Resolution on further repression against the democratic forces in Venezuela: attacks on presidential candidate María Corina Machado

2024/2549(RSP) - 08/02/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 446 votes to 21, with 32 abstentions, a resolution on further repression against the democratic forces in Venezuela: attacks on presidential candidate María Corina Machado.

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

On 22 October 2023, María Corina Machado was selected as the presidential candidate of the democratic opposition to the regime, winning with 92.35 % of the votes in the primary elections. For several months, María Corina Machado, members of her campaign team, civil society organisations, lawyers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other political players in the democratic opposition to the regime have been targeted by arbitrary and politically motivated attempts to disqualify them from holding public office.

Venezuela’s 2024 elections could represent a turning point from a corrupt autocracy towards a return to democracy if all the points of the Barbados Agreement are respected. However, civil and political rights continue to be violated in Venezuela with around eight million people have been forced to leave the country.

Parliament urged the Venezuelan regime to immediately stop persecuting, repressing and violating the civil and political rights of its political opponents and the Venezuelan people, as well as to revoke the arrest warrants for political opponents and to free political prisoners.

In its resolution, Parliament strongly condemned:

- the attempts to disqualify the presidential candidate of the democratic opposition to the regime, María Corina Machado, and others, such as Henrique Capriles, from holding public office;

- the attacks against, alleged forced disappearances and arrests of and arrest warrants issued for members of Maria Corina Machado’s team and other representatives of the opposition and civil society, as well as human rights defenders and journalists;

- the Maduro regime’s interference in the electoral process.

The Venezuelan regime is urged to immediately stop the persecution of the primary winner and thus fully legitimate candidate of the opposition to the regime, María Corina Machado, and other opposition politicians.

Member States are urged to maintain the sanctions imposed on the Maduro regime. Sanctions should be stepped up until there is a clear and permanent commitment to uphold basic democratic standards, the rule of law and human rights. The resolution called for **further targeted sanctions** through the EU global human rights sanctions regime (EU Magnitsky Act) against the judges of the Supreme Court of Venezuela

who were involved in attempts to ban María Corina Machado from holding public office and against the members of the Venezuelan security forces involved in the systematic abuses perpetrated against government opponents.

Parliament insisted that the EU must not consider sending any electoral observation mission to Venezuela until there are clear and credible guarantees that the Barbados Agreement and the electoral roadmap are being respected in their entirety, until opposition politicians who have been disqualified from holding public office are reinstated, until María Corina Machado is allowed to participate in the elections, and until the EU EOM's 2021 recommendations are properly implemented. The elections and the election results will not be recognised if these conditions are not met.