



Der Vorsitzende - The Chairman - Le Président

Josep Borrell Fontelles
High representative / Vice-President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 24 September 2020

Dear High Representative
Vice President of the Commission
Dear Mr Borrell,

We are alarmed at reports in certain media sources about an alleged and semi-official high-level mission sent by you to Caracas, to negotiate with Nicolás Maduro a possible delay in the legislative elections scheduled for next December 6th. We would like to convey our deep concern in that we believe this decision represents a substantial weakening of the political positions held by the European Union with respect to the Venezuelan regime.

Should this information be confirmed, the EU would effectively be offering the Venezuelan regime a possible exploratory mission as a preliminary step to a fully-fledged electoral observation mission. This, without any of the additional requirements of an adequate electoral framework that would incorporate key conditions, such as the unconditional release of all political prisoners, an end to the harassment and repression of democratic parties and leaders, the authorisation of all political candidates and parties, the return of those forced into exile, the impartial composition of a National Electoral Council as a guarantee for the free exercise of the right to vote, including that of the more than 5 million Venezuelans who have been forced to leave the country. This is the second largest population displacement in the world after the Syrian conflict.

We are also concerned that it appears that this mission has not been discussed nor endorsed by the leaders of the democratic forces represented by the President of the National Assembly. We remind you that the interim President of the country, Juan Guaido, is recognized by 25 EU Member States and by more than 50 countries. Instead, your mission gives the impression that for the EU, the legitimate interlocutor of the EU in Venezuela is the Maduro regime.

In our view, sending such a mission is a serious political and strategic mistake as it whitewashes Maduro's totalitarian regime and grants an appearance of normality where only corruption and tyranny prevail. It is as unthinkable as it would be currently unthinkable to send an EU mission to talk to the Lukashenko regime behind the back of the Belarusian opposition. That is exactly what this decision is doing at the moment with the Venezuelan democrats.

The message of the need to delay the elections could be sent to the de facto Venezuelan authorities, through different channels, together with the set of absolutely unequivocal measures that must be demanded in order to be able to maintain a minimally acceptable election. However, to dispatch an EU Delegation to Caracas to meet with Foreign Minister Arreaza and Maduro's Minister of Communication, Jorge Rodriguez, is unacceptable.

We expect from you, Mr. High Representative, the appropriate explanations in relation to the aforementioned visit, without ruling out those that you may be required to offer before the Chamber.

Respectfully,

Manfred WEBER,
Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament



Sandra KALNIETE,
Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament



Esteban GONZALEZ PONS,
Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament




Paulo RANGEL,
Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament



Dolors MONTSERRAT,
Head of Spanish delegation in the EPP Group in the European Parliament



Leopoldo LÓPEZ GIL,
EPP Group Coordinator in the Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly



CC: Ms Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission