DRAFT Emergency Resolution Nr. 3 tabled by PP / Spain to the EPP Congress, Rotterdam (The Netherlands), 31st May – 1st June 2022

"Situation of freedom of expression and freedom of press in Latin America"

Whereas:

A. Freedom of expression, together with the freedom to issue and receive truthful information, is a fundamental right, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression of the Organization of American States (OAS). It is one of the pillars and guarantees of the proper functioning of democracy and the rule of law, respect for freedom of opinion and political pluralism, especially during electoral processes. Understanding that freedom, freedom of enterprise, pluralism, media independence and the free exercise of journalism constitute basic and fundamental elements of the right to freedom of expression and information.

B. In some Latin American countries, in recent years there has been a deterioration in the exercise of the recognition of freedom of expression, information and communication: there is a growing trend of intimidation and harassment aiming to silence journalists and information professionals. The situation is critical and this requires the adoption of urgent measures to defend the essential role that the independent media plays in guaranteeing the principles governing the rule of law.

C. Intervention by governments in the free operation of media outlets including their closure, censorship, lack of institutional transparency, hate speech and disinformation increasingly for political purposes, are tools used to intensify social polarisation, especially in autocratic and authoritarian regimes such as those in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba. Actions aimed at weakening access to information have even managed to permeate the digital space through temporary or indeterminate blockades by Internet providers to websites where certain digital media operate.

D. Some reliable examples of the clear signs of deterioration of the freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of information in some Latin American countries are the foreign agents law of and the raid on the newspaper *El Confidencial* promoted by Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua after the 2018 protests, the blockades of internet access in Cuba by the Diaz-Canel regime to prevent the 11 July and 15 November 2021 demonstrations, or the

cases against certain Venezuelan media, with examples in the past such as RCTV or other more recent ones such as the newspaper *El Nacional*, whose digital editions are completely blocked within the country on a discretionary basis. All of these actions are to the detriment of democracy in Latin America.

The Congress of the European People's Party:

1. Underlines the fundamental role played, among others, by freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of information as guardians of democracy and the rule of law.

2. Rejects the use and abuse of institutions and laws by authoritarian governments for the purpose of limiting, restricting or even nullifying freedom of expression and freedom of the press and information for political and illegal purposes.

3. Demands the firm protection of freedom of expression in all its forms.

4. Expresses the need to reinforce cooperation for the strengthening of democracy in Latin America, a region with which we share a long history and common values, in the face of the serious totalitarian and populist wave that hangs over the continent.