



Topic: **Economic effects of Refugees on Developing Countries**

Committee: **ECOFIN**

Country: **Venezuela**

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is nowadays hosting 204.300 people in refugee and refugee-like situation<sup>1</sup> (which means that not all of them are considered as such, even if they meet the stipulated requirements) that mostly come from Colombia looking to escape from their country's Armed Conflict and the pervasive violation of Human Rights that it has caused. The ease to reach Venezuela –both countries share a 2.219 km long border- and the perception of our country being a secure territory (even the whole nation is immersed in an economic crisis) are the major causes of their flight.

The massive arrival of refugee claims to Venezuela since 1999 has favored the creation of measures that protect refugees and offer a shelter for those whose life is in danger, including an Organic Law which sets the procedure to follow in case of refuge, in cooperation with state institutions, several NGOs and ACNUR. The refugees that arrive to our country have the right to apply for recognition of their refugee condition, according to our laws. This means that they will be subject of the principle of non-refoulment and will not be punished for their illegal trespassing of the borders<sup>2</sup>.

From our country, all efforts are being made to ensure social integration of refugees thanks to the invaluable help of ACNUR's projects in several regions of Venezuela. However, a great deal still has to be done to guarantee their full inclusion, which shall begin with the documentation of all the Colombian refugees that express their need of international protection: only 2% of the people who live in a situation of refuge in Venezuela are factually considered refugees and treated as such, which means that the remaining 98% are in process of their applications being approved or those have already been denied. This means that those who cannot prove their situation through a refugee card cannot obtain any work or residence permits and can be subject of fines and refoulment at any time, creating a legal uncertainty which is very damaging for those citizens and their families.

Venezuela is the South American country that hosts the highest number of refugees within their frontiers in the continent, being thus clearly overflowed by this situation due to the lack of funding to deal with it. Nevertheless, this situation is not unsolvable: a special fund from the UN directed to ensure the correct documentation of refugees when arriving to their host countries is urgent and will pose the first step to cope with the issue: only once this stage has been reached, Venezuela will be able to address the problem by exercising the necessary expenditure and asking for foreign aid if necessary. This is a global problem in need of an urgent solution: international endeavors will be indispensable if we all want to end this dramatic situation that affects more than fifty million people around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> ACNUR (2013). Global tendencies of 2013 (“The human cost of War”), retrieved April 6, 2015 from [http://www.acnur.es/PDF/acnur\\_tendenciasglobales2013\\_web\\_20140619124652.pdf](http://www.acnur.es/PDF/acnur_tendenciasglobales2013_web_20140619124652.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Nava, B. (2008). Derechos Humanos de los refugiados: Situación en Venezuela. Retrieved April 7, 2015 from [http://w2.ucab.edu.ve/tl\\_files/CDH/recursos/ponencia.pdf](http://w2.ucab.edu.ve/tl_files/CDH/recursos/ponencia.pdf)