

Council conclusions on Venezuela

1. The EU and Venezuela have strong historic and cultural links and share the same fundamental values and democratic principles. Venezuela is also a country where more than 600 000 European citizens currently reside. Those ties and close relations with the Venezuelan people underline the interest of the European Union in the political, social and economic stability of Venezuela.
2. In this context the European Union fully supports the efforts by Former Presidents Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Mr. Leonel Fernández and Mr. Martín Torrijos to facilitate an urgent, constructive and effective dialogue between the government and the parliamentary majority in Venezuela. These efforts provide a crucial opportunity to create enabling conditions and a framework for peaceful and shared solutions to the country's multidimensional challenges. Therefore, the European Union urges all institutions and political players to engage in this process in full respect of the democratic and constitutional framework, rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those of jailed opponents who cannot exercise their rights.
3. The European Union stands ready to support the efforts of dialogue in every way possible. In this context, the Council encourages the High Representative to maintain regular contacts with Mr. Rodríguez Zapatero and to support the work of the three former Presidents. The Council invites the High Representative, the EEAS and the Commission services to explore further ways for possible EU support to foster dialogue and overcome the economic and social challenges that the country is facing, including through assistance appropriate to most urgent needs.
4. The reconciliation in Venezuela is of the utmost importance both for the European Union and for countries in the region. The European Union believes that regional countries and organisations, as well as other main international partners, have a key role to play to encourage the government and the opposition to engage in a genuine dialogue and in addressing the pressing needs of the people of Venezuela