

ADOPTED RESOLUTION

EPP CONGRESS ZAGREB, 20 – 21 NOVEMBER 2019



Resolution adopted at the EPP Congress, Zagreb (Croatia), 20th - 21th November 2019

EPP Resolution on the Ongoing Crisis in Venezuela

The tragic and preventable crisis in Venezuela continues to worsen. Since coming to power in 2013, Nicolás Maduro and his corrupt regime have ruined their country and impoverished its people through their incompetence and criminality. They have disregarded the Venezuelan constitution, undermined its democratic institutions and constantly violated basic human rights. Many thousands have been killed at the hands of extrajudicial security forces operating on behalf of the regime, with no legal recourse for the families of those murdered. Many more face systematic intimidation. Political opponents have been persecuted, imprisoned and even killed. Torture is widespread.

More than 7 million people in Venezuela need humanitarian assistance; 3.7 million are malnourished; 94% of the population live below the poverty line, with 62% in extreme poverty; 70% of children are not in school. More than 4.3 million Venezuelans have fled their country, with potentially millions more to flee in the coming months. Many have died for want of medicine, water, electricity and petrol.

The EPP, together with the EPP Group in the European Parliament, the Centrist Democrat International, the International Democrat Union and many other partners, has stood strongly and clearly with the people of Venezuela and the democratically-legitimate opposition to the Maduro regime. In particular, the EPP's resolutions of 5 September 2017 and 4 February 2019 have highlighted the abuses of the Maduro regime and demanded an end to political persecution and the immediate release of all political prisoners. We declared Venezuela's 20 May 2018 presidential election to be democratically illegitimate, and in January 2019 we recognised Juan Guaidó as interim President. We have supported a process leading to free and fair elections as soon as possible. We have called for targeted EU sanctions against the Maduro regime so long as it continues to violate the basic freedoms of its people and to block progress towards the restoration of democracy and rule of law.

On 16 July 2019, the European Commission and European Council issued a statement supporting the resumption of the Norway-facilitated talks in Barbados and ultimately calling for free and fair elections — going on to say, moreover, that “In case there are no concrete results from the ongoing negotiations, the EU will further expand its targeted measures.”

On 18 July 2019, the European Parliament adopted a further resolution — co-tabled by EPP Secretary General Antonio López-Istúriz, EPP Vice-President Antonio Tajani and 14 other members of the EPP Group — “[reiterating] its full support for legitimate interim President Juan Guaidó” and “[calling] on the Council to impose additional sanctions targeting the de

facto state authorities responsible for human rights violations and repression”. The resolution stated that “EU authorities must restrict the movements of the individuals concerned, and freeze their assets and visas, as well as those of their closest relatives.”

In August 2019, Maduro’s delegation suspended its participation in negotiations. On 17 September 2019, the EPP Group in the European Parliament echoed its support for additional sanctions in light of the Maduro regime’s bad-faith participation in the talks. On 29 September 2019, the EU announced new sanctions against seven individuals, bringing the total number of targeted senior officials to 25.

The EPP reiterates its support for these measures. We know that Nicolás Maduro has long used negotiations with the opposition and with international mediators as a tactic for delay. That is why we call on the EU to continue putting pressure on the regime by making it clear that additional sanctions are still being prepared against decision-makers abetting the Maduro regime’s suppression of their country’s democratic norms and profiting by their theft of its resources. Additional sanctions should be duly imposed if Maduro’s violations and delay tactics continue. The EPP demands that a regional strategy be established to support Latin American and Caribbean countries, including EU territories, especially the Dutch Caribbean islands of Aruba and Curacao, facing the massive exodus from Venezuela.

The EPP demands that Maduro immediately re-enter talks to set a clear, concrete, timely plan for new presidential elections. More than this, for the good of his country, he should relinquish the presidency in a peaceful transfer of power. He cannot be trusted to preside over a fair election, which must remain not only free from illegal interference but whose process and outcome must ultimately also be trusted by both citizens and independent observers alike.

The people of Venezuela deserve such an effort and desperately need such a solution. The EPP stands with them in denouncing a corrupt dictator and in demanding the restoration of democracy and rule of law to their country.

The EPP condemns the foreign interference of countries like Cuba, China, Turkey and Russia in support of the Maduro regime.