

European Parliamentarians support women's march for peace in Colombia

- **MEPs send a letter of support to the march which is set to take place tomorrow, November 22, in Colombia, in support of the peace process**
- **They ask the negotiators in Havana to listen to the demands of women and victims**
- **They ask the parties at the dialogue table to declare a bilateral cease -fire**

Brussels, November 21 2012. More than 20 MEPs from the European Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, the Greens European Free Alliance and the European United Left have sent a letter for the march which will take place tomorrow in Colombia in support of the peace process. The main request of the march, organized by the Women for Peace network (*Mujeres por la Paz*) is that neither the government nor the FARC leave the negotiating table before signing a Peace Agreement.

In the letter, the MEPs expressly ask the negotiators in Havana “to listen to the demands of civil society, particularly women and victims, and take into account their proposals”. They recall that Colombian women “have been developing peace-building proposals for decades, calling for a political solution to the armed conflict in Colombia”. They argue that if the country wants to emerge from a conflict that has been raging for so many years and build a lasting peace, it “must”, without a doubt, “listen to these voices”.

In this open letter the MEPs also call upon the actors at the negotiating table to consider the possibility of a bilateral cease -fire. This request is made expressly on behalf of the victims: “Colombia should not have to mourn for them any longer”. The MEPs also state that a ceasefire would be an important step to build confidence in the peace process and show that there are results and positive changes for the civilian population living in conflict areas. The initiative for this letter of support comes after an event took place on November 5th in the European Parliament entitled ‘Women, fundamental players for peace-building in Colombia’, organized by the European civil society networks **Oidhaco** and **Grupo Sur**.

Both Oidhaco and Grupo Sur support the requests made by the women in the peace march which will take place tomorrow in Colombia. “For many years we have supported all peace initiatives from Colombian civil society. Now that the government and the FARC are negotiating an Agreement, we have requested that the peace talks in Havana open their doors to civil society, including women. It is also important to listen to the victims because there is no real ‘peace’ without them”, concluded the organisations.