



Plenary sitting

B8-0725/2016

1.6.2016

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
(2016/2699(RSP))

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Ignazio Corrao, Isabella Adinolfi, Rolandas Paksas
on behalf of the EFDD Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Venezuela
(2016/2699(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the statement of 5 January 2016 by the EEAS Spokesperson on the inauguration of the new National Assembly of Venezuela,
 - having regard to the Inter-American Democratic Charter,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the Constitution of Venezuela, and in particular Articles 72 and 233 thereof,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Venezuela’s worsening economic crisis coupled with a political standoff between the government and the newly elected parliament has become a full-blown crisis with levels of discontent and violence increasing throughout the country;
- B. whereas, despite having the largest oil reserves in the world, Venezuela is on the verge of economic breakdown owing to the collapse of the economy in recent years and skyrocketing inflation; whereas the situation is particularly dire for the population as there is a severe shortage of basic necessities such as food and medicines, and electricity has also been rationed;
- C. whereas the already critical situation has been exacerbated by plummeting oil prices and by the country’s worst drought since 1969;
- D. whereas the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), a centre-right opposition party, won the legislative elections of 6 December 2015 with a two-thirds majority that would allow them to make changes to the constitution;
- E. whereas, on 2 May 2016, MUD deposited a petition containing 1.85 million signatures, well above the 200 000 signatures required by the constitution, calling for a recall referendum to remove the sitting President, Nicolás Maduro; whereas the government is opposed to the referendum;
- F. whereas the recall referendum is a three-stage process; whereas after complying with the first stage of the petition process, the opposition is waiting for the National Electoral Council (CNE) to provide the necessary documents to proceed to the second stage in which signatures from 20 % of the population would be required; whereas the CNE denounced irregularities in the collection of signatures;
- G. whereas, on 18 May 2016, the Venezuelan opposition organised a march in Caracas in support of the recall referendum, calling on the CNE not to stall the referendum process deliberately; whereas several incidents occurred when the Venezuelan National Guard

used tear gas in confrontations with protesters; whereas there were no reported casualties;

- H. whereas, on 13 May 2016, President Maduro issued a decree imposing a 60-day state of emergency; whereas, despite opposition protests, the Venezuelan Supreme Court has ruled that such a state of emergency is constitutional because of the ‘extraordinary social, economic, political, natural and ecological circumstances that are gravely affecting the national economy’;
 - I. whereas measures adopted by the government allow armed forces and local committees to distribute and sell food and to cut the working week in the private sector – a measure already taken in the public sector – in a bid to tackle the electricity crisis; whereas the new measures also allow the government to take control of basic goods and services;
 - J. whereas several companies have halted their activities in Venezuela as result of the economic situation; whereas President Maduro has threatened to nationalise businesses which halt operations;
 - K. whereas, on 28 May 2016, Venezuela’s opposition and top government officials met under the auspices of the Union of South American Nations, in the presence of a group of mediators in order to lay the groundwork for a dialogue; whereas there have been reports that there was no direct contact between the government and the opposition as the dialogue was conducted through the mediators;
 - L. whereas, on 31 May 2016, the Organization of American States (OAS) invoked its democratic charter to review the political situation in Venezuela at a meeting of its Permanent Council in which it will ‘address the break of the constitutional order and grave affect on the democratic order in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’;
1. Stands by the Venezuelan people in these difficult moments; reminds all political actors that in the face of the worsening economic crisis their first responsibility is to their people and to protect their well-being;
 2. Urges the government not to use the state of emergency to quell dissent and block the referendum process, but instead to use it as a genuine tool to help the desperate population meet their basic needs, and in particular to access medicines, medical care and goods necessary for survival;
 3. Supports the mediation actions taken by the international community on Venezuela and welcomes the launch of mediated talks in the Dominican Republic as a chance to overcome the political standoff; strongly believes that, while mediated talks are a starting point, direct talks between the parties would be beneficial for the future of the country;
 4. Maintains that national dialogue is the only way to overcome the emergency in Venezuela; believes that the priority for all political forces should be to give concrete answers to people who are suffering because of the lack of access to basic goods such as food and medicines;
 5. Calls on the international community to support a frank and open dialogue between the

principal actors of the government and the opposition and not to act in any way that could exacerbate the situation even further; calls for the European Union to stand ready to contribute to the process;

6. Calls on both the government and the opposition not to involve the army in the political quarrel, and highlights the inherent risks in doing so;
7. Believes that the political class cannot ignore the will of the people but emphasises that any initiative, including the process begun by the opposition asking for a recall referendum, should fully comply with the procedures laid down in the Constitution;
8. Calls on the CNE to continue its independent role of overseeing and guaranteeing the transparency of the referendum in line with the Constitution, not to stall the signature review process and to allow the second stage of the process leading to a recall referendum to begin; calls on the political parties not to influence the recall referendum constitutional process;
9. 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 Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States.