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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Venezuela

**Jaime Mayor Oreja, Mario Mauro, Bogusław Sonik, Cristian Dan Preda, Bernd Posselt, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Martin Kastler, Filip Kaczmarek, Tunne Kelam, Monica Luisa Macovei**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Venezuela**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Venezuela and in particular its resolutions of 7 May 2009, 23 October 2008 and 24 May 2007,
  - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
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- A. having regard to the tense political situation in Venezuela, reflected in the harassment, threats, intimidation and political and criminal persecution directed at the democratic opposition, its representatives, its democratically elected mayors and governors, the student movement, journalists and the media,
  - B. whereas in May 2007 *Radio Caracas Televisión's* open signal was suspended by President Hugo Chávez and the channel was obliged to become international in order to be able to transmit a signal through cable television,
  - C. whereas the first protests by the student movement began as a result of the channel being taken off the air,
  - D. whereas on 1 August 2009 the government of Hugo Chávez ordered the closure of 34 radio stations through a refusal to renew their licences,
  - E. whereas President Chávez has again shut down RCTV's international channel and five other channels for not having connected to the official channel in order to broadcast the presidential address on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of the fall of the dictator Pérez Jiménez,
  - F. whereas this new shut-down triggered a new wave of student protests, which were harshly suppressed by the police in many of the country's states and cities, and these events resulted in the deaths of two young students in the city of Mérida and dozens of injuries,
  - G. whereas these measures are designed to obtain control over and to gag the media, if not to curtail the democratic rights to freedom of expression and information,
  - H. whereas the OAS, through the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, has warned that this new move to take channels off the air has enormous repercussions in terms of the right to freedom of expression,
  - I. whereas the French Government has declared, in relation to this case, that pluralism of information is one of the fundamental elements of press freedom, and is essential for the proper functioning of democracy,

- J. whereas many political leaders and opponents of President Chávez are still in prison, some of them in preventive detention without due process having been followed and others convicted under judgments that were clearly politically motivated,
- K. whereas some leaders close to President Chávez, such as Ramón Carrizález, Vice-President and Minister of Defence, Mrs Yubiri Ortega, Minister of the Environment, and Mr Eugenio Vázquez Orellana, Chairman of the Central Bank, have recently submitted their resignations,
- L. whereas, according to the 2009 report by Transparency International, Venezuela is one of the most corrupt countries in the world, ranking alongside Haiti as the most corrupt country in Latin America, and whereas this corruption has even involved prominent members of President Chávez's own government, such as Jesse Chacón, former Minister of Education,
- M. whereas the latent climate of insecurity and the levels of crime and violence, which have turned Venezuela and its capital, Caracas, into one of the most dangerous places in the world, are causing concern among the people of Venezuela,
- N. whereas many Venezuelan citizens have to cope with numerous cuts to electricity and water supplies, although Venezuela has the largest energy reserves of any country in Latin America,
- O. whereas the recent decision to devalue the Venezuelan currency has impoverished the majority of the population, given the extremely high rate of inflation, which is around 50%, and has led to the confiscation and temporary closure of more than 1 900 establishments and retail outlets, some of them European-owned, following charges of alleged speculation and price increases,
- P. whereas, with a view to the forthcoming parliamentary elections on 26 September, the National Electoral Council, at the request of the government, has changed the boundaries of the constituencies that are to elect the 167 members of the National Assembly, in such a way that these changes affect 80% of the states governed by the opposition,
- Q. whereas this measure is designed to optimise the electoral results of the Unified Socialist Party of Venezuela so that it needs fewer votes in order to obtain a higher number of parliamentary representatives,
- R. whereas the many insults, threats and attacks directed towards national and international leaders by President Chávez have given rise to unease and have been the source of an enormous number of unnecessary tensions, which in some cases have even led to an order for the mobilisation of troops with a view to a possible war with Colombia,
1. Is appalled at the death of the two young students, Yonisio Carrillo and Marcos Rosales, during the protests in Mérida, and calls on the authorities to carry out an investigation into the reasons why these young men were killed and calls for those guilty to be dealt with by the justice system;

2. Unreservedly condemns the new attack on freedom of expression and information as a result of the television channels being taken off the air and the attempt to control and muzzle the free, independent press;
3. Is deeply worried by the drift towards totalitarianism of the government of Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Chávez, whose actions are moves towards intimidating the democratic opposition, restricting the rights and freedoms of citizens and keeping himself in power, gradually instituting an authoritarian, one-party system which has already significantly weakened democracy in Latin America;
4. Points out that, under the Organisation of American States' Inter-American Democratic Charter, in a democracy, in addition to clear and necessary legitimacy of origin, grounded in and obtained at the polls, legitimacy of exercise must also be complied with, and this must be founded on respect for pluralism, the established rules, the constitution in force, the laws and the rule of law as a guarantee of a fully functioning democracy, and this must of necessity include respect for peaceful and democratic political opposition, especially where that opposition has been elected in the polls and enjoys a popular mandate;
5. Strongly deplores the cuts to electricity and water supplies, the expropriation of retail outlets, the insecure situation within which citizens are living, the corruption, the currency devaluation and the circumstances that are increasing the poverty of a large part of Venezuelan society;
6. Calls upon the Venezuelan Government, in view of the parliamentary elections on 26 September, to respect the rules of democracy and the principles of freedom of expression, assembly, association and election;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and National Assembly of Venezuela and the Secretary General of the OAS.