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Plenary sitting

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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))

Francisco Assis, Victor Boştinaru, Carlos Zorrinho, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, Elena Valenciano, Nicola Caputo, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, José Blanco López, Victor Negrescu, Viorica Dăncilă, Marlene Mizzi, Tanja Fajon, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Alessia Maria Mosca, Goffredo Maria Bettini, Andi Cristea, Tonino Picula, Sorin Moisă, Zigmantas Balčytis
on behalf of the S&D Group

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 18 December 2014 on the persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Venezuela²,
- having regard to the press statements of the spokesperson of EU High Representative Federica Mogherini of 24 February 2015 on the arrest of the Mayor of Caracas, Antonio Ledezma, and the situation in Venezuela,
- having regard to the statement by the spokesman of the UN Secretary-General of 26 February 2015 on the situation in Venezuela,
- having regard to the press release of the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States (OAS) of 20 February 2015 on the detention of the Mayor of Caracas,
- having regard to the statement by the Secretary-General of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) of 25 February 2015 on the situation in Venezuela and on the death of the 14-year-old schoolboy Kluivert Roa,
- having regard to the press statements of the spokesperson of former EU High Representative Catherine Ashton of 28 March 2014 and 15 April 2014 on the situation in Venezuela,
- having regard to the opinion of the UN Human Rights Council's Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions 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 Interregional 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 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0106.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0176.

- A. whereas, following the detention of democratically elected politicians, the removal of legislative immunity from National Assembly members and the continued imprisonment of leading opposition figures since February 2014, street protests have broken out in Venezuela;
- B. whereas at least 44 people have been killed since February 2014, including a 14-year-old schoolboy;
- C. whereas, following the anti-government protests of February 2014, most of the protesters arrested were released but a total of 83 people were still in prison in February 2015 and are currently facing trial for alleged involvement in the protests;
- D. 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;
- E. whereas only respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, and constructive and respectful dialogue conducted in a spirit of tolerance can help the country emerge from this serious crisis and overcome future difficulties;
- F. whereas the ‘Mesa de Dialogo’ (dialogue table), between the government and the opposition, was initiated and unfortunately interrupted without success;
- G. whereas Venezuela was elected to the UN Security Council in October 2014;
- H. whereas Venezuela joined the Mercosur regional bloc in January 2012;
- I. whereas Venezuela has signed the Additional Protocol to the Constitutive Treaty of UNASUR on Commitment to Democracy and, furthermore, endorsed the protocols on commitment to democracy and the promotion and protection of human rights when it became a full member of Mercosur;
- J. whereas the EU is negotiating a regional Association Agreement with Mercosur, which comprises a political pillar, a trade pillar and a cooperation pillar;
- K. whereas an annual exchange between the EU and Venezuelan Human Rights Defenders was organised 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, in particular under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights;
- M. expressing its sincere condolences to the families of the protesters who lost their lives, and wishes the numerous wounded a rapid recovery;
- 1. Calls on the Venezuelan authorities immediately to release the democratically elected Mayor of Caracas, Antonio Ledezma, who is being detained in a military prison;
- 2. Calls on the Venezuelan Government to release all other political protesters and opposition leaders who have been detained in military prisons, where they are being

- kept incommunicado; calls on the Venezuelan authorities to withdraw the politically motivated accusations and arrest warrants against opposition leaders;
3. Calls for an end to the violence, which is causing a spiral of polarisation, and for dialogue across the entire political spectrum to guarantee public safety and protection, together with a return to calm and normality;
 4. Calls on the Venezuelan Government to ensure that people are not penalised for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression; calls on the government to revoke the recently published Resolution 008610, which allows security forces to use potentially lethal force, with a firearm or another potentially lethal weapon, to subdue civilian protests, overriding Article 68 of the Venezuelan Constitution;
 5. Expresses its concern at the possibility of new protests leading 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;
 6. Urges the Venezuelan Government to maintain the conditions for the country to hold parliamentary elections in 2015, in accordance with the envisaged timetable; calls on the opposition parties to keep political struggle within the bounds of constitutional order, resisting any pressure to radicalise their actions;
 7. Calls on the Venezuelan Government to comply with its own constitution and international obligations in respect of the independence of the judiciary, the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and political pluralism, which are cornerstones of democracy;
 8. Calls on the Venezuelan Government to uphold the conventions and protocols on human rights which it has ratified or endorsed as a full member of UNASUR and Mercosur;
 9. Calls on the Venezuelan Government to reconsider the decision it took in 2013 to withdraw from the American Convention on Human Rights, and to take the necessary steps to return to the convention;
 10. Encourages all parties to pursue peaceful dialogue, reaching out to all sections of Venezuelan society in order to identify points of convergence and to allow political actors to discuss the most serious problems facing the country;
 11. 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;
 12. Calls on the Venezuelan authorities to ensure that accusations of alleged coup plots against the government are investigated, with due respect for the principle of

presumption of innocence and impartiality;

13. Calls on the Venezuelan Government to respect human rights, conduct effective investigations into alleged human rights violations, and create an environment in which human rights defenders and independent non-governmental organisations can carry out their legitimate work in promoting human rights and democracy;
14. Calls for efforts to be made at regional level to facilitate dialogue between all parties, in particular with the assistance of the Organisation of American States and a contribution from fellow member states of Mercosur;
15. Regrets the failure of the recent efforts of the UNASUR Secretary-General to relaunch the dialogue between the government and members of the opposition, which was initiated in April 2014 to help the country overcome its current challenges and guarantee the human rights of all Venezuelans;
16. Is concerned at the fact that, in an election year, the political opposition has been a victim of arbitrary detention and attacks, which may call into question both the legitimacy and the outcome of the electoral process;
17. Calls on the Government of Venezuela to strictly guarantee maximum neutrality and transparency in the rules of the democratic process in order to enable political parties and all candidates to participate and run their electoral campaigns on an equal footing;
18. Calls on the more influential neighbouring countries to facilitate the dialogue between the opposition and the government, resolve pending human rights cases and guarantee full respect for democratic rules in the forthcoming elections;
19. 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;
20. 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;
21. Asks the EEAS, the EU Delegation and the Member State delegations to continue to observe the investigations and the trial hearings of opposition leaders;
22. Calls for the EU to continue funding projects with the aim of strengthening human rights and democracy, in particular under the EIDHR;
23. Stresses that Parliament should send a delegation to the region to gather fresh information regarding the situation there, and is confident that the delegation will be able to carry out its mission unobstructed and on schedule;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security

Policy, the Council, the Commission, 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.