Resolution on the humanitarian situation in Venezuela and the migration and refugee crisis

2019/2952(RSP) - 10/07/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 487 votes 119, with 79 abstentions, a resolution on the humanitarian situation in Venezuela and the migration and refugee crisis.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D and Renew groups.

The European Union has been supporting the Venezuelan population and the communities hosting refugees for years with EU assistance amounting to over EUR 319 million, both within and outside Venezuela. EUR 156 million have been devoted to humanitarian assistance, EUR 136 million to development and EUR 27 million to stability and peace.

The already dire political, economic, institutional, social and multidimensional humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has significantly worsened and become aggravated during the pandemic. The current crisis in Venezuela is generating the largest population displacement ever seen in the region. Around five million Venezuelans have fled the country, with 80 % of them displaced in countries in the region. According to the UNHCR, the Venezuelan refugee crisis is the second biggest in the world, behind that of Syria. It is expected that by the end of 2020, the total number of people fleeing the worsening conditions in Venezuela could exceed 6.5 million.

Parliament reiterated its deep concern at the severity of the humanitarian emergency, which poses a profound threat to the lives of Venezuelans. It highlighted the worsening migration crisis which has spread across the entire region, namely to Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Panama and Argentina, as well as some EU Member States and the Caribbean. Members asked the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to continue cooperating with these countries and territories, not only by providing humanitarian assistance but also by providing more resources and through development policy.

The Venezuelan authorities are urged to:

- acknowledge the ongoing humanitarian crisis;

- prevent its further deterioration;

- promote political and economic solutions to ensure the safety of all civilians and stability for the country and the region;

- create conditions leading to free, transparent and credible presidential and legislative elections based on a fixed calendar, fair conditions for all actors, transparency and the presence of credible international observers as the only way out of the crisis, thereby excluding any violence or military action.

Parliament called for:

- urgent action to prevent the aggravation of the humanitarian and public health crisis, and in particular the reappearance of diseases such as measles, malaria, diphtheria and foot-and-mouth disease;

- the rapid implementation of a short-term response to counter malnutrition among the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children and sick people;

- restrictions to the movements of the individuals on the EU's sanctions list, as well as those of their closest relatives, and freeze their assets and visas;

- an immediate ban on the trade in and circulation of illegal blood gold from Venezuela.

Maduro's dictatorial regime

The Maduro regime has failed to provide transparent information, accept international humanitarian assistance and give priority to the needs and rights of the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Parliament strongly regretted Mr Maduro's threats to expel the EU ambassador from Caracas as a form of retaliation for the sanctions imposed on 11 officials responsible for serious human rights violations. It called on Member States to consider acting under the principle of reciprocity if this situation arises again, namely by revoking the credentials of Maduro's Ambassadors in the EU.

It denounced the rampant corruption which has become an integral part of the Maduro regime including the use of political funding as a tool of foreign interference.

Members called for the immediate release of all political prisoners and an end to the torture, ill-treatment and harassment of political opponents, human rights activists and peaceful protesters, and for those unfairly forced into exile to be allowed to return. They also called for a fact-finding mission to be dispatched to the country in order to assess the situation.