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HR/VP speeches

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President, Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

The political deadlock and the dire economic situation in Venezuela are having a devastating impact in the country.

The figures are shocking: more than 21% of the population suffers from malnutrition and 25% are surviving on humanitarian. There are many figures that show how big this crisis is. It has left 70% of children without access to regular education, as well as a shortage of essential medicines, electricity and water supply. Even if it has been restored in most parts of Caracas, vast part of the country continues to suffer from regular blackouts.

The EU has been expanding its humanitarian support. The Commission has established a permanent presence in the country to be able to better monitor the situation. We have provided more than €170 million since 2018 and around €320 million including Member States assistance both inside Venezuela and in the neighbouring countries. We aim at maintaining this level of engagement in the future.

Around two thirds of the immediate humanitarian response have been allocated for actions inside Venezuela. We are the biggest humanitarian donor inside the country. The remaining one third is

implemented in the neighbourhood countries.

In view of the limited operation capacities in the Venezuelan context, the International Contact Group has increased its efforts on humanitarian diplomacy in order to further access an operating space for humanitarian actors in the country.

This is the most important population movement in recent American history. Every day, about 5 000 Venezuelans leave their country. Five million Venezuelans have already left. Most precisely, the number of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Latin American and Caribbean countries has increased to almost 4 million people right now.

The United Nations' organisations estimate that this amount can still increase to 4 million and can reach 5 million by the end of next year.

I would like [that] praise goes to neighbouring countries in the region for their remarkable efforts in welcoming Venezuelan migrants and refugees. But, overall, the need to help them is increasing. The United Nations has called for a Regional Response Plan (RMRP) that reflect growing funding requirements that will double compared to last year, to reach more than US\$ 1.3 billion. The numbers are overwhelming, and we can see, in some cases, patience wearing thin.

We, the European Union together with our Member States need keep up the momentum created by the International Solidarity Conference held at the end of October in Brussels. There was not a big answer from the point of view of the resources collected. We have to call for another one in order to bring resources to face this problem.

No matter how much we dig into our solidarity coffers, our resources will never be enough to address a crisis of this magnitude. We cannot feed every day millions of people.

Venezuela remains a wealthy country. Despite the deep poverty, that it has thrown its people in, it has one of the largest stocks of natural resources. It has also substantive financial assets, many of which are abroad. Surely, they could contribute to relieving the suffering of its citizens. I doubt that the world solidarity can bring the amount of money needed to help such a big amount of people on a continuous way.

We must look into creative solutions to mobilise any kind of resources to address this enormous crisis. I hope in the next future we will think about new ideas that we should consider in order to break the current political impasse and to face this humanitarian crisis for good.

As a final point, let me be clear the real long-lasting solution to the multidimensional crisis in Venezuela can only be achieved through a peaceful, democratic and Venezuelan-owned process leading to free and fair presidential elections.

We cannot wait for the political solution to face what is going to be one of the biggest crisis from the point of view of migration and from the point of view of the wellbeing of the people.

Link to the video:

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