



Declaration of the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on Venezuela

The European Union and its Member States deeply regret the decision of the Venezuelan authorities to go ahead with the election of a Constituent Assembly on 30 July.

The election of the Constituent Assembly has durably worsened the crisis in Venezuela. It risks undermining other legitimate institutions foreseen by the Constitution such as the National Assembly. The circumstances under which the election took place raise further doubts about the ability of the Constituent Assembly to effectively represent all components of the Venezuelan population. To all those who oppose serious negotiations, it has given an excuse to further drive conflict and use power unchecked. In addition, the legal attributions of the Constituent Assembly are unclear.

The European Union and its Member States therefore cannot recognise the Constituent Assembly as they have concerns over its effective representativeness and legitimacy and call on the government of President Nicolas Maduro to take urgent measures to rectify the course of events. In particular, the effective installation of the Constituent Assembly should be suspended and the attributions of all institutions foreseen by the Constitution should be explicitly recognised.

Further confidence-building measures, such as the release of all jailed political opponents, are also needed. In this respect, the EU and its Member States are deeply concerned by the news that Leopoldo López and Antonio Ledezma have been taken away from house arrest and ask for clarifications about their whereabouts.

By taking this stand, the European Union and its Member States solemnly appeal to all those in Venezuela who have the democratic mandate to govern, to legislate and to administer law: they all need to exercise their respective responsibilities and negotiate a way forward. Negotiation, to be successful, needs compromise, and guarantees. It also needs the full respect for the constitutional rights and mandates of all legitimate State institutions, especially of the National Assembly, but also the Supreme Court and the Attorney General.

The European Union and its Member States also welcome and encourage the offers of countries in the region and other international actors to accompany and facilitate such negotiations. They are ready to actively support all efforts towards this objective.

In this context, they recall the four points identified in the 2016 dialogue and reiterated in the letter from Vatican Secretary of State Parolin, i.e. (i) an electoral calendar; (ii) opening of a humanitarian channel (iii) liberation of imprisoned opponents; and (iv) respect for the National Assembly.

They call on all parties to refrain from violence, including through unidentified groups of armed civilians, and ask the authorities to ensure full respect for all human rights.

The European Union stands ready to assist on all issues which could alleviate the everyday situation of the Venezuelan people.

The European Union and its Member States are ready to gradually step up their response in case democratic principles are further undermined and the Venezuelan Constitution is not respected.