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REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT IN VENEZUELA, JANUARY 2026

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This LEGA Perspectives aims to summarize the most significant aspects of the regulatory environment for private enterprise in Venezuela during January 2026.

The report consists of three parts: (i) an overview of the regulatory environment; (ii) a highlight of the high-impact regulations enacted; and (iii) a summary of government appointments of interest to the private sector.

Overview of the Regulatory Environment – January 2026

In January 2026, two significant decisions were issued by the Constitutional Chamber regarding the constitutional status of the Presidency of the Republic and the Decree of External Commotion. The Decree of External Commotion was enacted. The National Assembly reformed the Organic Hydrocarbons Law. An Administrative Ruling was issued regarding guidelines for the diagnosis and cleanup of real estate assets belonging to Public Sector Organs and Entities. Additionally, seven new Ministers were appointed, along with a new Sectoral Vice President for the Economy and a new President of the International Center for Productive Investment.

Constitutional Chamber Decisions

The Vice President must assume the Presidency as Acting President

First, **Decision No. 0001 of January 3, 2026**, established that “given the forced absence of the President of the Republic (...) it is ORDERED that citizen DELCY ELOÍNA RODRÍGUEZ GÓMEZ, Executive Vice President of the Republic, ASSUME AND EXERCISE in an ACTING capacity all powers, duties, and faculties inherent to

the office of President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in order to guarantee administrative continuity and the integral defense of the Nation.”

Declaration of Constitutionality of the Decree of External Commotion

On January 8, 2026, the Constitutional Chamber issued **Decision No. 0002**, declaring the constitutionality of the Decree of External Commotion issued by the President on January 3.

Regulations

National Assembly Legislative Plan Approved

On January 22, 2026, the National Assembly’s legislative plan for the 2026-2027 period was approved. The scope of this plan will be explained in a subsequent LEGA Perspectives.

State of External Commotion

Decree No. 5.200 was published in the **Extraordinary Official Gazette No. 6.954** on January 3, 2026, declaring a State of External Commotion throughout the National Territory.

The most notable measures of this Decree include:

- The **militarization** of public service infrastructure, the oil industry, and other basic State industries. Personnel in these services or companies will temporarily be subject to military jurisdiction.
- The President of the Republic is empowered to:
 - Order the **requisition of assets** necessary for national defense.
 - Restrict the free movement of persons or vehicles of any kind within the national territory.
 - Suspend the right to public meetings and demonstrations.
 - Order specific natural or legal persons (public or private) to cooperate with competent authorities for the protection of persons, property, and locations, and impose extraordinary services upon them.
 - Issue other exceptional and temporary regulations necessary to repel external threats or hostile actions, restore internal order, and protect the rights of the population.

- Any other measure necessary to protect the Venezuelan people, territorial integrity, and sovereignty.
- Upon the entry into force of this Decree, articles in current laws that are incompatible with the measures set forth in the Decree are temporarily suspended.
- This Decree has the **rank and force of Law** and a duration of ninety (90) days, renewable for an additional ninety (90) days following constitutional procedures.

Hydrocarbons

Reform of the Organic Hydrocarbons Law

The **Reform Law of the Organic Hydrocarbons Law** was published in the **Extraordinary Official Gazette No. 6.978** on January 29, 2026.

The reform allows:

- Private company participation in the direct execution of **primary activities** (upstream).
- Expanded powers for minority partners in joint ventures (*empresas mixtas*).
- Local and international **arbitration**.
- Simplification of the tax regime in the hydrocarbons sector.

Tax Exoneration in the Hydrocarbons Sector

Decree No. 5.207 (Official Gazette No. 43.292, January 9, 2026) exonerates the payment of Value Added Tax (VAT), Import Tax, and Customs Regime Determination Fees, as well as any other applicable taxes or contributions, for the definitive import and domestic sale of hydrocarbon-derived fuels, as well as inputs and additives for improving gasoline quality. This applies to activities carried out directly by the State, wholly State-owned companies, joint ventures (any capital proportion), and private companies.

Public Assets

Administrative Ruling No. 023 (Official Gazette No. 43.306, January 29, 2026) establishes guidelines for the diagnosis and cleanup of real estate assets belonging to Public Sector Organs and Entities. It mandates an inventory and the

implementation of legal, administrative, and technical cleanup measures for such properties.

Restructuring of the National Water System

Decree No. 5.229 (Official Gazette No. 43.304, January 27, 2026) declares the restructuring of the National Water System. It proceeds with the **merger by absorption** of regional water companies into **HIDROVEN**, centralizing the administration and competencies of water services. Additionally, state and municipal water companies are transferred to HIDROVEN.

Extension of the Orinoco River Navigation Channel Agreement

Addendum No. 1 (Official Gazette No. 43.292, January 9, 2026) extends for five (5) years the agreement between the **Corporación Venezolana de Guayana (CVG)** and the **National Institute of Canalizations (INC)** regarding competencies over the Orinoco River navigation channel.

Appointments

- **National Assembly Board (2026-2027):** Jorge Rodríguez Gómez (President); Pedro Infante Aparicio (First VP); Grecia Colmenares Santander (Second VP).
- **Council of State Representative:** Francisco José Ameliach Orta.
- **Minister of the Office of the Presidency:** Juan Francisco Escalona Camargo.
- **Sectoral Vice President of Economy:** Calixto José Ortega Sánchez.
- **President of the International Center for Productive Investment (CIIP):** Calixto José Ortega Sánchez (Acting).
- **New Ministry of Industry and National Commerce:** Created from the suppression and merger of the Ministry of Industries and the Ministry of Commerce. **Luis Antonio Villegas Ramírez** appointed as Minister.
- **Ministry of Transportation:** Aníbal Eduardo Coronado Millán.
- **Ministry of Health:** Nuramy Josefa Gutiérrez González.
- **Ministry of Communication and Information:** Miguel Ángel Pérez Pirela.



- **Ministry of Ecosocialism:** Freddy Alfred Nazaret Nañez Contreras (also cited: Aníbal Eduardo Coronado Millán in Gazette 6.962).
- **Sectoral Vice President of Science, Technology, Education, and Health:** Isabel Alicia Iturria Caamaño.
- **President of the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security (IVSS):** Carlos Humberto Alvarado González (Acting).
- **Director General of the Autonomous Service of Sanitary Registry (SACS):** Esperanza Josefa Antonia Briceño de Jayaro.
- **Director General of Security and Integral Protection (Ministry of Hydrocarbons):** Henry Antonio Nava Rumbos (Acting).

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