by the University of Havana and to be published this summer 2022.

## Policy Briefs

In addition to books and academic articles, the project foresees the publication of three policy briefs for each of the thematic blocks: economics, social policies, and regional and global cooperation. These documents, which aim to translate the results of the research into a more informative and politically useful dimension, are already available on the Forum's website.

The first [policy brief](#), corresponding to the thematic block on economics and sustainable development, has been written by Anna Ayuso, Coordinator of the Europe Cuba Forum. In it, Ayuso reviews the state of economic reforms initiated under Raúl Castro's government to promote a more diversified economy, with an increasing role for the private sector, while at the same time opening the door to foreign investment. The achievements of this process have been below expectations, the pace of growth has been slow, with low productivity growth, and a recurrent tendency towards macroeconomic imbalances. The reasons are diverse and include internal and external factors, as well as conjunctural and structural ones. Obviously, the effects of US sanctions, whose embargo has lasted more than six decades and is a burden that conditions Cuba's international insertion, and the recent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on an economy like Cuba's, which is so dependent on tourism, have necessarily been intense. But many of the elements preventing the Cuban economy from taking off are institutional problems and the lack of a favourable incentive framework for economic and social agents.

Bert Hoffmann is the author of the second [Policy Brief](#), which focuses on institutional reforms and social policies in post-COVID Cuba in the framework of an agenda for cooperation.

Cuba and the EU signed the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) in December 2016. In many ways it has been a long six years. Four years of Trump's US administration upended the world and, with respect to Cuba, abruptly cut short the normalisation process initiated under the Obama administration. In its place, the US embargo has been tightened. Moreover, strident rhetoric has returned, both from Republicans in Washington and from the Cuban-American community in Miami, casting long shadows over any idea of dialogue and reconciliation. At the same time, the Cuban economy has gone from bad to worse. The COVID-19 pandemic paralysed international tourism and caused dramatic disruptions in the island's economic and social life. Hopes for greater political tolerance in the post-Castro era have not been fulfilled. When popular

frustration erupted into street protests on 11 July 2021, the state responded with an iron fist. Hundreds of people were tried and sentenced to often draconian jail terms. As air traffic resumed, emigration skyrocketed. Hopes that the Biden administration would return to a policy of engagement have not materialised, although in May 2022 Washington lifted some restrictions on travel, remittances and immigration. Russia's war against Ukraine brings other bad news for the Cuban economy: the cancellation of transatlantic flights from Russia has crippled Russian tourism; rising international prices for grain, energy and other commodities will further aggravate Cuba's foreign exchange crisis; while Russia's capacity for investment, soft loans and assistance will be eroded. All of these issues are addressed in this paper published in June 2022.

Finally, Susanne Gratius and Raynier Pellón present in the [third Policy Brief](#) a diagnosis, challenges and recommendations for the Cuba-EU relationship in the international context. Geopolitical ups and downs have been a key variable for relations between Cuba and the European Union (EU), determining that both actors review their international tactics periodically and in the face of global powers such as the United States (US), China and Russia. Economic, political and cooperation relations between Cuba and the EU are taking place in an international environment of transition towards a new world order, with trends that are sometimes contradictory: a shift of the centre of economic gravity from Europe and the US towards Asia, weakening of international governance, the rise of nationalist positions in the face of global problems, the crisis of multilateralism, greater regional instability and more international conflicts, among others. This is the context of EU-Cuba relations, which is the subject of this policy paper.

Other publications and [documents](#) of interest can be consulted on the project's website.



# FORO

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Jean Monnet Network

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