# Resolution on the situation in Venezuela

2015/2582(RSP) - 12/03/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 384 votes to 75, with 45 abstentions a resolution on the situation in Venezuela.

The resolution was tabled by the ALDE, ECR, S&D, and EPP groups. It called on the authorities immediately to release Antonio Ledezma, Leopoldo Lopez, Daniel Ceballos, and all peaceful protesters, students and opposition leaders arbitrarily detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression and fundamental rights. All political prisoners must be given medical attention and have immediate, private and regular access to their families and lawyers of their choice. Parliament recalled its forthcoming request to the VP/HR to call for the immediate release of the protesters who had been arbitrarily arrested since the start of the protests in Venezuela.

**End repression**: Parliament recalled that one year after the peaceful demonstrations more than 1 700 protesters await trial, more than 69 remained jailed, and at least 40 people had been killed in the protests, their murderers remaining unaccountable.

It called on the Venezuelan Government to cease the political persecution and repression of the democratic opposition and the violations of freedom of expression and of demonstration, and urged an end to media censorship, reminding the authorities that opposition voices were imperative for a democratic society. The European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Delegation to Venezuela and the Member States' embassies were urged to continue to closely observe the investigations and the trial hearings of opposition leaders. Members recalled their demand for an **ad hoc European Parliament delegation** to be sent to assess the situation in Venezuela and to hold a dialogue with all sectors involved in the conflict as soon as possible.

Members asked the Commission and the Council to explore and adopt any measures required to safeguard European interests and the **principle of legal certainty for European enterprises** in Venezuela. They also asked the EU, its Member States and the international community to make statements and take measures to show solidarity with the Venezuelan people during this difficult period.

Calling on the Venezuelan Government to create an environment in which **human rights defenders and independent non-governmental organisations** could carry out their legitimate work in promoting human rights and democracy, Parliament stressed that, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, the Venezuelan Government had a particular responsibility to comply with the rule of law and with international law.

**Elections:** in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections, Venezuela should use this period to establish an **inclusive political process** based on consensus and joint ownership, through a genuine national dialogue with the meaningful participation of all democratic political forces in the framework of democracy, the rule of law and the full observance of human rights.

Parliament expressed its concern at the **possibility of new protests leading to more acts of violence**, which would only deepen the gulf between the positions of the government and the opposition and polarise to an even greater degree the sensitive political developments that were taking place in Venezuela. Representatives of all parties and all sections of Venezuelan society must remain calm in both actions and words. Members warned against any move that might lead to an atmosphere of tension and regression, which could lead to the democratic opposition being delegitimised and made illegal and/or the elections being cancelled.

Lastly, Parliament encouraged the regional partners of Venezuela, such as UNASUR and the Organisation of American States, to open channels of dialogue and understanding between the conflicting parties, and to guarantee public safety and protection, together with a return to calm and normality in Venezuela.