Resolution on the case of Manuel Rosales in Venezuela

2009/2605(RSP) - 07/05/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 5 May 2009, the European Parliament adopted by 27 votes to 1 with 0 abstentions a resolution on the case of Manuel Rosales in Venezuela.

The resolution had been tabled by the EPP-ED, UEN and ALDE groups.

Parliament recalls the details of this case of the former Presidential candidate, ex-governor of the State of Zulia, and current democratically elected Mayor of the city of Maracaibo, Manuel Rosales, an opposition leader whom President Chávez has repeatedly and publicly threatened with imprisonment, and against whom he was eventually prompted to initiate legal proceedings based on a 2004 complaint concerning an alleged discrepancy in an income declaration during his time as governor of the State of Zulia. This case has every appearance of being political persecution, with no regard for due process and proper judicial safeguards. Parliament states that the verdict has been determined in advance and is clearly politically motivated.

It expresses its profound concern at the deterioration in the situation and in the quality of democracy in Venezuela, which is seriously threatened with collapse as a result of the concentration of power and the growing authoritarianism displayed by the President of the Republic. Members express their solidarity with all those suffering political persecution in Venezuela, a plight currently symbolised by the person of Manuel Rosales. They welcome the decision taken by the Peruvian Government to grant Manuel Rosales political asylum.

Parliament strongly condemns the use of threats and violence, the abuse of power, defamation and the exploitation of the legal system as a political weapon designed to intimidate and eliminate opponents.

It points out that, under the Organisation of American States (OAS) Inter-American Democratic Charter, in order to gain access to the exercise of power in a democracy, in addition to clear legitimacy of origin, grounded in and obtained at the polls, there must also be legitimacy in the exercise of such power, which must be founded on respect for the established rules, the constitution, the laws, and the rule of law as a guarantee of a fully functioning democracy and that this must of necessity include respect for peaceful and democratic political opposition, especially where that opposition has been elected and enjoys a popular mandate.

Parliament calls on the country's authorities, in particular the President of the Republic, to pursue their political action through dialogue, respect for the rule of law and constitutional legality, and tolerance of political opponents, so as to ensure that the various political choices made and supported by the people of Venezuela enjoy proper influence and representation in political life.

It urges the Venezuelan Government, furthermore, 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 the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.