



Plenary sitting

B8-0277/2017

24.4.2017

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

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

on the situation in Venezuela
(2017/2651(RSP))

**Javier Couso Permuy, João Ferreira, João Pimenta Lopes, Miguel Viegas,
Eleonora Forenza, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Marina Albiol Guzmán, Paloma
López Bermejo, Ángela Vallina, Nikolaos Chountis**
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Venezuela
(2017/2651(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 1(2) of Chapter 1 of the Charter of the United Nations of 1945, which lists as one of the purposes of the United Nations ‘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 (ICCPR) and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 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 the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) 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 the 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 previous CELAC Summits,
- having regard to the principle of non-intervention laid down in the Charter of the United Nations,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961,
- having regard to the previous statements on the situation in Venezuela by Mercosur, Unasur and CELAC, in particular those rejecting the US’s unilateral coercive measures against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela,
- having regard to the previous statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy on Venezuela;
- having regard to its 11 previous resolutions on Venezuela;
- having regard to the statement of 6 April 2017 by Admiral Kurt Tidd, Head of the United States Southern Command;
- having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has repeatedly denounced the external interference, destabilisation and disinformation campaigns in the country, the manipulation of public opinion and the violence promoted by some sectors of the opposition against the country's sovereignty, independence, peace and democratic stability and against the Venezuelan people;
- B. whereas the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is facing external and internal threats to its sovereignty and peace at a time when the country is also facing an extraordinary economic war, which has escalated in recent months, as a result of price rises, smuggled goods and stockpiling activities; whereas this extraordinary situation has caused social, economic, political, natural and environmental problems;
- C. whereas in December 2014 the then US President, Barack Obama, announced a bill, which was passed by the US Senate, imposing unilateral and extraterritorial sanctions against the people and the Government of Venezuela until 2019; whereas all 33 Latin American and Caribbean nations have condemned and rejected these unilateral sanctions imposed by the US on Venezuela, and whereas the Heads of State and Government of the EU took note in the Brussels Declaration of the second EU-CELAC Summit CELAC's rejection of the US sanctions against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; whereas the Government of Venezuela has reacted to the sanctions by announcing a set of measures provided for under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations;
- D. whereas on 9 March 2015 the then US President, Barack Obama, signed an executive order declaring the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 'an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States'; whereas the executive order allows the US to use national emergency resources to address the threat, such as enforcing sanctions against the country;
- E. whereas the statement of 6 April 2017 by Admiral Kurt Tidd, Head of the US Southern Command, was interpreted as an act of aggression against Venezuela contrary to the doctrine of regional collective security; whereas the statement was intended to create uncertainty and instability in the country and is part of the interventionist strategy in the region against progressive governments;
- F. 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 ongoing for over 12 years on the part of US agencies such as USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy; whereas President Obama authorised a special fund of USD 5.5 million to finance anti-government groups in Venezuela through the US State Department;
- G. whereas the Organisation of American States (OAS), and in particular its Secretary-General, has repeatedly tried to intervene in the internal situation in Venezuela and to legitimise by any means the activation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which opens up the possibility of an external intervention in the country;
- H. whereas this act by the OAS is contrary to the right of all peoples to self-determination and the right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development; whereas most recently the OAS took illegitimate

decisions against Venezuela in an illegal session that took place without the will of Bolivia and Haiti, whose respective representatives are currently President and Vice-President of the OAS;

- I. whereas Venezuela was prevented from assuming the pro tempore presidency of Mercosur, with the aim of isolating and expelling Venezuela from this organisation; notes that negotiations between the EU and Mercosur on the conclusion of a free trade agreement are in progress;
- J. whereas the EU has made several statements aimed at interfering with and conditioning the internal situation in Venezuela;
- K. whereas the situation in Venezuela is reported with a one-sided view by major international media corporations; whereas information is being manipulated and fake news and rumours are being spread about Venezuela for no other reason than to justify intervention in the country;
- L. whereas the Comité de Víctimas de la Guarimba y el Golpe Continuo (Committee of Victims of the Guarimba and the Continued Coup d'État), formed by victims of the violence and their relatives, has called on the international community to refrain from the 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 have called for an end to impunity for the human rights violations committed in the country;
- M. whereas 20 elections have taken place in Venezuela in the last 15 years; whereas the opposition won the last parliamentary elections, rendering the argument of the inexistence of democracy in Venezuela totally unfounded; whereas, despite the holding of democratic elections, part of the opposition still refuses to recognise the government's legitimacy; whereas in the last elections the opposition opportunistically recognised the result of the elections and called for respect for the Constitution of Venezuela, which they had always been against;
- N. whereas since the last elections to the National Assembly some sectors of the opposition have played a role in destabilising the country, using the legislative power at their disposal for their own purposes; whereas in February 2016 a majority in the National Assembly approved the Amnesty Law, an unconstitutional law aimed at releasing individuals responsible for crimes against the Venezuelan people and the country's legitimate government, for example those responsible for the murder of 43 ordinary people during the Guarimbas;
- O. whereas on 9 January 2017 the National Assembly took an unconstitutional decision tabled by the parliamentary opposition with the aim of delegitimising President Nicolás Maduro and his government;
- P. whereas in May 2016, at the request and initiative of President Nicolás Maduro, a Unasur committee advanced efforts to promote dialogue between the Government of Venezuela and the opposition with a view to addressing fundamental issues for the nation; whereas the team working on the agenda of the dialogue includes the former

Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the former President of Panama, Martín Torrijos, the former President of the Dominican Republic, Leonel Fernández, and a special representative of his holiness the Pope Francis; whereas in this context the UN has encouraged the ongoing initiatives by the former Heads of State and Government to promote dialogue between the Government of Venezuela and the opposition, under the auspices of Unasur;

- Q. whereas the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was elected with broad support as a member of the UN Human Rights Council; whereas Venezuela 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 committed itself to implementing the other accepted recommendations; whereas Venezuela was also elected in October 2014 to one of the five rotating seats of 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 Venezuela hosted in September 2016 the 17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, and whereas the country assumed its rotating presidency;
- S. 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;
- T. whereas between 2006 and 2013 Venezuela moved up 13 places, to 71st 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 rate of inequality in the region;
- U. whereas, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 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, compared with 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 Millennium Development Goals;
1. Strongly condemns the permanent external interference and the political, economic and social destabilisation measures taken against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;
 2. Stresses that the persistence in applying an interventionist strategy against the sovereignty of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is not in any way helping to create spaces for dialogue and peace;
 3. Reaffirms the right of the Venezuelan people to decide sovereignly and peacefully about their path of development, free from any external interference or pressure;

4. Reiterates its full respect for the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of states in accordance with international law;
5. Denounces the accusations about an ‘alleged humanitarian crisis’ in Venezuela, which are intended to increase external interference and bolster a campaign in favour of intervention in the country;
6. Deeply deplores any external interference by the US, the OAS, the EU or any country in the internal affairs of third countries; calls for respect to be shown for the right of all peoples to self-determination, to freely determine their political status and to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development;
7. Denounces the undemocratic and insurgent aims of the destabilisation campaign; highlights the imperialist interests 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);
8. Condemns the US decision to continue imposing sanctions against Venezuela; rejects the executive order which considers the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as ‘an unusual and extraordinary threat’ to the ‘national security and the foreign policy of the US’; demands the immediate repeal thereof;
9. Condemns the statements made by Admiral Kurt Tidd, Head of the United States Southern Command, on 6 April 2017, which prefigure an attempted aggression against a sovereign country;
10. Criticises the latest developments within the OAS, which demonstrate the organisation’s lack of democracy and the interventionist role it consistently plays against the sovereign will of the peoples of Latin America;
11. Criticises the latest developments within Mercosur, which is seeking to prevent Venezuela from taking on the presidency of the organisation;
12. Denounces the spurious ‘instrumentalisation’ of human rights for political ends by the EU, in particular in the case of Venezuela;
13. Firmly rejects any attempt by the EU to apply sanctions or other measures against Venezuela and its people;
14. Stresses that dialogue with third countries should under no circumstances result in restrictions being imposed on the right of peoples to self-determination;
15. Deplores the role played by a majority of international media agencies in spreading rumours and using fake information with the aim of undermining the legitimacy of the Venezuelan Government and generating an atmosphere of violence; recalls that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and calls on the international media to act responsibly and cover events in a fair, accurate and balanced manner, which is not currently the case;
16. Acknowledges the serious economic crisis currently confronting Venezuela ;

recognises, however, that this economic crisis is caused mostly by external interference, both by the sanctions imposed on the country and the fall in the price of oil, and by an orchestrated internal economic destabilisation strategy led by some sectors of the opposition and major economic actors in the country, which controls the production and distribution of goods, in particular in the area of food and medicine; recalls that this internal strategy has led to shortages of goods, which have been aggravated by the coordinated actions of groups working with the so-called 'bachaqueros', aimed at depleting stocks from stores at the moment of their refill in order to increase the prices of goods, selling them on the black market or distributing them for counterfeit purposes, a situation that has contributed to the high levels of inflation in the country; recalls that these strategies have been supported by the systemic removal from the market of 100 bolivares notes, the most important banknotes in the economy, as confirmed by the discovery of literally tons of such notes in countries like Colombia and Paraguay; remembers that, despite this severe attack against the economy, Venezuela has both maintained its international commitments as regards its external debt and continued to allocate a significant proportion of its budget to social development, which amounts to over 70 % of the annual budget;

17. Notes the respect shown by the Venezuelan institutions for the constitution, as opposed to the permanent disrespect and confrontational attitude shown by the majority of the National Assembly;
18. 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;
19. Welcomes the implementation of social inclusion policies in Venezuela, based on social responsibility and justice, equality, solidarity and human rights, which have helped to reduce inequality in the country, particularly 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 major increase in the number of higher education students;
20. Recalls the importance of Venezuela's role in the establishment and consolidation 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 to this end; welcomes the significant achievements of ALBA in the fields of health, education, culture and mutually advantageous cooperation;
21. Acknowledges that the member countries of ALBA-TCP are aware of the hard work carried out by the Venezuelan Government in promoting and upholding human rights, justice and peace, in order to contain the plan for international intervention against Venezuela, which threatens the stability not only of this sister nation, but of the region as a whole;
22. Supports the dialogue initiative promoted by President Nicolas Maduro, with the help of Unasur, between representatives of the government of the Bolivarian Republic of

Venezuela and the opposition, with the participation of the former Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the former President of the Dominican Republic, Leonel Fernández, the former President of Panama, Martín Torrijos, and a Special Representative of His Holiness Pope Francis; supports the role played by Unasur and other organisations such as CELAC and ALBA, promoting, as the priority of this dialogue, the well-being of all citizens, peace, justice, truth, institutional relations, measures to boost the economy, and support for the rule of law, democracy and respect for national sovereignty;

23. Reaffirms its solidarity with the Venezuelan people and its struggle to defend the Bolivarian process and the social achievements of recent years;
24. 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.