

EU and Canada to Fight New US Sanctions on Cuba

By [Telesur](#)

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The European Union (EU) and Canada issued a joint warning against the United States Wednesday after Washington reported that it would enforce Title III of the controversial [Helms-Burton](#) Act, which will permit lawsuits against foreign investments in Cuba.

“The EU and Canada consider the extraterritorial application of unilateral Cuba-related measures contrary to international law,” the EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini and Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said in a statement that was also signed by Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland.

The “Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act,” commonly known as Helms-Burton, was signed on March 12, 1996, during former President Bill Clinton’s administration, with the objective of disrupting foreign investment to the island and accentuating the economic effects of the economic blockade.

Through the application of Title III, U.S. citizens could sue in their country’s courts those persons and entities that conduct business with about 200 state-owned institutions in Cuba that were nationalized after Jan. 1, 1959. However, since the Clinton administration, the U.S. had avoided the implementation of this measure by issuing “temporary” six-month suspensions.

This practice became normalized because the full enforcement of the anti-Cuban law would imply massive damages not only for Cuba but for U.S., Canadian, and mainly European interests, as the bloc is the largest foreign investor on the island and the country’s top export market.

Title III is not any worse than Titles I and II, that are part of the array of actions against all the people of [#Cuba](#). No one is going to take away from us, neither by allurement or by force, “the Homeland the forefathers won us standing”. We Cubans are not surrendering. pic.twitter.com/rtg70vsSvK

— Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez (@DiazCanelB) [April 17, 2019](#)

The EU has argued that the law is illegal under World Trade Organization rules because it affects entities outside U.S. territory. Yet after negotiations with the U.S., a waiver was agreed upon, in 1998, to avoid the act affecting European businesses. In return, the EU dropped a challenge in the WTO to the U.S. legislation.

The waiver ends May 1 and the policy change to allow suits begins on May 2, Secretary of

State Mike Pompeo said. The EU's has threatened to sue at the WTO once again.

Meanwhile, Canadian officials said that the country "will review all options in response to this decision." Its law allows counterclaims to be submitted to any U.S. complaint regarding commercial ties between Cuba and Canada.

This new enactment of sanctions comes now as a bid to pressure Cuba's government for supporting Venezuela. Back in March 2019, the Trump administration already allowed the filing of lawsuits against more than 200 Cuban companies included in a unilateral list of sanctions. While Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Bob Menendez (D-NJ) [presented](#) a bill before the U.S. Congress to prohibit the official recognition and rights of Cuban trademarks in the United States.

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