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JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- Jaime Mayor Oreja, Fernando Fernández Martín, Sérgio Marques, Charles Tannock, Bernd Posselt, Laima Liucija Andrikienė and José Ribeiro e Castro, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Ignasi Guardans Cambó, Renate Weber, Josu Ortuondo Larrea and Marios Matsakis, on behalf of the ALDE Group
- Inese Vaidere, Ryszard Czarnecki and Adam Bielan, on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- PPE-DE (B6-0549/2008)
- UEN (B6-0553/2008)
- ALDE (B6-0555/2008)

on the political disqualifications in Venezuela

European Parliament resolution on the political disqualifications in Venezuela

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Venezuela, in particular that of 24 May 2007 on the Radio Caracas TV channel case in Venezuela,
 - having regard to the Human Rights Watch report of September 2008 entitled 'A Decade Under Chávez: Political Intolerance and Lost Opportunities for Advancing Human Rights in Venezuela',
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Venezuelan authorities are using various lists of citizens ('Tascón list', 'Maisanta list', 'Russián list') to remove public officials from office and to deprive citizens of their right to hold public office and of access to administrative services and procedures,
- B. whereas the political use of these lists is restricting the civil and political rights of opponents of the current Venezuelan Government, in particular the right to stand for election and the right of voters freely to elect their local, regional and national authorities,
- C. whereas the Venezuelan Comptroller-General has issued an administrative order disqualifying a large number of opposition figures from standing in the regional and local elections to be held in November 2008,
- D. whereas the Venezuelan authorities have arbitrarily expelled from the country the director of the NGO Human Rights Watch, José Miguel Vivanco, and the organisation's deputy director, Daniel Wilkinson, for having presented a critical report on the civil liberties and human rights situation during President Hugo Chávez's 10 years in office,
- E. whereas these are only the last in a long series of measures taken by the government with a view to intimidating opposition members, dissidents and international observers in the country,
- F. whereas on 1 October 2008 of Julio Soto, student leader in the Copei party and President of the Students Union at Zulia State University, was riddled with bullets in his car in the city of Maracaibo – a crime that was committed under strange circumstances and has yet to be cleared up,
1. Expresses concern about the list of electoral disqualifications issued by the Venezuelan Comptroller-General;
 2. Urges the Venezuelan Government to examine the above administratively imposed political disqualifications with reference to the provisions of Articles 42 and 65 of the Venezuelan Constitution, under which such measures may be taken on a definitive basis by judicial authorities alone, as is customary in all democratic states;
 3. Urges the Venezuelan Government also to comply with the international agreements signed and ratified by Venezuela, including the American Convention on Human Rights, with

specific reference to the provisions on political rights set out in Articles 23(1)(b) and 23(2) thereof, and Articles 2 and 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

4. Expresses firm opposition to the harassment and arbitrary expulsion of the human rights defenders; considers that expulsion to set an extremely serious precedent as regards respect for freedom of expression and the right to criticise that are fundamental to any democratic society;
5. Vigorously condemns the murder of the student leader, Julio Soto; conveys its condolences to the victim's family and friends and calls on the Venezuelan authorities to make every possible effort to clear up this crime as soon as possible, so that the perpetrators and those responsible are brought to justice and the crime does not go unpunished;
6. Calls on the Chávez government to put an end to all such practices and to foster a more participative democracy in Venezuela, in full compliance with the principles laid down in the 1999 constitution;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, and to the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, the Mercosur Parliament and the government and parliament of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.