

**Question for written answer E-003352/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Davor Ivo Stier (PPE)

Subject: Venezuela's participation in the EU's regional and thematic programmes

Following the persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in December 2014 calling on the Government of Venezuela to respect human rights, to conduct effective investigations into alleged human rights violations, and to enable an environment in which human rights defenders and independent non-governmental organisations can carry out their legitimate work of promoting human rights and democracy.

However, in February 2015, Venezuelan authorities arrested Antonio Ledezma, the mayor of Caracas, who is known to be the opposition leader. This happened on the anniversary of the start of protests against Maduro's rule that left dozens of people dead.

Venezuela, as a middle-income country, is no longer eligible under the EU's main instrument for bilateral development assistance for the next financial programme, 2014-2020. However, Venezuela remains eligible to participate in the EU's regional and thematic programmes.

Will the recent events that show significant deterioration of democracy in Venezuela and repeated human rights violations lead to tailoring the EU's regional and thematic programmes towards democracy building and human rights promotion when it comes to Venezuela's participation?