

**Question for written answer E-003692/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
Jørn Dohrmann (ECR)

Subject: VP/HR - Venezuela

In Venezuela a police officer was arrested following the shooting death of a 14-year-old student at a protest in San Cristobal, Tachira province. The student was reportedly hit by a rubber bullet in a clash with police. President Nicolas Maduro expressed regret over the death and promised a full investigation, calling for an end to violence on both sides. Tachira, near the Colombian border, was the initial focus of a spate of protests last year in which 43 people were killed; in March 2014 the opposition leader and former mayor of San Cristobal, Daniel Ceballos, was arrested on charges of civil rebellion and violence following the killing of a National Guardsman there.

Despite the deepening economic crisis and Maduro's plummeting approval ratings, recent protests have been more muted than those of last year, with broad public opinion opposed to renewed violence. However, recent arrests point to increasing polarisation, raising the risk of a government crackdown and rising instability.

What is the position on the VP/HR on the recent protests and the risk of violence in Venezuela?