

**Question for written answer E-003637/2020**

**to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

Rule 138

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Subject: Alleged illegal funding from Venezuela to the Five Star Movement

The Spanish newspaper ABC has reported the news that in 2010, the Venezuelan Government apparently provided the Italian party 'Movimento 5 Stelle' with EUR 3.5 million, sent in a suitcase and delivered to the party's co-founder Gianroberto Casaleggio.

The article states that Nicolás Maduro, who was Foreign Minister at the time of the deeds, allegedly authorised the sending of the suitcase to the Venezuelan Consulate in Milan, with Consul Giancarlo Di Martino acting as intermediary. The EUR 3.5 million were allegedly sent through diplomatic channels by the military intelligence service led by Hugo Carvajal, currently under investigation in the USA for crimes related to drug trafficking and for supplying weapons to the Colombian FARC.

The intent was allegedly to 'support a revolutionary left-wing movement in Italy'.

If this story were to be confirmed, it would be very clear that the Italian democratic process has been strongly influenced by external, secret and illegal funding. There could also be a risk of similar interference by the Venezuelan regime in other Member States.

1. How does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to check the above-mentioned facts?
2. What measures does he intend to take to protect European democracies from the risk of interference by third-country dictatorships?