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Plenary sitting

9.3.2015

B8-0243/2015

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Venezuela
(2015/2582(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Venezuela
(2015/2582(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Chapter 1, Article 1(2) of the UN Charter of 1945, with its stated purpose ‘to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace’,
- having regard to Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which state that ‘all peoples have the right of self-determination’ and that ‘by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development’,
- having regard to the declaration of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of CELAC (the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) and the EU of 27 January 2013, in which the signatories reaffirmed their commitment to all the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and their support for all efforts to uphold sovereign equality of all states and to respect their territorial integrity and political independence,
- having regard to the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, agreed at the Second CELAC Summit held in Havana on 28 and 29 January 2014,
- having regard to the principle of non-intervention laid down in the UN Charter,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the election of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as a member of the UN Human Rights Council and to the conclusions of the last Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review on Venezuela,
- having regard to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961,
- having regard to the statement of 7 March 2015 by the Secretary-General of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) following the UNASUR visit to Venezuela,
- having regard to the statements on the situation in Venezuela by Mercosur, UNASUR and CELAC, and in particular to Mercosur’s and CELAC’s declarations of rejection of the US’s unilateral coercive measures against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela,
- having regard to the statements on Venezuela by the Argentinian Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel and by Pope Francis,

- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy on Venezuela, in particular the most recent statement by her spokesperson, of 24 February 2015,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Venezuela, in particular those of 24 May 2007¹, 23 October 2008², 7 May 2009³, 11 February 2010⁴, 8 July 2010⁵, 24 May 2012⁶, 27 February 2014⁷ and 18 December 2014⁸,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas an economic war has been waged by some sectors in Venezuela for the last months through price rises, smuggled goods and stockpiling activities; whereas the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has denounced ‘Operation Jericho’, i.e. the latest attempt at a coup against the democratically elected government, planned for 12 February 2014 by the far-right opposition and funded and backed by the US Government with the support of a number of top Venezuelan military officials;
 - B. whereas according to information provided by the Venezuelan Government, the attempted coup was based on a four-stage plan to oust President Maduro, beginning with economic warfare and finishing with a violent military uprising using Tucano warplanes to bomb strategic targets including key government headquarters such as the Presidential Palace and the defence ministry and the Telesur television channel; this was planned to take place after the publication of a manifesto calling for a ‘transition’ and demanding the formation of a provisional government; whereas this manifesto was signed by opposition leaders including Antonio Ledezma, María Corina Machado and Leopoldo López;
 - C. whereas this ‘100-day Plan for Transition’ would have included a series of measures to be implemented by the junta which would have been put in place, including a call for early elections, privatisation of all public services and the intervention of the IMF, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank in the Venezuelan economy;
 - D. whereas President Maduro has announced further revelations for the following weeks, and has said that he will present evidence to the Summit of the Americas to be held in April 2015 in Panama; whereas the opposition leaders have been urged to refrain from armed struggle and to respect the Venezuelan Constitution;
 - E. whereas the Caracas Metropolitan Mayor, Antonio Ledezma, has been arrested following a warrant issued by the Attorney-General’s Office and charged with conspiracy and association with criminal intent for his alleged involvement in the plot; whereas both crimes are defined and penalised under the Venezuelan Criminal Code

¹ OJ C 120E, 24.4.2008, p. 484.

² OJ C 15E, 21.1.2010, p. 85.

³ OJ C 212E, 5.8.2010, p. 113.

⁴ OJ C 341E, 16.12.2010, p. 69.

⁵ OJ C 351E, 2.12.2011, p. 130.

⁶ OJ C 264E, 13.9.2013, p. 88.

⁷ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0176.

⁸ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0106.

and the Organic Law against Organised Crime and Terrorist Financing;

- F. whereas following the violence in Táchira state, a 14 year-old boy, Kluivert Roa, was shot dead on 24 February 2015; whereas the police officer allegedly responsible for the killing was arrested within 24 hours and is being prosecuted;
- G. whereas in December 2014 US President Barack Obama announced a bill imposing sanctions on Venezuela; whereas all 33 Latin America and Caribbean nations have condemned and rejected these unilateral sanctions imposed by the US on Venezuela; whereas the Government of Venezuela has reacted by announcing a set of measures in implementation of articles of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations;
- H. whereas one of the components of the ongoing destabilisation in Venezuela has been, and continues to be, the multi-million dollar funding of anti-government organisations and political parties which has been going on for over 12 years on the part of US agencies such as USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy; whereas President Obama has recently authorised a special fund to the sum of USD 5.5 million to finance anti-government groups in Venezuela through the State Department;
- I. whereas in February 2014 the plan known as ‘La Salida’ (‘The Exit’) was launched, with a demonstration organised by students following a call by right-wing and extreme-right political parties, which turned into violence that continued for several months with the clear aim of destabilising the democratically elected government of Venezuela; whereas between February and June 2014, 43 people were killed and 878 wounded; whereas this strategy was not new, as the scenario is similar to that of the coup of 2002 and the violence which followed the democratic election of President Nicolás Maduro in April 2013; whereas opposition leaders refused then to recognise the election results and have repeatedly boosted violence; whereas on the night of the elections 11 Venezuelans, including 2 children, died following attacks on the Bolivarian celebrations;
- J. whereas the ‘Comité de Víctimas de la Guarimba y el Golpe Continuo’ (Committee of Victims of Road Barricades and the Continued Coup d’État), formed by victims of the violence and their relatives, has called on the international community to refrain from political instrumentalisation of human rights and not to cooperate with Venezuelan political actors who try to silence or manipulate the violence and hate suffered by Venezuela since February 2014; whereas the relatives of the victims have asked for those responsible to be prosecuted and called for an end to impunity for the human rights violations promoted in the country;
- K. whereas the UNASUR fact-finding delegation formed by the UNASUR Secretary-General, the former Colombian President Ernesto Samper and the Brazilian, Ecuadorian and Colombian Ministers of Foreign Affairs visited the country on 6 and 7 March 2015 in order to support peace efforts; whereas during this visit Mr Samper reiterated the position of UNASUR, which ‘is in the Letter of the Constitution and has been endorsed in the Democratic Clause of the Treaty’ and ‘is absolutely clear and conclusive in noting that any destabilisation effort that takes place in a democracy or any attempt to destabilise a government will meet with unanimous rejection by the countries of UNASUR’; whereas the spokesperson of the right-wing party ‘Mesa de Unidad Democrática’ (Democratic Unity Platform), Jesús ‘Chuo’ Torrealba, described the

UNASUR visit as an act of provocation against the Venezuelan opposition; whereas already in March 2014 a UNASUR ministerial mission had visited Venezuela in support of an inclusive dialogue, and in April 2014 meetings between the government, the opposition, students' organisations, trade unions, business figures and religious groups took place with the mediation of UNASUR and the Vatican;

- L. whereas UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has expressed support for the visit of the UNASUR delegation to Venezuela; whereas the EU Vice-President / High Representative has recently welcomed initiatives by UNASUR and Venezuela's regional partners in support of mediation in the country;
- M. whereas Pope Francis has urged Venezuela to return to a common path for the sake of the nation, by reopening spaces of understanding and sincere constructive dialogue;
- N. whereas a majority of national and international media are presenting the situation in Venezuela one-sidedly; whereas the manipulation of information, in particular via social networks, is spreading rumours and fake images taken in Syria, Chile, Egypt, Spain and Singapore as if they were from Venezuela;
- O. whereas Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel has called for the defence of democracy in Venezuela against attempts to destabilise the government, warning that coup attempts are advancing via new methodologies in Latin America and denouncing the corporate media multinationals such as CNN and Fox News that are broadcasting war propaganda in the name of peace and hatred in the name of freedom;
- P. whereas 19 different elections have taken place in Venezuela in the last 14 years; whereas, despite democratic elections, part of the opposition refuses to recognise the government's legitimacy; whereas the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela includes mechanisms of participative democracy, such as the provision for a referendum revoking the President's mandate; whereas legislative elections are due to take place this year;
- Q. whereas the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been elected with broad support as a member of the UN Human Rights Council; whereas Venezuela has accepted 97 % of the recommendations of the last Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, of 2011; whereas 80 % of the recommendations were directly applicable and the Venezuelan state has committed itself to implementation of the other accepted recommendations; whereas Venezuela was also elected in October 2014 to one of the five rotating seats on the UN Security Council for the period 2015-2016, with 181 votes in favour out of 193 UN members; whereas on 6 and 7 November 2014 the Venezuelan state appeared before the UN Committee against Torture, which scrutinised the state's compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- R. whereas between 2006 and 2013 Venezuela moved up thirteen places, to 67th place out of 187, in the UN Human Development Index; whereas over the last decade the Government of Venezuela has increased social expenditure by more than 60.6 %; whereas Venezuela is today the country with the lowest inequality rate in the region;

- S. whereas according to CEPAL (the UN Economic Commission for Latin America), Venezuela has significantly reduced its poverty rate and increased life expectancy; whereas the level of extreme poverty fell to a record low of 5.4 % in 2015, as compared to 21 % in 1998; whereas the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has congratulated the Venezuelan Government for significantly reducing the number of people suffering from malnutrition, thus complying with one of the UN's Millennium Development Goals;
- T. whereas Venezuela is the world's fifth-largest oil-exporting country and has the world's largest proven oil reserves; whereas, according to the draft budget for 2015, 38 % of public expenditure will be devoted to social investment, including in education, housing and urban development, healthcare, social security, culture, communications and science and technology, amounting to 8.2 % of Venezuela's GDP;
1. Strongly condemns the latest coup attempt and related violence by right-wing and extreme-right opposition groups in Venezuela; deplores the permanent destabilisation campaign against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela through violent acts occurring in a framework similar to that of the previous coup attempt of 2002;
 2. Deeply regrets the loss of lives, and extends its condolences to the families of the victims; calls for those responsible for committing or inciting the crimes concerned to be held accountable for their acts; expresses its respect for the judicial system of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and therefore rejects any interference in the ongoing judicial proceedings at national level;
 3. Regrets the coup track record of some members of the opposition, such as Antonio Ledezma, María Corina Machado and Leopoldo López, who have on previous occasions placed themselves outside the democratic framework by attempting to break the Venezuelan constitutional order;
 4. Recalls its full respect for the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of states in accordance with international law; deeply deplores any interference by the EU or any country in the internal affairs of third countries; in this line, deplores the decision of the US to impose sanctions against Venezuela;
 5. Reiterates its full support for and solidarity with the Venezuelan people, the Bolivarian process and the elected President Nicolás Maduro; rejects all attacks on Venezuelan democracy and sovereignty;
 6. Denounces the undemocratic and insurgent aims of the destabilisation campaign; highlights the imperialist interest of the US in ensuring its access to Venezuela's oil resources and its political aim of undermining the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA);
 7. Endorses the principles contained in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, and urges the entire international community to fully respect this proclamation in its relations with CELAC countries, including a commitment not to intervene directly or indirectly in the internal affairs of any other

state and to observe the principles of national sovereignty, equal rights and the self-determination of peoples;

8. Stresses that dialogue with third countries should not under any circumstances result in restrictions being imposed on the right of peoples to self-determination; deplores the fact that the EU and its Member States too often give priority to diplomatic, political or economic considerations over human rights, an approach which, moreover, gives rise to a policy characterised by double standards, which is at odds with a universal vision of human rights; denounces the spurious utilisation of human rights for political ends by the European Parliament, in particular in the case of Venezuela; recalls that this is Parliament's ninth resolution on this country since 2007, most of them tabled in the run-up to elections or simultaneously with a destabilisation process;
9. Deplores the role played by a majority of international media in spreading rumours and using fake images with the aim of generating an atmosphere of violence and destabilisation that undermines the Venezuelan Government; recalls that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and calls on the international media to act responsibly and to cover events in a fair, accurate and balanced manner, which is not currently the case;
10. Welcomes the implementation of policies of social inclusion in Venezuela based on social responsibility and justice, equality, solidarity and human rights, which has helped to reduce inequality in the country, in particular in terms of social development measures and the significant progress made in the reduction of poverty or in the area of education, including the eradication of illiteracy in 2005 and the multiplication of the number of higher education students;
11. Recalls the importance of Venezuela's role in the creation and strengthening of a cooperation and integration process for the benefit of the peoples of Latin America; underlines the significant progress made in regional integration and cooperation in favour of the peoples of Latin America; welcomes the significant achievements of ALBA and CELAC in the fields of health, education, culture and financial integration;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Mercosur Parliament, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, and the Latin American regional bodies including UNASUR, ALBA and CELAC.