

**Question for written answer P-004809/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Francisco Assis (S&D)

Subject: VP/HR - Arbitrary detention of Portuguese entrepreneurs and those of Portuguese descent in Venezuela

Venezuela's social and economic collapse affects every sector of its population including foreign communities who have contributed to the country's development over recent decades. The most serious symptom of the collapse is the humanitarian crisis which is causing outrage around the world. The regime uses a self-victimising rhetoric to camouflage its own responsibility for the crisis based on the claim of an 'economic war' waged by foreign powers. This has served to justify the repeated practice of taking over companies by 'collectives', militia paid by the government, and arbitrary detentions of entrepreneurs coming from various European countries. The last case was on 22 September when 34 people were linked to managing supermarket networks Central Madeirense and Excelsior Gama and were detained. Three were Portuguese and seven were of Portuguese descent. In the words of President Maduro, they were put in preventative prison for 'hiding products for people and charging whatever prices they wanted'. If these Portuguese nationals and those with Portuguese descent are condemned in court, they risk sentences of up to ten years.

How does the EU endeavour to support entrepreneurs of European origin who are arbitrarily plundered and detained by the regime? In particular, how does it endeavour to obtain the immediate release of the Portuguese nationals and those of Portuguese descent who are currently being detained?