

**Question for written answer E-006492/2016
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
Francisco Assis (S&D)

Subject: VP/HR - Political prisoners in Venezuela

Yon Goicoechea, the leader of the *Vontade Popular* (Popular Will) opposition party in Venezuela, was arrested on the outskirts of Caracas on 29 August. The regime justified his detention on the grounds that the 31-year-old lawyer, who was awarded the Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty in 2008, was working for the 'American empire'. On 26 August, the former mayor of San Cristóbal, Daniel Ceballos, who had been under house arrest since August 2015, was abruptly transferred to a general prison in Guárico State. The reason, according to the Interior Minister, was that he was allegedly planning to escape.

In view of these fresh arbitrary arrests of members of the Venezuelan opposition, how will the EU raise awareness among the international community of the cases of Yon Goicoechea and Daniel Ceballos and exert pressure on the Venezuelan authorities to respect the right to democratic opposition?