

IAN DUNCAN

CONSERVATIVE MEP FOR SCOTLAND



President Juncker
European Commission

DATE 06.12.2016.

Dear M. Juncker,

I was deeply troubled by your statement marking the death of Fidel Castro.

Castro may have been a 'hero' for some but for others, particularly those members of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Community of Cuba, he was a homophobic tyrant who abused human rights and degraded human dignity.

The Castro regime declared homosexuality a 'deviation incompatible with the revolution.' Homosexuals were incarcerated without charge or trial and were beaten, degraded and tortured. Many did not emerge from the camps. Even when the camps were closed, the gay community of Cuba suffered abuse under the law. Young men deemed effeminate were forced to undergo aversion therapy to cure them of their perversion. Members of the LGBT community were excluded from university, prohibited from contact with children and young people and lived in fear of persecution. Castro made no apology for any of his systematic abuses of the gay community.

The testimony of gay Cuban author Reinaldo Arenas serves as a reminder of what life in post-revolutionary Cuba was like for those deemed 'socially deviant'. I enclose a copy of his memoir, which I strongly encourage you to read.

As one of the leaders of the EU I ask that you reflect upon your words, and the impression you gave that Fidel Castro was a heroic figure. Heroes do not torture homosexuals, nor degrade the rights of minorities. That is the action of a tyrant, and we should say so.

I write this letter in my personal capacity as a Member of the European Parliament and not as a vice president of the Parliament's LGBTI Intergroup, the leadership of which declined the opportunity to co-sign this letter.

In responding to this letter I ask you to acknowledge the suffering of the gay community of Cuba and recognise that it was the direct result of Fidel Castro and his totalitarian regime. Let us hope that his passing will bring greater freedom to Cuba.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Duncan