

**Declaration of the Mayors Regarding the Arbitrary Detention of Venezuelan Colleagues**

We, the undersigned mayors, express our concern over the arbitrary detention of our Venezuelan colleagues, and at the same time, we express solidarity with them and their families in this difficult situation.

We consider the forcible detention of the Mayor of Caracas Antonio Ledezma on the 19 of February, 2015, and its subsequent possession in a military prison, as well as the previous trials with the mayor of San Diego, Vincenzo Scarano and the mayor of San Cristobal Daniel Ceballos in 2014, to be a politically motivated act, through which the Venezuelan state authorities try to silence the views of the opposition.

Such a procedure has no place in the state based on the Rule of Law. It grossly violates the fundamental rights of the persons concerned, especially their right to liberty and the prohibition of arbitrary arrest or detention determined, among others, in Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Venezuela is a party. It contradicts the principles of vertical separation of powers, it impermissibly interferes with the rights of Venezuelan territorial units to self-government and it makes impossible to exercise free will of the people guaranteed by the Venezuelan constitution.

For all these reasons, we call on the relevant authorities to immediately stop the prosecution of the Mayor Antonio Ledezma, to abolish the penalties for the two above mentioned mayors, as well as to revoke the relevant convictions. We urge the Venezuelan government to exercise its authority fully within the principles of the Rule of Law and to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which it is committed according to the international law and which is guaranteed by the Venezuelan constitution.

In Prague on September 14, 2015