

A future for Venezuela: what role for the EU?

CEPS webinar, 5 November 2020, 2.00 p.m.

Over the past years, Venezuela has gradually fallen into a dramatic, almost dystopian social and economic emergency, with an estimated 95% of the population lacking regular access to water, and 96% lacking continued access to electricity. Political, human rights and socio-economic development in the country has led to the exodus of over five million refugees and migrants. The country that possesses the largest oil reserves in the world is now officially the poorest country in Latin America. Political instability has further worsened since the Spring 2018 elections, which left the country deeply divided. The Organization of the American States called a special permanent council session on September 29 to discuss the situation of democracy in Venezuela, and a recent Independent U.N. Fact-Finding Mission cast dark clouds on the regularity of the forthcoming elections, scheduled on December 6. Many member state representatives from the EU and experts from the U.N. Fact-Finding Mission to Venezuela agreed that, as it stands, the current conditions would not guarantee free and fair parliamentary elections in December. The European External Action Service recently completed a mission to Venezuela, which was aimed at promoting a democratic solution in view of the upcoming elections. How can the EU be most effective in this endeavour? Can the EU and Member States speak with one voice in Venezuela and in the whole region? What international actions would be most useful for the future of Venezuela?

14:00 – 14:10

Welcome and introductory remarks

Steven Blockmans, Director of Research and Head of Foreign Policy, CEPS

Nelson Dordelly-Rosales, Special Advisor on Foreign Affairs, National Assembly of Venezuela

Andrea Renda, Senior Research Fellow and Head of Global Governance, Regulation, Innovation and the Digital Economy, CEPS

14:10 – 15:10

Panel discussion: what future for Venezuela-EU relations?

Moderator: **Monica Rico Benitez**, CEPS

Speakers:

- **Javier Niño-Perez**, Deputy Managing Director for the Americas, European External Action Service
- **Michael Grant**, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Americas, Global Affairs Canada (GAC)
- **Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques**, MEP (S&D group)
- **Diego Enrique Arria Salicetti**, former Venezuelan Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations (1991–1993) and President of the Security Council (March 1992)
- **Jorge Guzmán**, Ph.D. in Political Science, former Advisor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia and former Advisor to the Ambassador of Colombia in Venezuela

15:10 – 15:30

Q&A moderated by **Monica Rico Benitez (CEPS)**