

**Question for written answer E-006608/2016**  
**to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**  
Rule 130  
**Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: VP/HR - Situation in Venezuela

On 1 September 2016, the opposition in Venezuela staged the *Toma de Caracas* (Taking of Caracas). The main aim of this protest was to force the National Electoral Council to announce the date for collecting the signatures of 20% of the electorate with a view to a recall referendum in respect of President Nicolás Maduro.

According to the Venezuelan Government, the opposition sought to commit acts of violence against their own supporters during the demonstration, for which there were precedents in the coup d'état that took place on 11 April 2002. Several paramilitaries and opposition leaders were arrested – including those of Leopoldo López's *Voluntad Popular* Party – for possessing arms and explosives with the intention of committing acts of violence.

The Secretary-General of Unasur – the former President Samper – and the other former Presidents Rodríguez Zapatero (Spain), Fernández (Dominican Republic) and Torrijos (Panama), who at the invitation of President Maduro had managed to facilitate a dialogue between the government and the opposition, called emphatically for the demonstrations to be peaceful and, following the events of 1 September, have insisted that the dialogue should continue.

What is the EU's position on this latent conflict and the acts of provocation being committed by violent factions belonging to the opposition in Venezuela?

What concrete action can the EU now take to support facilitation of the dialogue being promoted by Unasur?