

## EU has “good impression” of Castro (Mon 28 Mar, 2005)

### WARM-UPS

**CHAT:** Talk in pairs or groups about the EU/ Cuba / Fidel Castro / political prisoners / hijackers / communism / cigars / Che Guevara / global integration / Cuba-US relations...Change topic / partner frequently to increase conversation.

**CUBA BRAINSTORM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word ‘Cuba’. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**CUBAN “I KNOW THAT...”:** Write down five sentences about Cuba or Fidel Castro. Begin each with the sentence starter “I know that in Cuba...”. Examples could be,

- I know that in Cuba people ...
- I know that in Cuba they ...
- I know that in Cuba there is ...
- I know that in Cuba the weather ...
- I know that in Cuba cigars are ...

Use your sentences to start conversations with your partner/group. If you liked this activity, you could repeat it with a Fidel Castro “I know that...” one.

**OPINIONS:** Talk about these with your partner.

- a. Cuba belongs in the “axis of evil”.
- b. Fidel Castro is an enigmatic and wonderful leader.
- c. Cuba is working proof that a country does not have to be capitalist to be successful.
- d. America’s trade embargo on Cuba is totally wrong.
- e. Cuba is not a democratic country. You need more than one party to be democratic.
- f. Castro banned the US dollar in Cuba – that’s funny.
- g. Improved EU-Cuba relations is a sign that Cuba doesn’t need the USA.
- h. Political prisoners, executions and torture mean Castro should go. It’s time for a new leader.
- i. Cuba seems a fascinating place to visit.
- j. Communism is history and Castro is a dinosaur.

## PRE-READING IDEAS

**WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'high' and 'level'.

**TRUE FALSE:** Guess whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. European Union leaders met with Cuban president Fidel Castro. T / F
- b. A meeting took place to re-energize EU-Cuban relations. T / F
- c. The EU visit is the first by high-level European diplomats for twenty-two years. T / F
- d. In 2003 Cuba executed three hijackers and imprisoned 75 political activists. T / F
- e. The EU imposed has lifted all of its sanctions on Cuba. T / F
- f. Cuban human rights is no longer a sticking point with the European Union. T / F
- g. China is currently Cuba's largest trading partner. T / F
- h. Internationally, Cuba is a pariah state. T / F

**SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| (a) commissioner   | top ranking        |
| (b) impression     | bone of contention |
| (c) strengthen     | feeling            |
| (d) high level     | embargo            |
| (e) strained       | solidify           |
| (f) sanctions      | outcast            |
| (g) sticking point | top dog            |
| (h) contradict     | antagonistic       |
| (i) pariah         | negate             |
| (j) hostile        | tense              |

**PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article:

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (a) European Union           | relations                   |
| (b) very good                | point                       |
| (c) re-energize EU-Cuban     | been lifted                 |
| (d) strengthen               | impression                  |
| (e) relations                | Mr. Michel's final analysis |
| (f) the sanctions have since | ties                        |
| (g) a sticking               | state                       |
| (h) Cuba's largest trading   | commissioner                |
| (i) This seems to contradict | partner                     |
| (j) risk becoming a pariah   | were strained               |

## GAP FILL

### EU has “good impression” of Castro

**BNE:** The European Union commissioner Louis Michel has had what he calls “very \_\_\_\_\_” talks with Cuban leader Fidel Castro, saying he had a “very good impression” of Castro. The meeting between the two leaders is to \_\_\_\_\_ EU-Cuban relations and strengthen \_\_\_\_\_ between them. Mr. Michel’s visit is the first by high level European diplomats for two years. Cuba-EU relations were strained in March, 2003 after the EU \_\_\_\_\_ sanctions on Cuba for executing three hijackers and imprisoning 75 political activists. Many of the sanctions have since been \_\_\_\_\_ following the release of 14 of the prisoners. Human rights and Cuba’s remaining political prisoners are still \_\_\_\_\_ points between Europe and Cuba. Although the EU is currently Cuba’s largest trading partner, Mr. Castro has indicated that Venezuela and China are more important to Cuba. This seems to \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Michel’s final analysis that Cuba must choose between closer global integration or risk becoming a \_\_\_\_\_ state. Relations between Cuba and the USA have been frozen, if not openly hostile, since the imposition of a trade embargo in 1961.

*lifted   ties   re-energize   contradict   sticking   imposed   pariah   effective*

### DISCUSSION:

What was interesting in this article?

Were you surprised by anything in this article?

What do you know about Fidel Castro?

What do you know about Che Guevara?

What is your image of Fidel Castro?

What is your image of Cuba?

Would you like to go to Cuba?

Is America too strict with Cuba?

Should Fidel Castro ask America to leave Guantanamo Bay?

Is the EU policy of improving relations with Cuba a good one?

Do you think Cuba belongs in the “axis of evil”?

What is Cuba famous for?

Is it a problem that Cuba is a communist country?

Should America’s trade embargo be lifted?

Is Cuba’s human rights record so bad, compared with its neighbours?

Did you like this discussion?

Teacher / Student additional questions.

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## HOMework

- 1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- 2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information on Fidel Castro. Share your findings with your class next lesson.
- 3. CUBA:** Create a factfile poster on Cuba.
- 4. LETTER TO FIDEL:** Write a letter to Cuban President Fidel Castro telling him what you think about his leadership.

## TEXT

### EU has "good impression" of Castro

**BNE:** The European Union commissioner Louis Michel has had what he calls "very **effective**" talks with Cuban leader Fidel Castro, saying he had a "very good impression" of Castro. The meeting between the two leaders is to **re-energize** EU-Cuban relations and strengthen **ties** between them. Mr. Michel's visit is the first by high level European diplomats for two years. Cuba-EU relations were strained in March, 2003 after the EU **imposed** sanctions on Cuba for executing three hijackers and imprisoning 75 political activists. Many of the sanctions have since been **lifted** following the release of 14 of the prisoners. Human rights and Cuba's remaining political prisoners are still **sticking** points between Europe and Cuba. Although the EU is currently Cuba's largest trading partner, Mr. Castro has indicated that Venezuela and China are more important to Cuba. This seems to **contradict** Mr. Michel's final analysis that Cuba must choose between closer global integration or risk becoming a **pariah** state. Relations between Cuba and the USA have been frozen, if not openly hostile, since the imposition of a trade embargo in 1961.