



European Parliament

European Parliament, Brussels, 14 July 2016

Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón
President
Republic of Colombia

Mr. Antonio García
Chief
Ejército de Liberación Nacional - ELN

Subject: Commencement of the Public Stage of Peace Negotiations between the Colombian Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional - ELN

Dear Mr. President, Dear Mr. García,

On 30 March 2016, the Colombian government and the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN) jointly announced the beginning of the public stage of peace talks, following more than two years of negotiations behind closed doors. As Members of the European Parliament, we wish to express our joy and hope regarding these talks, as well as our support for this step forward in the process, the headquarters and commencement of which will be in Ecuador.

Considering that this new stage of dialogue complements the current process underway between the Colombian government and the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - FARC), we believe that its success will be an essential contribution to the construction of a long and sustainable peace in Colombia. As such, we urge both parties to make every effort to begin these talks as soon as possible and work towards a satisfactory outcome. We are convinced that their prompt commencement will contribute to bringing the armed conflict to an end, and will secure the confidence of the Colombian society in both the process and in the parties themselves.

We recognize the fundamental character of the work carried out by human rights defenders, who are the cornerstone of democracy, and underscore the importance of their protection. Furthermore, we acknowledge the role of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia, and believe it essential, that its mandate to monitor the human rights situation be maintained during the post-conflict stage.

Finally, we wish to reiterate our support for initiatives, which are aimed at reaching a political solution to the armed conflict and moving Colombia towards a true and positive peace, based on the principles of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law.

Yours sincerely,

1. Helmut Scholz, Member of the European Parliament, Germany
2. Jude Kirton Darling – Member of the European Parliament, United Kingdom
3. Deirdre Clune – Member of the European Parliament, Ireland
4. Ramón Tremosa-i-Balcells – Member of the European Parliament, Spain
5. Molly Scott Cato – Member of the European Parliament, United Kingdom
6. Tania González Peñas – Member of the European Parliament, Spain
7. Richard Howitt – Member of the European Parliament, United Kingdom
8. Ernest Urtasun – Member of the European Parliament, Spain
9. Paloma Lopez Bermejo – Member of the European Parliament, Spain MEP
10. Gabriele Zimmer – Member of the European Parliament, Germany
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12. Lynn Boylan – Member of the European Parliament, Ireland
13. Liadh Ní Riada – Member of the European Parliament, Ireland
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26. Barbara Spinelli – Member of the European Parliament, Italy
27. Brian Hayes – Member of the European Parliament, Ireland
28. Miguel Urbán Crespo – Member of the European Parliament, Spain
29. Xabier Benito Ziluaga – Member of the European Parliament, Spain
30. Lola Sánchez Caldentey – Member of the European Parliament, Spain
31. Estefania Torres Martínez – Member of the European Parliament, Spain
32. Kostadinka Kuneva, – Member of the European Parliament, Greece
33. Eleonora Forenza – Member of the European Parliament, Italy