

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Venezuela: Declaration by the High Representative Josep Borrell on behalf of the EU on the latest developments on the National Assembly**

Recent acts against the only democratically elected body in Venezuela, the National Assembly, and many of its Members, including the President of the National Assembly, have further escalated the Venezuelan crisis. The attempts to forcibly block a legitimate election process for the Board of Directors of the National Assembly on 5 January and the use of force against its President and several lawmakers to impede their access to the National Assembly are utterly unacceptable.

The European Union considers that the voting session that led to the "election" of Luis Parra is not legitimate as it did not respect the legal procedures, nor the democratic constitutional principles. The EU expresses its full support to Juan Guaidó as President of the National Assembly and strongly rejects the violations of the democratic, constitutional and transparent functioning of the National Assembly, as well as the continuous intimidations, violence and arbitrary decisions against its Members.

Members of the National Assembly must be able to exercise their parliamentary mandate as received from the Venezuelan people free of any intimidation or reprisal.

In light of these serious acts and decisions undermining democracy, rule of law and human rights, the EU is ready to start work towards applying targeted measures against individuals involved in the violation of these principles and rights. These measures shall in no way harm the Venezuelan people that are already dramatically affected by the crisis. The EU will maintain its assistance to the population and is considering further action in order to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

At the same time, the EU will spare no efforts to help a genuine and inclusive process towards a reinstatement of democracy and rule of law, through free and fair Presidential elections.

The EU encourages all members of the National Assembly and all political actors to engage meaningfully towards a peaceful and democratic resolution to the crisis and the reinstitutionalisation of public powers.

### **Press office - General Secretariat of the Council**

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

[press@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press@consilium.europa.eu) - [www.consilium.europa.eu/press](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press)