

# Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the latest developments in Venezuela

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The European Union firmly condemns the decision by the Venezuelan authorities to declare the Ambassador of Spain in Caracas as persona non grata and expresses its full solidarity with Spain. The EU recalls that its decisions in the area of foreign policy are taken by unanimity. We call for this decision to be reversed as it affects relations between Venezuela and the European Union.

As regards the recent decision to organise presidential elections, taken by the National Constituent Assembly that the EU does not recognise, we deeply regret that it was taken outside the scope of the national dialogue. Elections should be based on a viable electoral calendar, agreed in the context of the national dialogue with all relevant actors and political parties, all of whom should assume their responsibilities. The respect of equal, fair and transparent conditions of participation, including the lifting of bans on political opponents, a balanced composition of the National Electoral Council and the existence of sufficient guarantees with independent international observation comprised, are the only way to rebuild confidence of the Venezuelan people in the electoral process and avoid further polarisation.

In this context, the EU also deplores the Supreme Court's recent decision to exclude the MUD from the presidential elections, which represents a new and serious breach to the principle of equitable elections.

The future of Venezuela can only be determined by its people. The European Union reiterates the need for a negotiated and peaceful solution to the crisis in Venezuela based on credible elections, the recognition and respect of the role and independence of all democratically elected institutions, notably the National Assembly, the release of all political prisoners and the upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The EU will keep monitoring the situation and stands ready to take appropriate measures in light of developments and will continue using all its instruments to foster shared democratic solutions that can bring political stability and allow the country to address the pressing needs of the population that is harshly affected by the present crisis.

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