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 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Bolivia
(2019/2896(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group
The European Parliament,

- having regard to the statement of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on the electoral process in Bolivia of 22 October 2019 and on the situation in Bolivia of 15 November 2019,

- having regard to the statement of the Organization of American States (OAS) Electoral Observation Mission in Bolivia of 21 October 2019,

- having regard to the statement of the Group of Auditors on the Electoral Process in Bolivia of 10 November 2019,

- having regard to the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet of 16 November 2019,

- having regard to the constitutional referendum held in Bolivia on 21 February 2016,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Bolivia,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 20 October 2019, presidential and legislative elections took place in Bolivia in a highly polarised environment due to the controversy surrounding the acceptance of the candidacy of President Evo Morales;

B. whereas the atmosphere on the election day of 20 October was relatively calm, despite an extraordinarily tense and divided electoral campaign;

C. whereas the Constitution of Bolivia specifically prohibits the holding of three consecutive presidential mandates; whereas contrary to constitutional law, in 2016 President Morales called a national referendum on the possibility of standing for election again; whereas President Morales disregarded the people’s decision and forced an appeal to the Constitutional Tribunal to approve his candidacy, which was finally confirmed by the Supreme Court;

D. whereas according to the Constitution of Bolivia, the threshold to win a presidential election in the first round is 50 % of all votes plus one, or at least 40 % of votes with a 10 % lead on the second place presidential candidate;

E. whereas when 83 % of the votes were counted by the system for the transmission of
preliminary results (TREP), it showed 45 % for President Morales and 38 % for the opposition candidate Carlos Mesa; whereas a continuation of the above-mentioned trend should under normal circumstances have led to a second round of voting, envisaged for 15 December 2019;

F. whereas the Supreme Electoral Tribunal made a surprise decision to interrupt electronic counting (TREP), which restarted once 97 % of all votes had been counted; whereas the result announced reversed the initial trend; whereas the Constitutional Tribunal ruled out the possibility of a second round of voting on the basis that the required percentage difference of 10 % between the top two candidates had been reached;

G. whereas the actions of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal sparked disagreement and suspicion of fraud not only among supporters of the opposition candidates, but also from the national and international observers and the majority of the international community;

H. whereas President Morales publicly proclaimed himself the winner of the election, even before all official results had been transmitted and publicly announced;

I. whereas statements by the OAS, the EU and the international community expressed grave concerns about the unjustified interruption of vote counting, indicating a possible biased approach by the Electoral Commission observers; whereas the recommendation of domestic and international interlocutors was to organise the second round of the election as a way out of the political crisis;

J. whereas the unexpected interruption of vote counting and the proclamation of victory by President Morales resulted in massive protests and mobilisation by opposition supporters, as well as by supporters of President Morales himself; whereas these demonstrations have been a cause of great concern to the whole international community and have so far resulted in at least 23 people being killed, with hundreds more injured and over 600 arrested;

K. whereas the body in charge of administrating the election lacked any credibility, with one of its members resigning during the counting; whereas the opposition did not recognise the result of the election conducted under such circumstances, and denounced alleged electoral fraud;

L. whereas the EU did not deploy a fully-fledged election observation mission but was only represented by a small technical team consisting of three lower-ranked officials;

M. whereas with the aim of re-establishing trust, both the government and the electoral authorities accepted a technical binding audit from a professional team of the OAS; whereas this audit had the UN Secretary General’s support;

N. whereas the result of the OAS audit, published on 10 November 2019, recognised a massive electoral fraud, namely manipulation of the computing system and manipulation of voting ballots and votes as such;

O. whereas after the presentation of the OAS audit report on 10 November calling for the electoral process to be annulled and re-run, many high-ranked state officials resigned,
including the president, the vice-president, the Senate president and electoral body representatives; whereas Evo Morales and some other members of his government decided to leave the country and abandon their functions;

P. whereas several resignations have entitled second vice-president Jeanine Áñez to assume the interim presidency, with the obligation to quickly call new presidential elections being the only one democratic and constitutional way to resolve the current crisis; whereas on 14 November 2019, Bolivia’s interim government and lawmakers from the party of unseated candidate Evo Morales were trying to reach an agreement to hold a new presidential election;

1. Denounces the lack of transparency and credibility of the electoral process and the attempt to commit fraud by the Bolivian authorities, thereby undermining the right of the Bolivian citizens to freely and democratically elect its President;

2. Expresses its firm rejection of the violence and destruction that followed the 20 October election and conveys its condolences to all family members of the victims;

3. Expresses its full support for and recognition of the work of the OAS electoral observers operating under the extremely difficult conditions;

4. Condemns the attempt at electoral fraud, which constitutes a grave crime; recalls that under Bolivian legislation individuals and organisations involved in such illegal processes must be automatically excluded from electoral bodies and elections must be annulled;

5. Welcomes the decisions of those military and police officers who showed restraint and did not repress Bolivarian citizens;

6. Calls on the new interim authorities to take the necessary steps to change the situation and return trust and confidence to the electoral process; calls for a dialogue to be established with the aim of immediately organising a new democratic, inclusive, transparent and fair election, with a newly-composed electoral body, as a way out of the current crisis; welcomes the first steps achieved in this regard;

7. Welcomes the call for elections as early as January 2020 as proof of the will of the interim authorities to quickly find a way out of the crisis; calls on the interim authorities to take responsibility for the credibility of the procedure by organising properly conducted and inclusive elections where the political actors have the opportunity to compete in accordance with Bolivian law and the constitutional order;

8. Calls on all the different political actors and those in positions of responsibility in the army to refrain from violence and to ensure that the process of democratic and peaceful dialogue is pursued in accordance with the Bolivian constitution;

9. Demands that the new electoral process take place in the presence of credible and transparent international observers, who are free to operate and share their independent observations;

10. Expresses its readiness to assist in such an electoral process and calls on the VP/HR to
deploy a fully-fledged EU election observation mission;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government of Bolivia, the Andean Parliament and the EUROLAT Assembly.