

# **STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE PEACE PROCESS IN COLOMBIA, ONE YEAR AFTER THE INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENTS**

**January 16, 2018**

Following the debate today in the European Parliament on the peace process in Colombia, the S&D, Greens and GUE Groups state that:

1. We regret the opposition of EPP, ALDE and ECR to the approval of a European Parliament resolution supporting the peace process in Colombia, as it was approved by unanimity in January 2016.

2. It is an extraordinary achievement to advance towards peace after 52 years of violence and armed conflict. This is why we value the fact that the November 2016 Peace Agreements are moving forward, in particular that:

- The FARC are complying with the agreement that they have laid down their weapons and turned into a political party that intends to participate fully in the democratic process. The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia last September certified that the weapons and the explosives depots have been handed over, with the UN disabling the former while the Colombian government destroying the latter. The former guerrilla fighters are also moving forward in their process to reintegrate into civilian life.
- The legal and constitutional system in Colombia is adopting the precise reforms so that the Agreement commitments are implemented and the future of the country can be built on them.

3. We are concerned about the increasing number of social and peasant leaders that have been killed. The State vacuum in the areas from which the guerrillas have withdrawn is leaving space to the growing numbers of armed groups and drug traffickers, who are assassinating local leaders and human rights defenders. We call on the Government and the security forces to provide better protection for people at risk.

4. As stated by the UN Secretary General in his report to the Security Council on 10 January 2018, we are also concerned by:

- The slowness to elaborate the new frame that should allow for full political participation and all reintegration measures. In addition, the lack of financial resources for victims' reparation and compensation is a matter of concern.
- The delays in the legislative implementation and in adopting changes in the judicial field that have already been agreed, including the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.
- The persistence of coca cultivation in some rural areas and the difficulties to apply the programme for crop substitution in an effective and sufficiently broad

manner. The Government expected to reach 50% substitution of coca crops by the end of 2017, but it only reached 5%.

- The insufficient progress made in the implementation of the Integral Rural Reform.

4. We welcome the new round of peace talks taking place in Quito between the Government and the ELN. The end to violence must be maintained and we therefore call for the preservation of the ceasefire and hope that the talks will lead to a final peace agreement.

5. We reiterate our full support to the Colombian people in its aspirations for peace, and we hope that the upcoming legislative and presidential elections this year will not interrupt but bring a new energy to the peace process. Our full respect for the will of Colombians in the next elections does not stop us from showing our wish or express our conviction that nothing should threaten the continuity of this process.

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