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## Sakharov Prize ceremony 2017: Venezuela's democratic opposition to receive award

**The democratic opposition in Venezuela is to be awarded Parliament's Sakharov Prize 2017 on 13 December. Follow the ceremony live and watch our video to learn more about this year's winners.**

Venezuela is currently facing a serious [political and economic crisis](#). Spiralling inflation has left millions of Venezuelans struggling to buy food or medicine, while since the beginning of the year over 120 people have died in street demonstrations primarily against the government of Nicolas Maduro. The opposition-led national assembly has been stripped of its powers, and according to [Foro Penal Venezolano](#) there are currently 300 political prisoners in the country.

### A tribute to the struggle of the Venezuelan people

On 26 October, Parliament's President Antonio Tajani [announced](#) that the 2017 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought would be awarded to Venezuela's democratic opposition. This followed a decision by the President and Parliament's political group leaders. The democratic opposition includes the country's national assembly (represented by Julio Borges) and all political prisoners as listed by Foro Penal Venezolano (represented by Leopoldo López, Antonio Ledezma, Daniel Ceballos, Yon Goicoechea, Lorent Saleh, Alfredo Ramos and Andrea González).

Speaking ahead of the ceremony in Strasbourg, Julio Borges described the prize as "recognition for all the Venezuelan people" and not just for its parliament. On 13 December, Borges will be joined in Strasbourg by Antonio Ledezma and family members and representatives of the other political prisoners. The award ceremony commences in Parliament's chamber at 12.00 CET.

**Follow it live and submit your questions!**

The Sakharov Prize award ceremony on 13 December can be followed live both on [Parliament's website](#) and [Facebook page](#). The ceremony in the plenary chamber will be followed by a [press conference](#) and a [Facebook live](#) interview with representatives of Venezuela's democratic opposition at 16.00 CET.

## About the Sakharov prize

The [Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#), named in honour of the Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov, is awarded each year by the European Parliament. It was established in 1988 to honour individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms. [Last year's prize](#) was awarded to Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar.

## Award ceremony 2017

[Follow the ceremony live on 13 December from 12.00 CET](#)

[Ceremony and interview live on Parliament's Facebook page](#)

## The Sakharov Prize

[More on the 2017 Sakharov Prize](#)

[Sakharov Prize website](#)

[Audiovisual materials](#)

[More on the political crisis in Venezuela](#)

## Latest EP resolutions on the situation in Venezuela

[Parliament urges Venezuela to restore democratic order and free all political prisoners \(27 April 2017\)](#)

[MEPs call for EU sanctions \(14 September 2017\)](#)



### Video

<https://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/programme/world/sakharov-prize-2017-venezuela-s-opposition-in-a-crisis-struck-country>