

**Question for written answer P-003120/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
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Subject: VP/HR - Fresh attempt by the Venezuelan government to hijack democracy

On 1 May 2017, the President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, announced that he intended to convene a National Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution. This new constitution would be drawn up by 500 delegates, half of them from a non-elected communal 'parliament' created by the regime in 2016. There can be little doubt as to the aim behind Maduro's plan: to avoid calling elections.

Thousands of Venezuelans again took to the streets in protest, meeting a fierce response from the security forces and paramilitary groups working for the government, which recently revealed that it intended to arm one million civilians as members of the National Bolivarian Militia, whose role is to support the armed forces, raising the spectre of civil war.

The protests in recent weeks have left at least 30 people dead.

This fresh attack on the separation of powers in Venezuela comes shortly after an unsuccessful attempt at the end of March to usurp the functions of the National Assembly through the Supreme Court, which is controlled by the President and his supporters.

How will the EU respond to this fresh attempt to hijack Venezuelan democracy and replace it with a regime organised on unequivocally dictatorial lines?