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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0729/2016**

1.6.2016

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Venezuela  
(2016/2699(RSP))

**Francisco Assis, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, Carlos Zorrinho, Marlene Mizzi, Doru-Claudian Frunzuliță, Claudia Țapardel, Nicola Caputo, Nicola Danti, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Nikos Androulakis, Karoline Graswander-Hainz, Knut Fleckenstein, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, Ana Gomes, Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero Fernández, Jonás Fernández, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Victor Boștinaru**  
on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Venezuela  
(2016/2699(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Venezuela, in particular those of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Venezuela<sup>1</sup>, of 18 December 2014 on the persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela<sup>2</sup>, and of 12 March 2015 on the situation in Venezuela<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
  - having regard to the Inter-American Democratic Charter adopted on 11 September 2001,
  - having regard to the statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 20 October 2014 on the detention of protesters and politicians in Venezuela,
  - having regard to the letter of 16 May 2016 from Human Rights Watch to the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States, Luis Almagro, on the subject of Venezuela<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to the official communications from the Secretary-General of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) issued on 23 May<sup>5</sup> and 28 May<sup>6</sup> 2016 on the exploratory meetings to launch a national dialogue between representatives of the Venezuelan Government and the MUD opposition coalition,
  - having regard to the G7 Ise-Shima Leaders' Declaration of 26-27 May 2016<sup>7</sup>,
  - having regard to the statement by US Secretary of State John Kerry of 27 May 2016 regarding his call with former Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero<sup>8</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Venezuela has 20 % of the world's oil reserves, which represent only 3 % of world production; whereas oil accounts for 96 % of the country's exports; whereas during the economic boom Venezuela did not accumulate savings with a view to mitigating a reversal in the terms of trade or to cushioning the impact of necessary macroeconomic adjustments;

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2014)0176.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2014)0106.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0080.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/16/letter-human-rights-watch-secretary-general-almagro-about-venezuela>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unasursg.org/es/node/719>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unasursg.org/es/node/779>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000160266.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/05/257789.htm>

- B. whereas, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Venezuela's economy is projected to contract by 8 % in 2016, following a contraction of 5.7 % in 2015; whereas, despite a 30 % increase in the minimum wage, the 180.9 % inflation rate hinders any prospects for basic commodities being affordable for Venezuelans; whereas the IMF forecasts an average inflation rate of 700 % by the end of 2016 and of 2 200 % in 2017;
- C. whereas, despite the lack of official data, according to ENCOVI (Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida), the poverty rate in Venezuela has doubled from 30 % in 2013 to 60 % in 2016; whereas 75 % of the medicines considered essential by the World Health Organisation are not available in Venezuela;
- D. whereas the lack of foresight in basic infrastructure and inefficient governance have led to a major economic and social crisis, which is demonstrated by a long-running shortage of resources, raw materials, inputs, basic foodstuffs and essential medicines, with zero production, and whereas the country is on the verge of a major social upheaval, which could lead to a humanitarian crisis with unpredictable consequences;
- E. whereas Venezuela's opposition coalition, the MUD, won 112 seats in the 167-member unicameral National Assembly, a two-thirds majority, compared with 55 seats for the PSUV; whereas the Supreme Court subsequently blocked four newly elected National Assembly representatives from the MUD from taking office, which deprived the opposition of its two-thirds majority;
- F. whereas prominent political opposition leaders have been jailed, together with approximately a hundred other people, on ideological and political grounds; whereas on 29 March 2016 the National Assembly passed the Amnesty and National Reconciliation Law, and on 11 April 2016 the Supreme Court, once again, declared that law unconstitutional;
- G. whereas, since the National Assembly took office in January 2016, the Supreme Court has declared illegal or inapplicable the four laws passed by the Assembly: in February the Supreme Court upheld President Maduro's economic decree, rejected by the National Assembly in January; in March the Court ruled that the legislature had no right to examine the appointment of 13 magistrates in late 2015; in April the Court declared the Amnesty Law unconstitutional and struck down a constitutional amendment that would have reduced the presidential term of office from six to four years;
- H. whereas, in the framework of UNASUR, exploratory meetings have recently been held in the Dominican Republic, led by former Prime Minister of Spain José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, former President of the Dominican Republic Leonel Fernández and former President of Panama Martín Torrijos, with the aim of initiating a national dialogue with representatives of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the opposition parties represented by the MUD;
- I. whereas fights for control of illegal mines are common in the mineral-rich area near the borders of Guyana and Brazil; whereas on 4 March 2016 a massacre took place in Tumeremo, Bolívar state, in which 28 miners went missing and were then murdered; whereas a satisfactory answer is still due from the authorities, and whereas journalist Lucía Suárez, who had recently investigated the case, was shot dead on 28 April 2016 in her home in Tumeremo;

- J. whereas the rule of law and the principle of the separation of powers are not duly respected in Venezuela; whereas current facts point to excessive government influence and control over judicial power and the National Electoral Council, which has a detrimental impact on the legislature and opposition powers, the cornerstones of any democratic system;
- K. whereas Decree No 2294 of 6 April 2016 issued by the Venezuelan Government stipulates that public sector workers will work only two days per week for as long as the effects of El Niño on the Simon Bolívar Hydroelectric Plant persist; whereas teaching at universities and other learning institutions have also been temporarily or totally suspended on grounds of national security or energy savings; whereas these closures seriously affect citizens' rights;
- L. whereas Venezuela's very high crime rates and complete impunity have turned it into one of the most dangerous countries in the world, Caracas having the highest rate of violent crime in the world, with over 119.87 homicides per 100 000 people;
- M. whereas the democratic opposition has started a constitutionally recognised process to request the holding of a recall referendum; whereas the MUD has collected and delivered to the National Electoral Council 1.8 million signatures, many more than the 198 000 initially required for the process to be legal and constitutionally acceptable;
1. Expresses grave concern at the seriously deteriorating situation as regards democracy and human rights in Venezuela;
  2. Welcomes the mediation efforts initiated by UNASUR to launch a national dialogue process between the executive and the majority MUD opposition; recalls that there will be no viable, peaceful and stable solution for Venezuela without national dialogue, and calls on all parties to engage in a constructive, solution-driven process; stresses that a negotiated democratic solution is the only way forward;
  3. Urges the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and regional organisations to ensure that mechanisms for dialogue and national reconciliation play a mediation role in Venezuela, with a view to supporting a peaceful, democratic and constitutional solution to the crisis the country is currently experiencing;
  4. Takes note of the G7 Leaders' Declaration on Venezuela; asks the June European Council to deliver a political statement on the situation in the country and to support the mediation efforts recently launched in order to allow democratic and political solutions to be agreed on for Venezuela;
  5. Expresses great concern at the increasingly deteriorating social tension caused by the shortage of basic goods such as food and medicines; calls on the VP/HR to prepare a cooperation plan for the country with a view to addressing the population's most urgent and basic needs; calls on the Venezuelan Government to accept this cooperation and to facilitate its delivery;
  6. Expresses its concern at the current institutional impasse and the executive's control over the Supreme Court and the National Electoral Council aimed at impeding the

application of laws and initiatives adopted by the National Assembly; calls on the Venezuelan Government to respect the rule of law and the principle of the separation of powers; recalls that separation and non-interference between equally legitimate powers is an essential principle of democratic states guided by the rule of law;

7. Ask the Venezuelan Government to commute prison sentences to house arrest for those political prisoners currently in jail; recalls that the freeing of political prisoners is a precondition set by the opposition for the negotiation talks, and calls on both sides to agree on a compromise solution aimed at supporting the mediation efforts currently in place; recalls that this gesture will prove the executive power's will to facilitate national dialogue;
8. Requests that the authorities respect and guarantee the constitutional right to peaceful demonstrations; calls equally on the opposition leaders to exercise their powers with responsibility and restraint; calls on the Venezuelan authorities to guarantee security and the free exercise of rights to all citizens, in particular to human rights defenders, journalists, political activists and members of independent non-governmental organisations;
9. Considers it an absolute priority to reduce the existing high levels of impunity, which increase and foster the growing violence and insecurity in the country, and to ensure respect for the existing legal system, which demands justice for the victims of kidnappings, murders and other crimes committed every day, and for their families;
10. Calls on the Venezuelan authorities to investigate the Tumeremo massacre, in which 28 miners were despicably murdered, and to bring the perpetrators and instigators to justice, including those behind the recent murder of journalist Lucía Suárez, which took place in the same location and is suspected of being connected;
11. Urges the government and public authorities of Venezuela to respect the Constitution, and to facilitate rather than obstruct the legal and recognised mechanisms and procedures for activating the electoral process laid down in the Venezuelan Constitution;
12. Urges the Venezuelan Government to do its utmost to regularise working and school hours in order to bring the country to normality and to ensure that social and labour rights are respected, as well as the universal right to education;
13. Recalls that Parliament has on numerous occasions shown its solidarity with the Venezuelan people; points out that the majority of the political forces in the country have strongly and repeatedly asked for our presence and support; in this context, recalls that a visit by a parliamentary delegation has already been approved and is still pending; calls therefore for that visit to take place so that it can fulfil its mandate of taking stock of the political and social situation in Venezuela;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States.