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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Council Conclusions on Venezuela

Delegations will find in Annex the Council conclusions on Venezuela, as adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council at its meeting on 28 May 2018.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON VENEZUELA

1. The EU recalls its previous statements on Venezuela, in particular the High Representative's declaration on behalf of the EU of 22 May.
2. The latest developments in Venezuela have pushed further away the possibility of a constitutional negotiated solution that ensures the respect of democracy, the rule of law and human rights.
3. In spite of the numerous calls by national political actors and the international community, including the European Union, for elections on the basis of an agreed electoral calendar and guarantees that can ensure inclusive and credible elections, early presidential elections together with regional elections were held on 20 May without an agreement on the date or on the conditions, and in circumstances which did not allow for the participation of all political parties in an equal manner.
4. The substantially reduced electoral calendar, bans and other major obstacles to the participation of opposition political parties and their leaders, as well as the non-respect of minimal democratic standards as indicated by numerous reported irregularities, notably the widespread abuse of state resources, voter coercion and unbalanced access to media, led to these elections being neither free nor fair.
5. Under these circumstances, the election and its outcome lacked any credibility as the electoral process did not ensure the necessary guarantees for inclusive and democratic elections. The absence of those guarantees also prevented the EU from planning any form of observation to monitor the electoral process according to internationally recognized standards. The EU thus reiterates the need for free and transparent elections respecting the Constitutional rules of Venezuela.

6. Against this background, the EU calls for the holding of fresh presidential elections in accordance with internationally recognised democratic standards and the Venezuelan constitutional order. In this context, the EU will act swiftly, according to established procedures, with the aim of imposing additional targeted and reversible restrictive measures, that do not harm the Venezuelan population, whose plight the EU wishes to alleviate.
7. The EU reiterates the need for the recognition and respect of the role and independence of all democratically elected institutions, notably the National Assembly, the release of all political prisoners, the upholding of rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms.
8. The EU wishes to remain engaged with all stakeholders in Venezuela and reiterates its friendship and support to its people. The EU is ready to help find a democratic way out of the current multidimensional crisis, through a meaningful and result-oriented negotiation conducted in good faith, that includes all relevant Venezuelan political actors. To that end, the EU will enhance its diplomatic outreach with all relevant national, regional and international actors, recognising especially efforts by Latin American and Caribbean partners that have offered their assistance and support to the process of overcoming the crisis in Venezuela.

9. The EU is deeply concerned about the pressing humanitarian needs of the population, including of many Europeans citizens residing in the country, which need to be addressed urgently. The worsening crisis is causing mass migration that creates challenges to host communities and to regional stability. The EU calls on the Venezuelan Government to take immediate action to alleviate the impact of the crisis.
 10. The European Union will continue and step up its support to the population of Venezuela, also in neighboring countries, supporting the socio-economic inclusion of Venezuelans and resilience of host communities.
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