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*Plenary sitting*

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16.12.2014

B8-0376/2014

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela  
(2014/2998(RSP))

**Josef Weidenholzer, Francisco Assis, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, Enrico Gasbarra, Krystyna Łybacka, Alessia Maria Mosca, Nicola Danti, Javi López, Nicola Caputo, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Andi Cristea, Miroslav Poche, Carlos Zorrinho, Marc Tarabella, Marlene Mizzi, Miriam Dalli, Kashetu Kyenge, Doru-Claudian Frunzulică**  
on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on Persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela  
(2014/2998(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its Resolution of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Venezuela,
  - having regard to the press statements of the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton of 28 March 2014 and 15 April 2014 on the situation in Venezuela,
  - having regard the opinion of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions of the Commission on Human Rights of the General Assembly of the United Nations, of 26 August 2014,
  - having regard to the Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 20 October 2014 on the detention of protesters and politicians in Venezuela,
  - having regard to the Inter-regional Framework Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Mercosur concluded in 1999,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Venezuela is a party,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
  - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas following Venezuela's 2013 presidential elections, street protests broke out in February 2014;
- B. whereas 43 people were killed, 1,095 wounded and 3,337 arrested;
- C. whereas, most of the protesters arrested were released but a total of 69 people remain in prison by December 2014 and are facing trials for alleged involvement in the protests;
- D. whereas, leading opposition figures, are under investigation by the Venezuelan authorities;
- E. whereas freedom of expression and the right to take part in peaceful demonstrations are the cornerstones of democracy; whereas equality and justice for all are impossible without respect for the fundamental freedoms and rights of every citizen;
- F. whereas only respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, constructive and respectful dialogue conducted in a spirit of tolerance can help the country emerge from this serious crisis and overcome future difficulties;

- G. whereas in April 2014 a negotiation about the protests, between the government and the opposition, called "Mesa de Dialogo", was initiated and unfortunately interrupted a month later without any success;
- H. whereas Venezuela was elected to the UN Security Council in October 2014;
- I. whereas Venezuela has joined the regional bloc Mercosur in January 2012;
- J. whereas the EU is negotiating a regional Association Agreement with Mercosur which covers a political, a trade and a cooperation pillar;
- K. whereas an annual exchange between the EU and Venezuelan Human Rights Defenders was organized by the EU in Caracas in June 2014;
- L. whereas the EU is funding a wide range of projects with the Venezuelan government and NGOs with the aim of strengthening human rights and democracy, notably under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights;
1. Calls for an end to the violence and for dialogue across the entire political spectrum to guarantee public safety and protection, together with a return to calm and normality;
  2. Calls on the Venezuelan government to ensure that people are not penalised for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and to freedom of expression;
  3. Expresses its concern at the possibility that new protests may lead to more acts of violence which would only deepen the gulf between the positions of the government and the opposition and polarise to an even greater degree the sensitive political developments that are taking place in Venezuela; calls on the representatives of all parties and sections of Venezuelan society to remain calm in both actions and words;
  4. Welcomes the release of most of the protesters arrested and calls on the Venezuelan Government to release all others that have been arbitrarily detained; calls on the Venezuelan authorities to withdraw the unfounded accusations and arrest warrants against opposition leaders;
  5. Calls on the Venezuelan Government to comply with its own constitution and international obligations in respect to the independence of judiciary, the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, as well as political pluralism, which are cornerstones of democracy;
  6. Encourages all parties, to pursue peaceful dialogue, reaching out to all segments of Venezuelan society in order to define points of convergence and to allow political actors to discuss the most serious problems facing the country;
  7. Recalls that respect for the principle of separation of powers is fundamental in a democracy and that the justice system cannot be used as a political weapon; calls on the

Venezuelan authorities to ensure the security of all citizens in the country, regardless of their political views and affiliations;

8. Invites the Venezuelan authorities to investigate the accusations of assassination against President Maduro;
9. Calls on the Venezuelan Government to respect human rights and to conduct effective investigations into alleged human rights violations; and to enable an environment for human rights defenders and independent non-governmental organizations to carry out their legitimate work in promoting human rights and democracy;
10. Calls for regional efforts to be made, in particular with the assistance of the foreign ministers of UNASUR, to facilitate a dialogue between all parties;
11. Regrets the absence of a formal bilateral dialogue between the EU and the Venezuelan Government, and encourages further *ad hoc* discussions on human rights during meetings between the EU Delegation, Member State embassies and the Venezuelan authorities;
12. Regrets the lack of progress in the negotiation of the Association Agreement between the EU and Mercosur and invites both parts to launch a new round of negotiations and strengthen the political and human rights dialogue clause;
13. Asks the EEAS and the EU Delegation, as well as the Member States Delegations, to continue to observe the investigations and the trial hearings of opposition leaders;
14. Invites the EU to continue funding projects with an aim of strengthening human rights and democracy, notably under the EIDHR;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and National Assembly of the Republic of Venezuela, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States.