



Diaspora engagement mapping

CUBA

Facts & figures

Political rights



Dual citizenship^{*1}



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²³



Voting from abroad



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: -
Remittances inflow (USD million): -

Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from the World Bank (2023).

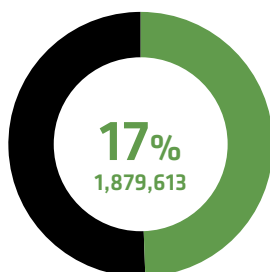
Emigration



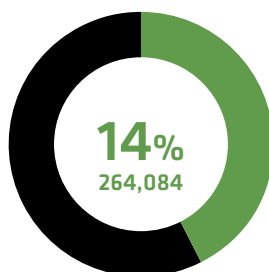
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 49.5%
♀ 50.5%



♂ 42.6%
♀ 57.4%

Top countries of destination



United States of America	1,394,750
Spain	215,409
Mexico	72,440
Italy	41,658
Canada	23,859

1 Article 36 of the 2019 Cuban Constitution amended the law to allow Cubans dual citizenship. However, it stipulates that while in Cuba (temporarily or permanently) they are treated as a Cuban citizen, not a foreign national. [http://www.granma.cu/file/pdf/gaceta/Nueva%20Constituci%C3%B3n%2024%20KB-1.pdf](http://www.granma.cu/file/pdf/gaceta/Nueva%20Constituci%C3%B3n%202024%20KB-1.pdf)

2 <http://www.granma.cu/file/pdf/gaceta/Nueva%20Constituci%C3%B3n%2024%20KB-1.pdf>

3 Comments online are illustrative of permitting voting abroad. However, it is not clear whether this happens in practice. Citizens must have lived in the host country for at least two years, be duly registered in their Municipality (in Cuba) and they have to be registered in the electoral list (in Cuba). <https://twitter.com/SoberonGuzman/status/1085223108305477633>

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2024 ● Laws on citizenship, migration, and foreign residency reaffirm that Cuban citizenship is not automatically lost upon acquiring another nationality, although Cuban citizens must use their Cuban identity exclusively to enter or exit the country. The laws introduce a new category of “effective migratory residence”, distinguishing between those living inside and outside the country, while preserving certain rights (such as property ownership) for those residing abroad. While the legislation aims to strengthen ties with the diaspora, it also establishes that citizenship may be revoked for actions deemed contrary to the interests of the Cuban state when carried out from abroad. Additionally, the laws allow for restrictions on entry and exit based on “public interest”.

➤ Trends

In consequence, to new migration flows from Cuba to destinations like Spain or Latin American countries, as of 2018 the government of Cuba has started to promote engagement with Cubans abroad. For example, it has stated the importance of Cubans abroad as a pillar of defence and it has organised a national event in April 2020 to bring back Cubans living in the diaspora.⁴

Medical tourism is one area of diaspora engagement. Cuba markets itself as a destination for medical tourism by offering high-quality medical infrastructure, expertise, and services at competitive prices. It has strong medical tourism campaigns that raise awareness among and seek support from diaspora members regarding medical services. As a result, many diaspora members have invested, volunteered, or made philanthropic contributions to the medical sectors in Cuba.⁵ In May 2023, the government celebrated 60 years of international medical collaboration, highlighting the participation of more than 605,000 Cuban health workers in 165 countries. During the event, significant achievements were highlighted, such as Operation Miracle that restored sight to more than three million people, the response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, and the current work in 57 countries with some 22,400 collaborators, 54% of whom are women.

In May 2023, the Cuban government announced new migration measures to benefit Cubans living in Cuba and abroad, as well as to strengthen family ties. These measures include extending passport validity to ten years, equalising the length of stay in Cuba for residents abroad and their foreign relatives, and establishing specific requirements for those who emigrated before 1971. These measures are seen as a response to attract a vital influx of foreign exchange from the Cuban diaspora, especially Cuban-Americans, in the midst of the economic crisis on the island.⁶

In the same vein, in July 2024, new laws on citizenship, migration, and foreign residency were approved, aimed at modernising the legal framework and strengthening ties with Cubans living abroad. Among the most notable provisions, the legislation confirms that Cuban citizenship is not lost upon acquiring another nationality, introduces the category of effective migratory residence, and upholds key rights (such as property ownership in Cuba) for those residing overseas. These reforms provide a more flexible framework for the relationship between the state and its diaspora, although they have also sparked debate due to the inclusion of discretionary restrictions on entering and leaving the national territory.⁷

4 <http://misiones.minrex.gob.cu/es/articulo/los-cubanos-residentes-en-el-exterior-constituyen-un-importante-pilar-en-la-defensa-de-la-1>

5 https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/diaspora_handbook_en_for_web_28may2013.pdf

6 <https://cubaminrex.cu/es/declaracion-del-director-general-de-asuntos-consulares-y-de-atencion-cubanos-residentes-en-el-https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/por-que-cuba-aplica-ahora-medidas-migratorias-largamente-esperadas-por-la-diaspora-/7160199.html>

7 <https://periodismodebarrio.org/2024/08/que-disponen-las-nuevas-leyes-de-ciudadania-migracion-y-extranjeria/>



Achievements

The government of Cuba involved Cubans abroad in drafting the 2018 constitutional reform. A section was enabled on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX) website so that all Cubans abroad could access an online form to send proposals for modifications or comments about the constitution.⁸

This initiative was repeated in 2022, when the government carried out a consultation with Cubans abroad on the reform of the Family Code, resulting in the participation of 26,740 members of the diaspora.⁹

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment is giving the opportunity for Cuban diaspora members to invest in local projects. Cubans from abroad are encouraged to invest in small and medium businesses in the tourism, agriculture and energy sectors among others.¹⁰

Along these lines, the II Cuba Business Forum was organised in 2021, which included a special panel on investment opportunities for Cubans living outside the island.¹¹



Obstacles

- **Low priority:** Cuba has a lower level of institutionalisation of diaspora policies than may be expected based on the importance of its diaspora and considering most of the country's challenges involve Cuba's political system and the international community's relationship with it.¹²
- **Trust:** The diaspora has little trust in the Cuban government, particularly those that exited voluntarily following the regime change which was opposed by groups who then fled into exile. A perception of pervasive corruption and ineffective governance at home can impede the ability to build trust.¹³ The significant political discrepancy between the government and the diaspora also means that government effectiveness deteriorates when it comes to possible cooperation with the diaspora.¹⁴
- **Remittances:** In addition to Cuban policy, U.S. laws bring challenges to sending remittances. In 2019, the Trump Administration changed policies to increase pressure on the Cuban government for its violations of human rights. For example, The Treasury Department eliminated donation remittances, a category that allowed Americans to send money to friends or organizations in Cuba.¹⁵

8 <http://misiones.minrex.gob.cu/es/articulo/cubanos-residentes-en-el-exterior-participaran-en-debate-del-proyecto-de-constitucion-2>

9 <https://cubaminrex.cu/es/concluyo-la-consulta-sobre-el-codigo-de-las-familias-los-cubanos-en-el-exterior>

10 <https://www.macaubusiness.com/cuba-authorizes-emigrants-to-invest-in-small-projects/>

11 <https://kuba.ahk.de/es/actualidades/detalles-de-las-novedades/zufriedene-bilanz-des-ii-wirtschaftsforums>

12 https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/diaspora_handbook_en_for_web_28may2013.pdf

13 https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/diaspora_handbook_en_for_web_28may2013.pdf

14 Soltész, Béla. "Migration and Diaspora Policy Institutions in Latin America." *Demográfia English Edition*, vol. 59, no. 5, 2017, doi:10.21543/dee.2016.2.

15 <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article234796257.html>



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There are no diaspora-engagement initiatives involving government authorities, development agencies, or the private sector, including on remittances.

Meeting of Cubans living in Europe (“Encuentro de cubanos residentes en Europa”) 2022

NETWORKING

Organised by Cuban diaspora groups and sponsored by the Directorate General of Consular Affairs and Attention to Cubans Living Abroad of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this meeting brought together in Berlin various members of the Cuban diaspora living in Europe. The event allowed participants to share and get to know each other in working group discussions and in plenary sessions dealing with issues of relevance to the diaspora. The exchanges underlined the love for the homeland and the willingness to accompany it in its socio-economic life, to participate actively in its society and to strengthen links with embassies and consulates.

IV Conference The Nation and Emigration (“IV Conferencia La Nación y la Emigración) 2023

NETWORKING

After being postponed several times due to the pandemic, in November 2023 the Nation and Emigration Conference was held in Havana. It brought together more than 300 Cuban delegates living abroad to discuss strategies for greater engagement with the homeland and to generate concrete actions that contribute to Cuba's economic development. The participants stressed the importance of overcoming the blockade imposed by the United States and expressed their commitment to support their country of origin through various solidarity initiatives and collaborative projects.¹⁶ Following the commitments made during the Conference, the first “Cubanos TIC”¹⁷ Business Forum was held in October 2024, organised by MINCOM and MINREX. This virtual event brought together participants from over 30 countries to promote collaboration in digital transformation, innovation, and technological entrepreneurship, highlighting the active role of the diaspora in advancing Cuba's digital development.

¹⁶ <https://cubaminrex.cu/es/los-cubanos-residentes-en-el-exterior-junto-su-patria>

¹⁷ <http://www.cubadebate.cu/noticias/2024/10/09/cuba-celebra-su-primer-foro-empresarial-cubanos-tic-para-impulsar-la-digitalizacion/>

Annex:

List of Actors

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 430+ institutions](#)

Diaspora related institutions

- **At national level**
 - At sub-ministerial level i.e. agency, committee, departments



Consular Policy Division

This entity is entrusted with managing consular affairs of Cubans living abroad.

Division of Migration Policy and Cuban Residents Abroad

A newly created entity operating since 2018 with the purpose to extend other services to Cubans abroad. Its approach is to promote Cuba's culture among its diaspora. It has scheduled a conference in 2020.¹⁸

Diaspora organisations in Europe

Read more about diaspora organisations in "[Starting guide: What is a diaspora organisation](#)"

Asociación cubana extremeña. ASCUEX Spain

An association that attends to Cuban immigrants, helping them to insert themselves into Spanish society and creating a space for entertainment and recreation among all Cubans. Spanish citizens who are interested in Cuban history and culture can also be part of the organisation.

Asociación de Cubanos Italy

The association is based in Italy and develops cultural events and activities, commercial and recreational. It creates partnerships with other Italian associations and groups and works to strengthen its bond with the country and institutions. The association also develops joint actions with political, religious and social workers and undertakes actions to transmit culture to generations born outside the island, preserving and promoting the most authentic of their roots.

Asociación de cubanos residentes en Andalucía. Tocatoro Spain

The association of Cubans living in Andalusia, Tocatoro is a non-profit organisation promoting cultural exchange between Cuba and Andalusia. It is composed mainly of Cubans, their families and friends from Cuba.

Comuna Cuba (Spain)

Organisation focused on sharing Cuban culture in Spain.

¹⁸ <http://www.nacionyemigracion.cu/content/daccre>

Federación de asociaciones de cubanos residentes en España Spain

Coordination platform for the purpose of sharing a common culture and ideology.

La Mesa de la Unidad Cubana (MUC) Spain

An association based in Spain that has among its objectives to mobilise Spanish and European public opinion, governments and EU institutions to advocate for freedoms and rights in Cuba. This appears to be more for Cubans in exile and those based in Spain.

Observatoria Cubano de Derechos Humanos Spain

The Spain-based organisation provides humanitarian, social, medical and integration support to Cuban political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, whether released or in prison and contributes to the transformation of Cuba into a social and democratic State based on the rule of law.

Trans-Fusion Spain

The organisation is based in Spain and aims to serve as a bridge to fuse cultures in all directions, transcending any kind of barriers in pursuit of a common good: to share culture with mutual respect, by understanding each other's values and the creativity of the human being regardless of race, social, economic or political condition.

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