1. Opening of the sitting

(The sitting opened at 09.00)

2. Implementing measures (Rule 88): see Minutes

3. Economic crisis and the euro (debate)

President. – The first item is the statements by the Council and the Commission on the economic crisis and the euro.

As you know, during the summer recess the European Parliament was already making efforts to ensure that straight after the recess we could immediately begin discussion of matters relating to the crisis and do everything possible to support the work of the Commission and work with the Council on solving the economic problems of our continent. The Committee on Economic and Budgetary Affairs met on 29 August. Now we are continuing our debate in the European Parliament. At a future part-session the Prime Minister of Luxembourg and President of the Euro Group Jean-Claude Juncker is also going to discuss the subject of economic matters in Europe. We are, therefore, attending to our most important internal question. Taking part in today’s proceedings are a representative of the Polish Presidency, Mr Rostowski, and the President of the Commission, Mr Barroso. I would like to welcome them both.

Jan Vincent-Rostowski, President-in-Office of the Council. – (PL) Mr President, honourable Members, 219 years ago, on 11 July 1792 in Paris, the Legislative Assembly issued a declaration which began with the words la patrie est en danger – ‘the nation is under threat’. I think that we are in no doubt, today, we cannot be in any doubt, and I will say this in French: que l’Europe est en danger – ‘Europe is under threat’. Only two months later, a brief skirmish took place at Valmy and the French Republic was saved. That was in September 1792. We are still a long way from victory, and I would like, today, to outline the dangers facing Europe, us, Parliament and the institutions.

Firstly, I think we must clearly and unambiguously say that if it were not for the vital interventions of the European Central Bank in August this year, which were fully justified from the technical, legal and political point of view – I will come back to these three in a moment – we would not, today, be looking with alarm at an approaching hurricane, we would already be in the middle of it. I am in no doubt that in those highly charged days the European Central Bank, and in particular its President Jean-Claude Trichet, saved Europe. The technical justification for the interventions which were begun then and which continue today is fairly obvious, and at the same time also constitutes their legal justification.

The level of uncertainty and the level of fear which exist in the markets as a result of apprehension over the enormous upheavals which might very naturally engulf Europe are making the normal operation of monetary policy impossible. How can the Central Bank influence and ensure price stability if the normal transmission channel – adjustment of interest rates and the Central Bank’s money supply – does not affect what is done by
European families or European businesses, or obviously at the most important and fundamental level if it does not affect the behaviour of European commercial banks? All these participants in Europe’s economic life are conscious of the dangers, and this being the case they do not know if they should hold on to their money, which makes the normal function of transmission mechanisms impossible, or get rid of their money, which could result in the danger of inflation. In this situation of uncertainty the first duty of the Central Bank must be to protect transmission mechanisms and secure stability. For this we must not only be grateful to the European Central Bank, but we must also firmly and clearly back its decisions.

(Applause)

I think it is also worth thinking about what would happen if we were to allow a gradual disintegration of the euro area – if some countries, the poorer and weaker ones, were pushed out of the euro area, or if other, wealthier countries themselves decided to leave the euro area. I am sure the Members of this House are familiar with the analysis conducted recently and published by the Swiss bank UBS. According to these calculations, if a poor country, a country which is in trouble, were to leave the euro area or be pushed out of the euro area, the costs for that country could reach 40-50% of its GDP in the first year and then be from between 10% to 20% of GDP annually. If a rich country decided to leave the euro area, the costs in the first year would be 20-25% of GDP, and after that GDP would be permanently at a level 10% lower than it is now.

Those figures may seem abstract. Let us think more carefully about what would happen to unemployment in the wealthier countries, in a country such as Germany, or if the budget of a large member of the euro area ran out of money or if such a country were to leave the euro area. Of course, we do not know exactly what the consequences would be, but it seems to me that a level of unemployment significantly higher than 15% is the least we could fear in such a situation.

What is more, we can also be of the opinion that a continuation of the crisis as it is, in its current unspecified and unfinished form, will also unavoidably cause – if it were to continue as it is, and of course it is doubtful if a situation in which the crisis remains unresolved is possible – but if this situation were to continue for a year or two, we would have to reckon with a very, very significant rise in unemployment, perhaps even a doubling of current levels, and this would also happen in the wealthiest countries.

In view of this, Poland, as the country holding the Presidency and as a Member State, fully supports all efforts to overcome the crisis by further integration of the euro area. However, we must remember that this process should not be used to create a two-speed Europe. We must, of course, save Europe at all costs, but we ought – working together as the 17 – to do only that which is necessary to save the euro area and so to save Europe, because, and let us not fool ourselves, if the euro area were to collapse, Europe would not last long after such a shock and all of its dramatic political consequences. This is why in closing I would like to appeal for rapid agreement on the six-pack. The differences between Parliament and the Council are now truly minimal. We must send a clear signal that we can work together by taking the six-pack quickly through to completion.

I will end with a personal anecdote. At the airport last week, I met a friend who worked with me in the Ministry of Finance during the first years of Poland’s transformation. Today, he is the President of a large Polish bank. We were talking about the crisis in the euro area, and he said, ‘You know, economic and political upheavals like this are usually followed
10 years later by a catastrophic descent into war. I am seriously thinking about getting a green card for my children in the United States. ’Ladies and gentlemen, honourable Members, we must not allow this to happen.

José Manuel Barroso, Member of the Commission. — Mr President, I welcome this opportunity to debate the measures that are urgently needed to respond to the turmoil in the euro area and on the global markets.

We are confronted with the most serious challenge of a generation. This is a fight for the jobs and prosperity of families in all our Member States. This is a fight for the economic and political future of Europe. This is a fight for what Europe represents in the world. This is a fight for European integration itself.

We must acknowledge the reality. Our citizens, the markets and our partners in the world have not yet been convinced that we are capable of taking on that fight and winning it decisively. In the cacophony of criticisms, counter-criticisms, magic bullets and miracle panaceas that are proposed on a daily basis the truth has been drowned out – that solid, visible, concrete proposals have been made. They have been agreed upon but they have taken too long and have not yet been fully delivered.

So my first concern is implementation of what we agreed. That is why it is now imperative that we demonstrate our joint resolve to act upon our decisions without delay. Now is the time to prove our full commitment to the principles of solidarity and responsibility. All euro area Member States have made commitments and are making efforts to put in order their public finances and to implement economic reforms that are indeed a precondition for growth. All of these Member States must now demonstrate in a convincing way that they are serious. It is not enough to make plans. It is action that counts and those euro area Member States that are providing the assistance so crucial for the survival and stability of the euro must also clearly show that they are determined to deliver support to countries that implement their programmes, as they have agreed. They must acknowledge that this is also to their advantage. Supporting the euro is not just an act of solidarity towards others. It is an act of self-interest.

None of this is easy and we in the European institutions must recognise that. We must make the case and persuade our citizens why they should give their support. National politicians need to do much more to explain the benefits that the euro brings and we in the European institutions have a special role to play. We must do more together to make the case and I count on you to do so in your countries as well.

Reassurance for our citizens, for investors and for our world partners can only come from the conviction that a comprehensive approach is being delivered in the short, medium and long term.

So what is needed now in the short term? First of all, the implementation of the package agreed on 21 July 2011 by all euro area Heads of State and Government, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Central Bank in the presence of the IMF. It is an important package which includes measures to increase the flexibility and effectiveness of the EFSF that will help to ensure financial stability. It foresees lowering lending rates, extending the maturities and allowing the Facility to do more than intervene only in a precautionary way, by allowing it to intervene on the secondary markets. These decisions are important but they have not yet been implemented. The obstacles raised by some in implementing the crucial decisions already in the days and weeks following the
meeting exacerbated the extraordinary developments in the sovereign bond markets during August. Of course, the fact there were also difficult moments on the other side of the Atlantic, creating doubts regarding the situation of the United States of America, was also a major factor aggravating the general very negative investor sentiment. This also reflected an unabated concern among investors that the euro area is incapable of responding effectively to its own crisis, because it takes too long to enact its own decisions. We have to recognise that sometimes there is a real problem between the speed of the markets and the time we take to make democratic decisions. Markets are impatient and democracies are usually slower.

The Commission worked tirelessly through the summer to support the work necessary to implement the decisions. Both Commissioner Rehn and I came to Brussels to drive this work forward. Therefore I expect all euro area Member States to make good on their promises and urge them to ratify the 21 July agreement by the end of September. Last weekend, the Greek Government took significant steps to deliver on their commitments. I urge Greece to finalise these efforts together with the Troika. The perspective of recovery and growth should be made a national cause.

Another urgent priority is the six-pack on reinforced economic governance. I talked about the delivery gap. It is now almost one year since the Commission put forward ambitious proposals to strengthen governance of euro area economies. After all the talk, we are now very close to what the Commission originally put on the table. The European Parliament has played a decisive role in keeping the level of ambition of these proposals. I salute you for that. I would now ask the co-legislators to adopt this package as a matter of urgency.

Part of the leadership we must provide means being honest with our citizens that we are also addressing the structural problems Europe faces. The crisis that we are facing is the result of competitiveness problems. Within the European Union – and also within the euro area – some Member States have been lagging behind others, which has led to greater imbalances. The same types of imbalances have also built up worldwide. This has resulted in an accumulation of debts and deficits that are simply not sustainable and have been further aggravated by the financial crisis. To tackle the crisis, we must correct the excessive deficits and debts in a determined and sustainable way. This is the only way to create a Union of stability and growth and it can only be done convincingly through the Community method.

We have a duty to learn the lessons of the crisis and to focus on the creation of growth and jobs. At the top of the agenda is the need to build a strong economy and not to use fiscal or monetary stimulus to live beyond our means. We must look at the reforms needed to correct these imbalances so as to create growth and jobs for the future. Growth is key. We must use all instruments available to promote growth. In the European Union we have some instruments, from the Agenda 2020 to the Single Market Act, to promote sustainable growth.

Europe needs to reform to deliver the good jobs, the better healthcare and the comfortable retirement that all Europeans aspire to. The purpose of reform is to strengthen our social market economy; to deliver a fair society where everyone has a chance in life and nobody is left behind; and to equip all Europeans with the skills, talents and opportunities to prosper in the global economy. Our impulse for reform must go hand-in-hand with our sense of fairness and social equity.
A sound economy also means we need sound financial markets. They have to return to their original function of a service industry for the real economy. The development of their profits must reflect the real economy. We have presented a whole series of proposals to this end, including those on short-selling and over-the-counter derivatives. In the next weeks we will go further with proposals to tackle insider trading and market manipulation, among others, as well as measures to address concerns over credit rating agencies. As I promised, the European Commission will also very soon propose a Financial Transaction Tax.

When it comes to the governance of the euro area, I am convinced we need deeper and more results-driven integration, and let me be clear: this has to be within the Community system. A system based purely on intergovernmental cooperation has not worked in the past and will not work in the future.

(Applause)

After all, this is why the Community method and the EU institutions were created by the Member States in the first place. The Economic and Monetary Union cannot function properly only on the basis of decisions taken by unanimity, because if a Eurosceptic fringe can determine the position of one Member State and if one Member State can block decisions, the result is that we are not credible. This is not about institutional positioning or power. It is about efficiency and delivery. Market investors will trust us only when we can show that we are able to deliver on our commitments and in a real determined way.

Moreover, the independent work of the European institutions further strengthens the credibility of our economic and budgetary policies. It is only through the European institutions that the European interest of all euro area Member States will be counted. It is only through the European institutions that we will avoid a fragmentation of the Single Market and a disconnect between the 17 members of the euro area and the European project of the 27 countries that are the European Union. We must keep the euro united and we must keep the euro open.

If we want to ensure democratic legitimacy for decisions taken at European level, full unequivocal respect for the role of this House is crucial. If we want European citizens to take ownership of European integration, re-nationalising euro area decisions is not the way to do it.

We, the European Commission and the European Parliament, are the Community institutions par excellence. And it is our duty to defend the collective European interest jointly. We must show that the Community actors are strong, united and able to deliver. Delivering also means that we need a better spirit of partnership and confidence between us – the European institutions – and the Member States, their governments and national parliaments.

Honourable Members, the signal I receive time and time again from our global partners, including in the G20, is that the world expects a more integrated Europe. In the age of globalisation everybody expects Europe to be stronger and united. We are a valued partner in global fora and debates and we have a significant influence on global issues such as trade and climate change because in those matters we are able to act together, united.

But the fact is that our way of taking and implementing decisions in the Economic and Monetary Union is consigning us to punching below our weight. Only by acting together and maximising the benefits of our interdependence will Europe reach its true potential
and be able to act as more than the sum of its parts. The conclusion I draw is crystal clear: the right way to stop the negative cycle and to strengthen the euro is to deepen integration, namely within the euro area, based on the Community method. This is the way to go.

(Mixed reactions)

It is also the way for the euro area to really play the role that investors and global partners expect it to play. What we need now is a new, unifying impulse: *un nouveau moment fédérateur* – let us not be afraid of the word – *un moment fédérateur* is indispensable.

Honourable Members, the road to recovery is long and it is painful for millions of our citizens and businesses, but it will not be made less painful by continued procrastination or by presenting as quick fixes ideas that will necessarily take time. It has become clear that we need an even greater integration of our economic and budgetary policies.

There has been much debate on the need for eurobonds. Today I want to confirm that the Commission will soon present options for the introduction of eurobonds. Some of these options could be implemented within the terms of the current Treaty, others would require Treaty change. But we must be honest: this will not bring an immediate solution for all the problems we face, and it will be one element of a comprehensive approach to further economic and political integration.

Let us not confuse these projects for deeper integration with immediate necessities. Ideas that would require substantial Treaty change are not going to be a substitute for Greece doing its homework or for euro area countries strengthening their fiscal surveillance. We must avoid compounding the dissatisfaction in public opinion by being seen as failing to deliver overnight what we already know takes time.

What we need now is for Greece to fully carry out its reform programme; for the six-pack to be adopted; and for Member States to ratify the 21 July agreements. What would be our credibility on deeper integration if we could not deliver the six-pack or the 21 July agreement? Only by proving ourselves in this way can we regain the market and public confidence necessary to even aspire to longer-term goals, to a more ambitious euro area and to a stronger Europe.

The Commission will continue to play its role to the full, putting the key proposals on the table that shape both the immediate and the long-term response: proposals that are ambitious, that should reflect the interests of all. What both the citizens and the investors want is political determination and economic discipline. To deliver this, we need more, not less, Europe.

Deeper integration is part of the solution. It will happen – not overnight – but in a solid, democratic process with the participation of this Parliament. I believe that with courage and wisdom the European Union will – as was always the case in the past – come out of the crisis stronger. It is certainly our duty to work for that purpose.

(Applause)

**Joseph Daul,** *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, for months now, the European Union has been seeking sustainable solutions; however, faced with the attacks on the euro, initiatives have been taken.

I am referring here to the first public finance consolidation measures and to the positive golden rule proposal. I am also referring to the introduction of measures to strengthen the
European Financial Stability Facility and the establishment of new economic governance instruments, or the six-pack, on which I should like to see a definitive agreement reached before the end of the month.

I am also referring to the coordination of national budgets and to this summer’s proposals regarding European economic governance, the financial transactions tax and tax harmonisation.

(The speaker broke off due to an interpreting problem)

Mr President, since the start of the crisis, billions of euros have been committed. European citizens are indeed concerned, as they can see no end to the efforts being asked of them. They feel as if they are feeding a bottomless pit, even though they are aware that this European crisis calls for a Europe-wide response and not only a national one. They question the ability of national and European leaders to end this crisis of confidence and growth once and for all. The markets remain unsatisfied, doubtful and particularly volatile, and react to the slightest rumour.

Ladies and gentlemen, the time has come, for eurozone Member States and for any other EU Member States that would like to be involved, to pull out all the stops and adopt strong measures, together and at the same time, to put an end to the doubts over the EU’s capacity to shoulder its responsibilities.

President Barroso, President-in-Office of the Council, Europe must restore its credibility. Europe must face up to reality and regain control of public finances. It must prepare itself for a transitional period characterised by stringent financial management at both national and regional level, and by incentives for savers and for investment in innovation, education and training. Europe must undergo a dramatic transformation to be referred to as the federation of the United States of Europe, or simply integration.

In this crisis, as in any other crisis, nothing will ever be as it was before.

The question is: are we capable, right now, of envisaging a different future for ourselves?

I recommend that, on the basis of a Commission proposal, all eurozone governments and all other EU governments who so wish, take a decision to drastically reduce their debts by taking coordinated measures, all at once and on the same day, to ensure the viability of their pension systems and to actually harmonise their taxation, in particular their corporate taxation.

By suddenly making economic governance a reality, and one that is accepted by all the Member States of the euro area, the EU would achieve two things: it would demonstrate its capacity to take long-term action, and it would strengthen cohesion between citizens, who would at last be subject to the same rights and obligations. By taking coordinated budgetary discipline measures while stimulating crucial growth in our economies, countries would establish a single or converging set of rules and would send a clear and strong message as to their will to further integration.

I should like to say a word, President Barroso, about growth. We are constantly saying ‘growth, growth’. Many people still dream of achieving double-digit growth. Our primary duty is to sustain low growth and avoid deflation.

The European institutions, for their part, must be more ambitious as regards common policies. We need those policies that we refer to regularly: a trade policy, an ambitious
research policy, a food-safety policy, an industrial policy that has finally undergone reform, and above all a policy enabling the internal market to function properly.

We have many regulations, but in these difficult times it remains to be seen whether they are actually applied. If there are things which need revising, we will revise them, but there is no need to add to them in the current climate.

Let us also enhance integration of the euro area, the heart of European integration, in order to help reform the European Union. That is what we in the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) are calling for, as we are aware of the responsibility of the centre-right, which is in the driving seat in times of trouble.

Ladies and gentlemen, our credibility is going to be at stake over the coming months. It is true that we are under very heavy attack, which is probably exaggerated in some areas. It is now up to us to show that the EU has the capacity to restore growth conditions and avoid succumbing to deflation. This, too, will safeguard employment levels. Everything must be done to protect our way of life as much as possible and to defend our values.

A major integration effort is ultimately not the way to succeed. Instead, ladies and gentlemen, we must find a way, among responsible democratic political groups, of showing a new approach and a new path to our Heads of State or Government, who are in a very difficult situation.

What I am asking of this Parliament, and of President Barroso and the President-in-Office of the Council, over the coming weeks, is unity, that is to say a single vision for European citizens for the four or five years to come. That is what we must work towards today.

**Martin Schulz, on behalf of the S&D Group. – (DE)** Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we are in the midst of a serious crisis which is threatening the process of European integration. We need to be completely clear about this.

The Heads of State or Government of the eurozone countries agreed on 21 July to take measures which we all believed would demonstrate that the eurozone cannot be split up and would also show that we are taking bold, joint action, which is coming late, but hopefully not too late. Subsequently, these same heads of government in many of the eurozone countries had to fight for the political survival of their governments, among other things because of the measures that they had taken.

The problem not only concerns the weakness of the euro. Most importantly, it concerns the weakness of those people who are supposed to be managing the euro. Consequently, much of what you say, Mr Barroso, is right, but in the case of those responsible for managing the euro it appears to be falling on deaf ears. They seem to me to be like Buridan’s ass. It also stood between two piles of hay and could not decide which one it should eat from. It ended up starving to death.

The president of the German Bundesbank, Mr Weidmann, has rightly said that we have reached the time of either-or. Either everyone must act for themselves and against all the others or everyone must work together and take joint action to support our strong currency. The middle way, which most countries always seem to choose and which involves a partial commitment and a yes-and-no, wait-and-see approach, will bring the euro to the point of collapse.

(Applause)
Therefore, we need committed, joint action involving the European Union institutions. We need economic governance for the European Union which will ensure that all our policies are coherent. By this I mean all the policies both inside and outside the eurozone. You are right that the euro is open to everyone. The stability criteria apply not only to the eurozone countries but also to those outside. The institution which will ensure that all the policies across the EU are coherent is not Herman Van Rompuy, but the European Commission, monitored by and linked to the European Parliament.

(Applause)

This should mean the end of the debate on the institutions, because we cannot afford to continue it now that we are in a situation where the social structure of Europe is under serious threat.

We are also in favour of the golden rule. We are in favour of budgetary discipline, because there is absolutely no alternative to this. However, it must be fair. At a time when salaries and pensions are being cut and sales taxes are being increased, I read in the newspaper that the bonuses of bankers in all the Member States within the eurozone have returned to their 2008 levels. That is not fair. This is why I believe that the rich must contribute more than the poor. We will not be able to impose budgetary discipline throughout Europe if everyone has the feeling that the ordinary people always have to pay and take the risks and that those who are really wealthy can shirk their responsibilities by sending their money to the remaining tax havens, for example. This is part of the economic governance ‘six-pack’ which also needs to be regulated.

(Applause)

The calls from the United States, Japan and China, our global economic competitors, to the European Union for more unity and more budgetary discipline are not acts of charity and sympathy by the Americans and the Chinese on our behalf. They are a way of expressing the fear that the collapse of the eurozone would drag the world economy into the abyss. This is why those people who want to make state bankruptcies into a self-fulfilling prophecy, because their own party is bankrupt, are playing with fire which we may well not be able to put out. For this reason, I am firmly convinced that if we act jointly and continue along the path of stabilising the eurozone that we have already taken, and if the heads of government who have made that decision are supported within their own countries and by their coalition parties, we have a chance of stabilising the euro.

The citizens of Europe want transparent policies and they want to know where their fate is being discussed. At a European level, the Council of Heads of State or Government is debating the fate of 500 million people behind closed doors. This Parliament is the institution which must make public the debate about the fate of the people of Europe. If we have economic governance, then this House is the economic parliament. That is the job that we have to do here. I am not afraid of entering into a new battle. Please tell your friend, Mr Vincent-Rostowski, that Europe is strong enough. If the pro-Europeans stand together, we have a good chance of coming out of this crisis in a stronger position.

(Applause)

Guy Verhofstadt, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – Mr President, I think everybody here agrees that this is a very deep crisis, but we should not make the mistake at the beginning of this debate of saying that this is a Greek debt crisis. The Greek debt crisis is maybe the trigger, but what is really at stake is a deep crisis in the eurozone. First of all, we need to
make an analysis of why we are in this crisis today, what went wrong. I think the reason is simple: first of all, we made a strategic mistake at the beginning when we launched the euro. We launched a monetary union, but we did not launch an economic and fiscal union, and we know that it is impossible to have one single currency with 17 different governments, 17 different bond markets, 17 different economic strategies. That does not exist anywhere in the world. Why should it exist then in Europe alone?

I think we also made a mistake of method. What we have used over the last 10 years in Europe is a bad method, a weak method, an intergovernmental method, and markets simply do not believe that Member States can produce enough discipline and enough solidarity to keep together a single currency. That is what we in fact need. That is what markets are asking for. For the first time, we have markets which are not asking for more deregulation; no, they are asking for more unity in Europe, for a transfer of power to the European level. That is the request of the financial markets of today.

To complete the analysis, I think that we have also had a bad attitude over the last 18 months, since the start of the crisis. We have seen political leadership in Europe in the Member States with a stop-and-go policy, a cacophony, half-measures and a lack of global approach. That global approach is what we need now, and what we need to hear from the European Commission. What is the global approach that can stop the crisis and then recreate confidence in the markets? What do we need? I think we need four building blocks, and it is for the Commission to come forward with these four building blocks.

The first is a real economic governance and economic government. Excuse me, but the proposals of Mrs Merkel and Mr Sarkozy a few weeks ago are not doing the job. A government of Heads of State and Government seeing each other twice a year is not a government. In my opinion, governments should see each other twice a week and not twice a year, as in the Merkel/Sarkozy proposal.

The second building block is also very clear. We need a eurobond market, because the ECB cannot forever continue to buy bonds off countries in difficulties. That is not possible, so we need a eurobond market. What is the situation today in Europe? The real situation in Europe is that the bond market in Europe is completely blocked. There are today no banks, insurance companies, pension funds or institutional investors who are still willing to buy bonds from a number of European countries and we are now dependent on savings from Latin America and China to have enough liquidity in Europe for the bonds of a number of European countries. That is the situation. So you have the choice. And in Germany you have the choice – and the FDP has the choice, I shall be very blunt about this – either you continue with the situation where we are dependent on savings from outside Europe or we create a European bond market now. And it is urgent to do it now and not to wait until the end of the year, as some are proposing.

My third proposal, the third building block, is a growth and job act in Europe. We need growth. Let us do what the US Government has done and announce a growth and job pact in Europe.

Finally, Mr President of the Council, we need the stability pact, the ‘six-pack’. Let us be honest; yesterday we received a new proposal from your side and we are going backwards instead of forwards. I thought we had an agreement for real automaticity also in the preventive arm of the Stability Pact: that it is no longer the Member States who have the lead, but it is the Commission who has the lead. In the new proposal, last proposal I have seen, it is again the opposite. I say there is no deal if the Member States do not understand
that it is the Commission which has to be in the lead of the Stability Pact and no longer the Member States, as this no longer works in Europe.

My final message is clear: we want the Commission to put a global proposal and a global approach on the table of Parliament and the Council. I can tell you, Mr Barroso: do that! It is the only way to put confidence back in the markets. That will be a huge global initiative by the Commission, backed by the European Parliament, and if you do that you can count on this European Parliament.

Konrad Szymański (ECR), putting a blue-card question to Joseph Daul under Rule 149(8). – (PL) Mr President, while we are on the subject of these great plans I would like to ask a question about a certain specific detail. It is a question which I wanted to put to Mr Daul at the very beginning, but I did not manage to get to the Bureau. Mr Daul and Mr Verhofstadt have repeatedly spoken of the necessity of harmonising corporate taxation. I would like to ask if they have in mind specifically the harmonisation of corporate tax rates in the European Union. I would also like to ask if they do not think that such harmonisation of corporate tax rates means increasing the amount of tax paid by businesses in some countries of the European Union which today are developing faster, amongst other reasons because of their tax competitiveness.

Joseph Daul (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, I will give a very brief answer to that. If agricultural support in Poland is harmonised, taxation will also be harmonised to a certain extent.

Rebecca Harms, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group. – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, in this Parliament and in the debate with the Council and the Commission on the euro crisis, I feel as if I am trapped in a time loop. The question which we need to ask ourselves when we say that the European Union is currently on the brink of disaster is why all the strong calls from Parliament for a commitment to more Europe and not to less have so far not produced any results. I am largely in agreement with your analyses, Mr Verhofstadt. However, I would like to contradict you on one point. I do not believe that the markets are calling for regulation. Instead, I believe that the markets have so far been exploiting every weak point in our policy in order to continue speculating against the euro and against individual states. Strong calls from our bank do not do any good in this respect when the European Commission and the Council ultimately fail to take a consistent approach to regulating the financial markets.

(Applause)

Our ‘six-pack’ of legislation is all very well, but we already know that ultimately we will say yet again that it is a move in the right direction, but that it does not go far enough.

At the end of this summer the Polish Presidency rightly said that Mr Trichet, the president of the European Central Bank, had saved the European Union – not the euro, but the European Union. What that means, and I believe that it is an accurate description, has not yet been explained. However, I cannot currently tell you how we get to the point after 18 months or two years of debate of sending a signal to the financial markets that none of the Member States of the European Union will be sacrificed and that the unity we are always talking about is real. I can only come up with empty phrases, because I no longer believe in our ability to take action.

Mr Barroso, I would now like to address my remarks to you. Your speech and your analysis at the end of the turbulent events of recent months has not indicated to me that you are the right person, together with the Commission, to show us the way out of
intergovernmentalism and out of the club of rich countries which is currently governing the eurozone and towards a greater sense of community. I am sorry, but I really do have to say this.

I believe that we must be just as critical of ourselves as stakeholders in the European Union as we are of the Member States. The citizens of the European Union want the European Union. However, if we are no longer in a position to explain what we have agreed, how we will implement the measures we have agreed on, what has changed in Greece and what has been achieved in Germany, if we cannot explain that, Mr Barroso, then the prospects for what is actually needed seem very poor.

In my opinion, and this has been mentioned here in the context of the expectations of China, the United States and other countries, we still represent one of the best and most successful areas in the world. We have so far not been able to find a responsible way out of the crisis. Mr Schulz has my full support for the statement that this is making everything worse, that injustice is growing and that we are increasing the burden on ordinary people during this crisis, while the rich continue to get richer. We have a lot of issues to deal with. There are enough formulas available for economic governance. We now need to implement it and explain it in a credible way, so that the citizens of Europe are prepared to follow us. That is the most important task facing us in the European Union.

(Applause)

Derk Jan Eppink, on behalf of the ECR Group. – Mr President, if you kick the can down the road, your shoes get dirty. That is what we have done with the euro. From the outset, the euro has been a political project ignoring economic realities. Whenever a problem arose, we kicked the can. But now realities are flying in our face. We are pushing Greece into a hole from which it will never emerge without devaluation. Iceland took austerity measures, but it also devalued its currency by 40%. Now its economy is growing again. Greece will have to do the same. Its default is a matter of time.

Some want to leap into a European transfer union, with Eurobonds. I understand the worries in Germany. Germans will have to pay, but what if Germany gets into trouble itself? Who saves the savours, as Federal President Wulff rightly asked. The liberal FDP is right to oppose Eurobonds. Unfortunately, they keep silent in this Parliament, and are absent. Instead, I hear their Group leader demanding Eurobonds. I support the Bavarian CSU opposing a United States of Europe, but unfortunately here the CSU is sitting like a pudding. Unsurprisingly, voters get confused. In Berlin they are right: a European transfer union will not save the eurozone, but break it up.

Mr President, may I reply to Mr Rostowski and Mr Barroso? I have the impression that I am attending a funeral in waiting. The only thing I do not know is: whose funeral?

Lothar Bisky, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group. – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, none of the so-called crisis summits have produced solutions to the debt crisis and to the uncontrolled speculation. State aid is still being given to the banks and austerity measures are hitting the poorest people and the middle class hardest, particularly in the debt crisis countries, but also in Germany. This weakens overall economic demand, investment and social cohesion within the European Union.

Despite many announcements, we have not succeeded in putting in place comprehensive regulations governing the financial markets. The citizens of Europe and the markets
themselves obviously have doubts about the economic competence and the ability to act of those in power and of the EU institutions. I must make it clear right from the beginning that none of this pleases me.

I agree with those Members who proposed that the EU constitution, the Treaty of Lisbon, should be revised. Before the treaty came into force, my group had already pointed out that it does not meet the current social, democratic and economic requirements and challenges.

Please allow me to make a brief remark about the EU budget for 2012 and the medium-term financial plan, which we will soon be discussing. The more cuts we make, the less funding will be available for cohesion and structural policy, for supporting cultural institutions and for exchange programmes in the fields of education and research. However, it is precisely these policies which represent the added value offered by the EU, which allow the citizens of Europe to experience the EU at first hand and which represent the first moves towards a social union. In my opinion, anyone who calls this into question is putting the idea of the European Union at risk.

(Applause)

Nigel Farage, on behalf of the EFD Group. – Mr President, there is a new mood in Strasbourg today, and during your speech, Mr Barroso, there was an all pervading sense of gloom. I saw for the first time even your own supporters shaking their heads. They do not believe in what you are saying. The European people do not believe in what you are saying, and I do not really think even you now believe in what you are saying. Because we all know that Greece is going to default. The end game for Greece is near. And you cannot say you were not warned. You were told the Treaties were fatally flawed. You were all told that Greece should never have joined the euro. And when I stood up here five years ago and talked about Greek bond spreads you treated me with such utter derision, it was as if I had been led out of the local lunatic asylum. No, you have been warned all the way through.

So now what you have got is economic governance, and everybody here in this front row supports more European economic governance. What is European economic governance? I will tell you what it is: it is a plane landing in Athens airport out of which get an official from the Commission, an official from the European Central Bank and an official from the appalling IMF, and those three people – the troika you call them – go in, they meet the Greek Government and they tell the Greek Government what they may or may not do. You have killed democracy in Greece. You have three part-time overseas dictators that now tell the Greek people what they can and cannot do. It is totally unacceptable. Is it any wonder that Greek people are now burning EU flags and drawing swastikas across them? Frankly, unless Greece is allowed to get out of this economic and political prison you may well spark a revolution in that country.

I suppose there is some good news at least, and that is that in Germany people are waking up; right up to the President people are saying all of this represents the death of democracy. None of this can work, and the German people will simply refuse in the end to pay the bill. Your one achievement is that you have split Europe between north and south. The Greeks now badmouth the Germans; the Germans badmouth the Greeks. I have one last plea, Mr Barroso: will you please help Greece? Help it to get its currency back. Help it to reschedule its debts. Help it out of the mess that you have put it into. Your policies have failed. Stand up, be a man, admit it.
Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE). - Mr President, I shall address Mr Farage. You are a very good speaker here. I admire your skills, but I have one question for you. You said, basically, that by our dictatorial way of dictating to the Greeks what they have to do, we will spark a revolution over there. What I noticed over the summer was that the closest that we got to a revolution was, in fact, in the streets of London, and that is not part of the eurozone. So I would like to know how you believe that we are going to get on if it is to be everyone on his own.

Nigel Farage (EFD). - Mr President, the Member is quite right. London has had some huge social problems, but they are not there today. The difference is that in Greece these protests go on day after day. I put it to you that if you rob people of the most powerful thing they possess in a free society, their ability to vote for and to fire their governments and their ability to be the masters of their own destiny, all they are left with is civil disobedience and violence. So what you are doing in the name of economic governance is something which is incredibly dangerous. Far from this European project being something that will engender peace, it is likely to do the very opposite.

Barry Madlener (NI). - Mr President, this whole dossier is full of lies and deception. Let us be clear about that. Greece is in the process of going bankrupt, we all know that. Mr Barroso is still living in another world, but he, too, knows in his heart that Greece is already beyond rescue, that all the support given to Greece has evaporated and that the citizens of Europe have been deceived here.

It all started way back when Greece joined the EEC. The deception took place then, and we knew it. The MEPs in this Chamber here knew that, as Mr De Gucht, a commissioner at the time, has himself admitted. The agreements underlying the Stability Pact have not been honoured and the people are constantly being fed lies about the aid measures. Because they will not be seeing that money ever again. Mr Verhofstadt, you are right: this single currency cannot work. However, if you ask yourself how we ended up in this situation, just take a good look at yourself. Your party was actually in power when this euro thing was introduced and when this single currency, that was never going to work, came into being. You, yourselves, must bear a share of the responsibility. Your parties are responsible, so you can stop going round pointing the finger at other people. You, yourself, are at fault.

The people have been forgotten. No one wants this, and no one was asked whether or not they wanted to end up in this situation. It is a disgrace that the Greeks have found themselves in this situation. It is also a disgrace that we are in this situation. The people do not want this, and this single currency must be dissolved at the first possible opportunity.

Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE). - Mr President, confidence in Europe's ability to solve its debt problems seems to be crumbling ever further and this is now also affecting our fragile economic recovery. The euro is our common currency: a single currency which Mr Madlener also wants to keep, but he is unwilling to learn the hard lesson that only common solutions will work. The six-pack will bring a radical reform of our common governance in Europe. I am optimistic and I am confident, perhaps more confident than Mr Verhofstadt, that the Council has the requisite flexibility to clear the last few hurdles. Because we really must approve the six-pack this month and no later and then move decisively further down this road. It will bolster the role of the Commission as an independent authority and lend democratic accountability to the Council and this House. President Barroso, you must show more initiative in further reinforcing the European
institutional structure. Reinforcing our competitiveness is also important. Because unemployment, youth unemployment, is rising and we have to send out an important signal to our citizens: we need to implement the EU 2020 agenda in practice, and the project bonds, and the EIB has to boost investment. This is also about the Commission's persistence, because our SMEs, our entrepreneurs, are running up against many obstacles which, according to the European legislation, ought to have been cleared away long ago. Our internal market must become a reality.

**Stephen Hughes (S&D). -** Mr President, we are on the edge of the second dip of a double-dip recession and the crisis is clearly deepening.

It did not have to be this way. My Group published a paper a year ago setting out an alternative economic agenda entitled ‘A fair way out of the crisis’.

We called for a growth and jobs pact. There has been no focus at all on growth or employment in the last year. In America, President Obama is launching a USD 450 billion American jobs act and Europe remains silent on the jobs crisis.

We called for fiscal consolidation, but at a sensible pace – all Member States' deficits below 3% by 2015, not 2013. The Commission’s latest forecasts, expected tomorrow, will show that many Member States cannot possibly make the 2013 deadline.

We proposed a European Stability Agency to manage a system of eurobonds. I am glad to hear what you have said today, President Barroso, on eurobonds, but I hope it is not a case of too little and too late.

We proposed a financial transactions tax (FTT) as part of a broader budget revenue package. Things have moved on this front but an FTT of 0.01% in 2018 will again be too little too late.

Finally, we made a number of proposals to tackle the root causes of the crisis on, for example, financial regulation and addressing macroeconomic imbalances. On the first, the Commission does not even support a ban on naked short selling, and on the second the Council opposes a symmetrical approach between deficit and excess countries.

The latest economic data and developments point in the direction of these proposals and these policies. It is not just about European economic governance. It is about the content of the policies. It is absolutely critical that we find a proper balance between consolidation and urgent support for growth and investment. I will resend you a copy of this paper, President Barroso. I hope this time you will read it and act on it.

**IN THE CHAIR: RAINER WIELAND**

**Vice-President**

**Sylvie Goulard (ALDE). – (FR)** Mr President, thank you for this debate. It is useful to take stock of the situation after the summer.

One thing should be said from the outset: as Mr Schulz mentioned, the decisions taken this summer seemingly tend towards a eurozone government without democratic legitimacy. That is not a mere detail, and we can discuss it again later.

I should like to say a word on the six-pack, for which I am one of the rapporteurs. We are told that we must face up to our responsibilities. Very well. Only, what are our
responsibilities? Is it our responsibility to agree to a compromise which is not bad but which contains some real flaws, or is it instead to continue to argue that it is not enough?

Personally, I will have a real problem squaring it with my conscience if we continue to condone – as Mr Verhofstadt said – the attitude of governments who want to control how the rules are implemented. When a rule is adopted, it must be implemented under the responsibility of the Commission. That is why we welcomed the six-pack and the reversed qualified majority system that you were proposing.

I would like to say a word to Mr Rostowski, who seems fond of French history. When I see the Council’s proposals, I do not think of 1792. I think of what Mr Talleyrand said about migrants in 1820: ‘They have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.’ Clearly, some people have learned nothing from the crisis and forgotten nothing of the nonsensical Fouchet Plan of the 1960s. They still believe that governmental cooperation is the way to convince third parties and the markets that Europe exists. That is not how we view things.

Pascal Canfin (Verts/ALE). – (FR) Mr President, President Barroso, I would like to ask you a question. If it is no trouble to you, would you mind listening to it?

I am not going to make a long speech. My question is a specific one: do you know how much Greek money – according to the Greek Government itself – is deposited in Switzerland and escaping Greek taxation? EUR 200 billion, which is the equivalent of Greece’s annual GDP and of two-thirds of Greece’s debt.

I am still waiting for your initiative to impose taxation on this money which has escaped the Greek tax system. I am also waiting for a strong initiative on this matter from Greece’s socialist government. It would have no macroeconomic impact on Greece, since this money has already gone elsewhere, but this policy would be completely legitimate from a social point of view. However, in order to take this initiative, the Greek Government needs the EU.

You will argue that this is complicated, but there is a very simple example: the United States, which is fighting a daily battle to have Swiss banking secrecy lifted for its own citizens and which is winning that battle. Meanwhile, we are either doing nothing, or doing things in an utterly disorganised and counterproductive manner, as the UK and Germany have just done by signing an agreement with Switzerland limiting the EU’s scope for action.

It is up to you to take an initiative: EUR 200 billion is a very large sum. We cannot ask European taxpayers to show solidarity if rich Greek citizens do not show any either.

Martin Callanan (ECR). - Mr President, we all woke up this morning to the news that yet another crisis meeting is taking place between the French President, the German Chancellor and the Greek Prime Minister in the slow-motion car crash that is Economic and Monetary Union.

Greece and other countries are suffering from a crisis of competitiveness. They are suffering from a crisis of excessive debt. Listening to this debate this morning, it seems obvious to me that that crisis will not be solved by eurobonds. It will not be solved by imposing yet more high-interest loans on Greece. It will not be solved by a financial transaction tax. In particular, it will not be solved by a theological debate about whether it is best to have the intergovernmental method, or the Community method, or other such bizarre solutions.

I am afraid that we have now reached such a stage that the only solution is for Greece to devalue, to leave the euro and to default on its debts. That will be extremely difficult. It will
be extremely painful. However, it is now the least bad option that is facing us to try a get a solution to this crisis.

**Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL).** — (EL) Mr President, Mr Barroso, everyone who spoke accepts that we are facing a crisis not just in Greece, but also in the euro area. I would add that this is the first time we have experienced such crazy times since the establishment of the European Union.

First example: you, the governments, all the institutions of the European Union have accused the credit rating agencies, the people speculating and attacking the euro area; at the same time, however, you have not taken any measures to control them and to make them proper ‘arbitrators’.

Second example: Commissioner Oettinger has stated that foreign civil servants should go and control the finances of over-indebted countries, obviously considering that a country in need of solidarity should concede sovereign rights.

Third example: the same Commissioner has called for the flags of over-indebted countries to be flown at half mast, thereby rubbing salt into the wound when he should be remedying the insults which have been levied against the countries in the South.

Wherefore I ask you, Mr Barroso, what do you have to say about your Commissioner making such statements? What is the European Union doing to defend the fundamental rights of workers in the European Union?

**Claudio Morganti (EFD).** — (IT) Mr President, President Barroso, ladies and gentlemen, back in the day we in the Lega Nord stated that the euro, as it had been introduced, would do more harm than good. We knew that the euro area was not an optimal currency area and that a crisis-hit country would have great difficulty in recovering and be liable to drag the other countries down with it.

Europe’s economies were not sufficiently integrated to be able to absorb any shocks caused by a Member State that, being deprived of the option of raising interest rates, now found itself with no way out. Rules were made and then, not for the first time, quickly broken.

Consequently, I would like us to recognise this failure before we subsequently look for solutions to remedy our predicament. We find ourselves in a situation that we certainly did not wish to be in, but which we must now deal with. We must embrace our responsibilities, starting with this package on new economic governance.

**Trevor Colman (NI).** — Mr President, in the history of the world there has never been a successful imposition of monetary union. Each and all attempts have failed. Today we are witnessing such a failure taking place in the eurozone. The political elites of Europe, including those in this House, dare not admit that what they have introduced is failing, even when membership of the eurozone is increasingly damaging the infrastructure of Member States. This arrogant indifference, together with growing disenchantment by the peoples of Europe, is a dangerous brew and is leading to public disorder. More will occur.

The European Union exists on the maxim that every problem merely requires more Europe when invariably it requires less and less, or none at all. The option that Member States return to their own national currencies is never considered, even when it obviously is the correct and only course of action.
The single currency contains the seeds of its own destruction. Already it is causing hardship and the breakdown of society. It is long overdue that this House recognise this reality and place the welfare of the peoples of Europe above misplaced political ambition.

Werner Langen (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, I would like to respond to the speeches made by the Finance Minister and the President of the Commission. I completely disagree: Europe is not on the brink of disaster. We are experiencing an institutional crisis, a crisis of responsibility, but not a deep-seated crisis affecting the European institutions as a whole, and that is where it is also important to assume responsibility.

Mr Barroso, you spoke of the cacophony of opinions. Your letter of 3 August did nothing to reduce this cacophony. You said that we have lost too much time. We waited four and half years for the proposals from your first Commission with regard to regulation of the financial markets. I would like to make it very clear that you have the right of initiative and you have the responsibility and the opportunity to put forward proposals in order to force the governments to act. I can, to some extent, understand the lack of confidence of the Heads of State or Government in the ability of the Commission to act. Monitoring of the implementation of European legal acts, monitoring of the allocation of resources from the Structural Funds – what has Greece done then? Seventy per cent is unused – monitoring of the Commission’s own ability to act reveals nothing but deficiencies.

Mr Barroso, in your speech on the State of the Union in two weeks’ time you have a unique opportunity to put forward proposals with regard to economic governance, the European Monetary Fund, realisation of the internal market, monitoring of the implementation of legislation, against individual States going it alone, and with regard to the amendment of the Treaties. We call on you to have the courage to do this. You will have the Members of this House on your side.

(Applause)

Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D). – (ES) Mr President, something is wrong. Economic deceleration, the collapse of the stock markets and financial tensions are the price we must pay for a weak response.

Our immediate priorities are Greece, financial stability and economic growth. The Greek government must receive clear support from the Union in its efforts to re-establish growth. This dissonance must end; it is now time to comply with the agreements reached on 21 July 2011, including a ‘Marshall plan’ that is worthy of the name.

Financial stability is vital for the euro. The European Central Bank has a particular responsibility while the Union does not have effective capacities in the area of fiscal policy. The eurozone is based on fixed interest rates, but not on exchange rates that can respond to unlimited differentiations.

The EU must ensure that its financial entities do not pose a systemic risk, and that they complete their recapitalisation processes adequately.

The problem is growth. In the last decade, the eurozone has grown less than any other region in the world. The surplus economies should expand demand. Low interest rates in the medium term could alleviate debt and help kick-start our economies. We need a European system of public debt to bring coherence to the economic union, to be in a better position to finance the EU and the Member States, to enable fiscal consolidation and
investments in order to regulate the economy and carry out structural reforms, and to convert the euro into an international currency.

It is time to get serious; no one can meet these challenges with the levels of wealth, cohesion, trade balance, fiscal space and opportunity for better integration that we currently have in the EU.

Carl Haglund (ALDE). – (SV) Mr President, as I happen to come from Finland, it may be good to say a few words about the mood in my home country, as it has influenced the discussion with regard to Europe. As many of you are well aware, Finland has demanded collateral in return for participating in the support package for Greece, something that is problematic from both an economic and a political point of view. I would like to say straight away that I personally do not support the government’s demand for this collateral, as I believe that it is unreasonable in relation to what other euro area States are doing.

At the same time, it may be a good idea to consider what is behind this demand. What it actually boils down to is the fact that there is a lack of confidence and trust in the measures that we, in particular the Council and the Commission, have jointly taken to solve the crisis. This lack of confidence is not just found in the Finnish Parliament; it is also present among the public at large, which is something that we need to deal with. Unfortunately, I have to say that, in this respect, I also share the opinion of the people. It is sadly the case that, as a politician, I recognise that it is political will that is needed in order to deal with this crisis, but, as an economist, I have to say that the measures that have been taken up to now in order to rescue Greece, among other things, are unfortunately wholly inadequate.

Last but not least, I would like to say that, in this debate, it could easily be the case that Germany, Finland and other countries are held to account for us not managing to deal with the crisis now. It is certainly the case that the eurosceptic mood is problematic, but we must not forget that this is not the crux of the problem. The problem is that certain euro area States have been living above their means for years. Let us not forget that that is the fundamental problem.

Kay Swinburne (ECR). – Mr President, the economic crisis in Europe and the eurozone sovereign debt crisis are not happening in a bubble. They are occurring at a time of unprecedented turmoil in the global economies around the world. Collectively, Europe needs to raise trillions of euros to fund the 27 economies; the Member States need investors to purchase their sovereign bond issuances. So what the market thinks is actually very important. For as long as we need money from the markets, whether for sovereign or EFSF bonds, we need to listen to what they are saying.

Currently their message is very clear. Italian bonds issued this week saw very low demand at very high rates, despite the purchasing of billions of Italian and Spanish bonds by the ECB in the secondary market. This week, the interest rate for Italian bonds has again reached 5.75%, which is hardly sustainable for the third-largest bond market in the world. The markets are pricing in a 98% chance of a default in Greece. Are all the experts in the world wrong? Who is going to buy the debt if it is not the investors?

Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL). – (EL) Mr President, from the outset we thought that the agreement reached by the euro area summit on 21 July 2011 was fragile and temporary. It does not only concern Greece. It is not just that there are conflicting fiscal policies in the euro area. The risk of a possible new agreement within the framework of the European Union on the debt of its Member States looms large before the people; we are facing the
possibility of a new international economic crisis before real recovery sets in, a new round of destruction of productive forces, at an incalculable cost to the working and grassroots classes.

The controlled bankruptcy of Greece, the depreciation of capital that it plans for banks and other parties holding government bonds, now appears tiny compared with what is needed in order to get the capitalist machine rolling again. It will be as difficult for the governments of the European Union to agree on which monopolies and which of their funds will be destroyed and which will stand to gain as it is easy for them to agree to shatter labour and grassroots rights. What the European Union – capital and the bourgeois governments – agree on is the uncontrolled bankruptcy of the people, by shattering labour and grassroots rights …..

(The President cut off the speaker)

Philip Claeys (NI). - (NL) Mr President, the only conclusion we can draw from this is that, structurally, the EU is becoming a transfer union, where the taxpayers of the northern countries are having to foot the bill of countries that are playing fast and loose with their budgetary discipline. In other words, the EU is evolving into a larger version of Belgium, which is a far from appealing thought. We have also seen evidence that the successive bailouts are failing to get us anywhere with a country like Greece.

There are, therefore, two things we could do: rush into another radical plan, as the de Verhofstadts of this Parliament would like us to do, with a kind of super-state government, with European taxes and Eurobonds, thus constructing a European public debt on top of the national public debts. Well, there is no democratic support for that. Such plans would immediately, and rightly, be rejected by the voters, if given a chance. We could also seek realistic solutions, such as showing Greece the door, as far as the euro area is concerned. That would be the best option in the long term, both for Greece itself and for the euro area. The longer we wait, the more money it will cost and the bigger the problems will be.

Mario Mauro (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, President of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, the economic crisis is in many ways also an institutional crisis – I think you would agree with this assessment – in that today we seem to be incapable of setting an agenda to bring us out of the crisis. Instead, we seem to be forced to accept the crisis’s own agenda.

I believe that this is the case because, as you have already explained, the 21 July agreement, for example, has not been swiftly ratified, approved or implemented by many of the governments of the Member States. Thus, I believe that it is important to use the State of the Union debate to set out a clear agenda on what must be done, not only in the future, but right away, so that we can restore a sufficient degree of confidence, the confidence required to meet our needs.

Yesterday, the Italian delegation called for the project bonds initiative to be brought forward; it should not coincide with the financial perspective but should be introduced much earlier. I think that the heart of our current work should lie in restoring substance to the Commission’s initiative, ensuring that the Commission is seen to be the one taking the lead, rather than following it. I believe that in many ways everyone will be able to support this position.
Leonardo Domenici (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the crisis is not a new phenomenon; it has existed for several years. Perhaps now is the time to undertake a critical review of the policies implemented up to now: have things always been done well? Have we always analysed the situation correctly? Has the right approach been chosen? Has the European Central Bank which, as Minister Rostoski said, has saved Europe, always taken the correct course of action, even when it has raised interest rates through fear of inflation?

President Barroso has identified a problem: the speed of the markets and the slowness of policy; yet is this the only problem? Of course, if we consider that we are still implementing the 21 July agreement, this ought at least to suggest that we need to prepare for and organise summits and their conclusions better, but policy will always lag behind the markets. We therefore need to look further, concentrating our efforts on combating unemployment and encouraging growth. These are the areas that the European Commission should focus on; even today in President Barroso’s speech, there was more substance with regard to the deficit than with regard to signs of growth and development.

The Commission must overcome its failings and state that the priority is the fight against unemployment, job creation, the redistribution of wealth and public investment strategies, while also amending the rules in the new European Stability and Growth Pact.

Peter van Dalen (ECR). – (NL) Mr President, the large debts of many Member States lie at the core of this crisis. Italy has a debt totalling 130% of their gross domestic product and the Irish budget deficit is 10%. However, Greece has notched up the most dismal score of all: a debt equivalent to 157% of their GDP and a budget deficit of nearly 8%. Even the legendary Greek character Atlas had a lighter burden to shoulder. Greece will never be able to repay that debt, and so part of that debt will have to be written off. There will have to be effective participation from the private sector, too.

We also need a recovery plan for the Greek economy to enable it to actually repay the remaining debt, and the Greeks must show full commitment to raising taxes. If these measures are not taken very soon, Greece will have to leave the euro. After all, the euro is a high-quality currency and maintaining that status requires discipline and decisiveness, such as effectively tackling debt and preventing bankruptcy.

Jean-Paul Gauzès (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, President-in-Office of the Council, President of the Commission, Minister, the current uncertainty over the EU’s response to the crisis is particularly harmful, firstly for the countries concerned, but also for the markets, on which the pressure is becoming unbearable and dangerous.

I would like to raise a purely technical issue in relation to this point. Since we recognise that a Member State may default, it is now crucial to define rules to govern this situation. When a business becomes insolvent, there are exceptional rules to protect it. However, there are no such rules for Member States, because it has long been accepted that Member States cannot default. Yet, the example of Greece clearly shows that constant pressure on a Member State prevents planned measures from being implemented effectively.

It follows that the European Union must decide, within the framework of the euro area, which rules shall prevail. Membership of the euro area creates an original and ambiguous situation for every Member State: it is no longer the one issuing its currency, but its financial policy is still out of sync with that of the other countries.
Clearly, the first imperative is the rapid completion of the economic policy coordination arrangements and of the European Stability Mechanism, but we also need to establish the rules that will apply in this area. In the case of countries under arrangements with the European Union or the International Monetary Fund, this would involve introducing provisions to freeze clauses concerning early repayment, forfeiture of terms or credit events, which are today standing in the way of a genuine recovery. Introducing such provisions would ensure both transparency and credibility.

Anni Podimata (S&D). – (EL) Mr President, President of the Commission, you said – and rightly so – that the prompt and full application of the decisions taken by all the Member States of the euro area without exception, all the States in receipt of financial aid, all the States being assisted by the other Member States, is of crucial importance.

As you know, as we all know, Greece has been making a huge effort for the last eighteen months to correct in a very short space of time not only deficits, but also decades of distortions, mistakes, shortcomings and omissions. This is an exceptionally difficult undertaking which has brought about results and which has had successes, as well, of course, as delays in its application, because a programme on paper is one thing and its application in practice is another. We also all know that Greece recently adopted additional fiscal and structural measures to speed up its effort and will be judged on their application.

However, it is not only Greece that will be judged. We are all being judged. We are being judged, primarily, on the tolerance and complicity which we have demonstrated in what were, until recently, inconceivable debates, such as the bankruptcy, controlled or otherwise, of a Member State of the euro area, with or without its exit from the euro. We are saying that there is a crisis of confidence today and rightly so. Except that, unfortunately, most people mean the confidence of the markets. Our biggest problem is that confidence between us and between us and the common currency is being eroded. When we resolve that, we shall regain the confidence of the markets.

Vicky Ford (ECR). – Mr President, the euro crisis has led some to demand more centralisation, but others are calling for more European localism. These ideas are not incompatible! Localism is not Eurosceptic opportunism or protectionism; far too often, decisions are taken by this House without even considering whether that decision could be taken locally or nationally.

The resulting legislation often adds bureaucracy costs and stifles investment. Yes, we need to mend our public finances, but we must also improve competitiveness and cut those costs. For example, we do need international agreement on banks, but we do not need every mortgage offer to every resident in every country to be identical. Yes, we should work together when necessary, but we must also give back responsibility to our citizens and our governments wherever possible.

Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE). – (ES) Mr President, we are all part of a whole, and nobody can survive alone. This emergency requires a joint effort and sacrifice. It is now being demanded that the Union show leadership, and that the mechanisms for governing and decision-making function in real time. The monetary union cannot survive without unambiguous political leadership.

It needs economic governance, a common budget, a certain level of fiscal harmonisation and an emergency plan. Therefore, we first need to regulate public accounts, correct
macroeconomic imbalances and stimulate competitiveness. No country should spend more than its economic growth allows.

On the other hand, the intergovernmental nature of the financial stability mechanism is regrettable. The European Union needs a permanent crisis resolution mechanism under the Community method: a European Monetary Fund.

If Europe wants to see leadership, ladies and gentlemen, then those decisions must be driven by Parliament and the Commission, rather than by the Council, which is hindered and slowed down by the national governments. It is the responsibility of Member States to do their homework in order to help with the decisions of the Union as a whole, and to do all they can to succeed in this vital task: achieve economic growth and create employment.

More than one year ago in Spain, the leader of the Popular Party, Mr Rajoy, expressed his support in the Spanish Parliament for a specific amendment to our constitution. Moreover just last week, the Spanish Parliament and Senate reached an agreement on the matter, after Prime Minister Zapatero gave his formal support.

The commitment to cleaning up public accounts cannot be an interim measure, ladies and gentlemen; it has to be permanent.

**Udo Bullmann (S&D).** – *(DE)* Mr President, President of the Commission, Commissioner, President-in-Office of the Council, there are two questions that remain unanswered in this debate. The first is that, when we read what the World Bank says, when we read what Ms Lagarde at the International Monetary Fund says, it would seem that we are on the brink of a recession. The growth engines have failed. Where are the investments? That is the urgent question for the European Union. I would like to ask you: you refer to the Stability and Growth Pact – where are the investments? You wanted to cut everything do with investments. So, where are the investments? Where can we cooperate so that we can move forward in Europe once again? We Social Democrats are willing to help in finding a strategy that will allow us to move forward.

The second question is this: how can we enter into a common bond market? Here, too, you can be sure of our support. Please put forward proposals. Help to convince those in the Council who are still not convinced. We will help you do this, and we would seek the support of the majority in this House.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE).** – *(PT)* Mr President, Dr Barroso, Mr Vincent-Rostowski, I would like to begin by expressing my satisfaction at hearing the words of the President of the Commission today. I would like to congratulate him on having made a balanced yet robust defence of the Community method. I am absolutely convinced that there is no prospect of us overcoming this crisis unless we use the Community method. Moreover, use of the Community method requires a completely firm and determined attitude on the part of Parliament and its Members in support of the Commission’s efforts.

It is often said that the Commission needs to be more proactive. I too am of that opinion. However, the fact is that the proposal relating to project bonds is already on the table. Here in Parliament we already have the proposal to increase the flexibility of funds to countries that are the subject of intervention, whether they are members of the euro or are outside the euro area, which will enable the allocation of resources to these countries, in order that there may be growth whilst austerity programmes are ongoing.
We have also had the news here today that there will be a properly balanced proposal to bring in Eurobonds, either in a form compatible with the current Treaties, or in a form which may mean institutional reform. We have also had this news here. Of course, we also know that this proposal has to be balanced, because it is not enough simply to introduce Eurobonds. That is only one possible variable in solving the problem.

What I mean by this is that we now have an array of solutions which have already been identified by the Commission, and all that is needed is our enthusiastic backing in the week of the State of the Union Address, in order to support the Commission as it puts forward a solution to the crisis.

Pervenche Berès (S&D). – (FR) Mr President, Mr Barroso, I can see you and yet very often, I wonder where you are. Where were you on 21 July? You have a skill for tailoring your views extraordinarily well to your audience. You have shown it again today.

Why, then, did you not express these views on 21 July? As the enforcer of the Community method, which we defend tirelessly in this Parliament, what are you doing to help the Union exercise this power to negotiate with Switzerland? What are you doing while a number of the most powerful Member States, in exercising their power to negotiate with Switzerland, are discrediting the Union as a whole by negotiating on a bilateral basis? Are you able to negotiate as earnestly as the Americans, in order to allow the Greeks to recover the money which the Germans are criticising them about for not knowing how to recover?

Finally, with regard to Eurobonds, we are not expecting you to ultimately agree to this proposal, which we have been advocating for so many years and which is the reverse side of joint and several liability. A measure of democracy and social progress must be added to it.

(The President cut off the speaker)

Marietta Giannakou (PPE). – (EL) Mr President, we have heard words here from the President-in-Office of the Council and the President of the European Commission, about dissent in Europe and about the need for responsibility and solidarity and a return to growth, social prosperity, jobs and an integrated response to the problems.

The euro and the steps taken in Europe were political decisions. They were taken by our leaders. They were not random developments and it is only with political decisions that we can respond to the crisis. Therefore, yes, we must abide by the Community method. Support from the Union is a political decision and we condemn any speculators ready to take advantage of unfortunate and inaccurate statements. We have instruments to deal with the crisis and we can create more. We have the European Semester and its evaluation, project bonds and Eurobonds, the EU 2020 strategy, the multiannual financial framework, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Financial Stability Mechanism and we have a European Commission which, based on the institutions, can and must take initiatives. Therefore, no one is asking for powers to be taken away from governments; however, the three institutions must work together on this question.

As far as Greece is concerned, it is not the only problem in the euro area. I should like to say to everyone who has said that Greece will default that our country will not default. It will not default because the Greek people are prepared to make sacrifices, not only for their own sake, but for the sake of their obligations within the European Union.
Marianne Thyssen (PPE). - (NL) Mr President, it is high time we put an end to this unmanageable flow of proposals. All these proposals, issuing from all quarters, are causing confusion and creating an image of a Europe which is rudderless. I totally agree with you, President Barroso, that we need a step-by-step approach, but we are counting on the Commission to be the helmsman. If we want to succeed, then we need a single scenario, we need to be unanimous and discreet in our communication and we must now make it our priority to carry out the plans we have already agreed on, instead of putting forward new plans all the time.

This means that we first have to solve the acute problem and do everything possible to help Greece out of the morass. This also means that all politicians should summon the courage to explain to their citizens that solidarity with other countries of the euro area will be the best deal for everyone in the long term.

In addition, we have to carry out structural changes, which, in other words, means that at the end of September we need to approve a robust six-pack in this House. These and other financial and economic measures are incredibly important, not only to recovering the confidence of the markets, but also to boosting our self-confidence as Europeans.

Finally, what this means is that, in the long term, we will also have to address other system errors, even if that means amending treaties. As far as I am concerned, it is worth considering all avenues towards a more community approach, and here we are counting on your helmsmanship, Mr Barroso.

Gunnar Hökmark (PPE). - Mr President, we need visions for the future but we need solutions for today. More calls for more Europe do not solve the real problems we are facing today. These real problems – deficits and the lack of growth – are obstacles for the future. We need more decisions in the Europe we have today in order to make real changes. We must emphasise that Member States are responsible, but we must never forget our own responsibility. The Commission, the Council and Parliament must use all of their powers.

I think one of the most important things is to use the opportunity we have. The European Union is the biggest economy in the world, but we are not making use of that because we are not the biggest market. That is why I call on the Commission to put forward proposals to make the European Union a totally internal market that can compete with the US and China and that can allow for the growth that we will need in order to deal with a debt crisis. We need a Stability Pact, which will be put in place, but we need growth and the Commission has a responsibility to provide a proposal for us to act immediately.

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). - Mr President, when I heard the Commission make the observation that we need a better spirit of confidence between the institutions and national governments, I wondered where exactly, and when exactly, it all went so horribly wrong. It seems to me that when things were good in Europe – or we thought they were good – everybody was in agreement. We are being tested politically because of the crisis. While much of this debate has focused on the economic crisis and the problems in Greece, I think the problems are much closer to home. They concern the profession that I am involved in, as these are problems with the profession of politics. How do we, as elected representatives, deliver better for our citizens? How do we tell them the harsh messages that they may not want to hear, but which we need to deliver to them in order to make progress? We need to look at ourselves to find those answers. What spurs me to keep going
is the messages from the extreme right and the extreme left. Let the centre prevail and make progress.

**Ana Gomes (S&D).** — *(PT)* Mr President, it has already been highlighted here that there are EUR 200 billion in Switzerland that were spirited out of Greece. There are trillions more from various Member States – including your country and mine, Dr Barroso: Portugal – that have disappeared from companies, banks and economies, to many other tax havens, evading or defrauding the national authorities.

Moreover, there is much more capital which, benefiting from the fun and games of tax rivalry within the European Union itself, has taken refuge in the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, the City of London or Ireland, eschewing investment in the countries which generated it.

How can the economic governance proposed by the Commission and the Council have any credibility or effect when they have done nothing to control tax havens and recover the funds lodged there, and when they are doing nothing to achieve tax harmonisation within the euro area?

**Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE).** — *(FR)* Mr President, I believe that the bankruptcy of one eurozone Member would, in fact, lead to the bankruptcy of the whole of Europe, and that it would have untold consequences and an exorbitant cost, not only in financial terms, but also in economic, employment and political terms. Bankruptcy is therefore not an option, and it must be stated clearly here.

The only solution is to help Greece: firstly by honouring our commitments; secondly by giving the country time; thirdly by helping it to conduct and successfully carry through the structural reforms it requires; and finally, by providing its people with prospects and guaranteeing those prospects. Only if we do that will Greece get back on its feet, in my view.

However, the crisis of confidence in the euro has reached such a level that we obviously cannot stop there. We need to implement these Eurobonds, which we have now been discussing for months, pool a proportion of eurozone Members’ debt up to 60% of GDP, and make progress on the issues of economic governance and of political governance, too, which has been very unsatisfactory during the crisis.

**Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE).** — *(DE)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to refer once again to a matter that is currently at the centre of the debate: the bond markets are under serious strain and the bond spreads are increasing all the time.

We have heard today from the Commission that it is going to table a proposal for Eurobonds that will entail no amendment to the Treaty. In fact, Article 136 enables instruments to be proposed within the euro area that will result in greater budgetary discipline. Moreover, we can and should design Eurobonds in such a way that they increase the budgetary discipline of all the Member States and at the same time represent a step closer to financial solidarity.

I would therefore call on the Commission to table this proposal as soon as possible. Such a proposal could ease the current situation if it is put together wisely. Do not just carry out a study: propose legislation that provides an incentive to the Member States to actually take a step in this direction. The absence here of the German Free Democratic Party and
the blockade in Germany on this point are irresponsible. When your proposal arrives, the German …

(The President cut off the speaker.)

**Lajos Bokros (ECR).** - Mr President, Finance Ministers these days praise the ECB for doing a great job, and they have a point, because the ECB is now becoming a fiscal institution. It does the job of the Finance Ministers. Instead of restricting itself to monetary policy, it finances sovereign debt. That is a distortion; it is a confusion of roads in economic policy, and it cannot be successful because it will really create inflation and it will really put more debt on those countries which are now saved, apparently, from this debt crisis. The resignation of Jürgen Stark is a stark reminder of this confusion. I think we have to realise that the Finance Ministers have to do their job and the sooner they do it, the better for the eurozone.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Mr President, it is amazing how the only concern of the leaders of the European Union is focused on the god of the marketplace, or financial interests, and that all their policies and positions are subordinate to it.

We are therefore expressing our most strident protest and indignation at these antisocial policies, which systematically ignore the public and are indifferent to the exacerbation of divergence, inequality, unemployment, poverty and social exclusion that they are creating. It is unacceptable that what was once called the European social model is being destroyed in most Member States, while the principle of economic and social cohesion is being hidden away and the top EU leaders are even being seen to publicly humiliate the Member States and their peoples, who are suffering severely from the consequences of their neoliberal and antisocial courses.

What will it take for them to review their positions and policies? Will it take an increase in social tension and the struggles of the workers and the people, who despair of these policies? This is certainly what will happen, and is already planned for Portugal, with General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers (CGTP) demonstrations planned for 1 October.

**Bastiaan Belder (EFD).** - (NL) Mr President, how can the weak countries of the euro win the confidence of the financial markets? Through spending cuts and reform. Both are painful, but essential for healthy finances, better competitiveness and sufficient earning power. Procrastination in that respect will be punished by the financial markets and it is the politicians’ job to steer an appropriate and consistent course.

However, something further is needed in order to reach a genuine solution. Several euro area countries have a high level of foreign debt. This is down to the trade balance and the balance of payments not being in equilibrium. A Dutch academic has called for a new Bretton Woods Accord that would restore the balance between the two, through, for example, regulation that restricts the extent to which the financial sector can finance other countries’ high trade deficits. Do the Commission and the Council view this as a good proposal for reducing this structural imbalance?

I would also like to ask a second question, very briefly: what does the Council make of the Dutch proposal for strengthening budgetary discipline?

**Andrew Henry William Brons (NI).** - Mr President, interest rates in the eurozone cannot be appropriate for economies in very different states of health. Interest rates are too high...
for southern European countries that are in recession, because they have been raised to curb inflationary pressures in Germany. This has exacerbated the recession and led to falling government revenues and increased government debt. Furthermore, the percentage return, or coupon, on sovereign bonds has had to be higher because of diminished confidence and fear of default.

The ECB was already buying small countries’ sovereign debt and has recently started to buy Spanish and Italian bonds to instil confidence. While this might postpone the crisis, there is a real danger that the ECB will purchase bonds the market value of which will eventually fall, as has occurred with the bonds from Greece, Ireland and Portugal. And even an institution like the ECB cannot survive a massive fall in the assets on its balance sheet without huge recapitalisation at the expense of taxpayers in the eurozone and outside it.

Olli Rehn, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, honourable Members, let me first of all thank you on our behalf for a very substantive and responsible debate which reflects the depth of the current crisis and the concerns we have about its consequences for ordinary citizens in Europe.

What we are seeing is that the real economy, growth and employment are now under extreme pressure from the negative ramifications stemming from the continued market turbulence related to the sovereign debt crisis. Therefore, the necessary condition to protect economic growth and job creation – economic recovery – is to contain the turbulence and reinforce our economic governance, to create solid foundations for the continuation of the recovery, sustainable growth and job creation.

Some of you have criticised the EU’s response to the crisis as too slow and ineffective and then pointed the finger at the Commission. Frankly, that misses the target. For instance, when we talk about eurobonds, already at the critical meeting of 9 and 10 May 2010 we proposed the European Financial Stability Mechanism that would be operated by joint and several guarantees. However, this was rejected by Member States in the Council because for them they resembled eurobonds too much.

Moreover, concerning the reform and reinforcement of the European Financial Stability Facility, we proposed that in our annual growth survey on 12 January. President Barroso reinforced the message and called for the conclusion of that work by the summit in early February. And where are we now? We are, I trust, finally carrying out this operation, getting the reformed, reinforced and more flexible EFSF operational as of October onwards.

So, it is the excess of intergovernmentalism and the deficit of the Community method that is hampering our actions, and that is the real problem in terms of EU economic governance. Let us be honest about this; let us be frank and open about this. Therefore, I agree with all those of you who have said that deeper economic integration and policy coordination is one key remedy to the crisis. Certainly not the only one – no silver bullet – but a necessary condition for the solution of the crisis.

We must be able to decide more quickly and more effectively and we must be much better in the implementation of our decisions in the European Union. The current institutional structures are not sufficient to tackle the challenges we are currently facing. As President Barroso said, we need un nouveau moment fédérateur and that moment must start today.

This calls for a very thorough public debate in our Member States and in this context I dare to say that the European Parliament is the institution and you, as representatives of our
citizens as Members of the European Parliament, are the representatives who have a major
responsibility and a major opportunity to pursue this debate, stimulate this debate and
participate in this debate, as you have a very special democratic interface with the European
citizens.

In the immediate short term let me underline the importance of implementation of the
decisions of the eurozone summit. I cannot stress enough the importance of swift
implementation of the decisions taken. Especially by increasing the flexibility and
effectiveness of the EFSF and the ESM, we can act earlier and more effectively to ensure
financial stability in Europe. Therefore, ratification of the agreed reform of the EFSF in the
Member States is a very clear and urgent priority. Moreover, rapid implementation of the
decisions is essential for addressing the debt crisis and restoring confidence in our economies
and therefore I expect that the Euro Group meeting this Friday in Wroclaw will overcome
the remaining hurdles and get the job finally done.

On Greece, let me say a word to those suggesting that Greece would be better off outside
the Europe. I very strongly disagree. Neither Greece nor the eurozone would be better off.
Whatever way you look at it, it is absolutely certain that a default and/or exit of Greece
from the eurozone would carry dramatic economic, social and political costs, not only for
Greece but also for all other euro area Member States and EU Member States, as well as for
our global partners.

(Applause)

There is an active debate on EU economic governance and there definitely is a need to
rethink our institutional structures. There are also currently high expectations of how
eurobonds could help solve the debt crisis by pooling the debt issuance of euro area Member
States. To my mind it is clear that eurobonds, in whatever form they might be introduced,
would have to be accompanied by substantially reinforced fiscal surveillance and economic
policy coordination as an essential counterpart, so as to avoid moral hazard and to ensure
sustainable public finances. Of course this would have implications for the fiscal sovereignty
of Member States, which calls for a substantive debate in the euro area Member States to
see if they would be ready to accept this.

Finally, in the very short term, yet another plea and I trust this is the very final plea on this
issue. In the very short term, the conclusion of the legislative package on EU economic
governance is the crucial step forward in strengthening fiscal surveillance and reinforcing
the surveillance of macroeconomic imbalances, and here I look both to the Council and
to Parliament. We need urgent approval of the six-pack by the end of this month; let us
vote on 28 September please. I mean you vote; I witness and I endorse with all my spirit
and sympathy. Urgent approval of the six-pack is not only important in its own right; it is
a necessary foundation for any further progress in economic governance. President Barroso
will deliver his State of the Union speech here in Strasbourg at the next plenary session,
where he will outline the Commission’s proposals on how to further develop the economic
governance of the euro area and of the Union.

So to conclude: what we need now is to implement the decisions to reinforce economic
governance and our instruments for ensuring financial stability in order to safeguard
financial stability and economic growth and job creation, to consistently continue to
improve public finances and undertake reforms that can boost economic growth and job
creation, and to conclude the six-pack in order to create the foundations for a real economic
union and thus move to the next stage in economic integration towards a deeper economic and political integration.

(Appplause)

Jan Vincent-Rostowski, President-in-Office of the Council. – (PL) Mr President, honourable Members, firstly I would like to say I am fully convinced that this week all sides – the Commission, Parliament and the Council – will show the necessary sense of realism and that we will reach a compromise over the six-pack on which we are now working. As both Mr Barroso and Mr Rehn said, this is something specific which we now have to do.

I would also like to make brief reference to what was said by Mr Bokros, whom I esteem highly as I know he is a former minister of finance. It is obvious that finance ministers have to do their job, but to do this they need time, because economies, too, have to have the opportunity to adjust to the steps we take. Today, however, in the short time horizon, we are seeing panic in the treasury markets of some countries. The European Central Bank cannot allow any of these countries to become insolvent, because this would lead to the complete collapse of the banking system of the entire euro area and the entire European Union. We know, too, that we would not then have any monetary policy at all, just monetary chaos. Therefore I think the measures taken by the European Central Bank were most certainly justified, appropriate, necessary and courageous.

Mr Schulz has comforted me by saying that everything will be alright. I must admit that in our part of Europe, history – including the worst periods of history – is perhaps a little more recent than the history of Western Europe. For us, the end of history was a great liberation. I appeal to the whole House: we must not allow history, in the bad sense of those words, to return. It is clear we have to save Europe. If we do not do so, who will? If we do not do so now, when will we? I would like to address my final words to Mr Farage. He said he has the impression he is attending a funeral but does not know whose. I will answer him in English: Do not ask for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for you.

President. – The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) Today Europe is going through a particularly difficult period, when at the same time we have to deal with the current situation and find the political will to invest in today’s economic growth and that of the future. Europe has also been shaken by a deep crisis of political confidence, and to overcome this we will require a much greater concentration of wisdom and political will than before. That is what our citizens expect from the EU’s institutions and their own Member States’ governments. The difficult situation that has come about in certain euro area countries should not become a pretext for establishing a two-speed Europe and preventing unified, coherent economic growth by Member States and the entire EU. We must understand that only by managing the economies of the 27 Member States more effectively and strictly can we ensure deeper integration, greater social guarantees for our citizens and greater confidence in the European Union itself.

Gerard Batten (EFD), in writing. – The architects of the European Single Currency are to blame for the crisis that now faces the eurozone. The euro was never an economic project. It was a political project designed to help bring about a United States of Europe. Once of the vital attributes of a state is its currency and that is why the European Union forced through the introduction of the euro against all the sensible advice against it. You
do not have to be an economist to know that to constrain a number of completely different economies within a single interest rate and exchange rate will, over time, bring nothing but problems and eventual disaster. That is what we are seeing now, and of course Mr Barroso is calling for full economic and financial governance of the eurozone countries by the European Union. The crisis was entirely predictable and so was Mr Barroso’s proposed solution. The euro is going to come apart. It is just a question of time. The longer it takes the worse the crash is going to be. The people to blame are those who forced the economies of the eurozone into an economic straightjacket in order to serve a political dogma.

**George Becali (NI), in writing.** – (RO) I must admit that this is the most worrying debate I have taken part in since the start of my mandate in June 2009. I have listened to the Polish Presidency’s representative and my concern has deepened. I have listened to the President of the Commission and the feeling has got worse. They are both asking us to support the proposed measures in front of our citizens.

What arguments should we have when unemployment reaches 15%? What should we say to the young people who cannot find a job in their own country and can no longer get into Spain where well over a million Romanians used to work until now? The social market economy and fair society are concepts which no longer mean anything to young people in London, Madrid, Berlin, Bucharest and, above all, Athens.

Mr Barroso mentioned credibility. I believe that this is the key response. It is complicated but not impossible to re-establish credibility. At the start of this mandate, I wished the President of the Commission the power of David and the wisdom of Solomon. Unfortunately, my wish was a kind of prophecy, defeated here in Strasbourg, because we all know that as a Romanian MEP, I was unable to be a prophet in my own land, Romania, which is still outside the euro area.

**Ivo Belet (PPE), in writing.** – (NL) A European economic government, Eurobonds, the rapid adoption of the six-pack package (which imposes strict budgetary discipline on governments): these are all desperately needed – that is beyond any doubt. These are ambitious interventions and they will inevitably be time-consuming. However, we also need to send out strong signals, here and now, this very day. Bizarrely enough, the action we need to take today is much simpler in nature. In brief, what it boils down to is the fact that we have to put a stop to all this cacophony, we have to be clearly united in our credo that the euro area is a single and indivisible entity and that, in times of crisis like today, we have to be prepared to take draconian steps to safeguard that unity. Responsible politicians have to stop broadcasting scenarios of Greece potentially having to leave the euro area. Because we simply cannot even contemplate going there. This crisis is a huge acid test for solidarity within the EU and, in particular, within the euro area. At the same time, it is a great opportunity to firm up our internal consistency. However, as I have said, that can only happen on one condition: if we stop drawing battle lines and if Brussels, Paris and Berlin, in particular, make it clear, once and for all, that we are moving towards a powerful Union with one, indivisible currency.

**George Sabin Cutaş (S&D), in writing.** – (RO) Most of the states in the euro area were not in difficulty prior to the financial crisis as they had falling public debts and deficits. On the other hand, the euro area’s public debt to GDP ratio is still far lower than that of the United States or Japan.

The European Union is not suffering so much a problem with public debt but more a lack of fiscal and political integration. This crisis needs a European solution and joint economic
governance based on the Community and not the intergovernmental method, which is lacking in terms of democracy and decision-making.

From this point of view, I welcome the fact that the European executive is drafting a proposal for a single public debt market, which will facilitate debt financing and ensure euro liquidity. At the same time, proposals are still required on fiscal harmonisation, European economic governance, economic growth and job creation.

There can be no disputing the euro’s global importance. The United States has recently requested a show of European unity, and the Union must rise to meet expectations.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – (PT) In recent weeks, set after set of up-to-date figures have been providing an account of the recession or, at best, stagnation in the economies of the euro area. The bleak prospects of a few months ago now look even blacker. The crisis is deepening rapidly. In this situation, it is increasingly clear that the leaders of the EU are in a state of utter confusion. It is also increasingly clear that the EU institutions and the powers that have been driving the integration process have nothing to offer the people of Europe but a major backwards step for civilisation. Straining at the leash to push on blindly is the only approach that they know and suggest. This is a dangerous path, as it is based on going further with the ideas that have led us here. Their inability to solve this crisis is, in fact, structural. The crisis is simultaneously an expression of the uneven development of capitalism in the EU, namely the asymmetrical interdependence that relegates countries such as Portugal, Greece and Ireland to a subordinate position that is dependent on the process of capitalist integration, and also of the deregulation of capital markets and the financialisation of the economy, which have paved the way for all kinds of speculation and extortion. For this very reason, the crisis will not be solved by persisting with these two factors.

**Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (PPE), in writing.** – (HU) I cannot accept that after the summer eurozone summits we are still talking about the theoretical explanations for the euro crisis. The citizens ask us every day, and with good reason, why and for how long we intend to leave the euro in an exposed position, and what the shortest way out of the crisis would be. Of course, certain Member States take practical action. However, their situation is not made easy if their work is downgraded at every turn in various ways. I am referring to the irresponsible and completely unjustified manifestations of credit rating agencies, and to a few unfortunate assertions made by the Commission. Not only were crisis management tools not available in good time, but I feel that even today the Commission has no solid, forward-looking recommendations, even though it is clear that Member States are becoming increasingly exposed without clear guidelines. So far I too have shared the opinion that this is a debt crisis rather than a euro crisis. Well, if much more time is wasted, we may even witness a euro crisis.

**Kinga Göncz (S&D), in writing.** – (HU) It is an old truth and a fact proven by reality several times over that the European Union has always developed further through crises, and the crises contributed to the deepening of cooperation and integration. Part of this development is the creation of the Schengen system and the introduction of the single currency. The latter, however, has proven to be incomplete: the monetary union is not supplemented by a single economic and budgetary policy. This led to decline in a few EU Member States and at the same time to the crisis affecting the entire euro area. The European Union is once again at a crossroads: it either steps back to settle for a more relaxed
cooperation and bears all the grave consequences entailed, or it implements relatively quickly the economic and financial integration within the euro area.

This requires strong European control, which the European Parliament, the most democratic institution of the EU, has been urging for a long time. It is clearly in the interest of Hungary and the other states outside the euro area to have the monetary union strengthened further and therefore to be able to belong to a community that provides economic and financial stability for them as well. The eurosceptic, belligerent, populist rhetorics and the false prominence attached to our sovereignty undermine Hungary’s chances for catching up, and reinforce the arguments of those who are already fond of plans for the creation of a multi-speed Europe. Hungary must support all efforts aimed at deepening the economic integration between Member States and reinforcing the fundamental democratic values of the EU. It is our fundamental interest to have a strong, democratic Europe.

Louis Grech (S&D), in writing. – The eurozone, and indeed the EU itself, is facing one of the most significant challenges in its history. Yet the economic governance reforms recently put forward by EU finance ministers fail to prioritise growth and job creation, and place little emphasis on the need for fairness and social equity when reshaping our economies for the future. This agreement will lead us further down the path of austerity at a time when the need for strategic investment to create jobs and growth has never been more acute. I will be working with my fellow MEPs in an effort to rebalance this package in the coming weeks. I also urge the Commission to submit proposals to strengthen financial regulation, including the possibility of establishing a European ratings agency, as soon as possible. The greed of banks and hedge funds, coupled with a lack of rigorous regulation, were the primary causes of the current crisis. It is imperative, therefore, to ensure that in future, financial institutions serve the broader economy and society as a whole; taxpayer bailouts must be conditional upon banks providing services and credit to citizens and SMEs as opposed to simply paying down debts built up due to their own speculation.

Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), in writing. – (FR) The crisis in the euro area is reaching a climax in a Europe dominated by right-wing governments. It is these governments, each more wary and selfish than the next, that are demanding endless guarantees, promises, and sanctions against the ‘naughty schoolchildren’ before they will agree to lend an ounce of solidarity. By dragging its feet over the implementation of bail-out plans for Greece, the coalition of the cautious is basically turning what ought to be a strong movement of solidarity into a waste of public money down a bottomless pit. Help granted piecemeal is of no use at all to our fellow country Greece, as it continues to come under attack from speculators. Are we going to allow the patient to die by putting him in quarantine and waiting? What exactly are we waiting for? Are we waiting to do the same tomorrow with Italy, Ireland, or Spain, which are showing the same symptoms? Since the epidemic is being passed on by the banks, as it is to them that the States are indebted, let us stop lying to ourselves: breaking up the euro area and the European Union will not save anyone from generalised economic collapse. What we need is to get investment going again, for lasting growth – but when is this message going to be heard?

Jiří Havel (S&D), in writing. – (CS) The current unflattering situation in the peripheral countries of the eurozone forces us to consider what to do next. One of the preconditions of European integration was to establish a single internal market in the EU based on the principle of the four freedoms, which the single currency of the euro was also supposed to promote. Over time, however, the establishment of a currency union without an adequate fiscal and institutional framework has proven to be difficult. In my opinion, a comprehensive
solution to the current crisis should cover the following three areas: the financial sector, fiscal policy and the competitiveness of the Economic and Monetary Union and the EU. It must first restore confidence in the EU’s financial sector, where key roles must be played on the one hand by the ECB (by providing liquidity to the banks and purchasing government bonds) and also the European Banking Authority, which is the banking regulator and which should, among other things, guarantee the credibility of EU bank stress testing. Secondly, the fiscal policy of EU countries should be strengthened by issuing eurobonds and by introducing a financial transaction tax (including a more active role for the European Parliament and national parliaments in this process). Thirdly, in the long term, the sustainable economic development and competitiveness of the EU will be important. Strict compliance with the Euro Plus Pact will be necessary, including an emphasis on efficient allocations from European funds after 2014, as well as compliance with conditionality requirements. Overall, I believe that the EU has the tools to resolve the situation, and that it will successfully overcome this crisis.

**Edit Herczog (S&D), in writing.** – (HU) We are witnesses to and victims of a crisis of confidence. The extensive indebtedness of households and state budgets, fostered by the illusion of cheap money and the dream of a rosy future, suddenly broke the spell of the financial markets, and this was followed by a swift spread of distrust and fear of losses. This panic is just as exaggerated as the earlier euphoria. However, while before, when the bubble or state debt was growing, everybody seemed to be doing well, what we now see is an actual shrinkage. The crisis does not affect people everywhere and to the same extent, but everybody is getting less than they would if the whole European economy was healthy and trust was restored. In my home country, tens of thousands took out Swiss franc loans, offered abundantly by banks up to October 2008.

Since then, many have lost their jobs due to the crisis, the property market collapsed, and as a result of the crisis of confidence already mentioned, the Swiss franc became significantly stronger. All these factors together threw thousands into a hopeless situation. ‘More Europe’, more solidarity would provide the way out. However, in some places it is selfish concern, and in others it is fear from the pain inflicted by restoration that hinder rapid and decisive decisions and actions. In this state of paralysis, Europe is drifting helplessly towards the vortex of crisis. I hope we all wake up before it is too late. A weak Europe falling apart can hardly fend off the challenges of the future. It is still not too late, but there is no time for further delay, either.

**Iliana Ivanova (PPE), in writing.** – (BG) The European Union debt crisis is the result not only of poor fiscal discipline and irresponsible spending by some Member States, but also of a lack of suitable instruments at European level capable of providing effective control and a prompt remedy to the existing imbalances.

At present, the EU needs to take decisive action and speak with one voice when taking the measures required to find a way out of the difficult financial situation for some Member States. A holistic approach is required which will include both a national and European action plan. Countries with excessive public debt must carry out major structural reforms, take the necessary steps to balance their budgets and streamline the operation of their public administration system.

This must be accompanied at European level by the creation of effective instruments for monitoring and controlling public finances. The countries outside the euro area must be included on an equal footing with the countries in the euro area when new fiscal regulations
are being considered. This is the only way that we can be sure that all Member States are heading in the one direction and that we will avoid a two-speed Europe.

Tunne Kelam (PPE), in writing. – This is not so much an economic crisis as a credibility crisis. The eurozone is at serious risk of losing its credibility, first due to an irresponsible style of living that includes consuming more than we earn, and secondly to the fact that the EU has not been able to react decisively enough and in a more coordinated way to the crisis. The key problem now is to act to repair the hole in the bottom of the European boat. New loans may be necessary but, if the hole is not repaired by cutting expenses and conducting serious structural reforms, the credibility crisis cannot be overcome. Latvia was in the deepest crisis three years ago but restructuring and streamlining the economy and cutting its expenditure by 20% has restored Latvia’s credibility. If needed, the country has no problem in taking out loans on favourable conditions. The most practical way to restore the EU’s credibility is for the Commission to come forward with concrete far-reaching new initiatives to deepen the internal market. The internal market is the very foundation of the EU. However, there are still hundreds of obstacles to its completion; the services sector especially comes to mind.

Slawomir Witold Nitráš (PPE), in writing. – (PL) Everyone in Europe realises that the EU finds itself at a turning point in history. The debt crisis is a threat not only to national economies, but has also revealed the weakness of the EU’s institutional architecture. In this situation, the Union must act effectively on two fronts – the institutional and the economic. The crisis has exposed the weakness of a crisis management system which has many actors. It is difficult, today, to say unequivocally who takes decisions and who takes responsibility for them – we are seeing the phenomenon of dispersal of responsibility. The effect of this is a multiplicity of conflicting announcements. It seems that effective management is possible today only at EU level, because only such a strategy will allow us to avoid fragmentation of the Union or – in the worst case – the appearance of a two-speed Europe. Institutional reform would allow EU bodies to rebuild their credibility and restore faith in the process of integration.

In the European Parliament we have said a lot about debt in relation to national economies. We must, however, remember that debt is not only the cause of the crisis, but is also a consequence of it. A rise in debt is not dangerous as long as it is accompanied by economic growth. If it were not for the lack of competitiveness which has emerged in the permanently weak economic growth of some countries, no one would be talking about a crisis today. What we need is reforms which allow a fall in debt but which also ensure the long-term financing of growth. The stability of public finances is not enough in the long-term perspective; we need sustainable economic growth.

Kristiina Ojuland (ALDE), in writing. – When discussing the economic crisis and the stability of the euro, we seem to concentrate on the present problems, failing to draw conclusions for a long-term economic perspective. The crisis has revealed blatantly that the economic system in Europe as we know it today can no longer be sustained. In fact, most of the EU countries seriously need to review their economic and social policies in order to avoid falling into financial difficulties. Keeping that in mind, we can support Greece only on the condition that Greece makes further cuts in its expenditure and reforms its economy, starting with an extensive privatisation programme. If Greece fails to comply then the rescue package will only be able to alleviate the symptoms, but not treat the actual cause of their problems. The success of the recovery from the economic crisis at large
depends first and foremost on each and every Member State and their strict and persistent adherence to the common rules as well as their dynamism in adapting to a different global economic environment. The EU economic governance package will surely be an important step forward, but earnest will and effort by the Member States must come first.

**Alfredo Pallone (PPE), in writing. – (IT)** The interconnection of our economies and the domino effect of the crisis show that the logic of nationalism brings no benefits; in fact, it causes serious harm. Solidarity among the countries of the EU must be accompanied by a sense of responsibility and compliance with the rules, which the States cannot and must not infringe. However, solidarity cannot and must not be one-sided: being part of a Union with shared ideals and values means committing oneself to growth and development and supporting each other even in times of trouble. We are promoting the concept of a social market economy, but one in which the emphasis is mostly on the market, with the social aspect overlooked. We have weakened the Stability and Growth Pact. This was a mistake, and we are paying the price for it. We need to go back to having rules on budgetary discipline, and procedures must be automatic. It is a good idea for the constitutions to include the principle of balanced budgets, but it should be achieved by combining rigour and consolidation of public finances with growth. I say this because, if we do constrain our public budgets with very strict rules, we should also introduce measures to ensure growth. Otherwise, Europe as a whole will not survive in a global context.

**Franck Proust (PPE), in writing. – (FR)** Some people are saying that Greece’s exit would cure all of the euro area’s ills. However, they are mistaken. As well as having a domino effect, such an event would send a dramatic message to the entire world that the European Union is no longer capable of realising its own monetary unification project. Let us not give in to haste, nor to the prevailing demagogy. Withdrawal into oneself has always been a harmful concept. History has unfortunately proven this to us, and that is why we sought to create the European Union. There is only one remedy for the crisis, and that is the Community method. The Commission, the Member States and Parliament: we have all shown the will to get out of this together. Today, it is time for us to act in concert. We have pooled our currency, let us now establish a genuine economic government and bring our fiscal policies into line, as Germany and France are proposing. Above all, let us not lose sight of the fact that we are acting on behalf of the people of Europe. Consolidating our finances means long-term investment in research and innovation to generate growth and employment. We must explain this to our fellow citizens, who are observing the reforms under way and rightly wondering about their future.

**Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE), in writing. – (FR)** We would be fooling ourselves if we pretended that the crisis we are currently in is not serious. The daily turmoil that is rocking governments, stock markets and banks is a sign of worse to come if Europe does not respond immediately. What are the causes of this crisis? To begin with, there is a structural flaw: how can we guarantee the long-term stability of a single currency without establishing proper budgetary coordination? The old stability pact was weak and detached from reality. The second reason is the economic climate: for a long time now, and more markedly since the economic crisis of 2008, governments have been hit-and-miss in the way they have managed public expenditure. This must stop. Lastly, the crisis has been made worse by the political selfishness of some States, who tinker here and there according to their short-term interests and the latest opinion polls. France and Germany have proposed solutions, which are necessary, but will not be enough. The response must come from Europe itself. Will the EU dare to take the leap of faith of true integration, in which each
member expresses solidarity for the sake of growth for all? If the euro collapses, then confidence in the European project will collapse along with it.

Edward Scicluna (S&D), in writing. – At this stage of the debt crisis in the eurozone we have now reached the point where words will no longer do. In the absence of political leadership financial markets are taking the decisions for us. Some painful truths need to be told. The collapse in share prices in French and German banks is because they are exposed to billions of euros in Greek debt. A Greek default will cause a domino effect starting with a banking crisis, which will then put pressure on other country’s debt financing.

We know this and political leaders in Germany, the Netherlands, Finland and other countries know it as well. But they are resistant to taking the action needed to prevent disaster. Either they are in denial or they have not been truthful with their electorates about the choices that face the eurozone.

In the old days we could have said that the solution for such indebted countries was to devalue their currency and fend for themselves. With a single currency, single monetary policy and interlinked banking system, this logic no longer applies. The single currency and our banking system are on a precipice. If leaders are not honest and brave both will collapse.

Richard Seeber (PPE), in writing. – (DE) The current debt crisis requires swift, decisive and united action. It is the European Commission in particular that is required to take this action and must pay greater attention to exercising its rights and fulfilling its obligations. It must not hide behind hesitant Member States, but must be proactive in taking the lead. An even weaker euro or – worse – the bankruptcy of a State will entail far higher costs than showing support and solidarity to the Member States that are deeply in debt. For this, the European institutions, in particular the Commission and Parliament, need the necessary resources to be able to deal with this crisis. However, these States, and Greece in particular, need to do more to get their national budgets under control.

Monika Smolková (S&D), in writing – (SK) Every country in the eurozone has to deal with the effects of the crisis. The cutbacks are being felt by people in all countries. In his introduction, Mr Barroso said that a tax on bank transactions would be one of these measures. I welcome this measure because we all have to recognise that the effects of the crisis cannot be borne by ordinary people while the banks share out the profits. At the moment there is a battle for Europe – a collapse of the eurozone would result in the collapse of the whole European economy. Individual Member States must announce that it is important to support the single currency, and that supporting Greece and Portugal means supporting the euro and the economies of individual countries. At times of crisis, the European Commission should also be pulling out all the stops for growth. Instead of waiting, they should invest and increase employment rather than, as the present right-wing Slovakian Government has done, granting exemptions in the labour code for overtime of up to 550 hours with unemployment running at 13%.

Csaba Sándor Tabajdi (S&D), in writing. – (HU) As a first step out of the crisis, we need to adopt the ‘six-pack’ legislative package aimed at strengthening economic governance, and we even need to go further. Careful consideration must be given to the introduction of Eurobonds in the near future and to the inevitable tighter political coordination related to this, because the only alternatives are never-ending rescue packages or the bankruptcy of states in difficulty. It is gratifying that the European Commission, too, acknowledged the necessity of this when it promised to draft a proposal. It is similarly gratifying that the
French-German summit in the summer seemed to suggest that even the European right-wing has finally acknowledged that austerity measures are not enough, and that the burdens of the crisis need to be distributed much more fairly than at present between the already overburdened European citizens and the financial sector, which has so far failed to share them. Therefore the introduction of the financial transaction tax proposed by the Socialists is now also supported by the European right-wing. This tax – cleverly calibrated – needs to be introduced as quickly as possible, and its introduction must be accompanied by a much stricter monitoring of the financial markets. I am confident that the Commission will submit a proposal for this, too, in the near future.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) Since the start of the crisis of the economy and the euro, many efforts have been made to affirm the European Union’s ability to overcome this phase and regain the trust of our public, markets and partners worldwide. The crisis is an opportunity for the EU to show that it is able to follow the path of growth and economic recovery. This requires a Union based on stability and solidarity, which can only be achieved through the Community method, as the President of the European Commission has mentioned. Several Member States, such as Portugal, have made efforts to take seriously the task of ensuring the survival and stability of the euro, through austerity programmes aimed at consolidating their public finances. It is therefore essential for the future of the euro area and the European Union as we know it to strengthen the spirit of partnership between the different European institutions and the Member States, in the shape of their governments and national parliaments. Parliament has an essential role in this, as it represents 500 million Europeans and is the legislative body of the European Union.

**Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D), in writing.** – (NL) We are debating the economic crisis at a time when the financial markets are threatening to destroy the welfare of 500 million EU citizens. As a solution to the crisis, the Presidency and the Commission are calling for the six-pack to be approved, but this is a quick fix. The six-pack does not answer the question of how we can develop a socioeconomic policy which will generate sustainable prosperity for all Europeans in the long term. It speaks only in terms of monitoring and punishment and, yet, remains silent as the grave about investment in education, human capital, innovation and infrastructure. Obviously, there can be no solidarity without budgetary responsibility. However, making the patient better means that you have to cut away any excess fat without removing any muscle and sometimes you even have to administer more oxygen.

I am pleased that the Commission will finally come up with specific proposals for introducing Eurobonds, but I fear that this might actually be too little too late. Such a show of European solidarity should obviously be accompanied by a stricter European control of the budgets. However, it is not just spending that needs to be better managed: that applies to revenue, as well. We are in favour of fair revenues, a European corporation tax and a financial transaction tax.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI), in writing.** – (DE) The crisis permeates our debates. We are united in diversity – but despite, and precisely because of, this unity it is clear that all citizens are being asked very forcefully to play their part. This starts with the States that must fulfil their financial obligations; however, it also requires all citizens of the relevant countries that are in debt and have got into difficulties to take responsibility: entirely in the spirit of solidarity – a question of give and take. It cannot be possible for the responsibility to fall solely on our citizens. In the long term, more Europe means more investment in education.
for all of our citizens – in that way we will create the opportunity for new and sustainable jobs, and if there are more jobs, there will be more tax revenue for the State.

**Iuliu Winkler (PPE), in writing.** – (RO) The EU is not only under pressure from sovereign debts and a crisis of confidence. The Union is at a crossroads where it needs to choose between going further down the path of integration and pulling back. We are at a crucial juncture when we must decide whether we are going to continue the European project involving economic integration, expansion of the single market and consolidation of EMU or whether we are going to allow the creation of a single Europe to be scuppered in a quagmire of populism, extremism and isolationism.

The crisis the EU is going through requires a European solution, not a sum of national responses. It is not enough for us to take note of and reiterate this point. A solution needs to be implemented as a supportive European response. We need to put these measures into action immediately and set up the European institutions proposed by the European economic governance package. However, we also need a European government, at euro area level to begin with.

Last but not least, we need a European Parliament with extended powers to manage the process of deepening European integration as the ongoing transfer of sovereignty must be guaranteed by a single European institution elected directly by the EU's 500 million citizens. This will ensure that Europe's citizens are the real winners from the process of deepening European integration.

**Anna Záborská (PPE), in writing.** – (SK) The measures proposed to halt the eurozone crisis are suitable for situations like announcing a quarantine during a flu epidemic. Instead of finally asking governments to take responsibility for managing their own economies, we are proposing more centralisation. In other words, we want to take more and more responsibility away from the governments of the Member States. First we want to set tax and deficit levels, then we want to define individual expenditure items until in the end our governments will be nothing more than disengaged departments of the central administration in Brussels. At the end of the day, we would not have to think up new rules if we finally started to abide by the ones we already have. The criteria for joining the eurozone may be excessively simple, but at least it means they are clear. Let us finally start living by them. If a country is unable to abide by the undertakings it made when it joined the eurozone, it should leave. As a doctor I know that the greater the threat of a particular disease, the more important it is to work together with those affected by it. Constantly trying out new, untested procedures leads to mistrust among the people threatened by infection. Let us not think up further solutions before we have heard the people and national governments. Today these people are asking us how things have come to this. Let us be frank with them and the solution will emerge for us all to see.

4. Presentation by the Council of its position on the draft general budget - 2012 financial year

**President.** – The next item is the presentation by the Council of its position on the draft general budget for the 2012 financial year.

**Jacek Dominik,** President-in-Office of the Council. – (PL) Mr President, honourable Members, at today’s sitting of the European Parliament I have the pleasure of presenting to you the position of the Council adopted on 25 July relating to the draft budget for 2012. For the
second time, the budget is being accepted in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Treaty of Lisbon, and I hope that this time we will use the experience we gained during the debate on the budget for 2011. Preparing a satisfactory agreement on the matter of the budget for 2012 will require an open and constructive dialogue between both our institutions. I hope in particular that we will be able to avoid any references to issues which are not directly linked to the annual budget.

Mr President, honourable Members, I noted with particular satisfaction the fact that the first round of tripartite talks regarding the budget, which took place on 11 July, was conducted in an atmosphere of fruitful cooperation. I hope this favourable atmosphere will continue to prevail and help us to adopt a realistic and balanced budget for 2012. Please allow me now to present four factors which guided the Council during its analysis of the draft budget presented by the Commission. It is a certain philosophy which was worked out during discussion of the draft budget by the Ministers of Finance, and it reflects the method of assessment and approach to certain expenses which were proposed by the European Commission. I hope that it will enable you to understand the Council’s position better, rather than just presenting you with dry numbers describing the level of expenses in individual areas.

Firstly, the growth of the European Union budget must reflect the situation in the Member States, which are going through a period of weak economic growth and are struggling with serious budgetary restrictions. Special attention should be paid to controlling administrative expenses, so that what we do accords with the efforts of the Member States made in this respect at national level.

Secondly, within the European Union budget, priority should be given to those programmes and measures which help to lift us out of the current crisis, support competitiveness and convergence, give real EU added value, create opportunities for employment and accelerate economic growth.

Thirdly, increasing funds for commitments and payments must be realistic. We should primarily take into account current and future indicators of budget performance and also absorption capacity in order to avoid any overestimates, which would only put unnecessary pressure on national budgets and increase outstanding commitments.

Fourthly, the current levels of the Multiannual Financial Framework should be adhered to in the budget. The budget should also be flexible, thanks to its having the appropriate margins to enable reaction to unforeseen situations or the incorporation of new policy priorities during the budgetary year.

In this context, it gives me pleasure to inform you that in relation to the 2011 budget, the Council’s position on the draft budget for 2012 anticipates an increase of 2.9% in funds for commitments and of 2.02% in funds for payments. I am convinced that this budget will provide an appropriate balance between fiscal consolidation on the one hand and support for those European Union programmes and projects which can be most effective in helping to bring the Union’s economy to life on the other hand. It will also be sufficient to meet financial commitments resulting from current and planned programmes and actions.

In relation to this, I think we are definitely able to explain such a budget to our citizens, who have been hit by the effects of the economic and financial crisis, and in particular that we are able to explain the far-reaching measures for fiscal consolidation in Member States
and to demonstrate the legitimacy of such a budget. The Council has agreed specific reductions in funds in many particular budget lines within all budget areas. These reductions have been introduced based on a detailed analysis of budget implementation in previous years, whilst also taking into account the latest budget forecasts. I believe that these reductions are completely justified.

Moreover, in order to assess the actual capability of the Commission and the Member States to realise programmes and actions in a timely manner and make use of appropriate funds during the course of the budgetary year, information available in the descriptions of the work of the Commission was used. Special attention was given to administrative expenses and the level of employment within the institutions. This includes administrative expenses related to operational programmes and executive agencies, as well as funds paid from the European Union budget to decentralised agencies. The Council is of the opinion that in accordance with the direction of measures being put in place at national level, the efficiency of EU administration should be increased. Additional funds and employment plans, both for European Union institutions and for decentralised agencies, were approved only in the case of new bodies and bodies which have been given new responsibilities. The resulting position of the Council, based on a clear method and an objective approach, constitutes a balanced, fair and justified solution.

I would like to finish by stressing the issue I raised at the very beginning of my speech, which is the need to achieve the correct balance between taking into account the difficult economic situation in which the Member States find themselves and providing sufficient means in the budget to support in particular those programmes and measures which can aid economic growth. I am convinced that the budget for 2012, set at the level proposed by the Council, will enable the European Union to fulfil its obligations, and will also be a signal to Europe's taxpayers that we are acting responsibly and that we are serving the interests of those we represent. I should also like to add that in accepting this draft budget, the Council has also accepted an obligation and adopted a declaration that if during the 2012 budgetary year there is a lack of funds in one of the budget areas and no redeployments can be made, then in that case, on the basis of a proposal made by the European Commission, additional funds will be guaranteed by the Member States.

IN THE CHAIR: JERZY BUZEK
President

Janusz Lewandowski, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, our budgetary trialogue in July was the first opportunity to react to the Council’s position. Developments in the summer confirmed that these are very difficult times. It is even more important, therefore, to strike a balance between budgetary self-restraint and necessary investment.

The European budget should be seen as supplementing national efforts to reinforce investment in growth and jobs. That has determined the structure of the draft budget proposed by the Commission. To avoid falling into a deflationary vicious circle, we must use all the instruments we have at our disposal. The European budget is one of them. So our budget proposals target increases in the area of competitiveness and cohesion as well as the phasing-in of agricultural payments – which, of course, is obligatory. The other budget headings came in below inflation, however, with clear self-restraint in administration.

The Council has decided to cut payments by EUR 3.7 billion and adjust the increase of the payment level to the 2011 inflation rate forecast. At the present time, I cannot agree that
this is the right way to strike a balance between smart investment and self-restraint in this time of austerity, especially when it comes to the EUR 1 billion cut in the area of competitiveness, which is conducive to growth and jobs. I cannot reassure the two arms of the budgetary authority that what is in the cohesion budget after the Council reading is enough, as our proposal was EUR 18 billion below the forecast from the Member States. The same Member States are now cutting the figures that they were proposing, and on which our draft proposal was based.

I must point out that we have outstanding commitments. We are proposing to raise the co-financing rate of the structural funds to 95% in order to help six Member States that need to be helped at the present time. Therefore, the inflation rate cannot be seen as the only parameter that needs to be taken into account when framing the budget.

I will deal only briefly with the other aspects of the Council proposals. With regard to the heading ‘Europe as a global player’, we acknowledge that the Neighbourhood proposals have been taken into account, but at the expense of pre-accession assistance and development aid. Having seen the humanitarian consequences of the drought in the Horn of Africa, I am not in favour of cutting development aid to the poorest parts of the world. Under Heading 3a we have cuts in the European Return Fund, FRONTEX and the External Borders Fund, although we clearly need much more budgetary funding to underpin immigration policy.

The further cuts to the administration budget fail to acknowledge or assist the Commission’s efforts to freeze its administrative budget. This will not help us to persuade our administration to exercise self restraint. I acknowledge the very focused, positive approach of Parliament’s Committee on Budgets. Our role now is to provide updated information in the expectation of compromise over the 2012 budget. We promise to provide updated information and monitor trends in budgetary payments so as to provide realistic data as a basis of conciliation. This would make a valuable contribution to the achievement of a timely, reasonable budget in response to all the challenges with which we are currently confronted.

**Francesca Balzani,** rapporteur. – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the institutions involved in the budget procedure, namely the Commission, the Council and Parliament, described their position in the Council’s reading in July – the Council and Commission with figures, Parliament with a definition of its priorities. These positions are apparently very different, and often far removed from each other – I am thinking in particular of payments and research funding – but there are also points of convergence, and we must concentrate our efforts on these areas of agreement if we are to reach a common position.

Parliament has an extremely difficult task, as it must also look to the future and play a proactive role. This is the most challenging area for elected institutions: they must operate with their feet firmly in the present, and hence be acutely aware of the tough times we are experiencing, the consolidation being carried out by Member States and the sacrifices being demanded of our fellow citizens, while always working to ensure investment, economic recovery and a more prosperous future.

This year especially, the budget should strike a delicate balance between opposing desires: to maintain the stability of the present, but also to continue to look forward and start laying the foundations for the future straight away. This Parliament will make strong calls for funding for the 2020 strategy, starting with the creation of quality employment, but there are also new areas of responsibility, some of which are sensitive: I am thinking of the new
responsibilities granted to us by the Treaty of Lisbon, and of the European Securities and Markets Authority. Then we have the level of payments, which should be correct from the outset, from the time of budget approval, and also undeniable emergencies such as migratory pressures and the situation in North Africa.

Consequently, with regard to the documents on priorities, on which we have already voted, we will continue, in a consistent and transparent manner, to develop and create instruments that will enable us to implement our policies.

José Manuel Fernandes, rapporteur. – (PT) Mr President, debating administrative costs at a time of acute financial, economic and social crisis always encourages populism and demagoguery. In light of this, it should be noted that the expenditure of all the European Union institutions represents only 5.6% of the EU’s overall budget. I do not know of any institution or organisation in the EU or any Member State that performs like that. The idea that some are trying to put across, that administrative and operating costs are too high, is therefore wrong and unfair.

I believe the institutions' spending has been managed rigorously over the years. In fact, the expectations of spending by Parliament, the Commission and the Council on operating costs are currently being exceeded. Indeed, following tabling of the budgets for all the institutions, a margin, or surplus, of over EUR 500 million will be left over in 2012.

This means that, despite the increase in new jobs, the new powers resulting from the Treaty of Lisbon, and new institutions such as the European External Action Service (EEAS), the institutions have managed to table rigorous budgets, surpassing even the expectations of the Council and the Commission.

It is neither correct nor sensible to compare the updating of Parliament’s budget for 2012 with the 2011 budget. Indeed, the inclusion of 18 new Members as a result of the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, means the additional expenditure of about EUR 10.6 million. Croatia’s accession also has practical implications for this figure. I mention only these two situations, which arise from expenses that are impossible to reduce or eliminate.

I would remind you that Parliament’s forecasts have already been adopted by this House; that the proposal for updating the administration was 5.2% and we reached agreement on 2.3%. We have made an effort but we want to go even further, as far as we can go with possible cuts. Of course, the additional sacrifices that we will impose on ourselves must be legal and must have a prompt effect.

As for institutions other than Parliament, I regret the blind cuts that the Council has made. There must be money to pay wages, to meet commitments and cover current expenditure. We need strong institutions with the necessary resources to face the current challenges, and that is what the public expects.

Jacek Dominik, President-in-Office of the Council. – (PL) Mr President, honourable Members, thank you for this very short debate on the 2012 budget. I would like to highlight a few significant elements relating to the Council’s position.

Firstly, the Council is not questioning the European Union’s priorities. Please note that in relation to expenses for the Europe 2020 agenda, the Council has not restricted any funds earmarked as commitment appropriations. Secondly, the cuts proposed by the Council are not short-sighted and are not the result of Member States’ lack of awareness of the
challenges faced by the European Union. They are, first and foremost, the result of the very
difficult budgetary situation in which the Member States find themselves and the necessity
of striking a balance and finding the lowest level of funding necessary to finance all the
European Union’s priorities.

We must be aware of the fact that for many Member States finding an additional
EUR 100 million or EUR 200 million from their national budgets is very difficult at the
moment. They have large deficits and are having problems financing debt in the market,
so we are not just talking about imaginary problems which are getting in the way of real
discussion on the EU budget.

I hope that this year we will manage to conduct a debate on the budget which will focus
on the problem of the 2012 budget, and that we will all have learnt lessons from the
negative aspects of the previous debate a year ago and avoid them on this occasion. I hope
that we will work well with Commissioner Lewandowski and I hope that, as always, the
European Commission will, first and foremost, play the role of an honest mediator and
suggest solutions to all sides which will be beneficial for the entire European Union. Thank
you very much.

President. – With that we close this item.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Jan Kozłowski (PPE), in writing. – (PL) We are all aware of the fact that Europe finds
itself in a very difficult financial situation and we know how important it is to manage
European funds in a sensible manner. However, we should remember that we are responsible
for earlier decisions and we should choose our areas of expenditure carefully.

I am afraid that the Council’s proposals for cuts in areas such as lifelong learning, youth
on the move and support for small and medium-sized businesses will only provide apparent
savings. In effect, we are running the risk that strategic European objectives will not be
achieved. I am also concerned at the proposed budget cuts for agencies which in some
cases would contradict their increased terms of reference, as in the case of Frontex, for
example, and would not guarantee them sufficient funding to fulfil their new responsibilities.

Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D), in writing. – (EL) I believe that the Council has made the
same mistake yet again. It looks at the EU budget through the eyes of an accountant, as a
budget of net spending. However, in the midst of the economic and social crisis which has
brought Europe to its knees and forced the Member States to apply harsh austerity policies,
we must defend the importance of the EU budget in strengthening investments. It must
be made clear that the EU budget, which accounts for a mere 1.01% of EU GDP, finances
actions which either cannot be financed by the Member States or the financing of which
at European rather than at national level brings about exponential – mainly economic –
gains. This is its added value. It enhances the efficacy of national financing and helps to
reduce overall spending through economies of scale, by concentrating and coordinating
resources and services. An excellent example is customs union, where every EUR one spent
at EU level is equivalent to EUR four saved by the Member States. Today more than ever,
we must seek support for sectors which strengthen economic growth, such as political
cohesion, research and innovation, thereby supporting efforts to save national resources
and apply fiscal restructuring.
5. Voting time

President. – The next item is voting time.

(For results and other details of the vote: see Minutes)

5.1. Mobilisation of Globalisation Adjustment Fund: AT/AT&S from Austria (A7-0279/2011 - Barbara Matera) (vote)

- Before the vote:

Barbara Matera (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, as rapporteur for the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund I feel obliged to express my concerns about the Council's preliminary approach regarding the European Commission’s proposal to extend coverage of this Fund to 2013 for reasons associated with the economic crisis.

I believe that the stonewalling by some delegations in the Council, including the Dutch delegation, which are trying to create a blocking minority by opposing this important derogation while at the same time citing the very same economic crisis in order to benefit, today, from several million euros of EGF funds, is irresponsible.

A substantial recovery in European labour market conditions is not expected before 2013, and this assessment is what is prompting us to impose this extension. It would therefore be a serious mistake to significantly reduce this Fund, which the public has told us that it regards as one of the few instruments of genuine EU solidarity in the face of the economic crisis.


5.5. Mobilisation of Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2010/027 NL/North Brabant Division 18/Netherlands (A7-0304/2011 - Barbara Matera) (vote)


5.8. Energy market integrity and transparency (A7-0273/2011 - Jorgo Chatzimarkakis) (vote)


5.11. Amendment of the Rules of Procedure concerning the hearings of Commissioners-designate (A7-0240/2011 - Andrew Duff) (vote)

5.12. Ongoing Doha negotiations (B7-0478/2011) (vote)

- Before the vote on Amendment 15:

Jörg Leichtfried, on behalf of the S&D Group. – (DE) Mr President, this paragraph concerns the reform of the World Trade Organisation, with which we are more or less in agreement. However, one particular matter still needs to be clarified. On behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, I would ask for a split vote to be held with regard to the words ‘and stakeholders’. If that meets with the approval of my fellow Members, I would ask that the S&D Group vote against these two words ‘and stakeholders’; otherwise we are in complete agreement with this paragraph.

President. – Please tell us exactly the oral amendment to which you are referring. I understand that you would like …

Jörg Leichtfried, on behalf of the S&D Group. – (DE) Mr President, this essentially concerns Amendment 15. I would like there to be an additional split vote on the words ‘and stakeholders’, so that it is possible to vote in favour of the paragraph as a whole, but against the words ‘and stakeholders’.

President. – Would anyone like to stand and object to the amendment?

(Over 40 Members rose)

(The oral amendment was rejected)

6. Statement by the President

President. – Ladies and gentlemen, it is a few minutes after 12.00. I am interrupting the voting for a few minutes to honour the victims of the massacre in Norway. This tragedy unfolded almost before our very eyes in July. Please allow me to say a few words at the outset. I want to make a statement, so please remain seated for now.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are talking about a very serious matter which has affected us all. On 22 July, Europe was once again the victim of a terrorist attack. In Norway, a killer murdered 79 mostly very young people in cold blood. Xenophobia and hatred showed their worst side that day, with deadly results. On the island of Utoya and in Oslo, the killer struck out at our basic values, at the foundations of our democratic society, at mostly young people who dreamt of their future and of public service. These cowardly attacks deserve our total condemnation. The events of 22 July showed that terrorism does not have to be an external threat, as happened on 11 September 2001 in the United States. The fanatic turned out to be a member of the same community that was so brutally attacked.
It is important that we draw appropriate conclusions from every such tragic event. Firstly, we must do everything to integrate internally, so that people who live together with us, in our communities throughout Europe or the world, can feel happy to be living together with us. We must also cooperate with every state which is fighting terrorism. This is a huge challenge for us all. In the era of the Internet and globalisation, terrorism knows no frontiers. Norway, a country which awards the Nobel Peace Prize, has been so ruthlessly and painfully attacked. However, terrorism will never succeed in altering our system of values. The most important thing is that our system of values, which we will always protect and cherish, is based on openness, tolerance and respect for other people, and for each member of our community.

On behalf of the European Parliament, I would like to express our full solidarity with the Norwegian people and with the government of that country. Once again, I would also like to offer deepest condolences and expressions of sympathy to the victims’ families. Today, we are still with you in our thoughts, prayers and affections. Two months after the tragedy, we have not forgotten you.

**Gunnar Hökmark, on behalf of the PPE Group.** – (SV) Mr President, thank you for this opportunity to say a few words on behalf of this Parliament to the Norwegian people, the people who, for both historical and present-day reasons, we in Sweden call our brothers. What happened was a horrific incident that demonstrated that sometimes evil has no boundaries. It affected so many young people. Even though we have not met them, we know them from their conviction, idealism, passion and the hope of knowing what is right and wrong and of being able to make the world a better place – something that we ourselves should stand for as much as possible.

The Norwegian poet Henrik Ibsen expressed this once with the following words when Denmark was attacked during the Schleswig-Holstein conflict: A *brother in need! Every man on deck*. During one period in our history, Sweden had reason to say that Finland’s concerns were also our own. What happened in Norway, in Oslo and on Utøya, makes Norway’s concerns the concerns of us all. Our sympathy and compassion and our solidarity can never be compared with the sorrow and pain that so many people in Norway are feeling today, but there is one thing we can say, which is that we share your sorrow and we share your pain. Your concerns are also our concerns.

The Norwegian poet and war correspondent, Nordahl Grieg, has been quoted at countless funerals in Norway this summer, where young men and women have been laid to rest. In his poem ‘For the Youth’, Nordahl Grieg wrote: ‘War is contempt for life/Peace is to create/Throw your strength into it: Death shall lose!’ There is no better way to express our sympathy with the Norwegian people and support for the amazing strength they are showing in wanting to protect their open society, saying that they will meet hatred with love and unity. This should also be our concern, and it can also enable us to say to all of those solitary terrorists out there or those that are organising themselves that we will defend our open society and we will make it more open. These are not empty words, but reflect a realism with the energy to act. It is telling them that they have lost and we have won. It is telling them that we will win and they will lose, because our values are stronger than their hate. That is how we shall honour those who lost their lives on Utøya and in Oslo in Norway – our brothers and our Europe.

*(Loud applause)*
Martin Schulz, on behalf of the S&D Group. – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, many of my friends in the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, many men and women from our international movement know the place well: Utoya is not only a place for the Norwegian Social Democrats; the International Union of Socialist Youth has often met there. For many of my friends, this place is therefore also associated with very many personal experiences.

It was an attack on the young people of the Norwegian Labour Party, but – as the previous speaker said – the victims here were the young men and women of the Norwegian Socialist Youth. They were the victims of a perpetrator whose target in this case was the Social Democrats, but the annihilation campaign that this terrorist carried out there was aimed at a system of values. The abhorrent nature of this crime is, in my opinion, due in particular to the fact that he did not want this system of values to have a future, and that is why young people in particular had to be killed. Thus, it was also a symbolic act to kill young men and women so that an idea should have no future.

The attack was directed at an idea, and if you read the ideology of this person you very quickly see: no open society, no respect for other cultures, the superiority of white people over other races, in other words no equality of people regardless of skin colour, origin, race or gender – that is an attack on our values and it is also an attack on your values. It is not an attack on Social Democratic values, but on the values of the European Community and European society.

If you so wish, ladies and gentlemen of this House, we as Parliament are the ones who represent these values. It was also an attack on us. It is an attack on everyone. It is therefore right for the European Parliament not only to remember the victims, but also to assimilate the fact that these values were attacked from the inside. We must defend ourselves against this. We must defend ourselves by leaving no room for these sorts of ideas: no room for intolerance, racism, xenophobia, the persecution of minorities, and no scapegoat politics. It is up to all of us to do this together. If we tackle this together, we will put a stop to the sorts of people that need to be stopped.

That is no consolation for the many parents, friends and siblings who are truly suffering. I am grateful to you for the sympathy that you have expressed, Mr President.

The day after this massacre, I received many letters that were addressed to me, but as a representative of the Social Democrats in Norway and the international Social Democratic movement. Many letters came from this House. I would like to single out one of these that touched me in particular. A fellow Member wrote that he took this attack on these young men and women as a personal attack. It was our colleague Mario Mauro. I mention this because he is not a Social Democrat, but had intuitively felt that, whether I am a Socialist or a Christian, whether I am religious or not, whether I am a Muslim, whether black, white or of Indian origin, whether I am a right- or left-leaning Democrat, such people want to destroy us all.

Therefore, if we work together here in the spirit of our common European Charter of Fundamental Rights, as a multinational, multi-ethnic, multi-religion, multicultural Parliament, then that is the best response to this terrorism.

(Applause)

Guy Verhofstadt, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – Mr President, in 1940, at the start of the Nazi occupation, the Norwegian poet Nordahl Grieg wrote ‘We are so few in this
country and every fallen is a brother or a friend'. I think this echoes on today as 76 young people have been massacred – young politicians, youngsters who were just becoming aware of what democracy and citizenship mean, and most of them not even old enough to vote.

It was not only a terrible tragedy and a huge loss, but also a direct attack on democracy itself. But I think simply voicing our disgust is a little too easy today. We cannot turn a blind eye to an act of violence like this. Perhaps Breivik was a madman and acting alone, but let us also be very clear on this. He is also the product of a society, of a movement and of a whole community of activists, chatters and bloggers who despise and reject all societies.

What struck me the most was how quickly public figures and politicians declined any responsibility when instead they should have reacted fiercely against Breivik’s ideology, an ideology that is anti-Islamic, anti-migration, against a multicultural and diverse society, against politically correct thinking, against Europe and, finally, against the European Union.

Breivik was in fact acting against the backdrop of a narrative which is becoming more and more common. It describes the current situation in Europe as disastrous and considers our society to have come to a point where it is fact no longer possible to trust any democratic government at all.

I think that we have to repeat and to remember the words of former President Clinton in his speech on the 15-year commemoration of the Oklahoma bombing. He said that we politicians and political commentators are also responsible for this as our words are not neutral, our words enter an echo chamber, travel through space and fall on the connected and the unhinged alike.

(Applause)

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group. – (FR) Mr President, when there is a massacre, at first most of us do not know what to say. We are sad; we are frightened, and then in time we begin to reflect.

This attack in Norway was directed at young people: social democrats who held a very strong belief in multicultural solidarity; young people who had come together united by this belief. What is more, there were young Norwegians of Kurdish origin there, and of many different origins, just as in the multicultural societies we have in Europe.

Certain politicians have been telling us for some time that multiculturalism has failed. I have always wanted to know what that means. Does it mean that you are going to send back all those who are not true Norwegians, true Finns, true Dutch, true French, true Swedish, true Italians, true whatever? Where are you going to send them?

These are the kind of ideas and language that lead to this hatred. People do not accept the reality that is now our reality. When we claim to defend the reality that is Europe, to defend European values and European citizens, this means in so many words defending present-day Europe’s multicultural identity. This is the reality in Europe, and it was against this idea that this massacre took place.

When a French Member of this Parliament dares to say that the problem in Norway was not the massacre, but the Norwegian Government’s naivety in tolerating a multicultural society, then this Parliament must say that Mr Le Pen is a disgrace to Parliament for having said this.
I would also like to say this to all true Europeans: if we allow this kind of despicable language into our discussions, and if we allow this idea that today’s Europe cannot and will not be a multicultural society to creep in, then together we are paving the way for people to commit the worst atrocities. We do have a responsibility to reflect and respond when something like this happens, because as Guy Verhofstadt said, we are creating a climate in which madmen and lunatics can act like this.

In taking time to reflect for Norway, we are also reflecting on what we are all doing and saying to each other.

Jan Zahradil, on behalf of the ECR Group. — Mr President, we might have different views on different issues in this Chamber, but I hope that we can all agree on one thing: that Europe is a continent of tolerance, of freedom and of pluralism. We have united in the past to fight those who stand for intolerance and oppression, and to resist those who wanted to destroy our open and democratic society; now we have to stand united again. The promotion of hatred, of fear and of violence has no place in Europe.

Let me express on behalf of my entire Group my deepest sadness over the terrible and brutal criminal act of 22 July. Our thoughts and hearts go out above all to the relatives of the victims, but also to the entire people of Norway and, last but not least, to our Socialist colleagues, to whose political family these innocent young people belonged.

Mr President, you yourself reminded us of the anniversary of 9/11 a few moments ago. In that particular case we quite rightly stressed, in the strongest terms possible, that although those terrorists carried out acts in the name of religion, they did not represent any religion or its followers. I think that we should look at the Norwegian tragedy from a very similar angle. The individual who committed this represented no one: no religion, no relevant political stream, just his own sick mind. I think we should resist the temptation to use this opportunity to politicise this tragedy.

I would like to thank all my colleagues from other political groups who resisted this temptation, who showed decency and who displayed once again that there are universal values common to all of us for which we can stand together.

Søren Bo Søndergaard, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group. — (DA) Mr President, for Norway, there is before and after 22 July. For us in Scandinavia, this day was in many ways our 11 September. The attack was not directed at random people; it was a direct attack on Norwegian democracy. It was more than that though. The attack on Utøya was also a carefully planned attack on future leaders of the Norwegian labour movement. It was an attack on the future.

The Labour Party’s youth organisation in Norway was not a random target. In its fight against racism and for tolerance, against inequality and for social justice, against oppression and for international solidarity, it represents everything that the mass murderer detested.

As horrific as it was, we cannot learn anything from the massacre itself, but we can learn an unbelievable amount from the way in which the Norwegian Prime Minister and the
Norwegian people reacted to it. In similar situations, others may have demanded revenge, declared war on terror and implemented one restriction of democratic rights after another, but not Prime Minister Stoltenberg. He insisted that the response to this act of terrorism should be yet more democracy, yet more openness and yet more humanity. He received support for this position from the Norwegian people.

Throughout Norway and the rest of Scandinavia hundreds of thousands of people have taken part this summer in rallies against terrorism and in defence of democracy and tolerance. The message of these rallies has been crystal clear: evil can kill a person, but it can never defeat an entire nation.

**Francesco Enrico Speroni, on behalf of the EFD Group.** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, my group would like to express its sorrow and its solidarity in the face of the attack against the Norwegian people and against humanity itself. There can be no possible justification for this act, because no idea, no motivation can be used to support a massacre. Even in the face of this appalling incident, our values of freedom and democracy will remain true to the principles that have shaped our coexistence and the relationship between our peoples.

**Diane Dodds (NI).** – Mr President, we all share in the sorrow, anger and dismay at such a futile act of mass murder. May I express my sympathy, and the sympathy of my constituents, with the people of Norway in this tragedy? Sadly, in Northern Ireland, we know the horror of terrorism only too well. That this terrorism should be directed at young people is particularly horrifying.

Many eminent people have been quoted here today, many statesmen, writers, politicians. I think, as probably the last speaker in this round, it would be appropriate if I take you to the words of one young survivor, who explained in her blog how she rushed through the bushes and the rocks to escape the killer: ‘I can’t even shed a tear’, she wrote, ‘I can’t believe it. Today I almost died. We don’t deserve to die and that is also why I am writing this post. We are just ordinary people. We are involved in politics. We want to make the world a better place’.

Mr President, we stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Norway at this time of grief. In this House, we come from all shades of political opinion. While many of us find the politics of the far right sickening, by standing together as democrats we can ensure that terror and violence will never prevail.

**(Applause)**

**Cecilia Malmström, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, what happened on 22 July in Norway was a horrible tragedy; a brutality hard to imagine, the worst of nightmares.

On the beautiful island of Utoya that nightmare became a reality. Eight people died in the terror attack on the government area in Oslo that day; that was the attack of one man. Later that day he brutally, cold-bloodedly shot 70 teenagers while disguised as a policeman. A policeman who in Norway and in many other countries is a symbol of safety and protection. Our thoughts are of course with the families, relatives and friends of the victims and of all the Norwegian people.
But we are all concerned by this attack because it was an attack on democracy, on the democratic institutions, on our values and on our ideals. It was an attack on young people preparing to take an active part in public life in party politics.

This event brought to light the dangers of right-wing extremism because the ideas of a sick man are nurtured today by xenophobia, extremism, attacks against multiculturalism, populism, etc. This ideology of hatred we must all fight. The Norwegian people have handled their grief in a dignified and determined way. I think we have all been impressed by the firm commitment of the Norwegian people to stand up for democracy, openness and our common values. In that determination we must all join them.

(Applause)

**President.** – Let us now observe a minute’s silence in commemoration and honour of those who died, murdered in July in Norway.

(The House rose and observed a minute’s silence)

**Robert Goebbels (S&D).** – (FR) Mr President, I would simply like to point out that the staunch anti-European Mr Farage, who is here in this building, has decided he would rather be noticed for his absence than join with democrats in their grieving.

**President.** – Ladies and gentlemen, this is a moment of great sadness. I would ask that we should not raise any matters of individual interest. We are all in a very serious mood.

7. Voting time (continuation)

**President.** – The next item is the resumption of voting.

(For results and other details of the vote: see Minutes)


7.3. EU homelessness strategy (B7-0475/2011) (vote)

7.4. A comprehensive approach to non-CO2 climate-relevant anthropogenic emissions (B7-0474/2011) (vote)

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**Jean-Marie Le Pen (NI).** – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I have been personally censured by a fellow Member for my statements about the massacre in Norway, and let me tell you that it is a lie. In condemning the Norwegian Government’s naivety for having failed in its security obligations, I was actually making a political judgment about Norwegian policy. States are responsible for protecting their citizens; however there was not a single police officer on the island.

**President.** – Mr Le Pen, you are speaking on a substantive matter, and this is not in accordance with the rules.
Jean-Marie Le Pen (NI). – (FR) Mr President, I have been attacked by the paedophile Mr Cohn-Bendit and I am entitled to reply. I am entitled to remind you that he was censured in this House for having harbouring a terrorist from the Red Army Faction and that he supported the Cambodians. I have the right to defend my honour. You may be President of this House, but I am the second oldest member.

President. – Mr Le Pen, I agree. You have made your statement. Thank you. We will take your words into consideration.

Jean-Marie Le Pen (NI). – (FR) Mr President, you cut off my mike, even though I had not finished my speech. I have the right to defend myself if my honour is being attacked: that is the least one might ask. Will you let me speak? It is quite clear: I said that the Norwegian Government was naive because it had not made security provisions, either on the island or behind it. It took the police an hour and a half to arrive at the scene of the crime. I think it is right that a Member of the European Parliament should be able to express his opinion on the attitude of a government that is part of Europe.

President. – Pursuant to Rule 151, you may not currently speak on substantive matters. I think you have delivered the most important part of your statement and we thank you for this. Thank you for your statement.

Jean-Marie Le Pen (NI). – (FR) Mr President, you are preventing me from speaking: anyone would think we were among the Bolsheviks!

IN THE CHAIR: RAINER WIELAND
Vice-President

8. Explanations of vote

Oral explanations of vote

Report: Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (A7-0273/2011)

Jens Rohde (ALDE). – (DA) Mr President, energy is a commodity that is traded in line with all manner of other commodities. Nevertheless, the energy market has a few peculiar characteristics that we need to take into account. We are still in the process of developing a competitive internal market for energy. There are obscure and unreasonable trading practices and this damages competition and causes violent price fluctuations to the detriment of undertakings and consumers.

It is therefore good that we have today adopted the Chatzimarkakis report, but I would like to say that this is not the end of the matter. We need to create a well-functioning, transparent internal market for energy services that will enable consumers to obtain the benefits of not only having the most energy-friendly, but also the most price-friendly energy distributed to their households.

Roberta Angelilli (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, firstly I would like to congratulate my colleague on the work he has carried out. It is important to draw up a legislative framework to regulate the wholesale electricity and gas market. The European Union is based on the principle of a free, transparent and unimpeded market that is wholly designed to safeguard consumers and micro-enterprises as final beneficiaries.
It is well known that unfair behaviour has an adverse effect on prices, and for this reason it is right to prohibit market abuse in the form of insider trading or market manipulation.

I also commend the proposal to create an agency for the cooperation of national regulatory authorities as a fundamental instrument for monitoring market transactions, and the intention to establish a European register of market participants.

Marek Józef Gróbarczyk (ECR). – (PL) Mr President, I decided to support the report as it has a significant impact on the level of energy prices, in particular on the budget of individual consumers. However, it should be stressed that the best remedy as far as pricing is concerned is healthy competition, above all competition between suppliers of the raw materials needed for energy production. A lack of diversification in the supply of raw materials, particularly supplies of gas, restricts and limits the control of energy producers and the possibility of influencing prices. This is the case in post-communist countries where gas supplies are still dominated by Russia. Construction of the Northern Gas Pipeline will only exacerbate the situation. If proper diversification does not take place, the monitoring agency will have no alternative but to serve the interests of Gazprom.

Sergej Kozlík (ALDE). – (SK) Mr President, almost 10 years since the piecemeal liberalisation of the energy and gas markets it has become clear that the energy exchanges that were set up and the agreements on OTC markets, which have become ubiquitous, are not protected against attempts to manipulate the markets or insider trading. Liberalisation of the energy markets was held up as a necessary measure to reduce the cost of electricity and gas to consumers. In reality prices have risen and energy poverty has become a permanent feature of the liberalisation process. The proposal for special regulation of energy markets acknowledges the special nature of these markets and proposes applying the same rules on abusing the market and insider trading which are used on the financial markets. That is why I supported this draft regulation.

Adam Bielan (ECR). – (PL) Mr President, dishonest practices in the energy markets are contributing significantly to high energy prices and the resulting financial situation of end-users, which means our citizens and businesses. At the same time, they are reducing the confidence of potential investors. In my opinion, the provisions of the regulation should mitigate abuses and manipulation in the wholesale trade of energy products. I agree with the need to prohibit the exploitation of inside information for the purposes of trading on one’s own account. I am also very much in favour of the standardisation of sanctions in the context of price manipulation.

Under the leadership of the recently constituted Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators, transactions relating to the sale of energy products are gaining greater transparency. The system of cooperation between the Agency and national regulatory organs set forth in the regulation makes the process of detecting and eradicating violations of EU law or financial irregularities more efficient. I am expecting the new regulations to improve the stability of wholesale energy markets, so I support this draft resolution.

Alajos Mészáros (PPE). – (HU) Mr President, the regulation on energy market integrity and transparency creates an EU legal framework to prevent market abuses and manipulations in the wholesale energy market. The purpose of the liberalisation thus introduced was to create the conditions for the internal market by 2014. Liberalisation, however, has not achieved its purpose, energy prices have not become standardised, prices have increased, and their variability has increased, too.
In my opinion, we can achieve the stabilisation and standardisation of energy market prices by suppressing unfair practices, thereby improving on the current situation of end users. Wholesale contracts, however, are easy to purchase and sell on, and therefore are more vulnerable to market manipulations.

This is another reason why we need more effective market control. We must create an EU register of market players from the national registers, and also provide the relevant authorities access to it. For this reason I too voted in favour of this proposal.

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). - Mr President, I support this regulation aimed at avoiding market manipulation and insider trading. If it works it would be good for consumers in terms of energy prices, but the energy challenge for Europe is great. We are significant importers of energy.

I would like to draw attention to a problem which has arisen in my own Member State about agreeing a REFIT tariff (Renewable Energy Feed in Tariffs) for the renewable energy sector. We are losing significant investment internally in the country due to the absence of an agreement on this issue, which the Commission is aware of and the Member State is pursuing. I hope it is resolved to the benefit of the sector very shortly.

Mario Pirillo (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the gas and electricity market is an instrument for driving economic growth and job creation, crucial factors in restoring the Union’s competitive edge and enabling it to overcome the crisis without delay. We must therefore prevent abuse and manipulation of the market, where monitoring and the application of penalties, along with the prohibition of insider trading, are a national responsibility.

The recent introduction of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) enables market transactions to be monitored, and the national and European registers of market participants make it possible to register transactions in wholesale energy products, thereby promoting transparency. Today’s vote, which is the result of close cooperation between the Polish Presidency, the Commission and Parliament, has laid the foundations for a more transparent market that safeguards consumer interests.

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE). - (LT) Mr President, the regulation on energy market integrity and transparency is particularly important for the European Union given the process of the liberalisation of the gas and electricity markets. In this context it is important to focus on one aspect. In order to ensure that a single and transparent energy market can function in the European Union, we must make sure that the rules we adopt are applied to all EU energy market operators uniformly and without exception, regardless of their true origin. Market surveillance authorities should ensure that we establish the identity of the end-entities behind transactions and make them subject to EU legislation. Unfortunately, until now there have been situations in which in some Member States entities from third countries, above all Gazprom, enjoy a dominant position or even a monopoly, but because they not only do this directly but also through companies they control, they are not subject to the rules that ensure market transparency. Therefore while welcoming this report, I call on the Commission to further improve the rules regulating the European Union’s energy market.

Seán Kelly (PPE). - Mr President, like my colleagues I was pleased to vote in favour of this regulation but because the regulation was voted on as a single vote we were unable to express our concerns regarding Article 13 which could lead to a constitutional issue for
Ireland because there is a potential dilution there of the separation of powers between the legislature and the judiciary. For that reason, Ireland would probably insert a declaration with the text of Recital 23 which refers to the application of penalties in accordance with national law. That is very important.

**Daniel Hannan (ECR).** - Mr President, 'This is the midnight – let no star Delude us – dawn is very far. This is the tempest long foretold, Slow to make head but sure to hold'. The markets are now pricing in a 98% likelihood of a massive default in Greece and we have spent this morning in the House jamming our fingers in our ears and humming Beethoven’s Ninth. The assumptions on which European integration has rested are crumbling. Big is not beautiful. National differences cannot be eradicated. Harmonisation does not lead to prosperity.

It is not just the European assumptions that are crumbling: it is the whole Keynesian edifice on which they rest. All those men who think of themselves as practical, but are in fact slaves to some long-defunct economist, are now finding that their elite system is in ruins. You cannot spend your way to growth. You cannot increase consumption without producing anything, at least not in the long term. You cannot debase a currency without consequences, and you cannot keep borrowing forever. And if you try to do those things, what happens? You are about to find out!


**Jens Rohde (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, I am proud to be able to say that I come from a country with a history of implementing the directives adopted at European Union level as quickly as possible. That is a distinct objective in Denmark. However, it creates a huge problem in relation to competition, particularly for Danish agriculture, where we can see that numerous countries in our Union choose the protectionist path and decide to implement the directives a long time after they have been adopted.

A community cannot operate on such terms. It is therefore good that we have taken this step today with Ms Lichtenberger’s report. We call on the Commission to propose a clear procedural law which requires the Commission to lay down binding time-limits for compliance with the rulings of the European Court of Justice by the Member States and to give EU citizens a response in connection with infringement procedures as soon as possible and in an appropriate manner.

**Roberta Angelilli (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it is the duty of the public authorities to legislate in the interests of citizens in order to achieve a number of objectives: to ensure a fair and competitive market, to safeguard health, to provide security, to stimulate innovation and to protect the environment.

It is the duty of the Member States to transpose EU legislation swiftly and accurately, for the benefit of citizens; however, there are still a large number of infringements, especially in relation to the recognition of professional qualifications, services and public tenders, resulting in the submission of many petitions reporting non-observance of EU rules.

That is why the ‘EU pilot’ project launched in 2008 is useful: it has reduced the time taken to examine infringements, and thus enabled those countries that have shown a willingness to cooperate and take part in this project to avoid having to resort to infringement proceedings and financial penalties.
David Campbell Bannerman (ECR). - Mr President, many people have no idea how much national legislation emanates from the European Union. In the UK, it is estimated that there are now 100 000 laws, regulations, directives and decisions which come from the EU and have been imposed on the country. It is estimated that this collective legal burden, known as corpus juris, costs between 4% and 10% of annual wealth in Britain. It is also estimated that the cost of such over-regulation is EUR 600 billion a year across the EU, and GBP 118 billion within the UK. Surely it is time to turn off this legislative sausage machine.

Daniel Hannan (ECR). - Mr President, let me remind the House one more time of Article 125 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which states that the Union shall not be liable or assume responsibility for the debts of a Member State or a public body within a Member State. Neither shall any other Member State.

We all seem to have forgotten that and yet, until a couple of months ago, nobody was seriously trying to argue that this policy of massive bail-outs was legal. Now not only have the EU institutions themselves connived in this flagrant disregard for what the dots and commas of the Treaty specify, but our national legal systems are also being made to collude in the deceit. Like the ancient mariner’s crewmates, they are making themselves accomplices in the crime.

When a political system departs from the rule of law it de-legitimises itself. A polity that is ruling arbitrarily, that is not following the rule book, forfeits the allegiance of its citizens.

Report: Judith Sargentini (A7-0245/2011)

Clemente Mastella (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we welcome the adoption of this report, which seeks to implement one of the fundamental objectives of the Treaty of Lisbon: the creation of a new institutional framework to ensure transparency within the European institutions.

With a view to creating an open, efficient and independent European administration, it is vital to guarantee European citizens a firm right of access to documents of EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of all kinds. Indeed, we regard transparency as an essential part of participatory democracy, being complementary to representative democracy, on which the functioning of the Union is based, allowing citizens to participate in decision-making and to exert public scrutiny, and thus ensuring the legitimacy of a democratic political system. We cannot remain insensitive to our citizens’ calls for more democracy, transparency, openness of institutions and of political actors, and for a stronger, more targeted fight against corruption.

Jens Rohde (ALDE). – (DA) Mr President, even though we (most of us) have a common European cause to fight for and even though our EU institutions are also an expression of the fight for a common European cause, politics is to a large extent a question of power struggles. When we have these power struggles it is very important – if it is to be possible for them to be conducted on an equal basis and on equal terms – that we have the same access to documents.

I am therefore pleased that we have adopted this report today, and I am particularly pleased that the report focuses on establishing common rules for the classification of documents. After all, ensuring transparency and providing access to documents and access to information is the only way that we can ensure that we have a proper democratic process and that the natural political struggles for power are conducted on equal terms.
Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (PPE). - Mr President, I supported the report that calls for enhanced access to documents because enhanced transparency is crucial to enable citizen participation in, and democratic scrutiny of, the European decision-making process. I am glad that there was a broad consensus in the European Parliament that much more needs to be done to increase transparency in the legislative process while ensuring data protection.

With the Stockholm Programme we committed ourselves to creating a real area of freedom and rights for our citizens. Transparency and accountability represent a good step in that direction. Now we should really move forward speedily with a new regulation. It is about time we got to work on it.

The new legislation should be simple, user-friendly and easy to understand for all citizens. It is important to focus on public access to information and not just on sharing information between European institutions. We should not ‘protect’ citizens from too much information or confusing information. They should choose when, if and what they want to know.

Salvatore Iacolino (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, there is no doubt that the measure we have endorsed and approved today is a decisive step towards making institutional acts more accessible, and represents one more reason not only to ensure their transparency, but also to establish an appropriate equilibrium between the right of access to these very acts, and privacy, which in any case must be guaranteed with regard to facts and situations that bear no relation to the need for due participation in institutional decision-making.

We can better scrutinise the use of EU funds by being more informed than we were in the past, and any refusals must always be justified. This must be accompanied by a step forward in the training of officials and accessibility of acts that also provides an element of justice for European citizens.

Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D). – (PL) Mr President, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak. I also supported the report on public access to documents, as I think did most of my colleagues. This is one of those rights of European Union citizens which directly follows from the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

However, I would like to stress that the classification of documents as public, confidential or secret has a very substantial effect on the practical application of the right of access to these documents. The Member States are very often overcautious in assigning a classification. This is why I would like to ask the Commission and the Council to investigate common principles for the classification of documents in the EU, as in my opinion this will have a significant impact on whether it will be a law solely on paper or whether citizens will be able to apply it in real life. Thank you.

Adam Bielan (ECR). – (PL) Mr President, my group, the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, supports greater transparency of European institutions and the ability to access as many documents as possible. Transparency is a general principle and one of the fundamental rights of citizens of the EU. In association with the right to proper administration, it is also an excellent method for its control. Documents relating to international agreements should also be available for public access. Therefore, I agree with the call for EU institutions to draw up clear rules governing freedom of information, based on current jurisprudence and treaties. Internet broadcasts of the work of Parliament at plenary level as well as committee meetings are good practice. Any restriction in access to documents in the process of being drawn up may be treated as a manifestation of blocking
public access to information. As citizens’ representatives we should play a leading part in activities relating to the openness of our work and public access to it. That is why I support the resolution.

Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE). - (FI) Mr President, keynote addresses always stress the importance of transparency in the work of the EU. Unfortunately, the everyday reality is often different.

The EU regulation on the transparency of documents lays down strict deadlines for handling documents. It is bewildering that not even the Commission keeps to these deadlines, which is evident, for example, from the Porsche case.

In many cases, delays have resulted in the Court of Justice of the European Union starting to hear a case, and when a reply has been received from the Commission, the case has been abandoned, although it has cost money and people have gone to a lot of trouble over it.

The EU’s regulation on transparency is being amended, but, unfortunately, this proposal by the Commission will take us in the opposite direction. Hopefully, there will be more transparency, because it is an important component of democracy.

Daniel Hannan (ECR). - Mr President, yesterday I quoted my countryman Jonathan Swift on the subject of bank runs, but I think the condition of EU documentation and lawmaking would have defied the parodic powers even of Jonathan Swift. You may remember that when Gulliver goes to Lilliput it is explained to him by one of the Lilliputians that it is a rule there that no law should be so long or so complicated that a common man cannot understand it.

What, I wonder, would he have made of a typical day’s voting in this House? All of us know, although we do not like to admit it in front of our constituents, that you cannot possibly be on top of more than two or three of the documents that we vote on in any given session. There simply is not the time available in the day. In fact, we have elevated this scrambling of documentation into a ruling doctrine. When we turned the Constitution into the Treaty of Lisbon its chief author, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, cheerfully admitted that lawyers had gone through the text with the sole purpose of rendering it ‘illisible’: unreadable.

What does it tell you about a political system when it dare not express its purposes? How can it expect loyalty from its citizens when it will not express itself clearly?

Report: Andrew Duff (A7-0240/2011)

Jens Rohde (ALDE). – (DA) Mr President, it is rather splendid that we are laying down some new procedures for the hearings of Commissioners here in Parliament. However, this will not solve the real problem faced by Europe, namely that the Commission is far too weak in relation the Member States. I think that the debates that have been held on the subject of Schengen, border control and the situation with regard to the debt crises in many of the European Member States on account of their inability to comply with the Stability Pact, are evidence that we have a Commission that is far too weak.

It would therefore have been much more logical if today we had taken up the debate as to whether the President of the Commission should not be appointed by the European Parliament so that he or she would always be held accountable for the European idea instead of being accountable to some strong and some less strong Heads of State or Government
in the individual Member States, because what we need in this crisis situation in which we find ourselves right now is not less EU, but more EU.

Seán Kelly (PPE). - Mr President, I also welcome these proposals because it is good that we look at what we are doing and try and improve it. Certainly there is an element of this here.

I attended as many as I could of the hearings for the Commissioners last year. I think most of them were quite satisfactory, but one in particular was very unfair to the lady in question. The questions were repetitive, personal and certainly not in accordance with giving fair play to the person involved. She did not become a Commissioner subsequently.

It is important that we get the best possible Commissioners. In that light, I just want to refer briefly to a suggestion made by Commissioner Oettinger about flying flags at half mast for countries with excessive deficits. This was ill-thought and ill-judged, and I would entreat him to withdraw those remarks with all possible haste.

Daniel Hannan (ECR). - Mr President, thank you for your kind words.

It is sometimes said that the European Commission is undemocratic in that none of its members is elected, but actually I find that it is rather more than that. Uniquely in the western world we have contrived a system which is anti-democratic, in the sense that you generally have to have lost an election before you are appointed to the European Commission.

If I think of the British appointees over the years – Chris Patten, Neil Kinnock, Peter Mandelson – it was only when they had been expressly rejected by their constituents that they were invited to come and legislate for them at European level.

I think of the career of our current UK Commissioner, Baroness Ashton, who has never once in her entire life taken the trouble to present herself to her fellow countrymen and ask for their support in an election. She is a product of the British quango state, having flitted from bureaucracy to bureaucracy, becoming an appointed peer and then arriving here.

Is it any wonder that a system based around this insulation from public opinion should be so contemptuous of democracy when, for example, a referendum goes the wrong way?

Motion for a resolution - B7-0478/2011

Roberta Angelilli (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the European Union has always defended and encouraged multilateralism, especially within the WTO which is a guarantor of economic governance and the regulated liberalisation of the global market.

I hope that the difficulties encountered this year, the differences which emerged over the content of the package to be tabled in December, can be resolved, or at least that a consensus can be reached on the specific topics it contains. There are important issues such as services, the protection of intellectual property and, in particular, greater protection of geographical indications, trade facilitation and non-tariff barriers.

I hope in any case that the Doha Development Agenda negotiations will not be wound up hastily, thereby sacrificing all those aspirations which over the years have not achieved consensus. We need to have stronger and more dynamic multilateralism than is currently the case.
Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, almost 10 years have passed since the Doha Round began. In two months’ time we will be marking its 10-year anniversary, but it has still not achieved any results. The global setting has changed profoundly. Countries which were considered to be developing countries have now become emerging countries, and today those countries are emerging even to the point where they are able to put themselves forward as saviours of the European Union or of certain Member States.

The rules of global trade need to be rewritten. Trade still has extraordinary potential to promote growth, better distribute wealth around the world and rebalance the North and South of the world. Within the multilateral framework, all of this has remained unchanged, but we need the chance to renew reciprocity between countries too, and we also need to launch and contribute a new process to strengthen democracy within the World Trade Organisation which is unable to function properly in its current form.

Mr President, I would like in particular to refer to paragraph 13 of the Doha resolution, which specifically deals with a relatively new problem the world faces, namely food security. Certainly it is now on the political agenda whereas perhaps ten years ago, at the outset of Doha, it was not. We need our multilateral agreements, should they ever prevail, to take account of the issue of food security. There are many in this House who have concerns about the inclusion of agriculture in the Doha Round in the context of the world trade system.

However, we would also have concerns about the proliferation of bilateral trade agreements. Here I refer to paragraph 12 of the resolution, which urges us to look again at the situation of the BRIC countries. Their fortunes have changed and their place in the world is different from what it used to be; this may indeed – as the resolution suggests – render the original objectives of the Doha Round impossible to attain.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, with regard to Doha, not only is there no agreement, but it is now obsolete and a failure. We call on Europe to adopt a strong position – something Parliament called for during the last parliamentary term – and for structural changes to be made to the WTO. The economic crisis, which is global, cannot wait any longer for a Doha agreement which has sorely tested us for 10 years and which we know will never be supported by many countries.

Mr President, we are now three months away from the next round of negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda and it is already very clear that no substantial progress will be made.

Let us recall that ten years ago at the launch of these negotiations we were told that these would be win-win negotiations. That whole idea, that win-win scenario, has been a lie from the start in my view. The deadlock in the negotiations underlines the fact that development and poverty eradication are not compatible with the interests of the major players in the global economy, particularly in the case of this deep economic crisis. The WTO has never been, and will not become, an organisation that facilitates trade in the
interests of workers and small farmers. It is an undemocratic institution that primarily represents the interests of the major corporations. Its policies have resulted in privatisation, lower labour standards and an increase in exploitation.

The WTO has failed the test of the Doha Development Agenda. It should be abolished and replaced by a system based on genuine global solidarity and cooperation between peoples. That means tackling the dictatorship of the markets and planning the economy on people’s needs.

**Syed Kamall (ECR).** - Mr President, one of the best ways to help development and to help those in poorer countries is to help the entrepreneurs in those countries who create wealth for their local communities; and one of the ways to help them is to make sure that we have open markets so that entrepreneurs from the poorer countries can compete and have access to world markets as well as access to the goods and services that we currently enjoy.

Why should it only be we in the West, or in the Northern hemisphere, who enjoy the very best goods and services? It is a shame that our progress in this area keeps getting stuck, and most of the lack of movement tends to be on agriculture. It is a pity that we seem to be in a situation where we have to unlock agriculture before we unlock manufacturing before we unlock services, although services account for a very large percentage of GDP. It is also a shame that we seem to be focusing mostly on bilateral agreements – which may not necessarily undermine the multilateral process, but I think it is important that we continue to move towards multilateralism.

If this does not work, we should bear in mind the work of Professor Razeen Sally who said that 50 countries, or 25 if one counts the EU as one trade block, account for 80% of world trade and a greater share of FDI. Maybe we should be looking for those countries to go for a plurilateral agreement.


**Jens Rohde (ALDE).** – *(DA)* Mr President, when it comes to reducing the administrative burden for our enterprises it is a bit like the weather: everyone talks about it, but no one does anything about it.

Politicians like us have a tendency to think we know what a good life is and we think we know how best to run a business. In the current crisis situation in Europe there is also a discussion going on in many Member States to the effect that we should implement a ‘pick the winner’ strategy, in other words that it should be us politicians who define what the right type of production is.

That is absolutely not the way forward. The best thing that we can do to reduce the burden on enterprises is to focus in a targeted manner on getting the internal market to function properly in areas where this is not happening, so that our enterprises have one large market, because our greatest challenge in Europe is that we perhaps have the world’s largest economy, but our market is far too small.

**Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced countless innovations, including one which in my view deserves greater attention: the Protocol on the role of national parliaments. In the Protocol, national parliaments are called upon to actively uphold the principle of subsidiarity during the legislative process.
I voted in favour of this report. Nevertheless, I wish to stress that, so far, very little has been done. Applying this Protocol would meet our citizens’ need, albeit only in part, for democratic legitimacy, and overcome that feeling of remoteness which surrounds the European institutions. I think that a need felt so keenly by our citizens deserves greater attention. I therefore hope that further measures are adopted as soon as possible.

Peter Jahr (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, I voted in favour of the report on better legislation, subsidiarity and proportionality and smart regulation with great pleasure, because it puts a key concern of citizens, businesses and, ultimately, also the administrations in the Member States back on the agenda.

What is this committee report about? The central themes of the report are the reduction of administrative costs by 25% and ensuring proper implementation. It is about active cooperation between the Commission and the Member States. It also contains a proposal for equivalent cost offsets, that is to say if additional administrative costs arise in businesses as a result of legislation, these are to be offset. That is a lofty desire. I am also very pleased to have read that this smart regulation will continue to be the task of the European institutions in the Member States. A progress report is scheduled for 2012.

David Campbell Bannerman (ECR). - Mr President, I commend my colleague, Sajjad Karim, on a sensible report that takes us back in the right direction. The emphasis on subsidiarity is correct. 90% of the British economy has nothing to do with trade with the EU, and 80% of that economy is trade within the UK, but we have to apply all of these EU laws – 100 000 of them.

On better legislation, the Agency Workers Directive, which will shortly be coming into force, is a disaster for Britain because, in the UK, we have a far more flexible workforce, which is vital to our prosperity and to our recovery. The question is why, when 80% of agency workers are in the UK, the EU should have any role in this legislation at all. The same is true of the dreadful Fund Managers Directive, where again 80% of fund managers are only in the UK. The lesson is this: overregulation destroys jobs, and we need less regulation now.

Guido Milana (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the single market, the freedom of movement and the Treaty of Lisbon are all elements which came about irrespective of changes to our method – either the European method or the national method – of lawmaking. We need to act on the commitments made in the light of these opportunities. In particular, we need to truly initiate a phase to simplify the legislative system, a simplification phase which must lead to a different kind of dialogue between Europe and the individual States.

I would start precisely with our documents, and I would take this opportunity to suggest a kind of clarity test for our documents. When we draw up a white paper or a green paper, everything should be more understandable, and I would say that, in order to truly launch this virtuous phase of introducing legislation, the real, perhaps strategic proposal for our Europe, is to give particular responsibility to a European Commissioner who would have the specific task of clarifying legislation and relations between the States and Europe itself.

Anna Záborská (PPE). – (SK) Mr President, I supported the report, but allow me to point out one important fact. The Treaty of Lisbon confers greater powers on national parliaments. This element of subsidiarity must be more effectively used. That is why I am in favour of evaluating the form this collaboration will take. If it turns out to bring little benefit, it should
be re-evaluated. Above all, the present timescales within which national parliaments can exercise their right to reply and protest against breaches of the principle of subsidiarity need to be changed. Because the flip side of subsidiarity is centralisation, and one effect of centralisation is that effective democracy, people’s ability to influence how the issues affecting them directly are resolved, is lost. To a certain extent our discussion earlier today on the financial crisis and the future of the euro was inconsistent with the principle of subsidiarity. The majority of our colleagues, including the President of the European Commission, were in favour of community-wide decision making, rather than decision making by the European Council.


Clemente Mastella (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon confirmed the right to petition the European Parliament as one of the cornerstones of European citizenship. This fundamental tool allows citizens to bring before Parliament their concerns over the impact of various EU policies and legislation on their everyday lives.

However, an analysis of the various statistics shows that, for those petitions declared inadmissible, this is mainly because petitioners continue to confuse the European and national competences. This shows that efforts must be stepped up to better inform citizens of what the right of petition is all about.

Furthermore, we intend to stress once again the need to create a Europe-wide one-stop shop to provide advice for citizens who consider that their rights have been infringed. This remains, in our view, a very important objective which we need to achieve extremely quickly.

Jens Rohde (ALDE). – (DA) Mr President, this year it is exactly 25 years since the adoption of the EC package on the internal market. It was an EC package that was intended to ensure the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons.

In Denmark where I come from there is currently an election campaign going on, and the election is tomorrow. If the socialist opposition comes to power, the government will introduce a requirement for young people who choose to leave Denmark to train after completing their education to pay back their educational grant. In other words, they will create a new Berlin Wall, where they not only want to control whether people come in across the border, but they clearly also want to prevent people going out into the wider world.

I hope that these young people will use our Committee on Petitions to ensure that their freedom of movement will also be ensured in the European Union in the future.

Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I can only endorse the text of this report. Mr Meyer has rightly highlighted the need to create a European one-stop shop. The creation of such facilities remains the main goal yet to be achieved.

However, the statistics in the report clearly show that there is a significant lack of information at European level, not only with regard to the public’s right of petition, but also in terms of the so-called informal mechanisms. For example, SOLVIT has shown that it works properly, swiftly and effectively, but this has not changed the fact that our fellow citizens only marginally avail themselves of this service.
I wonder whether it would not be more appropriate to organise a media campaign at European level on these topics instead of merely improving the Parliament website, which is an important communication tool, but which does not reach every citizen at the moment.

Peter Jahr (PPE). — (DE) Mr President, as coordinator for the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats), I have, of course, voted in favour of this report, but on the other hand I have also followed with interest the points of criticism raised in the debate in Parliament. There are essentially two points of criticism. The first is that the influence of the Charter of Fundamental Rights on the work of the Committee on Petitions is still not duly recognised in this report. The second is that the question of ownership rights or free access to property in the European Union for EU citizens has not yet been optimally or satisfactorily clarified and the competence of the committee is still not clear.

I can at this point only give my assurance that we intend to deal with precisely these two issues this year in the Committee on Petitions. I would ask my fellow Members to have a little patience. The next annual report will then contain something about both of these matters.

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). — Mr President, I would just pick up on this and thank Peter Jahr for those clarifying comments on two very important issues on which the Committee on Petitions has worked but has not reached a conclusion. I would suggest that where there is a specific large problem affecting many citizens, perhaps we could look at setting up a special temporary committee of inquiry. It worked with Equitable Life – it took a long time to get results but at least it did have an effect.

Can I also say that the first port of call for many citizens when they have a problem with the European Union or indeed back home, is their MEP, and some MEPs are more accessible than others. We would direct where appropriate our citizens to the Committee on Petitions. There also is the Pilot projects initiative which works between the Commission and the Member State. While I have had some good experience where this works effectively, I do not think it is open or transparent enough because I have had another experience where nothing happened and we had to go to the Ombudsman. So, much good work has been done, but there is more to do.

Jim Higgins (PPE). — Mr President, I welcome the report in that it is a long overdue forensic analysis of the scope, powers and relevance of the Committee on Petitions. One of the problems that we constantly refer to is the perception that Europe and the EU project are remote from our 500 million citizens, and one vital instrument in addressing that particular deficit and bridging the gap is the Petitions Committee, where individuals or communities can come before the Committee, have their grievances heard and hopefully redressed.

The statistics speak for themselves. In 2010, 1 655 petitions were received. I welcome in particular recital F. I have had tremendous success thanks to the Committee in highlighting neglect by two local authorities in Ireland – one in respect of flooding, the other in respect of road surfaces which led to deaths – and getting action.

Secondly, I welcome recital L which highlights the lack of action on the part of Member States. We have to make citizens more aware of the Committee on Petitions. It is a very useful instrument.

Seán Kelly (PPE). — (GA) Mr President, as my colleagues said, this committee is without doubt one of the best committees in Parliament and does a lot of work. I saw that myself. They listen very well to people and they make good decisions.
As an example of that, Mr Higgins – as he referred to a few minutes ago – was involved in dealing with a petition relating to some roadside accidents that led to mortalities. They could not get any movement in Ireland and came here basically as a last port of call because of bureaucratic regulations, intransigent State agencies and so forth. They came here and they got some semblance of justice.

The same applied to the Haulbowline toxic dump site. Nothing was happening in Ireland. It was passed from Billy to Jack for a number of years. The Committee on Petitions heard it and there was progress within 30 days, so certainly we should celebrate what is good.

**Motion for a resolution - B7-0475/2011**

**Roberta Angelilli (PPE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the right to decent housing is enshrined in numerous international treaties on human rights, including Article 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

I believe that a lack of housing is a direct infringement of a person’s physical and moral integrity, because the right to housing is a person’s fundamental right, as well as the foundation on which to enjoy all other social rights.

On this basis, I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution on an EU homelessness strategy, a goal which is, moreover, included in the EU 2020 strategy, which provides for the use of the European Regional Development Fund to finance social-housing construction. Last but not least, it is important to promote quality services and to develop voluntary services to support homeless people.

**Sergej Kozlík (ALDE).** – *(SK)* Mr President, the main aim of the EU 2020 strategy is to protect at least 20 million people from the threat of poverty and social exclusion. It has given new impetus to the struggle against all forms of poverty and social exclusion, including homelessness. That is why I am in favour of Member States proceeding with the measure to eliminate street sleeping by 2015, including the proposal to draw up an ambitious integrated EU strategy based on national and regional strategies which aim to eliminate homelessness over the long term within the framework of broader social inclusion. I also support the European Commission’s call to set up a working group for an EU homelessness strategy.

**Motion for a resolution - B7-0474/2011**

**Jens Rohde (ALDE).** – *(DA)* Mr President, combating climate change is, fortunately, always high on the political agenda, even though we have an economic crisis, and that is a good thing. I also believe that here in the European Parliament we can be rather proud of the fact that, with a very broad majority, we have been able to produce some very ambitious plans in connection with our energy strategy and, for that matter, also in the area of energy efficiency, which is one of the best ways of achieving lower CO\(_2\) emissions. So, that is all well and good.

Having said that, we also have to admit that there has been a drawback to us having focused so much on CO\(_2\). This drawback is the fact that we have perhaps forgotten to direct our attention at other greenhouse gases that also affect the climate. It is therefore good that we ourselves are now recognising that we need a broader focus and it is also good that we are now calling on the Commission to integrate other greenhouse gases into climate policy, so that we take a broad and effective approach.
Marek Józef Gróbarczyk (ECR). – (PL) Mr President, it is difficult to agree with all the proposals presented in the report which could have a destructive influence on EU enterprises at a time of economic crisis. According to the Kyoto Protocol, individual nations have committed themselves to a reduction in greenhouse gases other than CO$_2$ and this is in process. However, in many countries there are enterprises emitting above-average amounts of toxic gases which are extremely harmful to health. Under the guise of reducing CO$_2$ emissions they are producing gases which are dangerous to humans and animals. Combating these practices should be a priority of the European Union and this action should be supported.

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). - Mr President, I will be brief. I supported this resolution because I think it is important that we raise awareness of not just concentrating on carbon and reducing CO$_2$ emissions. Just to mention that when it comes to energy efficiency as a way of reducing CO$_2$ emissions – which we all believe is the right way to go – we are failing to reach our targets and we really need to redouble our efforts in that respect.

The issue of non-CO$_2$ emissions is significant because it may indeed be a less costly way of tackling climate change. I concur absolutely with paragraph 11 which calls for rigorous global implementation of air pollution regulations. We need global agreement and global implementation.

Written explanations of vote

Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0279/2011)

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting for this report as it rightly supports the workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the 167 redundancies that took place in a multinational enterprise, AT&S, specialising in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs) for mobile telephones during the last quarter of 2009. Of the workers made redundant, 74 will benefit from tailored measures supported by funding from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to a total value of EUR 1.22 million. The fund is there for precisely this purpose: to attend to the most pressing social issues.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to Austria. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. In Austria redundancies have been caused by globalisation and major structural changes in the production of mobile phones and devices, which has been relocated to Asia. Austria indicates that European printed circuit board (PCB) production fell by almost 11% in 2008, compared to decreases of 5.4% in China and 4.8% worldwide. Consequently, in November 2008 AT&S decided to move all of PCB mass production from Leoben to Shanghai, causing 603 redundancies in Leoben between November 2008 and December 2009, and another 200 redundancies following the closure of the AT&S Fohnsdorf site, 50 km from Leoben. We must provide these former employees with assistance.

Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional support for workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade, and to assist with their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal
consequences of which is an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all of the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support to those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. I therefore voted in favour of this report on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Austria, with the aim of supporting the workers made redundant from the company AT&S, specialising in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs) in the district of Leoben in the region of Eastern Upper Styria.

**Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES)** On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of Austria to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. This concerns 167 redundancies (of which 74 targeted for assistance) in the enterprise AT&S specialised in the manufacture of printed circuit boards in the region of Eastern Upper Styria.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT)** I voted in favour of this report on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. The provisions contained in the document propose protecting workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the mechanisms employed in the international markets by the phenomenon of globalisation, and are therefore entirely worthy of support. Hence my vote was a positive one.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT)** Given that Austria has requested assistance for 167 cases of redundancy, 74 of which are potential beneficiaries of assistance, at the company AT&S, specialising in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs), in the district of Leoben, I voted for the resolution, as I agree with the Commission’s proposal and the respective amendments introduced by Parliament. I also agree that the information provided on the coordinated package of personalised services to be funded from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) should include information on complementarity with actions funded by the Structural Funds, and I would reiterate Parliament’s call for the Commission to also present a comparative evaluation of these data in its annual reports.

**Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT)** Unfortunately, there have been many cases of recourse to the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), showing both the impact that this has had on the European economy, and the economic and financial crisis which is plaguing part of the Union. This case concerns an Austrian company manufacturing printed circuit boards (PCBs), which found itself in difficulties, leading to the redundancies of 167 workers. I hope that the funds will be made available to the workers entitled to them as quickly as possible.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT)** The low wage policy practised in some regions, particularly Asia, and specifically China, has not only caused many EU companies to relocate, but has also caused others to go out of business. This situation has come about in Austria, in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs). This report concerns a proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and the Council on the mobilisation of EUR 1 221 128 from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), with the aim of supporting the reintegration of Austrian workers made redundant as a result of the current economic and financial crisis. This application, the seventh to be examined within the framework of the 2011 EU budget, was submitted by Austria on 11 March 2010, and concerns 167 redundancies from the company AT&S, which specialises in the manufacture...
of PCBs. Given that this involves a specific budgetary instrument, and that the amount requested is legally acceptable and complies with the proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Austria, I am voting for this proposal, and hope that it contributes to alleviating the economic difficulties of the region’s inhabitants, and to revitalising the local economy.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) In almost all of Parliament’s part-sessions requests for the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) have been adopted. This is a clear sign of the consequences of the prevalent EU policies, but not so much as to provoke a change in them.

This report supports the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Austria, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This is the seventh application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 1 221 128 from the EGF for Austria. It concerns 167 redundancies, 74 of which are targeted for assistance, from the company AT&S, which specialises in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs), in the region of Eastern Upper Styria, during the four-month reference period from 1 September to 31 December 2009.

While it is true that the effects of the capitalist crisis have been focused particularly severely on outlying countries, which stems from the capitalist nature of the process of integration and its inherently uneven development, it is also the case, and we should not forget it, that workers are not shielded from these effects in any country.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was set up to provide additional help for workers who have felt the impact of the big structural changes that the world economy has undergone. Under point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management and Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, the Fund cannot exceed a maximum of EUR 500 million. On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new draft resolution on mobilising the EGF for Austria to assist workers who have lost their jobs due to the impact of the world financial and economic crisis on the labour market. This is the seventh application that will be considered during the 2011 budget, and it concerns mobilising a total of EUR 1 221 128 from the EGF for Austria.

The measure is for 167 workers (the assistance applies to 74 of them) who were made redundant by AT&S, a specialist in integrated circuit boards located in the east of Upper Styria, for a four month reference period from 1 September 2009 to 31 December 2009. In the view of the Commission their application meets the justification criteria under the EGF Directive and the Commission has recommended that the budgetary authority approve the application.

Lorenzo Fontana (EFD), in writing. – (IT) I should like to explain my vote in favour of the report. As already emphasised, I share the rapporteur’s pleasure in noting that, for the first time, in the 2011 budget, separate funds have been set aside for the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, and that it is not dependent, therefore, on unused funds from other areas. As regards the application relating to the Austrian undertaking, no critical issues have come to light.

Marian Harkin (ALDE), in writing. – I voted for this report because I believe that redundant workers need to be assisted with a package of personalised measures in order
to allow them access to retraining and upskilling. This will help to facilitate their re-entry into the labour market.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing.** – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was established to provide additional support for workers made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to assist them with their reintegration into the labour market. The scope of the EGF was broadened for applications submitted from 1 May 2009 to include support for workers made redundant as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis. The Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 allows the mobilisation of the EGF within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million. On 11 March 2010, Austria submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in the enterprise AT&S, which specialises in manufacturing printed circuit boards, in the district of Leoben located in the region of Eastern Upper Styria. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, as laid down in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006. I therefore welcomed the Commission’s proposal to mobilise an amount of EUR 1,221,128.

**Giovanni La Via (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) I voted for the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of Austria because I consider that instrument to be a valuable resource for the support of workers in difficulty on account of the economic crisis. At a time of economic crisis like the present, the EGF can be a valuable means of support, and not just for workers in difficulty. Today’s vote concerned an application submitted by Austria in respect of 167 redundancies (of which 74 were targeted for assistance from the Fund) at the enterprise AT&S, which specialises in the manufacturing of printed circuit boards and is located in the district of Leoben, in the region of Eastern Upper Styria. A total of EUR 1,221,128 has been mobilised.

**Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing.** – (SK) The draft decision to mobilise the EGF for Austria supports the return to the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis.

The nature of the dismissals was unforeseeable. It was a result of the poor financial and economic situation in 2008 and 2009, the increasing pressure on purchase prices, the weak US dollar compared with the euro, and rising wages in European factories.

We should remember that the financial contributions from the EGF are not a substitute for measures which are the responsibility of society on the basis of internal legislation or collective agreements; the measures give support to individual workers and do not go towards restructuring society or the industry; aid received from other EU financial instruments do not go towards funding the measures described.

I would like to point out that, with due consideration for interinstitutional agreement, it is important to ensure that a quick decision is taken to mobilise the fund.

**Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE), in writing.** – (PL) I voted in favour, because I believe that Austria’s application qualifies for funding of EUR 1,221,128 under the criteria contained in the regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. In this context, the events at AT&S directly mirror the global trend of transferring mass production to economies which can guarantee lower manufacturing costs, such as Asian countries, so I believe that Austria’s application is fully justified.

**David Martin (S&D), in writing.** – I welcome this mobilisation of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund to assist workers made redundant by AT/AT&S from Austria. The
redundancies concern the Land of Steiermark at NUTS II level and Östliche Obersteiermark at NUTS III level, and more specifically the district of Leoben. This is an industry-dominated area, economically dependent on a few large enterprises such as AT&S. Moreover, as AT&S was the region’s largest employer up until December 2008, the 167 redundancies in the present case would put the labour market under serious pressure.

The co-ordinated package of personalised services to be funded, including its compatibility with actions funded by the structural funds, includes measures for the reintegration of the 74 targeted workers into employment, such as information and admission to the labour foundation, occupational orientation, active job search, individual training, training and job search allowance.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (FR) I am abstaining out of consideration for the Austrian workers who have been sacrificed on the altar of globalisation. Given the situation into which they have been plunged as a result of the neoliberal policies advocated by the European Union and the derisory amount of this handout, a ‘no’ vote is almost preferable. However, the little that is being given may help to ease their suffering. This does not make the principles behind the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund any less intolerable.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur within a globalised context. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers’ rights. The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used by other EU countries in the past, so now it is appropriate to grant this aid to Austria, which has applied for assistance with regard to 167 cases of redundancy, of which 74 are targeted for assistance, at the company AT&S, specialising in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs), in the district of Leoben, in the region of Eastern Upper Styria.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. – The report covers the Austrian application of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund which relates to 167 redundancies that occurred in AT&S, a leading multinational company, specialised in the manufacturing of printed circuit boards for mobile phones, during the last quarter of 2009. Seventy-four redundant workers will benefit from personalised measures supported by EGAF funding for a total of EUR 1.22 million.

Siiri Oviir (ALDE), in writing. – (ET) I supported Barbara Matera’s report on the implementation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund in supporting business activities in both Austria and the Netherlands. I did not concur with the view of several governments of Member States on the council, which oppose the extension of the fund’s activities to the year 2013, especially in light of the economic crisis.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created to provide additional support to workers affected by the consequences of major structural changes in the patterns of world trade. On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new draft decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Austria, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This is the seventh application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates
to the mobilisation of the total sum of EUR 1 221 128 for 167 redundancies, of which 74 are targeted for assistance, from the enterprise AT&S, specialising in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs), in the region of Eastern Upper Styria, in Austria, during the four-month reference period between 1 September and 31 December 2009. Following an analysis of the process by all of the stakeholders, including the Commission, and given that the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the EGF Working Group approve of the mobilisation of the Fund in favour of Austria, I voted for this report.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I fully support the text presented by Ms Matera.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), in writing. – (PT) A seventh application for assistance from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) has been made within the framework of the implementation of the budget for 2011. This application was submitted by Austria, based on Article 2(c) of the EGF regulation and relating to 167 redundancies, 74 of which are targeted for assistance, from the enterprise AT&S, specialising in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs), in the region of Eastern Upper Styria, over the four-month reference period from 1 September to 31 December 2009. According to the assessment that was carried out, these redundancies were unforeseen and will have a significant impact on the district and the surrounding area. As all of the conditions are met for the mobilisation of the EGF, I voted in favour, in the hope that the assistance will be made available to the redundant workers swiftly and efficiently.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing. – (IT) On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of Austria, in order to assist the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant on account of the global economic and financial crisis. The application in question, the seventh in the framework of the 2011 budget, relates to the mobilisation of the EGF to the tune of EUR 1 221 128. It concerns 167 redundancies, 74 of which are targeted for assistance, at AT&S, which specialises in the production of printed circuit boards (PCB) and is located in Eastern Upper Styria, during the four-month reference period from 1 September 2009 to 31 December 2009. Following its assessment, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs has issued a positive opinion, while also confirming the importance of ensuring a rapid procedure with due regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement for the adoption of decisions on the mobilisation of the Fund.

Nuno Teixeira (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of Parliament and the Council of 20 December 2006 established the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) with the aim of supporting workers who lose their jobs due to structural changes in the context of the global economy. The Austrian enterprise AT&S specialises in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs), and relocated its manufacturing due to the growing pressure on purchasing prices, the weakening of the dollar against the euro and increased wages in the European plants. In view of this, Austria has submitted a request to the Commission to mobilise EUR 1 221 128 in order to address the 167 redundancies between 1 September and 31 December 2009 in the company, which is located in the region of Eastern Upper Styria. I would like to stress the fact that the EGF should not be a substitute for the legal and financial responsibilities of AT&S, but rather an additional support granted by the EU in order to alleviate the social difficulties that these workers will face.
Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0277/2011)

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting for this report as it rightly supports the workers who lost their jobs as a result of 1 180 redundancies that took place in various enterprises specialising in the manufacture of basic metals in two regions of Austria in 2009. Of the workers, 356 who were made redundant will be assisted with tailored measures supported by funding from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to a total amount of EUR 8.28 million.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to Austria. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) has been created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. On 9 March 2010, Austria submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in 54 enterprises involved in the manufacture of basic metals. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 8 284 908.

Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which is an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all of the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support to those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. It is for this reason that I voted for this report on the mobilisation of the EGF for Austria, with the aim of supporting workers made redundant from 54 enterprises operating in basic metals industries in the regions of Styria and Lower Austria.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of Austria to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. This particular case concerns 1 180 redundancies – of which 356 were targeted for assistance – that have taken place in 54 enterprises within the sector manufacturing base metals, and iron, steel and ferro-alloy products in the Austrian provinces of Styria and Lower Austria.

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) With regard to this report, the responsible Commission services have approved the request to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, a European instrument for assisting people who have lost their jobs as a result of the competition created by the distorting effects of globalisation. Indeed, there are no stumbling blocks or examples of non-compliance in the application submitted to the European Commission, and the criteria required in order to launch the procedure for mobilising the Fund have been met. I therefore voted in favour.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Austria has requested assistance in respect 1 180 redundancies, of which 356 are targeted for assistance, in 54 enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 24 ('Manufacture of basic metals') in the NUTS II regions of Styria (AT22) and Lower Austria (AT12). I voted for the resolution because I agree with the Commission’s proposal as amended by Parliament. I also agree that the EGF
was created as a separate specific instrument with its own objectives and deadlines, and that it therefore deserves a dedicated allocation. This will avoid transfers from other budget headings, as happened in the past, which could be detrimental to achieving the objectives of the various policies.

**Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) In the past, the basic metals industries thrived in Europe, but today they too are facing a severe crisis. That is the case for the enterprises operating in the regions of Styria and Lower Austria, which had to dismiss 1 180 workers, 356 of whom meet the requirements for being targeted for assistance. I hope that the affected regions, and in particular the workers made redundant, will be able to become productive once again and succeed in recovering after this unfortunate period.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) Having seen the severe social impact of the current economic and financial crisis, the European Union created the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to provide additional assistance to workers affected by changes in the structure of global trade. This report concerns the proposal for a decision of Parliament and the Council on the mobilisation of the EGF in accordance with point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (application EGF/2010/007 AT/Steiermark and Niederösterreich from Austria). In June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Austria in order to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis, following the application referred to above, which was submitted on 9 March 2010. This is the sixth proposal for the mobilisation of the Fund submitted under the 2011 EU budget, mobilising EUR 8 284 908, and the aim is to mitigate the social impact of the dismissal of 1 180 workers from 54 metals enterprises in the regions of Styria and Lower Austria. I am voting for this assistance in the hope that the Austrian metal industry will recover quickly.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D), in writing.** – (SK) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was set up to provide additional help for workers who have felt the impact of the major structural changes that the world economy has undergone. Under point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management and Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, the Fund cannot exceed a maximum of EUR 500 million. On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new draft resolution on mobilising the EGF on behalf of Austria to support workers who been made redundant as a result of the world financial and economic crisis. This request, EGF 2010/007/AT/Steiermark and Niederösterreich, was submitted to the Commission on 9 March 2010 and supplemented with additional information on 27 January 2011.

One criterion which the Commission used in making its decision was to assess the relation between the job losses and major structural changes in world trade and the financial crisis, which in this particular case was related to a fall in world demand for metals, and which had an extraordinary impact on Austrian metals exports. In the Commission’s view the request meets the eligibility criteria of the EGF Regulation and the Commission recommends that the budgetary body approve the request.

**Marian Harkin (ALDE), in writing.** – I voted in favour in order to ensure that assistance from the European Globalisation Fund is available to the workers made redundant in Austria following a global drop in demand for metal that hit the Austrian metal industry.
The measures proposed in the application by the Austrian Government will, I believe, facilitate the re-entry of the redundant workers back into the labour market.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing.** - (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was established to provide additional support for workers made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to assist them with their reintegration into the labour market. The scope of the EGF was broadened for applications submitted from 1 May 2009 to include support for workers made redundant as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis. The Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 allows the mobilisation of the EGF within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million. On 9 March 2010, Austria submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in 54 enterprises in NACE Rev. 2, Division 24 (manufacture of basic metals), in the contiguous NUTS II regions of Steiermark (Styria, AT22) and Niederösterreich (Lower Austria, AT12) in Austria. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, as laid down in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006. I therefore welcomed the Commission’s proposal to mobilise an amount of EUR 8 284 908.

**Giovanni La Via (PPE), in writing.** - (IT) On 9 March 2010, Austria submitted an application to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in respect of redundancies in 54 enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 24 (manufacture of basic metals) in the two contiguous NUTS II regions of Styria (Steiermark, AT22) and Lower Austria (Niederösterreich, AT12). In response to further information, we have made provision today for the mobilisation of the EGF to the tune of EUR 8 284 908. As has been mentioned on a number of occasions in this House, since 2006 the EGF has provided practical support to European workers made redundant either for reasons associated with the relocation of their companies or, following the 2009 amendment, on account of the economic crisis, in order to assist their reintegration into the labour market. I consider this an example of practical and indispensable support at a time of crisis such as the present, when Europe cannot and must not fail to provide support to workers made redundant.

**Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing.** - (SK) The request is for the mobilisation of a total of EUR 8 824 908 from the EGF for Austria. It relates to 1 180 workers who lost their jobs at 54 enterprises whose activities fall under the NACE Revision 2 classification, division 24 (‘Manufacture of basic metals’), affecting the regions of Steiermark and Niederösterreich over the nine-month reference period from 1 April 2009 to 31 December 2009.

The link between the redundancies and major structural changes in world trade or the financial crisis was evaluated, which in this particular case related to the drop in world demand for metals as a result of the crisis, and which had a particularly marked impact on the export of metals from Austria. According to Eurostat and the Austrian statistics office, in 2009 metals exports were down 38.6% compared with the previous year.

Although the metals industry is generally subject to cyclical fluctuations, the speed and intensity of the drop resulting from the crisis could not be foreseen and came as a surprise for the industry as a real growth in GDP had been predicted.

**Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE), in writing.** - (PL) I voted in favour, because the decision to make over 1 000 people redundant over a period of less than nine months was unforeseen and is directly related to the global crisis which has brought about a sudden fall in demand for metals, which has affected Austrian exports of these products in particular. Therefore I believe Austria’s application is fully justified.
David Martin (S&D), in writing. — I welcome this proposal. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. This application fits the criteria perfectly.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing. — (FR) I am abstaining out of consideration for the Austrian workers who have been sacrificed on the altar of globalisation. Given the situation into which they have been plunged as a result of the neoliberal policies advocated by the European Union and the derisory amount of this handout, a ‘no’ vote is almost preferable. However, the little that is being given may help to ease their suffering. This does not make the principles behind the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund any less intolerable.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. — (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur within a globalised context. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers’ rights. The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used by other EU countries in the past, so now it is appropriate to grant this aid to Austria, which has applied for assistance with regard to 1 180 cases of redundancy, 356 of which are potential beneficiaries of assistance, at 54 companies within division 24 (manufacture of basic metals) of NACE Revision 2, in the NUTS II regions of Styria (AT 22) and Lower Austria (AT 12), in Austria.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. — The report covers the Austrian application of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund which relates to 1180 redundancies that occurred in different undertakings specialised in the manufacturing of basic metals in two Austrian regions in 2009. Three hundred and fifty-six redundant workers will benefit from personalised measures supported by EGAF funding for a total of EUR 8.28 million. The application is not transparent and I abstained.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. — (PT) This report also relates to the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), which was created to provide additional support for workers affected by the consequences of major structural changes in the patterns of world trade. On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new draft decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Austria, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This was the sixth application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of the total sum of EUR 8 284 908 from the EGF for 1 180 workers made redundant, 356 of whom are potential beneficiaries of assistance, from 54 enterprises operating in Division 24 (Manufacture of basic metals) in the regions of Styria and Lower Austria, during the nine-month reference period from 1 April 2009 to 31 December 2009. There being agreement between all of the stakeholders as to the application being taken further, I voted for this report.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), in writing. — (PT) The application submitted by Austria for the intervention of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) relates to 1 180 cases of redundancy, 356 of which are targeted for assistance, at 54 enterprises within Division 24 (Manufacture of basic metals) in the regions of Styria and Lower Austria. According to the
Commission’s assessment, this application meets all of the legally defined eligibility criteria. Under Regulation (EC) No 546/2009 of Parliament and Council of 18 June 2009, which amended Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of Parliament and Council of 20 December 2006 establishing the EGF, the scope of application of the EGF has been temporarily extended to cover its intervention in situations like this, in which, as a direct result of the global economic and financial crisis, there are ‘at least 500 redundancies over a period of nine months, particularly in small or medium-sized enterprises, in a NACE 2 division in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level’. I therefore voted for this resolution, in the hope that the assistance will be made available to the workers who have been made redundant swiftly and efficiently.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing. – (IT) On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of Austria. The application in question, the sixth in the framework of the 2011 budget, relates to the mobilisation of the EGF to the tune of EUR 8 284 908 for Austria. The application relates to 1 180 redundancies from 54 enterprises. Following its assessment, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs has issued a positive opinion, while also confirming the importance of ensuring a rapid procedure with due regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement for the adoption of decisions on the mobilisation of the Fund.

Reports: Barbara Matera (A7-0279/2011) - (A7-0277/2011)

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This report advocates the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of Austria, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis.

This is the seventh application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 1 221 128 from the EGF for Austria. It concerns 167 redundancies, 74 of which are targeted for assistance, from the company AT&S, which specialises in the manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs) in the region of Eastern Upper Styria, during the four-month reference period from 1 September to 31 December 2009.

The application, case EGF/2010/008 AT/AT&S from Austria, was submitted to the Commission on 11 March 2010 and supplemented by additional information up to 22 February 2011. It was based on the intervention criterion of Article 2(c) of the EGF Regulation, which enables the waiver of the requirements of Articles 2(a) and 2(b) in small labour markets or under exceptional circumstances, when the redundancies have a serious impact on employment and the local economy. In this case, the Austrian authorities specified that the application seeks to derogate from Article 2(a), where the normal threshold is at least 500 redundancies over a four-month period.

Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0270/2011)

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting for this report, as it gives the green light to the mobilisation of EUR 610 000 to cover various activities to be undertaken by the services of the Commission in 2011, such as the provision of information and seminars on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), the evaluation and monitoring of the EGF, and the creation of standardised procedures for its implementation.
Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) The European Union has set up the appropriate legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist their reintegration into the labour market. Up to 0.35% of the annual EGF amount can be made available each year for technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission, in order to finance monitoring, information, administrative and technical assistance, audit, control and evaluation activities necessary to implement the EGF Regulation, including the provision of information and guidance for the Member States in using, monitoring and evaluating the EGF and providing information on using the EGF to European and national social partners. I welcome the Commission’s request to mobilise an amount of EUR 610 000 in 2011.

Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 also provides that 0.35% of the maximum amount of the EGF can be made available each year for technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission. I therefore voted for this report on the Commission’s request that the EGF be mobilised in order to cover its administrative needs for monitoring and information on its implementation, the creation of a knowledge base, which would allow applications and their processing to be speeded up, administrative and technical support, the exchange of successful practices among the Member States and the mid-term evaluation of the EGF.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) On 22 June 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). This proposal concerns the mobilisation of EUR 610 000 from the Fund to cover EC technical assistance and to achieve objectives such as monitoring, information, creating a data base, administrative and technical support, and exchanging best practices with other Member States.

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) I voted against this report. While, on the one hand, the aim of the document is certainly a worthy one, on the other, the approximation to which the accounting data has been exposed is unacceptable, as the data ends up being inaccurate. For this reason I believe that the document itself should not be adopted in its current state. I therefore voted against it.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because I agree with the Commission’s proposal that it is necessary to improve the collection, organisation and dissemination of information on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) and the support it provides by establishing a new knowledge base. By presenting this proposal, the Commission expects that when funds from the EGF are mobilised in this way the fund will be managed more efficiently, and this in turn will help improve the functioning of the market. It must be stated that this is not the first time that the Commission has presented such a proposal to the budgetary authority this year and that, under the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006, it was decided that the maximum budget available for this objective should be EUR 500 million. The money would mostly be allocated to monitoring, information, administrative and technical assistance, the creation of a knowledge base, the exchange of best practices with Member States and evaluation.
Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The Commission has requested that the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) be mobilised in order to cover its administrative needs for monitoring and information on the use of the EGF, the creation of a knowledge base, which would allow applications and their processing to be speeded up, administrative and technical support, the exchange of successful practice among the Member States and the mid-term evaluation of the EGF. I voted for the resolution because I agree with the Commission’s proposal, as the application fulfils the eligibility criteria set out in the EGF Regulation.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Given the increasing uptake of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), the Commission has requested that it be mobilised to meet its needs, particularly in terms of monitoring and information on its implementation, and the provision of technical support. I agree with this mobilisation, but I hope that the ultimate goal of this will be not be forgotten, namely by avoiding the temptation for the administrative system to acquire more powers, which would bring it more funds and more employees, and thus avoid this vicious circle.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Having seen the severe social impact of the current economic and financial crisis, the European Union created the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to provide additional assistance to workers affected by changes in the structure of global trade. In June 2011, the Commission adopted a new draft decision on the mobilisation of EUR 610 000 of the EGF to cover the Commission’s technical assistance expenses, under the terms of Article 8(1) of the legal basis, which is aimed at funding the following activities: collection of data on the applications received and funded, maintenance and updating of the EGF website, creation of a knowledge base, administrative and technical support, exchange of best practices between the Member States, and mid-term evaluation of the EGF as laid down in Article 17(1a) of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006. As this is a properly substantiated proposal in legal terms, and it is necessary to cover the financial needs of the fund’s implementation, there is nothing that stands in the way of its adoption, as far as I am concerned.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This report aims to respond to an application by the Commission for the mobilisation of EUR 610 000 from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to cover the cost of technical assistance for the Commission.

According to the Commission, this amount is intended to cover the following activities:

- Monitoring: it aims to collect data on applications received and paid, and the measures proposed and implemented, and it will update and publish the statistical profile of the EGF.

- Information: the EGF website will be regularly updated and expanded, and translated into all official EU languages. Press folders will be published and the annual report of the EGF will be produced, translated, printed and distributed.

- Creation of a knowledge base: this aims to set up standardised procedures for EGF applications and their processing, which will allow access to reports for the various needs to be simplified.

- Administrative and technical support: the Expert Group of Contact Persons of the EGF, with 27 members, one from each Member State, will hold two meetings.

- Exchange of best practices between the Member States.
This is a sad and unfortunate list of activities, if we bear in mind that these are parts of a bureaucratic machine that deals with cases of redundancies in the EU; a machine that has been running constantly.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** This report aims to respond to an application by the Commission for the mobilisation of EUR 610 000 from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to cover the cost of technical assistance for the Commission.

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- Administrative and technical support: the Expert Group of Contact Persons of the EGF, with 27 members, one from each Member State, will hold two meetings.

- Exchange of best practices between the Member States.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK)** The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was set up to provide additional help for workers who have felt the impact of the major structural changes that the world economy has undergone. Under point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management and Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, the Fund cannot exceed a maximum of EUR 500 million. The sum in question can only be included in the budget as a provisional appropriation if there are sufficient reserves and/or decommitments. If a positive decision is taken, the Commission submits a proposal to the budgetary authority to mobilise the funds together with an application to transfer the funds. A trialogue may also be opened on the use of the funds requested. On 22 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new draft resolution on mobilising the EGF. The sum in question is EUR 610 000, and covers technical assistance for the Commission.

The sum is allocated to cover the costs of activities such as monitoring, information, creating a knowledge base, administrative and technical support, the exchange of best practices among Member States, and assessment. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, in a joint announcement adopted within the framework of an arbitration decision of 17 July 2008 confirmed that with due consideration of the Interinstitutional Agreement, the fast-track procedure for deciding on the mobilisation of the fund should be used.

**Lorenzo Fontana (EFD), in writing. – (IT)** In principle, we have always been in favour of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. However, in this report I found that the accounting data was too vague and the estimated figure for technical assistance too exaggerated. That is why I will vote against the report.
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 provides that 0.35% of the annual maximum amount may be made available each year for technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission. I therefore welcomed the Commission’s proposal to mobilise an amount of EUR 610 000. According to Commission’s proposal, this amount is intended to cover the following activities: monitoring - the Commission will collect data on applications received and paid, and the measures proposed and implemented and it will update and print the Statistical Portrait of the EGF; information - the EGF website will be regularly updated and expanded, and translated into all the official EU languages. Press folders will be printed, and the annual report of the EGF will be produced, translated, printed and distributed. General awareness of the EGF and its visibility will be enhanced; creation of a knowledge base - the Commission will set up standardised procedures for EGF applications and their processing. This will allow applications to be simplified, their processing to be speeded up and reports to be more easily extracted for varying needs; administrative and technical support - the Expert Group of Contact Persons of the EGF, with 27 members, one from each Member State, will be holding two meetings; exchange of best practices with Member States; evaluation - activities for the mid-term evaluation of the EGF, as laid down in Article 17(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, have been contracted out with the resources of the 2010 budget. The final evaluation of the EGF will not begin until 2012.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The proposal relates to the mobilisation of funds of EUR 610 000 and covers technical assistance for the Commission. Under Article 8(1) of the legal basis, the maximum sum that the EGF can provide for technical assistance at the proposal of the Commission each year is 0.35%. The maximum amount that can be allocated for these purposes from the fund each year is EUR 1.75 million. Under Article 12(6) of the EGF Directive more than 25% of the maximum annual sum allocated to the EGF is available to cover requirements that arose during the last four months of 2011.

Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE), in writing. – (PL) I voted in favour because I believe that permanent technical assistance will enable action to be taken to expedite and rationalise the implementation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund in every Member State. Constant planning, monitoring and control of newly-created aid instruments and the flow of funds is essential. The application at the initiative of the Commission to allocate funds for technical assistance is fully justified.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I voted for this resolution, which requests the institutions involved to make the necessary efforts to improve procedural and budgetary arrangements in order to accelerate the mobilisation of the EGF; appreciates, in this sense, the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament’s request to accelerate the release of grants, aimed at presenting to the budgetary authority the Commission’s assessment on the eligibility of an EGF application together with the proposal to mobilise the Fund; and hopes that further improvements in the procedure will be reached in the framework of the upcoming reviews of the EGF and that greater efficiency, transparency and visibility of the Fund will be achieved.

Iosif Matula (PPE), in writing. – (RO) I voted for Ms Matera’s reports on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) as I think that we need to focus our attention on the problems caused by globalisation and the economic crisis, while, at the same time, expressing our solidarity with the affected regions. The fact that more than
21 million people are currently unemployed in the European Union highlights the need to take specific measures across all Member States, which will encourage access to the EGF.

This will enable us to take a step towards stabilising the labour market and reducing unemployment, thereby contributing to sustainable economic growth. In this regard, a legislative framework must be adopted which will also permit access to the EGF for Member States that have encountered obstacles, as has also happened in the case of the country I come from. I believe and maintain that Romania too could benefit from such aid in the future as a result of company relocations.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was set up to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of major structural changes in international trade patterns. On 22 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF. This report concerns the mobilisation of EUR 610 000 from the EGF to cover the cost of technical assistance for the Commission. According to Article 8(1) of the legal basis, 0.35% of the annual maximum amount of the EGF can be made available each year for technical assistance expenses at the initiative of the Commission. A maximum of EUR 1.75 million can be used each year in order to cover the needs that are specified for the implementation of the EGF.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. – I disagree that the green light is given for the mobilisation of EUR 0.61 million to cover various activities to be carried out by the EC services in 2011, such as information campaign and seminars on the European Globalisation Fund, evaluation and monitoring of the European Globalisation Fund, setting up of standardised procedures for European Globalisation Fund applications. I voted against, because I think it is not proper to spend such significant means on officials.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) On 22 June 2011 the Commission adopted a new draft decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), relating to the mobilisation of EUR 610 000 to cover the Commission’s technical assistance costs. According to Article 8(1) of the legal basis, 0.35% of the annual maximum amount of the EGF can be made available each year for technical assistance expenses at the initiative of the Commission. A maximum of EUR 1.75 million can be used each year in order to cover the needs that are specified for the implementation of the EGF. The Commission justifies the transfer of these funds on the basis of the need to cover the activities of monitoring applications that have been received and funded, providing information through the maintenance of the EGF website and its translation into all the official EU languages, creating a knowledge base, obtaining administrative and technical support, exchanging best practices between the Member States, and carrying out evaluations. In the light of the favourable opinion in the letter of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the approval of the Committee on Budgets, I voted in favour of this report.

Siiri Oviir (ALDE), in writing. – (ET) I consider the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to be a very important supporting measure for Member States in overcoming the difficulties caused by the global economic crisis. Unfortunately several Member States, including my home country Estonia, have not made use of the opportunities offered by the fund, although they are greatly in need of it. I believe that the provision of the commission’s technical assistance to Member States would help promote use of the fund.

Fund (EGF) with the aim of supporting workers who lose their jobs due to structural changes in the context of the global economy. With a ceiling of EUR 500 million for 2011, the EGF has been an important instrument of support for the workers of many Member States, justifying the creation of networks that enhance the exchange of information and strategic synergies between economic and social partners on this funding mechanism. According to Article 8 of the EGF Regulation, 0.35% of the annual EGF amount can be made available each year in order to finance technical assistance, including the provision of information and technical guidance to the Member States in the processes of analysing, evaluating and monitoring the EGF. I am voting for this report, and would like to highlight the fact that the Commission has only asked for the use of EUR 610 000 of the total of EUR 1.75 million which was allowed for it in the annual budget.

Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0303/2011)

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to the Netherlands. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. The Netherlands has requested assistance in respect of 800 workers made redundant from 52 enterprises involved in the printing and reproduction of recorded media. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 2 649 148.

Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which is an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all of the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support to those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. It is for this reason that I supported this report on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the objective of supporting workers made redundant from 52 enterprises operating in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the regions of Zuid-Holland and Utrecht.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of the Netherlands to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. It concerns 800 redundancies in 52 companies from the sector of graphic arts and reproduction of recorded media in the regions of Zuid-Holland and Utrecht.

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) With regard to this report, the responsible Commission services have approved the request to mobilise the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, a European instrument for assisting people who have lost their jobs as a result of the competition created by the distorting effects of globalisation. The application submitted concerns the workers of more than 50 enterprises in South Holland, of whom a total of 800 have been made redundant. The criteria to be met in order to mobilise the Fund have been verified and approved by the Commission. I therefore voted in favour.
Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Given that the Netherlands has requested assistance in respect of 800 cases of redundancy that have occurred in 52 companies operating within Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II regions of Zuid-Holland (NL33) and Utrecht (NL31), I voted in favour of the resolution because I agree with the Commission’s proposal and with the amendments to it tabled by Parliament. I also agree that following repeated requests by Parliament, for the first time the 2011 budget should show payment appropriations of EUR 47 608 950 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) budget line (04 05 01).

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The 800 redundancies in the Dutch regions of Zuid-Holland and Utrecht in the ‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’ industry, on top of the many other redundancies in the same country and sector, constitute a worrying sign of the effects of globalisation and the present economic financial crisis. I hope that the mobilisation of the fund will enable the rapid reintegration of workers into the labour market and that Dutch society, which is traditionally dynamic, creative and enterprising, will regain some of the brilliance of its commercial history and be able to rebuild its productive fabric.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) This report concerns the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (application EGF/2010/029 NL/Zuid-Holland and Utrecht Division 18 from the Netherlands). In June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration of workers made redundant due to the global crisis. This is the 11th application submitted under the EU budget for 2011, submitted to the Commission on 20 December 2010, on the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 1 849 086, aimed at mitigating the social impact of the dismissal of 551 workers from 26 enterprises in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the NUTS II regions of Zuid-Holland (NL33) and Utrecht (NL31). I am voting for this proposal, as it consolidates the objectives which led the EU to create the EGF, and I hope that the economy of these regions will recover rapidly.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) Another case of workers made redundant in the Netherlands, another request for mobilisation from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant in the graphic media industry.

This is the 11th application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 2 649 148 from the EGF. This application relates to 800 redundancies, all of them potential beneficiaries of the assistance, in 52 companies. It was based on the criteria set out in Article 2(b) of the EGF Regulation, which makes intervention subject to there being at least 500 redundancies over a nine-month period in enterprises operating in the same division of NACE Revision 2, in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level in a Member State. According to the Dutch authorities, the economic and financial crisis and its impact on the sector could not have been foreseen.
Once again, we recognise the need to provide support for these workers. We would also like to make clear our protest that these redundancies, like many others, have not been avoided.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This is another case of assistance for workers made redundant in the Netherlands. On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant in the graphic media industry.

This is the 11th application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 2,649,148 from the EGF for the Netherlands, relating to 800 cases of redundancy, all of them potential beneficiaries of intervention, at 52 enterprises.

It was based on the criteria set out in Article 2(b) of the EGF Regulation, which makes intervention subject to there being at least 500 redundancies over a nine-month period in enterprises operating in the same division of NACE Revision 2, in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level in a Member State.

Moreover, according to the Dutch authorities, the economic and financial crisis and its impact on the sector could not have been foreseen.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) Under point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management a maximum of EUR 500 million can be allocated from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) via the flexibility instrument per annum over and above the relevant rounds of the financial framework. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted request EGF/2010/029 NL/NL/Zuid-Holland and Utrecht under Division 18 for financial contributions from the EGF fund as a result of redundancies in 52 enterprises.

This application was part of a set of four interrelated applications relating to redundancies in six different NUTS II regions in the Netherlands active in the field of printing and reproduction of recorded media. After careful consideration of this request, the Commission came to the conclusion under Article 10 of Regulation (EC) 1927/2006 that the conditions for allowing the financial assistance had been met. The budgetary authority should therefore approve this application.

Lorenzo Fontana (EFD), in writing. – (IT) I should like to explain my vote in favour of the report. I share the rapporteur’s pleasure in noting that, for the first time, in the 2011 budget, separate funds have been set aside for the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, and that it is not dependent, therefore, on unused funds from other areas. No critical issues have come to light with regard to the specific matter of the Dutch employees.

Marian Harkin (ALDE), in writing. – I support this report which targets 800 workers who lost their jobs in the printing industry and the graphic sector in the Netherlands. This package is part of four interrelated applications and it is hoped that all four will benefit the redundant workers with training and upskilling opportunities and job search initiatives.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was established to provide additional support for workers made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to assist them...
with their reintegration into the labour market. The scope of the EGF was broadened for applications submitted from 1 May 2009 to include support for workers made redundant as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis. The Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 allows the mobilisation of the EGF within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in 52 enterprises in NACE Rev. 2, Division 18 (printing and reproduction of recorded media), in the NUTS II regions of Zuid-Holland (NL33) and Utrecht (NL31) in the Netherlands. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, as laid down in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006. I therefore welcomed the Commission’s proposal to mobilise an amount of EUR 2 649 148.

Giovanni La Via (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted in favour of the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) because I consider that instrument to be a valuable resource for the support of workers in difficulty on account of the economic crisis. The application submitted by the Netherlands is aimed at the mobilisation of the EGF in respect of redundancies in 52 enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 18 (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’) in the NUTS II regions of Zuid-Holland (NL33) and Utrecht (NL31), amounting to a sum of EUR 2 649 148. In this case too, Europe is helping workers made redundant on account of the crisis, in order to assist their reintegration into the labour market. Today’s vote shows that it can be effective in helping us combat unemployment caused by globalisation and the economic crisis.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The draft decision relates to the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands to support the re-entry on to the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global financial and economic crisis.

Eight hundred workers were dismissed from 52 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 division 18 activities (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’) in the regions of Zuid-Holland (NL33) and Utrecht (NL31) at NTS II level, for the nine-month reference period between 16 January and 16 October 2010.

Furthermore, it was not possible to foresee the financial and economic crisis and its effect on the industry in question.

According to the Dutch authorities, the provinces of Zuid-Holland and Utrecht are part of the Randstadt region, which is one of the most densely populated areas in the country. The economic situation in both provinces deteriorated in 2009 and its economic growth was negative compared with the previous year (-3.2%).

The request meets the eligibility criteria under the EGF Regulation, and therefore we in the budgetary committee recommend that Parliament approve the request.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I support this proposal to mobilise funds under the Globalisation Adjustment Fund. This is the 11th application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 2 649 148 from the EGF for the Netherlands. It concerns 800 redundancies, all targeted for assistance, in 52 enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 18 (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’) in the NUTS II regions of Zuid-Holland (NL33) and Utrecht (NL31) in the Netherlands, during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010.
Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of this. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur within a globalised context. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers’ rights. The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used in the past by other EU countries, so it is appropriate to provide aid to the Netherlands, which has submitted a request for assistance in respect of cases concerning 800 redundancies in 52 companies operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II regions of Zuid-Holland (NL33) and Utrecht (NL31) in the Netherlands.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) On 28 June 2011 the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This is the 11th application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of the total sum of EUR 2 649 148 from the EGF for 800 redundancies, all of which are targeted for assistance, from 52 companies operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 18 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II regions of Zuid-Holland (NL33) and Utrecht (NL31) in the Netherlands, during the nine-month reference period between 16 January and 16 October 2009. Following an analysis of the process by all of the stakeholders, including the Commission, and given that the Committee on Employment and the EGF Working Group approve of the mobilisation of the Fund in favour of the Netherlands, I voted in favour of this report.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The request submitted by the Netherlands for the intervention of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) relates to 800 cases of redundancy, all of which are targeted for assistance, at 52 enterprises within NACE Revision 2 Division 18 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II regions of Zuid-Holland and Utrecht. According to the Commission’s assessment, this application meets all of the legally established eligibility criteria. Indeed, under the EGF Regulation, the scope of application of the EGF was temporarily expanded to cover its intervention in situations like this, in which, as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis, there are ‘at least 500 redundancies over a period of nine months, particularly in small or medium-sized enterprises, in a NACE 2 division in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level’. I therefore voted in favour of this resolution, in the hope that the assistance will be made available to the workers who have been made redundant swiftly and efficiently.

Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0304/2011)

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to the Netherlands. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. The Netherlands has requested assistance in respect of 199 workers made redundant from 14 enterprises involved in the printing and reproduction of recorded media. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 667 823.
Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which is an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all of the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support to those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. That is why I voted for this report on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting workers made redundant from 14 enterprises operating in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the region of Noord-Brabant.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of the Netherlands to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. It concerns 199 redundancies in 14 companies in the region of Noord-Brabant.

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) With regard to this report, the responsible Commission services have approved the request to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, a European instrument for assisting people who have lost their jobs as a result of the competition created by the distorting effects of globalisation. The application submitted concerns the workers of more than 14 enterprises in the Dutch region of Noord-Brabant, of whom a total of 199 have been made redundant.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Given that the Netherlands has requested assistance in respect of cases concerning 199 redundancies, all of them potential beneficiaries of intervention, in 14 companies operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41), I voted for the resolution because I agree with the Commission’s proposal and with the amendments to it tabled by Parliament. I also agree that the information provided on the coordinated package of personalised services to be funded from the EGF should include information on the complementarity with actions funded by the Structural Funds, and reiterate Parliament’s call for the Commission to submit a comparative evaluation of these data in its annual reports as well.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The Dutch ‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’ industry has been experiencing problems, leading the Netherlands to request assistance for 199 workers made redundant in the Noord-Brabant region. The volume of requests and the need for a rapid response from the European Union is indicative of the difficulties the European economy is going through and causes concern that others may follow suit. Given that in the opinion of the Commission and the rapporteur the request for assistance satisfies all the eligibility criteria, I cannot see any reason not to support this request.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) This report, drafted by Ms Matera, concerns the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management
(application EGF/2010/027 NL/Noord-Brabant Division 18 from the Netherlands). In June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration of workers made redundant due to the global crisis. This is the ninth application submitted under the 2011 EU budget, submitted to the Commission on 20 December 2010, on the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 667 823, aimed at mitigating the social impact of the redundancies of 199 workers from 14 enterprises in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41). I am voting for this proposal, as it consolidates the objectives which led the EU to create the EGF, and I hope that the economy of this region will have a rapid recovery.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) A total of 199 operators and other workers in the industry of ‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’ in the Netherlands have become victims of the crisis of capitalism, and we are now called on to support them. This support is indispensable, but it does not silence the revolt and the demands to prioritise prevention instead of the introduction of stop-gap measures, as we have so often maintained. This would require serious changes to existing policy, which the leaders of the European Union do not seem willing to do; quite the contrary.

This report concerns yet another mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted this new proposal for a decision for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant. This is the ninth application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 667 823. The application relates to redundancies, all of them targeted for assistance, which occurred in 14 enterprises operating in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41), during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This report concerns yet another mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant.

This is the ninth application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 667 823 from the EGF for the Netherlands. This application relates to 199 redundancies, all of them targeted for intervention, that have occurred within 14 companies operating within Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41), during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010.

The application, relating to case EGF/2010/027 NL/Noord-Brabant Division 18 from the Netherlands, was submitted to the Commission on 20 December 2010 and supplemented by additional information up to 7 March 2011. It was based on the intervention criterion set out in Article 2(c) of the EGF Regulation, which authorises the Member States to submit a request for assistance from the EGF, in the case of small labour markets or in exceptional circumstances.

Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) Under point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management a maximum of EUR 500 million can be allocated from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) via the flexibility instrument per year over and above
the relevant rounds of the financial framework. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted application EGF/2010/028 NL/Noord-Brabant Division 18 on financial contributions from the EGF as a result of redundancies in 14 enterprises whose activities come within division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’) in the Dutch region of Noord-Brabant (NL41), NUTS II level.

The application was part of a package of four interrelated requests relating to redundancies in six NUTS II regions in the Netherlands in enterprises active in printing and the reproduction of recorded media. After careful consideration of this request, the Commission has concluded that the request meets the requirements for the provision of a financial contribution under the regulation.

Marian Harkin (ALDE), in writing. – I voted in favour of this report and it is worth noting that this application was based on Article 2c of the regulation, on the flexibility of the EGF and how it can respond to different situations, but always with the redundant workers in mind.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was established to provide additional support for workers made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to assist them with their reintegration into the labour market. The scope of the EGF was broadened for applications submitted from 1 May 2009 to include support for workers made redundant as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis. The Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 allows the mobilisation of the EGF within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in 14 enterprises in NACE Rev. 2, Division 18 (printing and reproduction of recorded media), in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41) in the Netherlands and supplemented it by additional information up to 7 March 2011. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, as laid down in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006. I therefore welcomed the Commission’s proposal to mobilise an amount of EUR 667 823.

Giovanni La Via (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted in favour of this request to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) because I consider that instrument to be a valuable resource for the support of workers in difficulty on account of the economic crisis. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in 14 enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 18 (printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41) in the Netherlands. Today’s vote has given the green light to the mobilisation of the sum of EUR 667 823. To conclude, I would mention that, with this important instrument, we are today able to provide some concrete responses and to help workers made redundant on account of globalisation and the economic crisis, not only by trying to compensate for the hardships suffered, but also by reintegrating them into the labour market.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The application is for the sum of EUR 667 823 from the EGF for the Netherlands. The redundancies affected 199 workers in 14 enterprises whose activities come under NACE Revision 2 division 18 (‘Printing and reproduction of recording media’) in the region of Noord-Brabant (NL41) at NUTS II level, for the 9-month reference period between 16 January 2010 and 16 October 2010.
These redundancies had a severe impact on employment in the local economy. The severe economic situation and the market situation in Noord-Brabant as well as further dismissals at NUTS II level in the Netherlands for the same reasons, during the same period and in the same division of NACE Revision II, together meet the criteria of Article 2(c) of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – This is the ninth application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 667 823 from the EGF for the Netherlands. It concerns 199 redundancies, all targeted for assistance, in 14 enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 18 (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’) in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41), during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010. I voted for it.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur within a globalised context. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers’ rights. The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used in the past by other EU countries, so it is now appropriate to provide aid to the Netherlands, which has submitted a request for assistance in respect of 199 redundancies, all of them targeted for intervention, in 14 companies operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’) in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41) in the Netherlands.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This was the ninth application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 667 823 for 199 cases of redundancy, all of which are targeted for intervention, which took place at 14 enterprises operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’) in the NUTS II region of Noord-Brabant (NL41), during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010. Given that an examination of the case has been carried out by all the stakeholders, especially the Commission, and that the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and its Working Group on the EGF are in favour of the mobilisation of the fund in favour of the Netherlands, I voted for this report.

Angelika Werthmann (NI), in writing. – (DE) For some time I have consistently abstained from the vote on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). As I support the idea behind the EGF, I cannot simply reject any of the applications. However, during the course of my work in the Committee on Budgets, I have come across applications that give me reason to suspect that the regulations governing the EGF are too relaxed. I have therefore spoken out in favour of revising these regulations many times and have set this revision as a condition for my voting in favour of new applications in the future. For the first time, this report includes such a call within the text. More specifically, the Commission is called on to present a comparative evaluation of these data in its annual reports. Nevertheless, I
have once again abstained from the vote today until the corresponding evaluation is available.


**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing.** – *(LT)* I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to the Netherlands. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. The Netherlands has requested assistance in respect of 214 workers made redundant from nine enterprises involved in the printing and reproduction of recorded media. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 718 140.

**Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing.** – *(PT)* The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which is an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all of the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support to those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. For this reason I voted for this report on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, which has the aim of supporting workers made redundant from nine enterprises operating in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the region of Overijssel.

**Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing.** – *(ES)* On 10 June 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of the Netherlands to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. It concerns 214 redundancies in nine companies from the sector of graphic arts and reproduction of recorded media in the province of Overijssel.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing.** – *(IT)* With regard to this report, the responsible Commission services have approved the request to mobilise the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, a European instrument for assisting people who have lost their jobs as a result of the competition created by the distorting effects of globalisation. There are no critical issues in the dossier received by the European authorities concerning over 200 redundancies in nine enterprises in the Dutch region of Overijssel, and so I voted in favour.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing.** – *(PT)* Given that the Netherlands has requested assistance in respect of cases concerning 214 redundancies, all of them targeted for assistance, in nine companies operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II region of Overijssel (NL21), I voted for the resolution because I agree with the Commission’s proposal and with the amendments to it tabled by Parliament. I also agree with the institutions’ commitment to ensuring a smooth and rapid procedure for the adoption of the decisions on the mobilisation of the EGF, by providing one-off, time-limited individual support geared to workers who have suffered redundancy as a result of globalisation and the financial and economic crisis,
emphasising the role that the EGF can play in the reintegration into the labour market of workers who have been made redundant.

**Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) Given the worrying signs that seem to be coming from various European economies, and the way in which the stability of the euro area and the very survival of the single currency are being called into question, the requests for the mobilisation of additional assistance for workers made redundant are completely understandable, whether this is due to major changes in the structure of world trade patterns or whether they were made redundant as a direct result of the global economic and financial crisis. As in other Dutch regions, in Overijssel the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector has also made employees redundant, and they meet the requirements for benefitting from assistance from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). The number of requests for the mobilisation of the EGF should continue to be a matter of concern for policy makers, and should motivate them to seek solutions for the problems that are directly affecting the lives of European workers and European economies.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) This report, drafted by Ms Matera, concerns the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (application EGF/2010/028 NL/Overijssel Division 18 from the Netherlands). In June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration of workers made redundant due to the global crisis. This is the 10th application under the EU budget for 2011, submitted to the Commission on 20 December 2010. It relates to the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 718 140, aimed at mitigating the social impact of the redundancy of 214 workers from nine enterprises in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the NUTS II region of Overijssel (NL21) in the Netherlands. I am voting for this proposal, as it realises the objectives which led the EU to create the EGF, and I hope that the economy of this region will have a rapid recovery.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – (PT) This is yet another application for the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), with yet more workers having been made redundant. This time, the request concerns the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 718 140 for the Netherlands. At issue is the dismissal of 214 workers, all of whom are targeted for intervention, from nine enterprises operating in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the Netherlands, during the nine-month period from 16 January to 16 October 2010.

The application was based on the criterion that, where there is a small labour market or under exceptional circumstances, allows the Member States to submit a request for EGF assistance, even when the conditions set out in Article 2(a) and (b) are not fully met, provided that the redundancies have a serious impact on employment and the local economy.

As on other occasions, we have voted for this request because we believe it essential to support workers who have been made redundant. However, as on those other occasions, we would like to reiterate here that this is another stage in the trail of destruction that the crisis of capitalism has been leaving in the EU, which is itself a process of capitalist integration and thus, undeniably, a factor in the crisis, with the policies it has been promoting over the years.
Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This report relates to the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), and this is the 10th application to be examined under the 2011 budget. It relates to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 718 140 from the EGF for the Netherlands. It concerns 214 workers who have been made redundant, all of them potential beneficiaries of the intervention, from nine enterprises operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II region of Overijssel, in the Netherlands, during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010.

The application was based on the intervention criterion provided for in Article 2(c) of the EGF Regulation that allows the Member States, where there is a small labour market or under exceptional circumstances, to submit a request for EGF assistance, even when the conditions set out in Article 2(a) and (b) are not fully met, provided that the redundancies have a serious impact on employment and the local economy.

On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted this new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers who have been made redundant.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) Under point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management a maximum of EUR 500 million can be allocated from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) via the flexibility instrument per year over and above the relevant rounds of the financial framework. The rules covering contributions from the EGF are set out in Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted application EGF/2010/028 NL/Overijssel Division 18 on financial contributions from the EGF as a result of redundancies in nine enterprises whose activities are under division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’) in the region of Overijssel (NL21), NUTS II level.

The application was part of a package of four interrelated requests relating to redundancies in six NUTS II regions in the Netherlands in enterprises operating in printing and the reproduction of recorded media. After careful consideration of this request, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1928/2006, the Commission has concluded that the request meets the requirements for the provision of a financial contribution.

Marian Harkin (ALDE), in writing. – I support this EGF application which like some others is based on Article 2c of the EGF Regulation. The Dutch Government also established a link between the financial and economic crisis and the decrease in demand for the graphic media industry. This indicates that the need for the crisis derogation must continue, and I would urge the Dutch and indeed all other Governments to support this derogation up to the end of 2012.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was established to provide additional support for workers made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to assist them with their reintegration into the labour market. The scope of the EGF was broadened for applications submitted from 1 May 2009 to include support for workers made redundant as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis. The Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 allows the mobilisation of the EGF within the annual ceiling of
EUR 500 million. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in nine enterprises in NACE Rev. 2, Division 18 (printing and reproduction of recorded media), in the NUTS II region of Overijssel (NL21) in the Netherlands and supplemented it by additional information, most recently up to 7 March 2011. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, as laid down in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006. I therefore welcomed the Commission's proposal to mobilise an amount of EUR 718 140.

Giovanni La Via (PPE), in writing. – (IT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was set up in 2006 to provide practical support to workers made redundant either for reasons associated with the relocation of their companies or, following the 2009 amendment, on account of the economic crisis, in order to assist their reintegration into the labour market. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in nine enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 18 ('Printing and reproduction of recorded media') in the NUTS II region of Overijssel (NL21) and supplemented it with additional information up to 7 March 2011. With today's vote, we have authorised the allocation of EUR 718 140.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The application is for the sum of EUR 718 140 from the EGF for the Netherlands. The redundancies affected 214 workers from nine enterprises whose activities come under NACE Revision 2 Division 18 ('Printing and reproduction of recording media') in the region of Overijssel (NL41) at NUTS II level, for the 9-month reference period between 16 January 2010 and 16 October 2010.

It was not possible to foresee the financial and economic crisis and its impact on the industry in question. The financial contribution will be managed and supervised by the same authorities who are responsible for managing and supervising funding from the European Social Fund in the Netherlands. The Agency of Social Affairs and Employment will be the intermediary body for the managing authority. The request meets the eligibility criteria under the EGF Regulation.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I voted for this, which is the tenth application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 718 140 from the EGF for the Netherlands. It concerns 214 redundancies, all targeted for assistance, in nine enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 18 ('Printing and reproduction of recorded media') in the NUTS II region of Overijssel (NL21) in the Netherlands during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur within a globalised context. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers’ rights. The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used in the past by other EU countries, so it is now appropriate to provide aid to the Netherlands, which has submitted a request for assistance in respect of 214 redundancies, all of them potential beneficiaries of assistance, in nine companies operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II region of Overijssel (NL21) in the Netherlands.
Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This was the 10th application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 718,140 for 214 workers, all of them targeted for intervention, who have been made redundant from nine enterprises operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the NUTS II region of Overijssel (NL21), in the Netherlands, during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010. Given that an examination of the case has been carried out by all the stakeholders, especially the Commission, and that the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and its Working Group on the EGF are in favour of the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of the Netherlands, I voted for this report.

Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0306/2011)

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to the Netherlands. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. The Netherlands has requested assistance in respect of 551 workers made redundant from 26 enterprises involved in the printing and reproduction of recorded media. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 1,849,086.

Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance for workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which is an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support for those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. That is why I voted for this report on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting workers made redundant from 26 enterprises operating in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the regions of Noord-Holland and Flevoland.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of the Netherlands. The application concerns 551 redundancies in 26 companies. I support this report.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Given that the Netherlands has requested assistance in respect of cases concerning 551 redundancies, all of them targeted for assistance, in 26 companies operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the two NUTS II regions of Noord-Holland (NL32) and Flevoland (NL23), I voted in favour of the resolution because I agree with the Commission’s proposal and with the amendments to it tabled by Parliament. I also agree that, in line with Article 6 of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) Regulation, it should be
ensured that the EGF supports the individual reintegration of workers who have been made redundant into active life. I would also reiterate that EGF assistance should not replace actions which are the responsibility of companies by virtue of national law or collective agreements, nor measures for restructuring companies or sectors. Measures financed by the EGF should be aimed at creating long-term employment.

**Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT)** Several printing and reproduction of recorded media industries in the Netherlands have submitted applications for assistance. In this case, 551 workers were made redundant in the regions of Noord-Holland and Flevoland. In the light of other resolutions adopted today, this is not a unique case. Unfortunately, many enterprises in the same sector have had to lay off workers, leading to situations of social emergency which the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) then seeks to mitigate. In this case and the previous ones, I hope that the mobilisation of the EGF will actually contribute to the reintegration of the workers in difficulty and will promote the creation of more sustainable employment.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT)** This report concerns the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (application EGF/2010/030 NL/ Noord-Holland and Flevoland Division 18 from the Netherlands). In June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration of workers made redundant due to the global crisis. This is the 12th application submitted under the 2011 EU budget, submitted to the Commission on 20 December 2010, on the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 1 849 086, aimed at mitigating the social impact of the redundancies of 551 workers from 26 enterprises in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector in the NUTS II regions of Noord-Holland (NL32) and Flevoland (NL23). I am voting for this proposal, as it realises the objectives which led the EU to create the EGF, and I hope that the economy of these regions will recover quickly.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** This report concerns the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), in relation to an application by the Netherlands, adopted by the Commission on 28 June 2011.

This is the 12th application to be examined under the 2011 budget, and is another proposal for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This mobilisation is of a total sum of EUR 1 849 086 from the EGF, relating to 551 cases of redundancy, all of them potential beneficiaries of assistance, at 26 enterprises in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector.

The application was submitted to the Commission on 20 December 2010 and supplemented by additional information up to 3 March 2011. It was based on the criteria set out in the EGF Regulation, which make intervention subject to the occurrence of at least 500 redundancies in enterprises in one region or in two contiguous NUTS II regions of a Member State.

As ever, we believe that it would have been better to have intervened prior to the companies going out of business. We voted for the proposal to mobilise the necessary support for the workers made redundant.
Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This report concerns the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in relation to an application by the Netherlands which was adopted by the Commission on 28 June 2011. This is another proposal for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis, and it is the 12th application to be examined under the 2011 budget.

It concerns the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 1,849,086 from the EGF, relating to 551 cases of redundancy, all of them targeted for assistance, at 26 enterprises in the printing and reproduction of recorded media sector.

The application was submitted to the Commission on 20 December 2010 and supplemented by additional information up to 3 March 2011. It was based on the criteria set out in the EGF Regulation, which make intervention subject to the occurrence of at least 500 redundancies in enterprises in one region or in two contiguous NUTS II regions of a Member State.

Although we believe that it would have been preferable to have intervened prior to the companies going out of business, we voted for the proposal to support the workers made redundant.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) Under point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management a maximum of EUR 500 million can be allocated from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) via the flexibility instrument per year over and above the relevant rounds of the financial framework. The rules covering contributions from the EGF are set out in Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. On 20 December 2010, the Netherlands submitted application EGF/2010/030 NL/Noord-Holland and Flevoland Division 18 on financial contributions from the EGF as a result of redundancies in 26 enterprises whose activities are under Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 ('Printing and reproduction of recorded media') in the Dutch region of Noord-Holland (NL 32) and Flevoland (NL23), NUTS II level.

The application was part of a package of four interrelated requests relating to redundancies in six different NUTS II regions in the Netherlands in enterprises operating in printing and the reproduction of recorded media. After careful consideration of this request, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1928/2006, the Commission has concluded that the request meets the requirements for the provision of a financial contribution and therefore believes that the budgetary authority should comply with the request.

Marian Harkin (ALDE), in writing. – I support the report, as I support the EGF application for the 551 Dutch workers who were made redundant in the graphic media industry. This industry suffered a drop of nearly 9% in turnover and the Dutch Government was able to establish a link between the financial and economic crisis and the redundancies. As in other EGF applications, we voted on today it is crucial that all EU governments recognise the need to extend the crisis derogation to the end of 2012.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was established to provide additional support for workers made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to assist them
with their reintegration into the labour market. The scope of the EGF was broadened for applications submitted from 1 May 2009 to include support for workers made redundant as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis. The Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 allows the mobilisation of the EGF within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million. On 20 December 2010 the Netherlands submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in respect of redundancies in 26 enterprises in NACE Rev. 2, Division 18 (printing and reproduction of recorded media), in the NUTS II regions of Noord-Holland (NL 32) and Flevoland (NL 23) in the Netherlands and supplemented it by additional information, most recently on 3 March 2010. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, as laid down in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006. I therefore welcomed the Commission’s proposal to mobilise an amount of EUR 1 849 086.

**Giovanni La Via (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) I voted for the report on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of the Netherlands. As my fellow Members have mentioned, this Fund has been in active operation since 2006 and has helped, since then, to provide practical support to workers made redundant for reasons associated with globalisation and the economic crisis, in order to assist their reintegration into the labour market. Today’s vote concerned an application for support in respect of redundancies in 26 enterprises operating in Division 18 (‘Printing and reproduction of recorded media’). The application has been deemed to comply with the requirements for determining such financial contributions, and so I am in favour of the Fund being mobilised to the tune of EUR 1 849 086.

**Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing.** – (SK) The application is for the sum of EUR 1 849 086 from the EGF for the Netherlands. Redundancies affected 551 workers from 26 enterprises whose activities come under NACE Revision 2 Division 18 (‘Printing and reproduction of recording media’) in the region of Noord-Holland (NL 32) and Flevoland (NL 23) at NUTS II level, for the 9-month reference period between 16 January 2010 and 16 October 2010.

The request meets the eligibility criteria of the EGF Regulation.

**David Martin (S&D), in writing.** – I voted for this proposal, which means Parliament has voted to approve aid totalling EUR 9 506 036 from the EU Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) for redundant workers in Austria, plus EUR 5 884 197 for redundant Dutch workers.

**Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur within a globalised context. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers’ rights. The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used in the past by other EU countries, so it is now appropriate to provide aid to the Netherlands, which has submitted a request for assistance in respect of 551 redundancies, all of them targeted for assistance, in 26 companies operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the two NUTS II regions of Noord-Holland (NL 32) and Flevoland (NL 23) in the Netherlands.
On 28 June 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) for the Netherlands, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This is the 12th application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 1,849,086 from the EGF in favour of 551 cases of redundancy, all of which are potential beneficiaries of assistance, at 26 enterprises operating in Division 18 of NACE Revision 2 (Printing and reproduction of recorded media) in the two NUTS II regions of Noord-Holland (NL32) and Flevoland (NL23), during the nine-month reference period from 16 January to 16 October 2010. Given that an examination of the case has been carried out by all the stakeholders, especially the Commission, and that the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and its Working Group on the EGF are in favour of the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of the Netherlands, I voted for this report.

In December 2010, the European Parliament adopted a written declaration on an EU homelessness strategy to support Member States in developing effective national strategies, in line with the 2010 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion and as part of the Europe 2020 strategy. This joint report makes it clear that Member States should adopt integrated homelessness strategies focusing on key targets such as the prevention of homelessness and a reduction in its duration, especially in severe cases, an improvement in the quality of services for homeless people and the provision of affordable housing.

The EU strategy which needs to be developed by the European Commission and national strategies must focus on common definitions, causes, actions and on impact. The European Commission must draft a communication on the problem of homelessness as an absolute necessity, and European policies and strategies must be devised in collaboration with homeless people and the associations which they belong to. The European Commission must support the creation of structural funds (the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)) aimed in particular at analysing the problem of homelessness and at the social inclusion of homeless people in the European Union through building permanent social housing.

I am voting for this document, as the application submitted fulfils the established criteria, and because it should be of particular assistance to workers made redundant as a direct result of the economic crisis. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) should therefore give additional support to workers made redundant due to major structural changes in the patterns of international or regional trade as a result of globalisation, and in order to help them re reintegrate into the labour market, which I would like to emphasise in this context. Finally, it is crucial that this assistance be provided as quickly as possible.

Once again we have chosen to support the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund – this time to help people who have lost their jobs in Austria and the
Netherlands – because Europe is still suffering the effects of the economic crisis and exceptional times require exceptional measures.

However, we believe that in future we should instead use instruments that already exist – in particular the European Social Fund – in order to increase the employability of those who have been given notice or have been made redundant. There should be no need for a Globalisation Adjustment Fund in the next budgetary period, and it should be made clear that social policy is primarily the responsibility of the Member States.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – In favour. The EP requests the institutions involved to make the necessary efforts to improve procedural and budgetary arrangements in order to accelerate the mobilisation of the EGF; appreciates, in this sense, the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament’s request to accelerate the release of grants, aimed at presenting to the budgetary authority the Commission’s assessment on the eligibility of an EGF application together with the proposal to mobilise the Fund; hopes that further improvements in the procedure will be reached in the framework of the upcoming reviews of the EGF and that greater efficiency, transparency and visibility of the Fund will be achieved.


John Bufton (EFD), in writing. – Although I have great sympathy for redundant workers wherever they are in the world, I believe that UK taxpayers’ money, which provides a significant contribution to the EU and thus Global Adjustment Fund budget, is better concentrated on providing jobs for unemployed workers in the UK. Unemployment in the UK continues to rise to unexpected levels. Many of our heavy industries have shut down and our workforce is inundated with EU migrants. It is a slap in the face to hardworking Brits who have lost their jobs in industries that have relocated to other EU countries under EU law to then find that their contributions as taxpayers are being spent by the EU in assisting unemployed people in the Netherlands. Increasingly the UK is becoming a hub for people who have fled their own EU Member States to try to earn more money or claim benefits in the UK, which they often send large proportions of back home rather than inject it into the local economy. As unemployment continues to rise in the UK, particularly blighting some of the former mining towns in Wales, I cannot justify assenting to aid newly unemployed workers abroad when long-term unemployed people continue to suffer in communities in my constituency.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (FR) I am abstaining out of consideration for the Dutch workers who have been sacrificed on the altar of globalisation. Given the situation into which they have been plunged as a result of the neoliberal policies advocated by the European Union and the derisory amount of this handout, a ‘no’ vote is almost preferable. However, the little that is being given may help to ease their suffering. This does not make the principles behind the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund any less intolerable.

Report: Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (A7-0273/2011)

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting for this report, as it aims to prohibit the manipulation of the EU energy markets, defines them, and puts in place control mechanisms and sanctions to discourage market abuses. As is set out in this report, the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) must be given an important role in
supervising the markets, monitoring and helping to enforce the regulation of national regulatory authorities, introducing a system of registration for market participants and guaranteeing that penalties take into account the harm caused to consumers by market abuses. To this end, ACER must have sufficient resources so as to take into account the additional functions assigned to it. It is also important for sanctions to be harmonised across all the Member States and, as such, the Commission should consider the call for proposals to harmonise minimum penalty standards.

Sophie Auconie (PPE), in writing. – (FR) Energy is central to human activity. It is vital that it should be accessible at a reasonable cost, and that there should be no market abuse. I therefore voted in favour of this draft regulation, as it will ensure greater transparency in the wholesale energy market, and hence greater price stability, which will benefit end users.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this important document. The Commission proposal for a regulation (REMIT – Regulation on Energy Market Integrity and Transparency) establishes an EU-wide legal framework to prevent market abuse and manipulation in the energy sector (gas and electricity). Unfair practices on wholesale energy markets affect price levels. Such practices can cause high price volatility, lead to increased energy prices for end consumers (both citizens and companies) and undermine the confidence of potential investors in energy infrastructure projects. Transparency of energy markets is a prerequisite for further integration of the EU energy market, which is expected to bring important benefits to consumers. The regulation prohibits market abuse in the form of insider trading and market manipulation in wholesale energy products (electricity and gas). I agree that market manipulation should be sanctioned equally throughout the EU in order to prevent companies which infringe the REMIT provisions from setting up in Member States with the least severe penalties. I welcome the call for the Commission to present proposals by the end of 2012 to further harmonise penalties and set up minimum requirements for penalties at EU level.

Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Transparency in energy markets is an essential condition for greater integration of the EU energy market, and should bring consumers considerable benefits. Unfair practices in the wholesale market can provoke higher price volatility, lead to price increases for end consumers and undermine the confidence of potential investors in energy infrastructure projects. This report, for which I voted, welcomes the Commission’s proposal while also proposing other improvements. These are: that the present regulation should also cover the CO\textsubscript{2} markets under the EU Emissions Trading System; that the regulation should not apply to very small market participants and, hence, to transactions below a certain volume, so as not to hamper greater energy market liberalisation; and finally, that the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) be provided with the appropriate financial and human resources, and have the opportunity to set up liaison offices situated close to the major trading exchanges.

George Becali (NI), in writing. – (RO) I voted for our colleague’s report. We need regulations on the energy market which will ban abusive practices and we should define exactly every detail covered by the new regulation. We also need to monitor energy transaction activities with the help of both national supervisory authorities and of the relevant European agency. Other measures which are just as important are collecting and reporting data, registering market participants and exchanging information between the agency and other authorities. Lastly, mechanisms are required for applying bans relating to market abuse.
Sergio Berlato (PPE), in writing. – (IT) The report we are discussing today is particularly important because it relates to the creation of an EU-wide legal framework establishing new rules for the prevention of abusive practices – such as the use of inside information – and market manipulation in the gas and electricity sectors. I support the objective of strengthening the regulatory framework which governs the European market in energy products, with a view to progressing towards regulatory harmonisation aimed at the establishment of an internal energy market. However, a legislative measure of this kind must not serve to introduce an excessively burdensome administrative regime in terms of the systematic reporting of commercial transactions. While I consider both the structure of the proposal for a regulation and the suggested mechanisms for its enforcement to be satisfactory, I agree with the rapporteur that the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators should be provided with adequate financial and human resources so that it can set up liaison offices close to the major trading exchanges.

I would also like to see effective coordination between this European Agency and the national regulatory authorities guaranteed, so as to ensure a proper balance of powers. Lastly, I welcome the increased protection of commercially sensitive information which is regularly submitted to the competent authorities.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) I support this report, which aims to establish an EU-wide legal framework to prevent market abuse and manipulation in the energy sector. It demands a sector-specific approach, which I agree with.

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) I voted in favour of this proposal on the prevention of market abuse and manipulation in the energy sector. The document acknowledges that consumers and small enterprises are the most vulnerable to any manipulation of prices of products such as gas and energy, and proposes to protect the interests of such sectors directly through the establishment of a specific framework for monitoring the market and penalising any violations. Given the proposal’s focus on the protection of consumers and small enterprises, I cannot but endorse it.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because it is necessary to stop the withholding of energy production assets and to strive to prevent market abuse and manipulation in the energy sector. Preventing abuse is also very important because this would increase long-term confidence in the electricity and gas markets. Abuse in the gas and electricity markets in one European Union Member State affects not only wholesale prices in other countries, but also retail prices for consumers and micro-enterprises. Thus, when addressing this issue, it is very important to seek a joint solution for the whole of the EU and not just individual Member States. Otherwise high price volatility might arise, energy prices for end consumers would increase, and there would also be a decline in investment in energy infrastructure. Currently, in some energy markets, behaviour that undermines integrity is not totally banned, and strong measures therefore need to be taken on this issue.

Jan Březina (PPE), in writing. – (CS) I applaud the Commission proposal, which aims to prevent abuse of the energy market. In my view, however, the failure to include markets in CO2 within the framework of EU emissions trading is a mistake. The major participants in the carbon markets, especially the electricity companies, also participate in the electricity and gas wholesale markets. The gas and electricity markets are also interlinked with the oil and coal market, the evolution of which has an impact on them. Nevertheless, these markets have a global dimension and cannot be adequately regulated at EU level. Market
participants in these sectors should be invited to provide information, without being subject to the control and enforcement mechanism. The Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators must be provided with sufficient financial and human resources to be able to set up liaison offices close to the places where major deals are concluded. Furthermore, it could be envisaged that the Agency serves in the future as a trade repository for energy-specific financial transactions. This would facilitate the operations of energy traders, as they would avoid having to report to the trade repository for the financial sector created under the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR).

**John Bufton (EFD), in writing.** – I believe that increasing integrity and transparency in wholesale energy markets should seek to foster open and fair competition that will benefit consumers. Energy prices need to be contained or lowered and not harmed by market manipulation, thus I fundamentally disagree with creating an EU regulation that serves only to promote the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), which requires all EU energy traders to register. The cost of red tape will trickle down to households and businesses that already struggle with rising costs of fuel. This is merely another attempt by the EU to harmonise policy across the Union and seize control of energy security regardless of the impact such legislation is likely to have.

**Cristian Silviu Buşoi (ALDE), in writing.** – (RO) At the time I voted for this regulation, I had consumer protection foremost in my thoughts. The introduction of a regulation governing energy market integrity and transparency will ensure that wholesale energy trading is conducted fairly. It is our duty to protect consumers and ensure that the final price they are going to pay is fair.

However, we cannot talk about consumer protection without having a more transparent internal market. Energy market transactions should not be conducted on the basis of insider trading or creating monopolies. Therefore, I agree with the introduction of penalties to reflect the harm caused to consumers, as well as with setting up a European register to monitor transactions closely. I welcome the adoption of this regulation and I firmly believe that it will bring us closer to creating an internal energy market.

**Alain Cadec (PPE), in writing.** – (FR) The draft regulation on energy market integrity and transparency is intended to prevent market abuse by placing an obligation on operators to inform the regulators of their inside information. This regulation constitutes a major step forward in regulating and increasing the transparency of energy markets. It has the dual advantage that it only applies to wholesale energy markets, and that it acts as a tool against price volatility, which will give consumers greater financial stability.

**Antonio Cancian (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) I voted in favour of the Chatzimarkakis report on energy market integrity and transparency because I believe that these are the fundamental principles of any liberal economy which seeks to take due account of its operators’ interests. With this in mind, it is important for prices to reflect a fair interaction between supply and demand. Markets are becoming increasingly interconnected and abuses committed in one Member State could affect wholesale electricity and gas prices even across national borders. I agree with the decision to prohibit the use of inside information to perform manipulated transactions which artificially inflate prices to a level which is not justified by actual availability and production costs. I believe that the monitoring carried out by the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators, the national energy and financial industry regulatory authorities and the competition authorities will prove a suitable and effective
means of combating abuses and infringements and that the sanctions to be introduced by the Member States will also be appropriate.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Transparency is a prerequisite for the increased integration of the EU energy market. This integration brings consumers clear benefits. The regulation adopted today is a step towards completing the internal energy market by 2014. The regulation establishes a database of transactions in the wholesale energy market and creates a European register of market participants, so preventing unfair practices. Unfair practices in the wholesale energy market affect price levels and harm consumers. Lack of transparency can lead to increased prices for end consumers and can undermine the confidence of potential investors in energy infrastructure projects. This regulation is thus crucial for the correct functioning of the internal market, and for consumers and investors.

Lara Comi (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I fully support the objectives laid down by the regulation. Talking about integrity and transparency means establishing a necessary, though not entirely sufficient, requirement to improve our collective well-being. This is an issue on which we cannot improvise. The reference to the ban on market abuse on the wholesale electricity and electricity products markets, for example, shows the importance of organising ourselves and following the approach that we adopted when we chose our policies for the energy sector. At the same time, we need to ensure that checks are not hampered by events beyond our control or by unexpected inefficiencies during monitoring exercises. That is why I also welcomed the approval of the priorities identified by the Commission and the reference to the introduction of mechanisms enabling other relevant authorities to access information received on transactions on the wholesale energy markets, because I believe they are crucial to optimising the market. Given the long-term strategic importance of this matter, the decision to have other European bodies support the Agency in order to monitor economic operators more efficiently and hence pursue our general interests is crucial.

Corina Crețu (S&D), in writing. – (RO) This framework is geared to the energy markets, supplementing the already existing regulations for financial markets. Unfair practices on energy markets affect the level of prices to such an extent that the markets are unable to fulfil their role of sending clear signals to power plants, individual consumers and businesses about optimal energy use, provide guidance on reasonable investments in the energy infrastructure and promote efficient energy use. Transparency in energy markets is a prerequisite for smoother integration of the EU energy market, which should provide significant benefits for consumers. This is why the Regulation on Energy Market Integrity and Transparency (REMIT) functions as a key tool for achieving the goal set by the European Council, which is to create the internal market by 2014.

Mário David (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I voted for this report, as I consider the effective monitoring of European energy markets to be absolutely essential. Transparency and efficiency will be brought to the markets through the strengthening of the role of the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), headquartered in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in particular as regards truly effective coordination of the Member States’ network of regulators, as well as through the application of the legal framework in force. This will also bring objective economic gains. I would also stress the strengthening of ACER’s role in the areas of research and application of the legal framework in force, which seems extremely important as a way of discouraging competitive and practices detrimental to the interests of the Member States, the EU and consumers. I now hope that the final agreement with
the Council will be reached quickly following the informal agreement of 23 June with the
Hungarian Presidency, and that this regulation will come into force rapidly.

Christine De Veyrac (PPE), in writing. – (FR) I voted in favour of this report, which will
guarantee greater transparency in transactions on the energy markets within the European
Union. These new rules for the wholesale electricity and gas markets should increase trust
between the various operators and the EU Member States, by establishing an EU-wide
supervisory framework.

Ioan Enciu (S&D), in writing. – (RO) I voted for this report as the regulation on energy
market integrity and transparency is a key tool for achieving the internal energy market
by 2014. It will create a framework which defines consistent regulations, adapted to the
specific requirements of the energy markets and designed to identify and discourage market
abuse.

We need to bear in mind that the market abuses which occur in one particular Member
State are not confined to it, but can have repercussions across the whole EU. We must not
forget either that the basic purpose of the European energy market is to offer consumers
lower prices by stimulating competition.

The regulation gives national authorities the leading role when it comes to the investigation
procedures in the case of suspected abuses. I think that Member States must grant them
the powers required to investigate market abuses and establish suitable regulations on the
penalties which can be applied.

Last but not least, I maintain that the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)
must play a key role in preventing market abuses and manipulation, which push up prices
for consumers. The national regulatory authorities must accept communication and
cooperation with ACER because this is the only way that the Agency will be able to fulfil
the role that it has been assigned.

Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I voted for the report on energy market integrity
and transparency, because it tables important proposals to prevent and punish any attempts
at energy sector market abuse and speculation, with a view to protecting the interests and
rights of consumers.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The proposal for a regulation on energy market
integrity and transparency establishes an EU-wide legal framework to prevent market abuse
and manipulation in the energy – gas and electricity – sector. Given the strategic importance
of the energy market and the tendency towards abuses, the Commission’s proposal and
its sector-specific approach, with a view to preventing market abuse, is welcome. The
structure of the proposal and the mechanisms proposed for applying the regulation are,
as the rapporteur says, appropriate for regulating a market of growing importance, the
intention for which is that it will head towards integration of national energy markets into
a single European market.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) This report, drafted by Mr Chatzimarkakis,
concerns a proposal for a regulation of Parliament and the Council on the integrity and
transparency of energy markets. The Regulation on Energy Market Integrity and
Transparency (REMIT) will be applied to contracts relating to the production, supply and
transportation of natural gas and electricity, and aims to prevent abuses in the wholesale
energy markets, thus protecting consumers. The recently created Agency for the
Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), in partnership with the regulatory authorities
of the Member States, will carry out a fundamental role once monitoring of these markets is in place, and will present a report to the Commission annually. Energy costs constitute a substantial share of outgoings, for both individuals and the corporate sector. It will therefore be necessary to prevent unfair practices, which lead to price increases and undermine the confidence of potential investors. I voted for this proposal, as it represents a significant advance in the defence of consumer rights in one of the most important sectors of the global economy.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) First they liberalised the energy sector. The consequences of this are well known: the formation of private monopolies, high prices, little attention to consumers and huge profits.

Now Parliament, which supports this option, wants to adopt new rules to prevent abuses in the wholesale energy market and, supposedly, to protect consumers. Under the Commission’s proposal, the monitoring of these markets will take place at EU level so as to ‘enable Member States to prevent and punish anti-competitive behaviour’. They forget that they contributed to this by facilitating privatisation and monopolistic concentration in this area. In the name of their god, the market, they promoted deregulation processes, with disastrous consequences, as attested by several studies.

This Regulation on Energy Market Integrity and Transparency (REMIT) will be applied to the trade of wholesale energy products, and particularly to contracts and derivatives related to the production, supply and transport of natural gas and electricity.

Now they are saying that ‘energy must remain affordable for everyone as it is the key to the economy’. However, they are concealing the fact that price liberalisation brought serious problems, that energy poverty is increasingly the unfortunate reality for consumers, and that small and medium-sized enterprises have seen their production costs grow significantly; there are still no responses to this situation.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) Having liberalised the energy sector, with all its well known consequences, namely the formation of private monopolies, high prices and little attention to consumers, Parliament is now adopting new rules to prevent abuses in the wholesale energy market and protect consumers, which everyone now acknowledges is necessary.

Under the Commission’s proposal, the monitoring of these markets will take place at EU level so as to ‘enable Member States to prevent and punish anti-competitive behaviour’. They forget that they contributed to this by facilitating privatisation and the concentration of capital in this area.

This Regulation on Energy Market Integrity and Transparency (REMIT) will be applied to the trade of wholesale energy products, and particularly to contracts and derivatives related to the production, supply and transport of natural gas and electricity.

Of course, they are now saying that ‘energy must remain affordable for everyone as it is the key to the economy’. However, they cannot hide the fact that price liberalisation has led to a serious problem, that energy poverty is increasingly the unfortunate reality for consumers, or that micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises have seen their production costs grow significantly; there are still no responses to this situation. That is why we voted against.
Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) An EU framework is needed for the integration of national energy markets into a single market. Unfair practices on the wholesale energy markets affect price levels so that they are unable to do their job of sending a clear signal to power stations, households and enterprises regarding the optimum use of energy. Instead these practices may result in great price fluctuations, leading to higher energy prices for the end-consumer (individuals and businesses) and weaken the confidence of potential investors in energy infrastructure products. Transparency on the energy markets is a necessary prerequisite if the EU energy market is to be further integrated. For this reason, REMIT operates as a key instrument for achieving the European Council’s target of completing the internal energy market by 2014. In order to prevent further liberalisation of the energy markets, this regulation should not apply to very small market operators. This will help new operators avoid excessive obstacles when entering the market. Market manipulation should also be sanctioned uniformly throughout the EU. I believe that after some of the changes proposed during the legislative process have been implemented, the directive should be capable of fulfilling its task and increasing transparency, integrity and stability on the wholesale energy market.

Adam Gierek (S&D), in writing. – (PL) The basic aim of the regulation under discussion is to organise the European energy market in such a way that its resulting integrity and transparency will preclude large energy corporations from exhibiting monopolistic or oligopolistic tendencies. They prevent the development of innovative, energy-saving solutions, which may in fact have an adverse effect on the situation of the end-user. The aim is to prevent speculation and to avoid risks which include those resulting from abuses, especially on the derivatives market. Speculative notifications of demand for energy should be restricted in cases when they cannot be accepted and transmitted immediately, as should be cases where there is no financial possibility of carrying out the transaction. Transparency of the energy market also requires comprehensive information on actual prices, being a sine qua non of fair play.

The regulation does not include trading in new forms of energy, for example, not the energy itself but the power available over a certain period of time (capacity payment), which would curb speculation. When setting energy prices, transmission costs are not taken into account (nodal pricing), which means that the total costs are incorrect. Selected scientific institutes should also have access to data, even data classified as sensitive, in order to be able to carry out independent analyses. For the above reasons, and being of the opinion that this regulation requires additional work, I abstained from voting.

Louis Grech (S&D), in writing. – I believe that the report on Energy market integrity and transparency sets out important principles for the protection of consumers from market abuse and speculation in the wholesale energy market. It is important to ensure that consumers pay a fair price for electricity and gas throughout the European Economic Area. This would increase consumer confidence in the electricity and gas markets in the long term and ensure affordable, accessible and available energy for all citizens. Action to ensure the integrity of markets cannot be a matter for individual Member States only. Strong cross-border market monitoring is essential for the completion of a fully functioning, interconnected and integrated internal energy market. Therefore proper monitoring and transparency of the energy market is dependent on close cooperation and enhanced coordination between various European agencies and national authorities.
Estelle Grelier (S&D), in writing. – (FR) I voted in favour of the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on energy market integrity and transparency. The regulation lays down new rules that are designed to stop abusive practices in the wholesale energy markets, among other means by giving more powers to monitor and impose penalties to the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), which was set up in 2009. Considering that at present one of the main objectives of EU energy policy is to complete the establishment of the internal gas and electricity market, and that research and investment are concentrating on developing trans-European energy networks, it is extremely important for this new market to be governed by rules that will protect consumers. We can also expect energy trading between Member States to increase over the next few years. The research currently being done in the North Sea on creating a network capable of transporting offshore wind energy is just one example of what is needed for the future. It will therefore be beneficial to provide an appropriate legislative framework for this new market, so that it can develop properly and expand within a clearly defined legal framework.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) I welcomed this document because it is aimed at preventing market abuse and manipulation in the energy sector (gas and electricity). The regulation prohibits market abuse in the form of insider trading (Article 1(1) & Article 3) and market manipulation (Article 2(2) & Article 4) in wholesale energy products (electricity & gas). It requires market participants to disclose inside information (Article 4(4)). The key actor in monitoring the transactions in the market is the recently established Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER). Article 7 of the regulation requires market participants to provide the Agency with a record of their transactions in wholesale energy products. The Agency monitors this data and reports annually to the European Commission (Article 6). The Agency shares the information it collects with other bodies, in particular national regulatory authorities and financial and competition authorities in Member States (Article 8). Market manipulation should be sanctioned equally throughout the EU in order to prevent companies which infringe the REMIT provisions from setting up in Member States with the least severe penalties. The Commission should therefore present proposals by end 2012 to further harmonise penalties and lay down minimum requirements for penalties at EU level.

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), in writing. – (PL) We are all fully aware nowadays of the importance of energy security, of the importance of constant, ideally independent and reliable access to energy. Crude oil, coal and gas markets are connected with the electricity market and are open to abuses and manipulation. Legislative changes should regulate these matters, which are raising major uncertainties today, they should solve problems which are interfering with equal competition in this sector in the single European market, and they should also remove obstacles standing in the way of new entities, small businesses just entering the market, and not saddle them with excessive licensing requirements. We should keep watch over the energy sector and its associated markets to ensure that it is characterised by transparency and integrity, which the report we are discussing is striving to do.

Tunne Kelam (PPE), in writing. – Transparency and integrity are the core principles to be fully implemented in the European energy market. Energy deals and projects should be closely monitored and details made available to national and European energy authorities. This should apply for EU internal deals, and especially for deals with third countries. I very
much welcome the recent statement by Commissioner Oettinger with the aim of increasing the role of the European Commission in assessing energy deals, including ongoing projects.

This would both serve the aim of speaking with one voice, and also ensure that energy deals which mainly have an impact on the whole of Europe are fully in line with EU principles and laws. Europe is highly dependent on external energy resources, and the only way to guarantee that EU law and EU security-of-supply aims are respected and followed is to ensure greater coherence, transparency and data-sharing on all levels.

Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D), in writing. – (PL) On 14 September 2011, a vote was held on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on energy market integrity and transparency, which I supported. In my opinion, we need a sectoral approach to the energy market, which requires various regulatory objectives, and at the same time we need to uphold principles which accord with financial market regulations. I think wholesale energy markets should be more transparent as a result of the introduction of a register for market participants. Dishonest practices affect the level of energy prices. Market participants should transfer data on wholesale transactions to the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators. In addition, national regulators should work together with the Agency.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) Unfair practices on the wholesale energy markets affect price levels so that they are unable to do their job of sending a clear signal to power stations, households and enterprises regarding the optimum use of energy, allowing sensible investments in the energy infrastructure and promoting efficient use of energy. Instead these practices can lead to excessive price volatility and energy price increases for end-users and weaken investor confidence in energy infrastructure projects. Transparency on the energy markets is a necessary prerequisite if the EU energy market, which is expected to be a major contribution for consumers, is to be further integrated. For this reason, REMIT operates as a key instrument for achieving the European Council’s target of completing the internal energy market by 2014.

In order to prevent further liberalisation of the energy markets, this regulation should not apply to very small market operators, that is, to transactions below a certain volume. This would mean new market players would not face excessive obstacles when entering the energy market. Market players who have resources below a certain level would not be required to notify their transactions or have to meet the licensing requirements (de minimis rule).

The directive would increase transparency, integrity and stability on the wholesale energy market.

Citizens have the right to know how public funds are allocated and spent, and to what effect. For this reason the EU institutions must apply these rules to the way institutions and policies are operated and how they are funded at all levels.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I welcome this report and the Commission proposal and its sector-specific approach to focus on the energy sector, in order to prevent market abuse. The structure of the proposal and the mechanisms proposed for applying the regulation are very good, nevertheless several improvements can be made and they are reflected in the report.

Véronique Mathieu (PPE), in writing. – (FR) I voted in favour of the regulation on energy market integrity and transparency, in order to combat market abuse in the energy sector.
Wholesale trade in energy products will now be regulated independently throughout the whole of the European Union. To achieve this, the draft regulation stipulates that the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators will oversee the electricity and gas markets, in cooperation with the national regulatory bodies. The regulation will prohibit the unlawful use of inside information and practices that manipulate the markets. As regards penalties, we were keen to take the ‘damage caused to consumers’ into consideration. We also advocated creating a European register of energy market participants.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (FR) This report is aimed at establishing an internal energy market based entirely on free, undistorted competition. It subjugates energy resources to the laws of profit-making. Once again, it is citizens who will pay the bill and the ecosystem that will suffer. What Europe needs is a public body for energy.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) This proposal for a regulation – the Regulation on Energy Market Integrity and Transparency (REMIT) – establishes an EU-wide legal framework to prevent market abuse and manipulation in the gas and electricity sector. With the adoption of this report we are concerned with consumer protection in the energy market, introducing a regulation for the integrity of the energy market and transparency to guarantee correct behaviour in the wholesale energy market. It is our duty to protect consumers and ensure that the final price they pay is fair. We cannot talk about consumer protection without a more transparent internal market. The energy market cannot be based on inside information or dominated by monopolies. As such, I agree with the introduction of penalties for possible harm caused to consumers. I therefore welcome the adoption of this regulation, which will contribute to the creation of an internal energy market.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. – The regulation aims to prohibit market manipulation and insider trading in the EU’s energy markets and defines them and puts in place monitoring mechanisms and penalties to dissuade such forms of market abuse. ACER (Agency for the Cooperation of European Energy Regulators) is given a strong role to play. In Latvia strong violations related to distribution of quotes on wind generators have led to a full stop in implementing such projects. The European Commissioner from Latvia had the straightest relation to the machination. I voted in favour.

Siiri Oviir (ALDE), in writing. – (ET) I supported this report because transparency in the energy market, which would prevent the use of disreputable methods in wholesale energy markets, is in the interests of European economic development and all consumers. The unjustifiably high prices in the energy market naturally have a negative effect on the European economy and consumers, whose incomes have fallen significantly since the economic crisis. The existence of a sector-based legislative framework covering the entire EU in the energy sector is extremely important from the point of view of preventing misuse and manipulation of the market.

Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) Energy is a very topical subject in the EU, particularly for the energy island, of which Lithuania forms a part. This document calls for the establishment of a single EU market for electricity and gas, which would be run by Brussels. Increasing involvement by the EU in the management of energy markets should protect EU populations from sudden price hikes, and ensure greater stability in the supply of energy resources for consumers. In the document we also call for countries’ energy laws to be harmonised, thus facilitating trade in this sector. Once these proposals have been realised, Lithuania and all of the Baltic countries would be included in a single EU energy network, and their vulnerability to energy blackmail would be reduced. All of this would
also promote internal competition among energy suppliers, which should have a positive impact on the price of electricity and gas in the market.

**Alfredo Pallone (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) Energy market integrity and transparency: the title of the proposal for a regulation already indicates what it is about, a regulation that summarises and consolidates all the existing legislation on the trade in energy commodities in any given market. I voted in favour of the proposal for a regulation in the hope that energy speculation on the stock markets and the lack of transparency in the trade in energy commodities may be prevented by the entry into force of specific rules contained in the regulation in question. We need to ensure that the markets and the monitoring bodies are transparent and efficient.

**Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE), in writing.** – (EL) The proposal for a regulation on energy market integrity and transparency, which I supported, is the first step towards creating a European framework, with a view to integrating the national energy markets into a single European market. The proposal relates to the wholesale energy markets and aims to regulate their shortcomings, such as withholding energy production capacity. By default, the European energy framework being formulated is extremely important and will be the subject of discussion in Greece, especially in light of the country’s debate on energy policy and in light of the integrated exploitation of alternative energy sources (such as solar energy) offered by new technologies.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) This proposal for a regulation – the Regulation on Energy Market Integrity and Transparency (REMIT) – establishes an EU-wide legal framework to prevent market abuse and manipulation in the gas and electricity sector. There was a broad consensus in favour of this report in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. Indeed, the Commission proposal and its sector-specific approach to focusing on the energy sector, in order to prevent market abuse, have been well received in Parliament. I also agree with the structure of the proposal and the mechanisms proposed for applying the regulation, as well as the various improvements tabled by Parliament, which are reflected in the draft report, particularly the reinforcement of the role of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), which has a key role in the application of this regulation, and must therefore be provided with the appropriate financial and human resources to be able to set up liaison offices situated close to the major trading exchanges. I voted in favour of this report for these reasons.

**Rovana Plumb (S&D), in writing.** – The regulation aims to prohibit market manipulation and insider trading in the EU’s energy markets and defines them and puts in place monitoring mechanisms and penalties to dissuade from such forms of market abuse. ACER (Agency for the Cooperation of European Energy Regulators) is given a strong role to play: to monitor and help enforce the regulation with national regulatory authorities, a registration scheme for market participants (with the possibility for a licensing scheme should this not prove sufficient), ensuring that penalties take into account the consumer damage caused by market abuse, that ACER will be allocated sufficient funds in a review in order to take into account the extra tasks assigned to it. The Commission should consider presenting a proposal to harmonise minimum standards for penalties and Member States have to work to harmonise sanctions, so as to avoid competition or loopholes. Voting this report we act to curtail market abuse and speculation in the wholesale energy markets, to protect the consumer, as it is ultimately consumers who pay more for their electricity and gas when these abuses occur.
Paulo Rangel (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The proposal for a regulation under discussion here deals with the wholesale energy market. This is an area which deserves particular attention from the Union institutions, since any faults in the functioning of the market will have repercussions for companies, the public and families. This proposal aims to combat unfair practices which distort the normal functioning of the market. It is a particularly sensitive issue, and one in which EU involvement is justified.

Crescenzio Rivellini (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I congratulate Mr Chatzimarkakis on the excellent work he has done. Today we have approved new rules to prevent market abuse in the wholesale energy sector and hence to protect end consumers. Europe's wholesale energy market will be monitored by an independent agency so as to enable national governments to prevent or penalise behaviour which undermines free competition. Energy must remain within everyone's reach. We want prices to be transparent for consumers, but unfortunately there are many hidden costs in the excessive prices that consumers ultimately pay, and this has a very negative impact on growth and employment.

Europe needs a more transparent energy market, a market protected from abuse: that is the purpose of this regulation. I therefore welcome these new measures, which guarantee transparency and help prevent market abuse in the wholesale energy sector, thereby ensuring fair prices and free competition.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – I voted in favour. The Commission proposal for a regulation ('REMIT' – Regulation on Energy Market Integrity and Transparency) establishes an EU-wide legal framework to prevent market abuse and manipulation in the energy sector (gas and electricity). This framework must be specific to the wholesale energy markets, in addition to the already existing regulations for financial markets. The inherent characteristics of energy products, misconduct specific to the energy market (such as withholding energy production assets), as well as the different regulatory objectives require a sector-specific approach, while maintaining principles compatible and coherent with financial market regulations. In the context of the integration of national energy markets into a single European market, an EU framework is necessary.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted in favour of this text because I believe that it is a step in the right direction insofar as it establishes an EU-wide legal framework to prevent market abuse and manipulation in the energy sector, particularly with regard to gas and electricity. What we need, in fact, is a specific approach for this sector that will prevent unfair practices on wholesale energy markets from being able to manipulate price levels, making them extremely volatile and undermining potential investors’ confidence in energy infrastructure projects.

Oreste Rossi (EFD), in writing. – (IT) I am in favour of the regulation establishing an EU-wide legal framework to prevent market abuse and manipulation in the energy sector. We must ensure that the prices set on wholesale energy markets reflect a fair and competitive interaction between supply and demand and that it is not possible to benefit from market abuse, which often affects not only wholesale prices for electricity and gas across national borders, but also retail prices for consumers and micro-enterprises. The concern to ensure proper monitoring and transparency of energy markets is one of the goals alongside which the idea, which President Buzek too supports, of creating a single energy market designed to penalise countries which do not observe the rules of transparency and compete unfairly, should be developed and put into practice.
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I support the proposal for a regulation on wholesale energy market integrity and transparency. The topic is a very sensitive one, given that wholesale market prices also determine energy costs for households and businesses. Citizens, businesses and authorities must have confidence in the transparency of the wholesale energy markets. The objective is to reinforce the legislative framework regulating the energy product market in Europe ahead of regulatory harmonisation aimed at creating an internal energy market. Businesses in particular are relying on this new regulation to allow them to respond to changes in market conditions with greater flexibility, and to support the new generation and infrastructure investments necessary for transforming the supply of energy in Europe. If this fails, it could discourage investment and increase the volatility of energy prices. For example in Italy, my own country, energy market liberalisation is a two-speed process. It is effective in the electricity market, which is already successfully open to competition, but it is encountering resistance and difficulties in the gas market, which is penalised by a lack of competition. Therefore, to conclude, I believe it is necessary to ensure effective coordination between national regulatory authorities and the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators.

Bogusław Sonik (PPE), in writing. – (PL) The new EU regulation on energy market integrity and transparency, which provides for inter alia the monitoring of wholesale trade, the protection of end-users and the levying of financial penalties on entities violating the regulations, is an important step on the path to establishing an EU energy market. The provisions which have been adopted are good news for the whole of the EU and each individual Member State in particular, as this regulation signifies the legal sanctioning of greater transparency in the functioning of the EU market. This procedure forms part of the process guaranteeing energy security not only for Poland but for all Member States. It is essential in so far as regular supplies of energy provided in conditions of transparency and freedom from corruption on the European market are particularly significant for our economy, which could not function correctly without adequate energy supplies. The added value of this document is in the potential benefit for ordinary consumers: new principles of market participation mean greater competition between energy suppliers, which in turn should translate into lower purchase costs.

Nuno Teixeira (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The electricity and gas market, particularly the wholesale market, must have a legal framework suited to energy matters. That is the only way to prevent abuses and manipulation of the energy sector, allowing end consumers fair, competitive, transparent prices. This regulation imposes rules regarding the abuse of inside information, market manipulation and the publishing of inside information. The recently established Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) has the role of monitoring information provided by the Member States, and later reporting it to the Commission. It also aims to provide ACER with the human and financial resources necessary for it to function, so that in the future it will be able to draft delegated acts. A licensing scheme for energy traders, valid throughout the EU and required for traders carrying out transactions above a certain threshold, which could be removed in case of breaches of this regulation, is an essential factor in this measure’s success. This report, which is specific to the wholesale electricity and gas sector, is crucial to the implementation of a common energy policy across the 27 Member States. There is an urgent need to create a sustainable and competitive market and, at the same time, reduce the EU’s foreign dependency.

Rafał Trzaskowski (PPE), in writing. – (PL) Clear rules of play in the energy market ensure greater competitiveness and lower prices, which is good news for consumers.
Removal of barriers and regulatory differences, in brief, strengthening the single EU market, including the energy market, is the answer to today's crisis. This is the position of the European Parliament it is also part of the programme of the Polish Presidency. This is also good news for Poland, as the regulation means greater transparency in the EU market which, as we know, has been infiltrated to a considerable degree by Russian firms such as Gazprom, for example. They too will have to conform to the new rules.

**Dominique Vlasto (PPE), in writing.** — (FR) It is essential that competition should be free and fair. This rule, which is an absolute pillar of EU law, not only leads to rivalry between private operators, thus guaranteeing innovation and productivity, but also acts as a safeguard to protect consumers against potential price-fixing and abuse of market power. All markets should obey this fundamental rule. I naturally voted in favour of this regulation, therefore, as it is designed to stop abusive practices in the wholesale energy markets, from which consumers lose out. Among the measures it adopts, the report’s strong condemnation of insider trading struck me in particular: the unlawful use of inside information and practices aimed at manipulating the markets must be punished by the national authorities with penalties that reflect the harm suffered by consumers. I welcome the fact that trade in wholesale energy products will now be monitored independently throughout the whole of the European Union, and I hope that the Commission will give the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) adequate resources with which to fulfil its function of monitoring and investigating breaches of the regulation.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI), in writing.** — (DE) The report concerns the Commission proposal for a regulation, which is intended to lay down, at EU level, the legislative framework to combat market abuse and market manipulation – in the form of insider trading – in the gas and electricity energy sectors. Like the rapporteur, I support the chosen sector-based approach in order to be able to tailor the provisions to sector-specific conditions and thereby increase the prospects of success accordingly. I also support the amendments proposed by the rapporteur with regard to the content of the regulation, in particular a harmonised – and therefore effective – system of penalties.

**Hermann Winkler (PPE), in writing.** — (DE) I would like to thank the rapporteur for his important work to promote greater transparency and integrity in the wholesale energy markets. I voted in favour of this report and I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise how important I believe it to be that the approach taken allows the Agency in Ljubljana to forge strong links with the most important wholesale energy markets in order to receive their support. Efficient market monitoring requires reliable and regular as well as rapid contact with the most important trading markets. I would even have liked to see Parliament go further and call for specific contact offices, as Mr Chatzimarkakis had originally considered doing. Such additional monitoring structures would surely have been appropriate and helpful for the Agency in Ljubljana and not counterproductive as some fellow Members obviously feared. However, I hope that use will indeed be made of this option. In this regard, I am thinking in particular of the four major cross-border trading exchanges, Paris, London, Amsterdam and Leipzig.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE), in writing.** — (IT) The definition of a common energy market to guarantee greater transparency, prevent dominant players from abusing their position, and consequently stop damaging speculation on the European market is the aim of the Chatzimarkakis report on energy market integrity and transparency, which I supported. The final text is the result of lengthy negotiations and aims especially to prevent potential market ‘manipulation’, increasing the penalties for those who breach the regulations. In
addition the emphasis on the role of the European Agency for the Coordination of Regulators in terms of market monitoring and control is a positive factor.

Report: Eva Lichtenberger (A7-0249/2011)

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting for this report as it deals principally with a document concerning the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which introduced a number of new legal bases intended to facilitate the implementation, application and enforcement of EU law.

Sophie Auconie (PPE), in writing. – (FR) The Treaty of Lisbon brought in several new legal bases for facilitating the implementation, application and enforcement of European Union law. This report focuses on the fundamental role played by the European Commission in bringing infringement proceedings against Member States that have breached one of their obligations under the Treaty. It calls on the Commission to draft a procedural law on the subject, and deplores the lack of transparency that currently prevails. The report emphasises the need for concordance tables to be drawn up and published, which would give the Commission an overview of the transposition measures introduced in all Member States. I support these demands, and therefore voted in favour of this report.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force on 1 December 2009 and introduced a number of new legal bases intended to facilitate the implementation, application and enforcement of EU law. Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union defines the fundamental role of the Commission as that of guardian of the Treaties. In this context, the Commission has powers and a duty to bring infringement proceedings against a Member State that has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaties, including obligations in relation to fundamental rights of citizens. This twenty-seventh annual report on monitoring the application of EU law shows that, despite a fall in the number of infringement cases opened by the Commission, it was still dealing with around 2 900 complaints and infringement files at the end of 2009, and that Member States were still behind schedule with their transposition of directives in more than half of cases. I feel that such a situation is far from satisfactory, and the Commission should therefore bring more transparency into ongoing infringement procedures and inform EU citizens as soon as possible and in an appropriate manner of the action taken on their requests. I agree that the Commission should propose a benchmark for Member States’ compliance with Court of Justice rulings.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) I support this report, which evaluates the Commission’s monitoring of the application of European Union law in 2009. It focuses on the fundamental role of the Commission as ‘Guardian of the Treaty’. It reiterates that the infringement procedure consists of two phases: the administrative (investigation) stage and the judicial stage before the Court of Justice.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because in it the European Parliament evaluates the Commission’s role as guardian of the Treaties. This is the 27th annual report prepared by the European Parliament on the role played by the Commission in monitoring the Member States. The first phase of the infringement proceedings is one of the areas of direct interaction between Europe and EU citizens, where citizens turn to the Commission and Parliament for help in order to access their European rights. It is therefore vital that complainants are treated according to principles of good administration. Thus, the report indicates that, although infringement proceedings fell in
2009, the situation is still unsatisfactory and this is above all down to Member States being behind schedule in the transposition of rules of law. The European Parliament also calls on the Commission to ensure greater transparency in infringement procedures and asks the Commission to propose a benchmark for Member States’ compliance with Court of Justice rulings.

**John Bufton (EFD), in writing.** – The EU Commission’s emphasis on improving the prevention of infringements while ensuring sufficient means are made available, especially preserving consistency in the application of EU law by the Member States and ensuring the role of the Court of Justice, is not at all welcome. I strongly oppose the idea of the EU Commission investigating and initiating infringement proceedings when a petition or complaint is directed against jurisdiction by a national court. It implies not only a disregard for domestic rule of law and absolute disrespect for judicial impartiality.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) This report assesses the monitoring of European Union law by the Commission in 2009. It focuses on the fundamental role of the Commission as ‘guardian of the Treaties’ and describes its power and duty to bring infringement proceedings against the Member State that has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaties. The report calls on the Commission to propose a ‘procedural law’ in the form of a regulation, under the new legal basis of Article 298 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) in order to reinforce citizens’ rights and ensure transparency. The procedural law will not in any way limit the discretionary power of the Commission but would only guarantee that when exercising its power the Commission respects the principles of ‘an open, efficient and independent European administration’ as referred to in Article 298 of the TFEU and in Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

**Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) The means of implementing, applying and enforcing EU law have for a long time worried both European legislators and lawyers. The more the volume and complexity of EU law increase, the more its intelligibility and applicability are jeopardised. To deal with these concerns, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced several legal bases aiming to improve the way in which EU law is made and applied. The resolution before us concerns the fundamental role of the Commission as a promoter of infringement proceedings against a Member State that has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaties, focusing on its two stages: the administrative stage and the judicial stage. The broad discretion of the Commission in this type of process has merited specialists’ reflection, nonetheless the rapporteur has come down on the side of the need to adopt a procedural law which does not limit it. This is only one of the existing problems, and it demonstrates the obvious tension in legal and jurisdiction terms between the European institutions and the Member States. Such problems heighten the urgency of monitoring the adoption and application of EU law, and of seeking to improve either its wording or its systematic coherence.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) This report, drafted by Ms Lichtenberger, focuses on the 27th annual report on monitoring the application of European Union law by the Commission in 2009. The Commission, as ‘guardian of the Treaties’, must ensure Member States’ compliance, and is responsible for penalising those that fail to fulfil an obligation to which they are bound, by virtue of having concluded the Treaties. A more efficient Europe implies the careful participation of the public, who must be made aware that complaints can be submitted when the Treaties are not respected, particularly in the areas of the environment and of all violations of fundamental rights, so as to avoid harmful
consequences for the public. However, there should be more transparency in the processes of handling complaints by providing continuous information on their progress. An increasingly strong EU means each Member State being responsible both for itself and for the whole. I therefore welcome this report and I call on all the Member States to scrupulously respect the Treaties they have concluded. Only in this way will we achieve a stronger and better Europe.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The importance of the rule of law to a democratic society and for the legitimacy of any government cannot be disputed. Although the EU is undoubtedly one of the places in the world where objectivity, transparency and applicability of the law is at the highest level, this case draws attention to a number of failings that cannot be overlooked. In order to resolve the issues of applying the legislation of the European Union in an improved and more targeted way, the Commission launched the EU pilot project. However, this was not fully satisfactory and it would therefore be more suitable to set up an alternative type of mediation where citizens could complain to those who initiate the cases. There have often been cases where implementation of EU law has resulted in misunderstandings, for example, many petitions refer to the Charter of Fundamental Rights even where the charter does not apply to the legal acts of the Member State in question.

Citizens feel they have been misinformed as far as the real scope of the charter is concerned. I therefore believe it necessary that the Commission together with the Member States do everything in their power to explain the scope of the powers and applicability of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) This report evaluates the Commission's monitoring of the application of European Union law in 2009. It focuses on the fundamental role of the Commission as guardian of the Treaty and the Commission’s powers and duty to bring infringement proceedings against a Member State that has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaty. It reiterates that the infringement procedure consists of two phases: the administrative (investigation) stage and the judicial stage before the Court of Justice. In the administrative phase, the role of citizens (complainants) in ensuring compliance with Union law on the ground is of paramount importance. Bringing Europe closer to its citizens and embracing techniques of good governance are intrinsically linked. One of the areas of direct interaction between Europe and EU citizens is precisely the administrative phase of Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), where citizens turn to the Commission and Parliament for help in order to access their European rights. It is therefore vital that complainants are treated according to principles of good administration. The rapporteur therefore calls on the Commission to propose procedural law in the form of a regulation under the new legal basis of Article 298 TFEU, in order to reinforce citizens’ rights and guarantee transparency. This procedural law would not in any way limit the discretional power of the Commission but merely guarantee that, when exercising its power, the Commission respects the principles of an open, efficient and independent European administration, as referred to in Article 298 and in Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The report focuses on the fundamental role of the Commission as the guardian of the Treaty and its authority and obligation to initiate proceedings regarding infringements of the regulations by a Member State which has failed to honour particular obligations thereunder. There are two phases to infringement cases: an administrative (investigatory) phase and a judicial phase at the European Court of Justice.
The administrative phase plays a key role for citizens (complainants) by making on-the-spot compliance with Union law possible. Bringing Europe closer to its citizens and accepting good administrative practice are areas which are fundamentally intertwined. One of the areas of direct interaction between 'Europe' and its citizens is the administrative phase of TFEU Article 258, under which citizens may apply to the Commission and Parliament for assistance in accessing their European rights. It is therefore extremely important that complainants are treated according to the principles of good public administrative practice. The Commission should propose ‘procedural legal provisions’ in the form of a directive based on the new legal basis of TFEU Article 298 to strengthen the rights of citizens and to ensure transparency.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I welcome this report, which evaluates the Commission's monitoring of the application of European Union law in 2009. It focuses on the fundamental role of the Commission as 'Guardian of the Treaty' and the Commission's power and duty to bring infringement proceedings against a Member State that has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaty. It reiterates that the infringement procedure consists of two phases: the administrative (investigation) stage and the judicial stage before the Court of Justice. In the administrative phase, the role of citizens (complainants) in ensuring compliance with Union law on the ground is of paramount importance. Bringing Europe closer to its citizens and embracing techniques of good governance are intrinsically linked.

One of the areas of direct interaction between 'Europe' and the EU citizens is precisely the administrative phase of Article 258 TFEU, where citizens turn to the Commission and Parliament for help in order to access their European rights. As such, it is vital that complainants are treated according to principles of good administration.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The purpose of this report is to assess the Member States’ application of legislation adopted at EU level and the need for infringement proceedings to be brought against a Member State that fails to fulfil the Treaties' provisions. According to the text, the Commission is therefore called on to propose a procedural law in the form of a regulation, in order to assure greater respect for European citizens' rights. At the same time, it calls for greater cooperation between EU institutions and national parliaments, especially in the application of EU law.

Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE), in writing. – (SK) The Treaty of Lisbon which came into effect on 1 December 2009 introduced several new legal principles to facilitate the implementation and transposition of EU law, thereby significantly changing the legal and regulatory environment at European level. As in any democratic state with rule of law, the European Union must have legal standards in force which conform with the principles of transparency and the objectivity of decisions so that EU citizens and all economic entities can exercise their legal rights calmly and effectively. This makes it paramount that EU law is as transparent, comprehensible and accessible as possible. I believe that much more needs to be done as regards transparency and strengthening good public administration at European level, which to citizens continues to be something distant and unachievable. I therefore support the recommendations in the annual report on monitoring the application of European law and the appeals to the Commission to draft new legislation to strengthen the rights of citizens and promote transparency and am voting in favour of it.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. – The European Commission deals with an important number of infringement cases. To better address the citizens' and businesses’
questions concerning the application of EU law, the Commission launched the EU pilot project. I voted in favour.

**Siiri Oviir (ALDE), in writing.** – (ET) This report shows that out of roughly 2900 complaints and cases of violations, in more than half of cases Member States were behind with the transposition of directives, and primary responsibility for this lies with Member States’ government agencies. Monitoring shows that Member States are not making a sufficient effort to transpose necessary directives, and our common objectives are largely only on paper, and are not functioning in reality. Transposition naturally takes time, but the transposition of important directives cannot take forever, and the European Union must act decisively to ensure that our common objectives are realised.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) I voted for this report, which assesses the monitoring of European Union law by the Commission in 2009. The Commission has a fundamental role as ‘guardian of the Treaties’, and in this capacity it can and should bring infringement proceedings against Member States that have failed to fulfil their obligations under the Treaties. This report reiterates that the infringement procedure consists of two phases: the administrative, or investigation, stage and the judicial stage before the Court of Justice. The role of citizens – complainants – in the administrative phase, in ensuring compliance with European Union law on the ground, is of paramount importance. Indeed, I believe that the aims of bringing Europe closer to its citizens and embracing techniques of good governance are intrinsically linked. I support the call made in the report to propose a ‘procedural law’ reinforcing the rights of the public and ensuring greater transparency. This will no doubt contribute to strengthening ‘an open, efficient and independent European administration’ as referred to in Article 298 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and in Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) When discussing the monitoring of the application of EU law, the first thing to note is the important role of the Commission as ‘guardian of the Treaties’. Potential problems and their possible solutions must be considered from this standpoint. As such, an active stance on the part of the Commission is key to avoiding failures to comply with EU law by the Member States. As far as cases of non-compliance are concerned, it is important to stress the need for proper regulation, so as to reinforce the procedural legitimacy of the Commission’s actions and safeguard the public’s expectations relating to the correct application of EU law. It is also worth stressing the need to link the EU institutions with the Member States and their courts, as well as the European public itself, which has at its disposal the possibility of directly petitioning Parliament. These are all methods worth considering so as to achieve better European integration.

**Crescenzio Rivellini (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) Today we voted in plenary on the twenty-seventh annual report on monitoring the application of European Union law. The report by Ms Lichtenberger calls on the Commission to propose a procedural law, in the form of a regulation under the new legal basis of Article 298 TFEU, in order to reinforce citizens’ rights and guarantee transparency. This procedural law will not in any way limit the Commission’s discretionary power, but will only guarantee that when exercising its power the Commission will respect the principles of an ‘open, efficient and independent European administration’, as referred to in Article 298 TFEU and Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
Robert Rochefort (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) I supported Eva Lichtenberger’s report on monitoring the application of European Union law. Without proper transposition, EU law clearly cannot operate effectively. Yet in 2009, nearly 3,000 complaints and cases of infringement were recorded, and Member States were late in transposing directives in over half of all instances. I am also concerned by the high number of infringements in the areas of recognition of professional qualifications, services and public procurement. Having said this, I am not one of the people who continuously accuse Member States of acting in bad faith in this area. Instead, I see in these poor results a need to spell out the legal framework that applies in these fields more clearly, in order to help national authorities understand the framework and the implementation process. I would like to take this opportunity to remind people of the importance of the SOLVIT network and of the benefits of initiatives such as the ‘EU Pilot’ project and the ‘Your Europe’ web portal, which provide practical information on applying EU law in the single market.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – I voted in favour. This report evaluates the Commission’s monitoring of the application of European Union law in 2009. It focuses on the fundamental role of the Commission as ‘Guardian of the Treaties’ and the Commission’s power and duty to bring infringement proceedings against a Member State that has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaties. It reiterates that the infringement procedure consists of two phases: the administrative (investigation) stage, and the judicial stage before the Court of Justice. In the administrative phase, the role of citizens (complainants) in ensuring compliance with Union law on the ground is of paramount importance. Bringing Europe closer to its citizens and embracing techniques of good governance are intrinsically linked. One of the areas of direct interaction between ‘Europe’ and EU citizens is precisely the administrative phase described in Article 258 TFEU, where citizens turn to the Commission and Parliament for help in order to benefit from their European rights. As such, it is vital that complainants are treated according to the principles of good administration. The report therefore calls on the Commission to propose a ‘procedural law’ system in the form of a regulation with the new legal basis of Article 298 TFEU in order to reinforce citizens’ rights and guarantee transparency.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted for this report because I believe it is exhaustive in its evaluation of the effectiveness of the Commission’s monitoring of the application of European Union law in 2009. Europe can only be brought closer to its citizens by adopting techniques of good governance, but also through suitable infringement procedures. One of the areas of direct interaction between Europe and its citizens is precisely the administrative phase of Article 258 TFEU, where citizens apply directly to the Commission and Parliament for help in order to access their European rights.

Angelika Werthmann (NI), in writing. – (DE) I naturally voted in favour of this report. As a member of the Committee on Petitions, I have a great deal of experience with citizens’ difficult battle with the national authorities. The committee has also repeatedly called for more transparency in relation to developments in pending infringement procedures. The demands of this report, which primarily concern the first phase of the infringement procedure, the administrative phase, and call for a separate procedural law in order to establish in law the participation of citizens and transparency, can only be supported.

Iva Zanicchi (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted for the report by Ms Lichtenberger, which evaluates the European Commission’s monitoring of the application of European Union law and its consequent power and duty to bring infringement proceedings against a Member State that has failed to respect the Treaty. The text therefore calls on the Commission to
propose a procedural law in order to reinforce citizens’ rights. At the same time it is hoped
that there will be greater cooperation between EU institutions and national parliaments,
especially during the EU legislation implementation process.

Report: Judith Sargentini (A7-0245/2011)

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting for this report. I am particularly
satisfied with the reference to a constitutional framework on EU transparency instituted
by the Treaty of Lisbon. Transparency has become a fundamental and legally binding right
for the public. I agree on common rules for the classification of documents, as well as an
appropriate balance between transparency and data protection.

Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this important
resolution on public access to documents for the years 2009-2010. Currently, citizens are
calling for more democracy, transparency, openness of institutions and of political actors
and a stronger fight against corruption, therefore the opportunity to access documents
and information is one of the ways to make sure citizens can be involved in the democratic
process and that corruption is prevented and fought. It is important to highlight that, in
order to guarantee the accountability and legitimacy of a democratic political system,
citizens have a right to know how their representatives act once elected or appointed to
public bodies or when representing the Member States at European or international level,
how the decision-making process works (including documents, amendments, timetables,
players involved, votes cast, and so on), and how public money is allocated and spent, and
with what results. I therefore welcome this resolution and believe that the EU should stand
at the forefront, providing a model of institutional transparency and modern democracy
for the Member States as well as for third countries.

Pino Arlacchi (S&D), in writing. – I voted in favour of this Resolution because I am
convinced that transparency is the best way to prevent corruption, fraud, conflicts of
interest and mismanagement. For this reason, the EU must provide a model of institutional
transparency and modern democracy for the Member States as well as for third countries.

Sophie Auconie (PPE), in writing. – (FR) The right to access documents of the European
Parliament, the Council and the Commission is laid down in Article 15 of the Treaty on
the Functioning of the European Union. The European Transparency Initiative, the adoption
of a parliamentary resolution in April 2006 and the adoption of the Aarhus Convention
(concerning access to documents containing information on environmental matters) have
all obliged the Commission to table an amendment to the current regulation on the subject,
so as to extend its scope to other EU bodies. In my view, access for citizens to the work of
the EU institutions and bodies is not a side issue. It is fundamental to the Union’s democratic
legitimacy. I therefore supported this report, which expands on the Commission’s initial
proposals.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this document. The
Treaty of Lisbon introduced a new constitutional framework of EU institutional
transparency, with a view to an open, efficient and independent European administration, by establishing a firm fundamental right of access to documents of EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. This right is afforded by the Treaty not only to EU citizens but also to any natural or legal person residing in a Member State, and should be exercised in compliance with the general principles and limits (set with a view to protecting certain public or private interests) laid down by the regulations adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. Transparency is a legally binding fundamental right of the citizen, and any decisions denying access to documents must therefore be based on clearly and strictly defined exceptions founded on sound arguments and reasonably explained so that citizens can understand why they are being denied access and can use the legal remedies available to them effectively.

Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Transparency is one of the fundamental pillars of participatory democracy, being complementary to representative democracy, as access to documents and information is one of the ways to ensure public participation in the democratic process, as well as a way of preventing and combating corruption. The Treaty of Lisbon introduced a new constitutional framework of EU institutional transparency, with a view to an open, efficient and independent European administration, by establishing a firm fundamental right of access to documents of EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. This means that any decisions denying access to documents must be based on clearly and strictly defined exceptions founded on sound arguments and reasonably explained. This report advocates the need to revise Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 in order to define precisely and narrow its exceptions and ensure that these exceptions do not undermine the transparency granted by the Treaties and the European Union Charter of Fundamental Human Rights. This revision should strengthen the right of access to documents. It also advocates the need to establish an appropriate balance between transparency and data protection. I voted for this report for the above reasons.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) I supported this report, because transparency is the general rule, and under the Treaty of Lisbon access to documents became one of the legally-binding, fundamental rights of citizens. Refusing access to documents must be based on clear exceptions and underpinned by solid arguments. The EU must provide a transparent model of reference.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because access to documents and information is one of the ways to make sure citizens can be involved in the democratic process and that corruption can be prevented and fought. The Treaty of Lisbon introduced a new constitutional framework of EU institutional transparency in order to ensure that the European administration would be open, efficient and independent by establishing a firm fundamental right of access to the documents of EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. Thus the European Parliament stresses the current lack of coherent administrative law for EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, such as rules regarding the delivery of administrative decisions that can be appealed against, and therefore calls on the EU institutions to urgently define a common EU administrative law. Furthermore, the European Union should stand at the forefront, providing a model of institutional transparency and modern democracy for Member States as well as for third countries. Since the principle of transparency has already become a legally binding fundamental right of the citizen, transparency at EU level should be mirrored by Member States when transposing EU legislation into national law.
The European Parliament thus takes the view that the revision of the regulation on public access to documents should strengthen the right of access to documents without in any way reducing the existing standards for the protection of that right, and take into consideration the case law of the Court of Justice. Furthermore, the revised regulation should be simple and accessible to citizens to enable them to use their right more effectively.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing.** (PT) I voted for this report because I consider access to documents a fundamental right. Transparency is the general rule and with the Treaty of Lisbon it became a legally binding fundamental right of the citizen, so that any decisions denying access to documents must be based on exceptions clearly and strictly defined, founded on sound arguments and explained reasonably, allowing citizens to understand the denial and to use the legal remedies available to them effectively. I believe that transparency is the best way to prevent corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and mismanagement.

**Ioan Enciu (S&D), in writing.** (RO) I voted for the report on public access to documents for 2009-2010 as I regard transparency as both a general rule and a fundamental right of the citizen, which is legally binding.

I advocate that any decision banning access to documents must be based on clearly and strictly defined exceptions founded on sound arguments and must be reasonably explained, allowing citizens to understand the situation and use other legal remedies available to them. The European Union must provide a model of institutional transparency and modern democracy for Member States as well as for third countries.

At the same time, we need to adopt a proactive approach in terms of information availability and make every effort to provide the public with as many categories of documents as possible via every communication channel.

Last but not least, I think that national information access legislation needs to be harmonised at EU level, and Member States must be encouraged to adopt the most transparent laws possible on accessing documents.

**Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing.** (PT) I voted for this report, as I believe that transparency in public access to the documents of the European institutions is an effective way of preventing corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and mismanagement. I believe, however, that in cases where it is justified, any decisions denying access to documents must be based on clearly and strictly defined exceptions, allowing citizens to understand the denial and use effectively other methods available to them to obtain information.

**Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing.** (PT) The European Union is built on the Treaties, composed of states, and is at the service of the people. As such, the participation of Europeans in the process of European integration is absolutely crucial. The Treaty of Lisbon therefore aims to simplify procedures, making the language used in the Treaties more accessible to the public, and to reinforce transparency and public access to the institutions' documents. These mechanisms are fundamental and constitute the cornerstone of informed and participatory European democracy. In order for these intentions to become a reality and for the European Union to become actually closer to Europeans, more transparent and more accessible, there is a need for genuine access to documents. This will safeguard the public’s right to information, without putting at risk the confidentiality and protection of classified information.
José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) This report by Ms Sargentini addresses access to documents (Rule 104(7)) for the years 2009-2010. This document was adopted in June this year by a significant majority. Public access to documents, which is a European prerogative under the Rules of Procedure and following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, is not always as easy as would be desirable. There remains much to be done in order to ensure transparency in this consultation process. Everything must be done so that legislation is respected in all the Member States, as this has already caused several complaints to be submitted to the European Court of Justice. It is clearly necessary to rationalise this access. Not all documents should be available for public access, for instance historical or confidential documents, which should be given special treatment. I therefore agree with the rapporteur’s recommendations for a review of the current legislation in order to facilitate public access to documents and I welcome the Commission’s intention of improving the current legislation.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), *in writing.* – (SK) The Treaty of Lisbon introduced a new regulatory framework for institutional transparency in the EU in the interests of open, effective and independent European administration by establishing an inalienable fundamental right of access to the documents of EU institutions, bodies, departments and agencies. The Treaty extends this right not just to EU citizens, but to any legal or natural person resident in a Member State, and it should be applied subject to general principles and limitations (provisions established to protect certain public and private interests) established in the regulations adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council. In particular, the general rule that applies is full access to legislative documents while restricting the exceptions relating to non-legislative documents without these two approaches coming into conflict with one another.

Transparency is basic element of participatory democracy and supplements the representative democracy on which the functioning of the EU is based, as is set out in Articles 9-11 TEU, by enabling citizens to participate in the decision-making process and to exercise public control, thereby guaranteeing the legitimacy of the democratic political system. In the same way, joint document classification rules must be underwritten in law. I also express my full support for freedom of opinion within the scope of entities and institutions as well as a reasonable balance between transparency and data protection.

Louis Grech (S&D), *in writing.* – I am voting in favour of this report which emphasises the need to make the EU institutions more transparent by facilitating public access to Parliament, Council and Commission documents. Currently, the Treaty of Lisbon affords citizens the right to access documents of EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies (with limited exceptions for particularly sensitive documents). In practice, however, citizens face a cumbersome procedure with rules that are often unclear. The result is that a significant number of citizen document requests are refused, contributing to the sense the workings of the EU lack accountability and transparency. By addressing these shortcomings, we have an opportunity to reinforce EU efforts against corruption, whilst also encouraging citizens to become better informed about how it works, how public money is spent and how their representatives act.

Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), *in writing.* – (FR) I supported this report, which emphasises the fact that since the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, the European Parliament, Council and Commission, as well as the European External Action Service (EEAS), must allow access to EU documents. This is in keeping with the increased attention now being focused on relations between citizens and the EU administration, with a view to greater transparency.
There is still strong resistance among some Member States, in terms of access to the information and national documents exchanged as part of the legislative process, denying access to documents concerning international agreements, or leaving out the names of Member States from the conclusions of debates. This secrecy is unacceptable. We should draw upon the arguments put forward by the European Court of Justice in the ‘Turco’ judgment, in which it stated that transparency ‘contributes to [...] greater legitimacy, efficiency and accountability of the institutions vis-à-vis citizens in a democratic system’. We have everything to gain from transparency. I therefore uphold the principle of access to documents, whilst denial of access must be done for good reason and as an exception.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) I welcomed this document because I believe that it is necessary to give citizens as much access to documents as possible, and if these really are confidential, then this must be based on clearly and strictly defined exceptions. European Union decisions must be adopted transparently and openly, and these decisions must be as easy to understand by European citizens as possible. This will strengthen the principles of democracy and respect for fundamental human rights. Furthermore, it is the best way to prevent corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and mismanagement.

Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE), in writing. – I voted in favour of the report and in the LIBE committee I contributed amendments to highlight the following: that transparency is the best way to prevent mismanagement, fraud and corruption; according to international standards, the refusal to disclose a document should be based on a strict three-part test – to protect a legitimate aim, prevent a substantial harm, and no overriding public interest for disclosure applies; EU institutions should be proactive, making as many categories of documents as possible publicly accessible by default on their websites; transparency of data on the beneficiaries of EU funds should be strengthened by the publication of the same categories of information, on a single website, in one EU working language.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The Treaty of Lisbon introduced a new legal framework for institutional transparency in the EU in favour of open, effective and independent European administration by establishing a basic right of access to the documents of EU institutions, bodies, departments and agencies.

The Treaty extends this right not just to citizens of the EU but to any natural or legal person resident in a Member State. Transparency is the best way of preventing corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and mismanagement.

Citizens have the right to know how public funds are allocated and used, and with what results. It is therefore necessary for the EU institutions to embody this principle with regards to the operations of institutions and policies and the funding allocated to them at all levels.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I voted in favour of this report, which reiterates that Parliament should be at the forefront of the proactive approach on publicity, transparency, openness and access to documents; highlights in that regard the success of webstreaming of hearings and committee meetings in addition to plenary sittings, and believes that this should become the norm and that the Legislative Observatory should be expanded even further to include all EU official languages and information, both at committee and plenary level, such as amendments, opinions from other committees, Legal Service opinions, voting lists, roll-call votes, present and voting MEPs, interinstitutional letters, names of shadow rapporteurs, a ‘search by word’ function, multilingual search, tabling deadlines, RSS feeds, an explanation of the legislative procedure, links to webstreamed discussions, etc., to ensure a full cycle of information for citizens, giving access to the documents as well to multilingual
citizens’ summaries of legislative proposals and summaries of existing EU legislation (SCADPLUS), for which adequate search and browsing facilities as described should be offered as well.

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) Transparency is an essential element of participatory and representative democracy, since it allows the public to participate in and exert control over decision making. It is known to be the best way of preventing corruption, fraud and mismanagement. In order to ensure such transparency, the fullest possible access by all to the documents of the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies is essential. This rule cannot and should not be limited to documents related to the legislative process, and reasons for denying access to a document must be as limited and clear as possible.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (FR) This report calls for Members of Parliament and citizens to be kept informed about the decisions made at European level. It explains that to achieve this, documents must be available in all the official EU languages and must be easily accessible. If only the same applied to the European Parliament. It also calls on Member States to be transparent in the way in which they transpose European legislation into their national laws. It is pitiful that we should be reduced to making this kind of request in a Union that claims to represent democracy. I am voting in favour of the resolution and I deplore the European Union’s opacity.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I believe that transparency in public access to documents of the European institutions is a good way of preventing corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and mismanagement. However, in cases where not making them available is justified, the reasons for denying access to documents must be based on clearly and strictly defined exceptions, allowing citizens to understand the denial and effectively use other methods available to them to obtain information.

Louis Michel (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) Access to documents and transparency are fundamental principles for institutions and for the proper functioning of democracy. Nonetheless, we must ensure that, in certain circumstances, this transparency does not become an obstacle to ongoing developments in the documents and negotiations, or even become paralysing, or a sort of forced opposition to change. Members of Parliament must be able to work completely independently. I fully agree that transparency and openness should apply to Members of Parliament, in terms of their participation in parliamentary work and their attendance. However, I would like to stress that we must not go too far in the area of Members’ activities, especially with respect to their diaries, the contacts they have had, or the documents and correspondence they have received, written or sent in the course of their duties.

Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE), in writing. – (SK) The European Union has reached a new phase with the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, which has introduced a new constitutional framework for EU institutional transparency, with a view to creating an open, efficient and independent European administration. By establishing an incontrovertible fundamental right of access to documents of EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, a participatory democracy enabling its citizens to participate in decision-making and to exercise public control, thereby guaranteeing the legitimacy of a democratic political system, is becoming a reality. Citizens may directly participate in the democratic process, monitor how public funds are spent, and also directly combat corruption, which is currently associated with a lack of transparency in mechanisms and secretiveness in institutions. The reality of everyday life remains prosaic, and therefore for the reasons mentioned above I fully support the
requirements expressed in the report on access to documents whereby all EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies should act proactively and automatically make the budgets and lists of concluded public procurement contracts, in addition to documents on their activities, available to the general public on their websites. In particular, I would like to highlight the clear need to ensure transparency in the management of European funds, where it appears to be essential to systematically disclose the same categories of information on all beneficiaries of EU funds on a single website. Such behaviour will clearly strengthen public confidence in the actions of the European Union and the proper management of funds.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. – I agree that common rules for classification of documents and a broader redefinition of a document must be clarified in the legislative review. I also support the need to ensure a ‘space to think’ without undermining transparency or the encouragement of free thinking within the agencies and the institutions as well as an appropriate equilibrium between transparency and data protection. I voted in favour.

Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE), in writing. – (EL) This particular report aims to increase the degree of accountability of the EU towards its citizens at a critical time. Public access to documents and information is one way – but certainly not the only way – of ensuring that citizens participate in the democratic process and of increasing the transparency of EU policies and actions, as stipulated, moreover, in Articles 9 to 11 of the Treaty. In any event, even if full access is granted to legislative documents, there are exceptions in the case of non-legislative documents, which must be kept to a minimum and must be justified on the basis of strict criteria (such as disproportionate harm to the general interest). The report, which I supported, includes this particular dimension.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Access to documents is a fundamental right of the European Union following the Treaty of Lisbon. Indeed, transparency is the general rule and with the Treaty of Lisbon – and, accordingly, with the acquisition by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights of binding legal force – it has become a legally binding fundamental right of the citizen, so that any decisions denying access to documents must be based on clearly and strictly defined exceptions, founded on sound arguments and reasonably explained, allowing citizens to understand the denial and to use the legal remedies available to them effectively. I agree with the call for transparency at EU level to be mirrored by Member States when transposing EU legislation into national law, notably by establishing correlation tables, drawing, inter alia, on best practice in terms of e-Parliament and e-government transparency. I voted for this report since I agree with the need to encourage the Commission to maximise the transparency of the standards promoting public access to documents.

Miguel Portas (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) Transparency is an essential element of participatory and representative democracy, since it allows the public to participate in and exert control over decision making. It is known to be the best way of preventing corruption, fraud and mismanagement. In order to ensure such transparency, the fullest possible access by all to the documents of the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies is essential. This rule cannot and should not be limited to documents related to the legislative process, and reasons for denying access to a document must be as limited and clear as possible.

Phil Prendergast (S&D), in writing. – I welcome this report on public access to documents. It is often said that sunlight is the best disinfectant and this report reaffirms
that transparency is not merely a proverbial ideal but rather a fundamental right protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Transparency is essential in order to effectively counteract corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and mismanagement. Moreover, it is a vital structural tool to be used in the promotion of a virtuous cycle in public administration. We should reject any retrospective, backward-looking approach to transparency and, in light of calls from the European Ombudsman for the European Institutions to adopt a proactive approach, we should make as much information as possible openly available to the public. We cannot understate the nexus between open and transparent decision-making and the improvement of civil society’s participation in public life. This, in turn, strengthens the relationship between the Institutions and the European citizen.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), in writing. – (PT) One of the public’s fundamental rights is transparency from public political institutions regarding their activities. For this to be guaranteed, it is necessary for the public to have at its disposal ways of exercising this right. As such, the European public’s right to access EU documents is a right which can be restricted only in specially justified cases. Indeed, this is the only way of ensuring that the public is able to monitor the measures adopted, at the same time as reinforcing the legitimacy of the way in which public bodies act in relation to the electorate. The protection of public access to the documents is thus an issue to which Parliament, as the assembly of the representatives of the European public, must continue to demonstrate a firm commitment.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – I voted in favour. Among other things, the resolution: recalls that transparency is the general rule and that, with the Treaty of Lisbon (and accordingly, with the acquisition of binding legal force for the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights), it became a legally binding fundamental right of the citizen, so that any decisions denying access to documents must be based on clearly and strictly defined exceptions founded on sound arguments and reasonably explained, allowing citizens to understand the denial and to use the legal remedies available to them effectively; considers that the EU should stand at the forefront, providing a model of institutional transparency and modern democracy for the Member States as well as for third countries; and recalls that transparency is the best way to prevent corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and mismanagement.

Michèle Striffler (PPE), in writing. – (FR) Access to documents is guaranteed under Article 15 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which states that ‘any citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, shall have a right of access to documents of the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union’. Ms Sargentini’s report contains the annual review of how citizens’ right to access European institutional documents has been applied. I voted in favour of the report because it upholds the policy of guaranteeing access to documents and transparency during the legislative process where necessary and in a way that can be understood by the public.

Nuno Teixeira (PPE), in writing. – (PT) This report, which is part of the ‘better lawmaking’ debate, aims to create more transparency, publicity, openness and access to the documents of the European institutions and their associated bodies. In order to promote good governance and participation by the European public in EU activities, as expressed in Article 15 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and according to the principle of ‘an open, efficient and independent European administration’ (Article 298 TFEU), European institutions are committed to giving current legislative documents so-called
‘space to think’, under certain conditions. Free access to EU documents and information is essential in order to inform the European public about the various processes carried out in the European institutions. There is also mention of institutional openness: that is, openness between the institutions themselves and European agencies, so as to establish a model of institutional transparency. I voted to adopt this report highlighting interinstitutional transparency, since it is essential that Parliament, as the representative of 500 million European citizens, participate, along with the Commission, in the negotiations of international agreements as established in the Treaty of Lisbon, so enabling the public to express its opinions.

Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE), in writing. – (LT) I agree with the rapporteur that transparency is necessary for guaranteeing the accountability and legitimacy of a democratic political system. Citizens have the right to know how political decisions are made and why. Lithuania is experiencing a crisis of public confidence due to institutions’ lack of transparency. Courts in both Lithuania and Europe have demonstrated their susceptibility to political manipulation. Public confidence in the courts and local government remains low. According to information from a survey conducted by Vilmorus, only 19% of Lithuanian citizens have confidence in the courts, while a few years ago this rate was 35%. According to information from the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, the level of transparency when decisions are taken at municipal level is not particularly high in Lithuania.

City council legal acts are rarely found online, and people usually only hear about decisions following their adoption. It is important for our legislative and judicial processes to be more transparent, accountable and accessible to the public. This report recalls that the Treaty of Lisbon introduced a new constitutional framework of EU institutional transparency to ensure that decision-making is more open and effective. All we need now is the political will.

Angelika Werthmann (NI), in writing. – (DE) Since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and the associated legally binding status of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, transparency has been an important civil right. In order to enforce this right effectively, clearer definitions and declaration obligations for rejection decisions are needed. On account of the previous problems that have accumulated over the years, a statutory regulation was essential. I have voted in favour of this report.

Iva Zanicchi (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted in favour of Ms Sargentini’s report, which provides an annual review of the application of the regulation regarding public access to documents of EU institutions. This gives EU citizens a greater idea of the kind of work that is carried out by the European Parliament, Commission and Council, and enables them to gain a better understanding of how the institutions work.

Report: Andrew Duff (A7-0240/2011)

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting for this document. The approval of the Commission by Parliament in February 2010 was based on an enhanced process of hearings which ensured that the entire Commission-designate was assessed in an open, fair and consistent manner. However, conclusions can be drawn from the approval process, in collaboration with the Commission, which suggest that further modifications are both necessary and desirable. Nonetheless, there is a need for the Code of Conduct for Commissioners to be revised, and in particular the provisions thereof concerning financial declarations by Commissioners, with a view to achieving the highest standards of governance for the European Union.
Sophie Auconie (PPE), in writing. – (FR) This resolution seeks to modify Parliament’s Rules of Procedure to bring them in line with the criteria for hearings for candidates for all posts in the European Commission, thereby giving MEPs as much input as possible. I voted in favour of the report because it emphasises that hearings are an extremely important democratic exercise, which, we must remember, allow the European Parliament at the start of every Parliamentary term to rule out candidates who are not compatible with the European Commission’s mission.

Regina Bastos (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The purpose of this report, for which I voted, is to amend Rules 106 and 192, and Annex XVII of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure, covering the hearings of the Commissioners-designate. With these amendments to the Rules of Procedure, Parliament’s power over the selection of new European Commissioners is being increased, specifically by providing for the possibility, where necessary, of a second hearing for the Commissioners-designate, as well as giving the President the chance to request that the President-elect of the Commission inform Parliament about the allocation of portfolios in the College of Commissioners. This amendment will also make the process of selecting new Commissioners more transparent by stipulating that there will be a live audio-visual transmission of the hearings, thus enabling the European public to watch the hearings of the Commissioners-designate live. Finally, I would like to emphasise the recommendation made to the Commission to revise its Code of Conduct for Commissioners, and in particular the provisions thereof concerning declarations of financial interests by the Commissioners, with a view to achieving the highest standards of governance for the European Union.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) I voted in favour of this report, which aims to clarify the system for hearings of European Commissioners-designate by placing greater emphasis on the coordinators of each committee.

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) This proposal for an amendment of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure aims to ensure that Parliament’s assessment of the Commission is properly carried out by means of more effective monitoring procedures. I fully support the statements in the proposal, which specifies that proper assessment of the Commission is vital in order to improve EU governance standards, and I believe that maximum transparency and reciprocal supervision between institutions are essential to this aim. I therefore voted in favour.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I believe that it is necessary for the Commission to revise its Code of Conduct for Commissioners, and in particular the provisions thereof concerning financial declarations by Commissioners, with a view to achieving for the European Union the highest standards of governance. I agree with the amendments tabled in the report, as I believe that the approval of the Commission by Parliament in February 2010 was based on an enhanced process of hearings which ensured that the entire Commission-designate was assessed in an open, fair and consistent manner.

Carlos Coelho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) In the light of the experience of the latest hearings of the Commissioners-designate, there is a need to make minor changes to the Rules of Procedure in order to improve the process and make it more transparent. The changes introduced are of a purely technical nature and enable improvements in how the hearings are conducted, without introducing any substantive political changes.

There is provision for the possibility of convening a second and final hearing, if during the hearing it clearly becomes necessary to extend the examination of the Commissioner-designate. It is also intended to increase the level of transparency by
providing for live audiovisual broadcasts of the hearings. I also agree there is a need for
the Commission to revise the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, so as to ensure greater
transparency and the highest standards of governance in the EU.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Over the course of several parliamentary sessions,
Mr Duff has been a leading figure because of the way in which he is seeking to study and
develop institutional solutions for improving the functioning of the European Union and
deepening the integration of its Member States. I do not object to the amendments which
he advocates of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure, since these aim to strengthen this House’s
ability to scrutinise appointments to the College of Commissioners, and levels of
transparency and information with regard to the Commissioners-designate. Having said
that, we do not want such an amendment to be understood as permission to promote
‘grilling sessions’ in which, instead of rigorous assessments of technical competence, the
Commissioners-designate find themselves confronted with crude and inappropriate
interrogations about their values, beliefs and personal lives. It is up to Parliament to live
up to its proposal.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Every five years, which is the length of
the mandate of the Commission, the executive body of the European Union, the
appointment of the College of Commissioners takes place. Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the
number of Commissioners corresponds to the number of Member States – currently 27 –
and they are approved by Parliament in two stages: firstly, it elects the President of the
Commission chosen by the Council; secondly, it examines the candidates proposed by the
President-elect of the Commission and confirmed by the Council. Parliament’s approval
process is governed by the provisions of Annex XVII of the Rules of Procedure and includes
the following stages: assessment of curricula vitae and declarations of financial interests;
response to a set of written questions; a three-hour public hearing; and assessment by the
parliamentary committees and the Conference of Presidents. This report, drafted by Mr Duff,
suggests a set of minor amendments to the Rules of Procedure regarding the hearings of
Commissioners-designate. I welcome the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure,
since they represent a significant contribution to improving the quality of our
Commissioners, so the European public will have a great deal to gain.

Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) Parliament approved the
Commission in February 2010 by enhancing the process of hearings by which it was
ensured that the entire Commission-designate was assessed in an open, fair and consistent
manner. Nevertheless, one can draw conclusions from the approval process that it is
necessary and desirable to carry out further adjustments in co-operation with the
Commission. The code of conduct for members of the Commission needs to be revised
and in particular its provisions relating to the financial statements of the Commissioners,
in order to achieve the highest standards of European Union governance.

Some major changes to supplement the rules of procedure are as follows: the President of
the Parliament may invite the President-elect of the Commission to inform Parliament on
the division of departmental responsibilities in the proposed College of Commissioners
in accordance with its political guidelines; the President-elect of the Commission shall
present the college of Commissioners and their programme at a sitting of Parliament which
the President of the European Council and President of the Council shall be invited to
attend; committee co-ordinators are elected by the committee chairs in order to prepare
the organisation of the Commission hearings; the hearings are organised by the Conference
of Presidents on the recommendation of the Conference of Committee Chairs and the chair
and coordinator of each committee is responsible for specific measures; three hours will be reserved for each hearing and if during its course it appears that the hearing of the Commissioners-elect needs to be extended, a second and final hearing may be arranged.

**Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), in writing.** – (FR) In many areas, the European Parliament is consistently relegated to playing second fiddle. One good example is the appointment of new European Commissioners. This is why, despite the minor role allocated to us in the Treaties, we need to do our utmost as representatives of the European people to assess the quality of the candidates chosen by the Member States and presented as a single package, so as to do more than simply formally approve the College as a whole. These hearings constitute a unique opportunity to vet the quality of the proposed Commissioners. That is why I supported the proposals made on improving the organisation of the hearings and maximising the opportunities for MEPs to verify whether the candidates do really meet the requirements for the portfolio that they would be given. Each political group would then need to have the courage to decide whether or not the candidates had passed the entry exam.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing.** – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, because it focuses on the recent revision by the Commission of its Code of Conduct for Commissioners, and in particular the provisions thereof concerning financial declarations by Commissioners. It has been decided that the application of the new Code of Conduct should be kept under review in order to enable the European Union to reach the highest standards of governance.

**Vladimir Manka (S&D), in writing.** – (SK) The Code of Conduct for Commissioners should be reviewed. Particularly those provisions relating to the financial statements of the Commissioners, in order to achieve the highest standards of European Union governance.

I therefore supported the amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament in the wording of the changes that were put to the vote.

**Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE), in writing.** – (PL) I voted in favour, because I believe that a change in the rules on interviewing Commissioners-designate is essential at an organisational as well as at a political level. I believe that the proposed changes are sufficient to improve the procedure and make it more transparent.

**David Martin (S&D), in writing.** – I welcome the recommendations contained in this report, which should improve the conduct of hearings for Commissioners-designate.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – (FR) Commissioners have legislative powers that ought to belong to the European Parliament. They should be elected after genuine debate and on an individual basis. This report does not include this basic demand. Instead, it restricts the opportunities for debate. I voted against.

**Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) The Rules of Procedure currently setting out the rules for the hearings of Commissioners seem appropriate, although they are in need of certain adjustments, which are provided for in this amendment. The adjustments are intended to make the procedures more transparent and improve them. The proposed changes are of a purely technical nature and can improve the way in which the hearings are conducted, without introducing any substantive changes at political level. I would like to stress the
possibility of convening a second and final hearing, if during the first hearing it becomes clearly necessary to extend the examination of the Commissioner-designate.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing.** – The conclusions that can be drawn from the first approval process, in collaboration with the Commission, suggest that further modifications are both necessary and desirable. Therefore I would like to remind the Commission of the need to revise its Code of Conduct for Commissioners, and in particular the provisions thereof concerning financial declarations by Commissioners, with a view to achieving for the European Union the highest standards of governance. Bringing back the memories of actions taken by the Commissioner from Latvia, Piebalgs, I feel shame for Commission. I voted in favour.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing.** – (DE) The Duff report on amendment of the Rules of Procedure relating to the hearings of the Commissioners-designate appears very technical, but some of the paragraphs contain considerable restrictions of the rights of the Members of the European Parliament. Thus, in future, following the hearing of the Commissioner-designate concerned, only the coordinators of the political groups will be able to prepare the evaluation on behalf of the committee. Mr Duff also proposes only to invite the President of the European Council and the President of the Council to the hearings in future, rather than all of the members of the Council, as was previously the case. Overall, therefore, this could be said to be an unnecessary and unjustified additional curtailment of the rights of MEPs. Although it may increase efficiency, it will be at the cost of democracy, which is why I voted against the report.

**Franz Obermayr (NI), in writing.** – (DE) This report grants the coordinators an important – almost exclusive – role in the evaluation and appointment of members of the Commission. As a non-attached Member of Parliament and therefore one who is discriminated against and regularly excluded from the coordinators’ meetings (official interpretation of the Rule 192 of the Rules of Procedure), I object to this provision. The appointment and evaluation of members of the Commission are important tasks in terms of the ‘checks and balances’ between the EU institutions. It is unacceptable for a body from which a number of MEPs are unjustifiably excluded to have this key competence. I therefore voted against the report.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) This report on the amendment of Rules 106 and 192 of, and Annex XVII to, Parliament’s Rules of Procedure, relating to the hearings of the Commissioners-designate, reflects on the strengthening of Parliament’s powers following the Treaty of Lisbon, in Parliament’s Rules of Procedure. The Commission is the government of the Union, and Parliament cannot stop exercising its power of scrutiny over the composition of this EU government. I agree with the proposed procedure of posing two common questions drafted by the Conference of Committee Chairs to each of the Commissioners-designate, the first relating to issues of general competence, European commitment and personal independence, and the second relating to management of the portfolio and cooperation with Parliament. The committee responsible is entrusted with drafting three other questions; in the case of joint committees, each is given the right to draft two questions. The proposal that the bulk of the speaking time be allotted to the political groups seems appropriate. I voted in favour for these reasons.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing.** – I voted in favour. According to the adopted text, Parliament: reminds the Commission of the need to revise its Code of Conduct for Commissioners, and in particular the provisions thereof concerning financial
declarations by Commissioners, with a view to achieving for the European Union the highest standards of governance; decides to amend its Rules of Procedure as shown; and points out that the amendments will enter into force on the first day of the next part-session.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) The text adopted today aims to modify the current procedure for hearing Commissioners-designate. The report specifically proposes that for each Commissioner-designate there shall be two common questions drafted by the Conference of Committee Chairs, the first relating to the issues of general competence, European commitment and personal independence, and the second relating to the management of the portfolio and cooperation with Parliament. The committee responsible would be called upon to draft three other questions. In the case of joint committees, they would each be given the right to draft two questions. The Chair and coordinators would meet after the hearing to evaluate the individual Commissioners-designate. After these meetings, held *in camera*, the coordinators would express their opinion on the Commissioners-designate.

**Motion for a resolution - B7-0478/2011**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing.** – (PT) I am voting for this motion for a resolution, as it reiterates its full commitment to the multilateral trading system and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as the guarantor of a rules-based trade system, and because it reaffirms its full commitment to a balanced and fair conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). At the same time, it insists on the need to resume the debate on the future functioning of the WTO, with a possible reform of the multilateral trading system.

**Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing.** – (ES) I voted in favour of this report on the need for full commitment to the multilateral trading system and the World Trade Organisation as the guarantor of a rules-based trade system.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) I voted for this motion for a resolution because the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) was launched in 2001 with the objective of creating new trading opportunities, strengthening multilateral trade rules, addressing current imbalances in the trading system and putting trade at the service of sustainable development. It places particular emphasis on the economic integration of developing countries, especially the least developed countries (LDCs), arising from the conviction that a multilateral system based on more just and equitable rules can contribute to fair and free trade at the service of the development of all continents.

**Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – (EL) I voted against the motion for a resolution on the state of play of the negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda. The current global trading rules imposed by the WTO serve the interests of countries and large corporate groups that are already rich and, at the same time, increase the divide between them and the poorest countries. Consequently, the inability to implement this agenda stems mainly from the very nature of the World Trade Organisation. Unfortunately, instead of safeguarding the conditions for sustainable global growth, the free trade system being applied at all costs is exacerbating social inequalities, the abuse of natural resources and the increase in environmental pollution. Developing countries are still facing global trade from a disadvantageous position, compared with the big players who make up the rules, one of which is the EU. Finally, this particular motion for a resolution does not promote an alternative fair trading system.
George Sabin Cutaş (S&D), in writing. – (RO) I voted for the motion for a resolution because I think that we must push ahead and conclude the Doha Round negotiations.

The Doha Round was launched in 2001 with the aim of promoting development by offsetting the imbalances in the trading system so as to achieve the economic integration of both the developing and least developed countries. I believe that the industrial countries must assume their responsibility for the development of the poor countries. Unfortunately, after a long period when the negotiations were stalled, they are not expected to be concluded by 2011. If the Doha Round ends in failure, doubt could be cast over the WTO’s credibility as the guarantor of an effective multilateral trading system.

Luigi Ciriaco De Mita (PPE), in writing. – (IT) Economic cooperation, including trade cooperation, is one of the instruments through which foreign policy is implemented. The European Union is founded, first, on sectoral trade and, second, on the wider single market: a foundation that is still suffering from the lack of a single foreign policy; a wide-ranging, strong and authoritative policy that helps to define strategic positions on economic cooperation with other countries and geopolitical regions, as well. This situation allows each Member State to develop in an independent and uncoordinated fashion, either on its own or in the various international organisations to which it belongs. In order to ensure that the Doha negotiations have a favourable outcome, while also reiterating the usefulness of the World Trade Organisation as a forum for solving the problems of balanced development and cohesion among all the member countries, we need to work on integrating the other countries, too, into long-term policies, firstly by building on their competitive advantages, and secondly by strengthening their ability to shape their own development. I believe that the adopted report makes a contribution, however small, to this prospect.

Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) The Doha Round, which was launched in 2001 with a view to creating new trade opportunities and correcting the current imbalances in the trade system, has been at a standstill since 2008. The eighth World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference will take place in December 2011 and will seek to conclude the Doha Round. We very much hope that it will at least make some progress in favour of the least developed countries. The WTO needs to establish international rules to limit food price fluctuations and thereby guarantee greater food security. It must also introduce simpler and more transparent preferential origin rules for imports from the least developed countries. If the WTO member states fail to reach an agreement on how to contribute to ambitious and balanced global development and how to guarantee economic growth and eradicate poverty around the world, then the WTO will have to be completely overhauled. Only through a well-regulated and fair world trade system can trade be used to serve sustainable development.

Harlem Désir (S&D), in writing. – (FR) Since its inception in 2001, the World Trade Organisation’s Doha trade negotiation round has had the task of redressing the balance of world trade rules in favour of developing countries. These negotiations have now stalled. Various factors have contributed to the stand-off, for which all parties bear some responsibility, but it is developing countries that will be hit hardest by the failure of the negotiations. Every effort must be made to conclude the negotiations, but also to take into account the concerns raised, not least by developing countries, and particularly the situation in sensitive industries and in agriculture, where food security for citizens must be the priority. Public services should still be governed by each country to reflect the public interest, rather than being liberalised as part of enforced horse-trading with no reference to social needs. Subject to these conditions, the conclusion of the Doha Round is both
desirable and necessary. The proliferation of bilateral agreements – like those currently under negotiation – will prevent us from establishing clear and fair rules. Multilateralism is still the best framework for ensuring fair trade that will encourage sustainable development across all continents.

**Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing.** – *(PT)* I voted for this motion for a resolution, since it considers that the conclusion of the Doha Round negotiations could have an important role in guaranteeing a rules-based trade system, which would contribute to ensuring better management of globalisation through a more equitable distribution of its benefits and respect for well-balanced economic growth.

**Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing.** – *(PT)* I believe that the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), which is aimed at creating new trading opportunities, strengthening multilateral trade rules and addressing current imbalances in the trading system, is crucially important, not only for international trade but also for a more equitable distribution of the benefits of globalisation. It is therefore important that the DDA take this into account and make a real contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As the resolution states, I too hope that the Eighth World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference, to take place in Geneva from 15 to 17 December, focuses its objectives on the issue of development, and I hope that the goals set out in the 2001 Doha Ministerial Declaration and the commitments made at the 2005 WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong will be fulfilled through support for the least developed countries (LDCs).

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing.** – *(PT)* The Doha Development Agenda (DDA), begun in 2001, was aimed at creating new trading opportunities, strengthening multilateral trade rules and addressing current imbalances in the trading system, placing it at the service of sustainable development with a view to bringing about fair and free trade that would promote development on all the continents. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial talks to conclude the DDA reached an impasse at the end of July 2008. However, in early 2011 some progress was made, although this has not ensured the conclusion of the negotiations by the end of 2011. Given that from 15 to 17 December 2011 the Eighth WTO Ministerial Conference will take place in Geneva, I believe that Parliament’s representatives should be there representing Parliament’s position, and I therefore wish to express my complete agreement with the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Moreira, on behalf of the Committee on International Trade, following a statement by the Commission pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – *(PT)* The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is one of the most important instruments of capitalist globalisation, and it plays a pivotal role in the affirmation and imposition of one of its pillars: the deregulation and liberalisation of international trade to benefit the big business in the major powers, creating ‘new trading opportunities’ for them, as hinted at by the resolution. However, this also imposes competition between workforces, so making more labour available at a lower cost.

The rhetoric of multilateralism, which is frequently used by advocates of the WTO, cannot hide the fact that this is not a democratic organisation, as it is unrepresentative and is actually contrary to the interests of the people. The fallacy of the ‘more equitable distribution’ of the benefits of globalisation that this organisation could provide collapses in the face of the obvious consequences of free trade: the destruction and relocation of productive activities and jobs, the attack on social and labour rights, and the degradation of the environment and natural resources.
That is the Doha route, and we urgently need to backtrack from it, in the interests of the workers and peoples of Europe and the whole world. The ‘global system of economic governance’ referred to in the resolution is nothing more than the governance of capital, acting at global level to defend its own interests.

Obviously, we voted against.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) It is well known that the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is one of the most important instruments of capitalist globalisation, and it plays a pivotal role in the affirmation and imposition of one of its pillars: the deregulation and liberalisation of international trade to benefit the big business in the major powers, creating ‘new trading opportunities’ for them.

However, it also aims to impose competition between workforces, so making more labour available at a lower cost. The rhetoric of multilateralism, to which advocates of the WTO frequently recourse, cannot hide the fact that this is not a democratic organisation, as it is unrepresentative and is actually contrary to the interests of the people.

The obvious consequences of free trade are well known: the destruction and relocation of productive activities and jobs, the attack on social and labour rights, and the degradation of the environment and natural resources. That is the Doha route.

Now, in the interests of the workers and peoples of Europe and the whole world, it is necessary to change this path. The ‘global system of economic governance’ referred to in the resolution is nothing more than the governance of capital, acting at global level to defend its own interests.

We therefore voted against.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) International trade cannot in itself be evaluated positively or negatively. It is an instrument, the results of which are dependent on their application. I am of the view that international trade should not be purely an instrument for achieving profits and a platform for a competitive battle between countries where the stronger one often wins. It should also be a developmental instrument. I therefore believe that it is desirable that at the December Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization this position should be promoted not only by representatives of the so-called developing economies, but also by representatives of the EU. Development must be central to the Doha Development Agenda (DDA).

In addition, the draft EP legislative resolution by the Committee on International Trade formulated the requirements for sustainable development. It is important to improve access to environmental goods and technologies, and it will therefore be necessary to reduce or eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services. If international trade is to develop towards equitable and sustainable development it will certainly also have fewer critics.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) I welcomed this document because it is aimed at creating new trading opportunities, strengthening multilateral trade rules, addressing current imbalances in the trading system and putting trade at the service of sustainable development, with an emphasis on the economic integration of developing countries, especially the least developed countries, on the basis of the conviction that a multilateral system based on more just and equitable rules can contribute to fair and free trade at the service of the development of all continents.
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE), in writing. – (DA) The Doha Round envisages a general revision of WTO trade provisions: better global governance, sustainable development and better conditions for international trade and investments.

The Doha Development Round, initiated in 2011, is of great immediate interest from the point of view of international trade, and I am therefore pleased that the European Parliament has adopted this proposal.

I have voted in favour of the motion for a resolution, as it emphasises the importance of following up on the WTO members’ commitment to help developing countries in particular to benefit from the WTO’s rules, including by guaranteeing them access to the markets of the industrialised nations. I am pleased that the Chair of Committee on International Trade, Vital Moreira, who is a member of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, has focused on ensuring that the positive effects of globalisation also benefit the developing countries.

The difficulties experienced in achieving a conclusion to the Doha Round have been well-known since the negotiations stalled in 2008, and 2011 is considered to be the year in which it will at last be possible to negotiate the conclusion of an agreement at the Eighth WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva in mid-December.

I can only give my full support to the resolution and to the statement that the Ministerial Conference in Geneva must deliver results at least in favour of the least developed countries.

Vladimir Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The Doha Round was launched in 2001 with the objectives of creating new trading opportunities, strengthening multilateral trade rules, addressing current imbalances in the trading system and putting trade at the service of sustainable development, with an emphasis on the economic integration of developing countries, especially the least developed countries. A multilateral system, based on more just and equitable rules, can contribute to fair and free trade at the service of the development of all continents.

The WTO has a key role to play in ensuring better management of globalisation, more equitable distribution of its benefits and well balanced economic growth. Due to the persistent deadlock in the original architecture and objectives of the DDA, it is now more necessary than ever to resume the debate on the future functioning of the WTO with a possible reform of the new multilateral trading system. The Commission must consult proactively with Parliament on a shared vision of the architecture of a future global trading system. The WTO must consistently and urgently tackle new global challenges in which trade plays a part, such as food security, energy, sustainable development and Aid for Trade, even if the DDA is not concluded.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I voted in favour of this resolution, in which Parliament reiterates its full commitment to the multilateral trading system and the WTO as the guarantor of a rules-based trade system, and reaffirms its full commitment to a balanced and fair conclusion of the DDA.

It also recognises the deadlock in the original architecture and objectives of the DDA and insists on the need to resume the debate on the future functioning of the WTO, with a possible reform on the new multilateral trading system. The S&D Group decided to support this resolution. However, some key amendments were eliminated in the committee vote and up-to-date elements on the negotiations are missing in the resolution.
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (FR) This report is an ode to the battle against any form of protectionism. It takes it upon itself to lecture emerging countries and to threaten anyone who dares decide to restrict their exports of natural resources. This is pure heavy-handed imperialism. I voted against.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The Doha Development Agenda (DDA) was launched in 2001 with the objective of creating new trading opportunities, strengthening multilateral trade rules, addressing current imbalances in the trading system and putting trade at the service of sustainable development. It places particular emphasis on the economic integration of developing countries, especially the least developed countries (LDCs), arising from the conviction that a multilateral system based on more just and equitable rules can contribute to fair and free trade at the service of the development of all continents. As such, we must all continue to make efforts so that the negotiations are successful.

Louis Michel (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) It is almost 10 years since the Doha Round talks began, and we have to acknowledge that they will not be completed during the eighth Ministerial Conference in December. There has been a stalemate since 2008. Nonetheless, the Doha objectives remain very topical: reducing subsidies that encourage overfishing, establishing rules for agricultural subsidies that distort trade, eliminating export subsidies, reducing customs duties on manufactured goods, simplifying customs procedures, improving market access for dynamic service sectors and, above all, ensuring that least developed countries (LDCs) are better integrated into the trade system. As Pascal Lamy has very rightly said, if we want to succeed, we will need to demonstrate political courage and pragmatism. The burning questions for LDCs, such as cotton and rules of origin, need to be addressed without further ado.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. – Doha Negotiations are multilateral trade negotiations aimed at decreasing trade restrictions around the world, which will allow countries to increase trade worldwide. I voted in favour.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing. – (DE) The negotiations that began in 2001 in Doha (Qatar) remain at a standstill after what has now been 10 years. The last attempt at reaching an agreement took place in 2008 in Geneva. It failed on account of the demands of the economically strengthened emerging nations, China and India. The unwillingness of the United States to compromise made consensus impossible. The motion for a resolution does not take adequate account of the new balance of power in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations, as China and India in particular used these negotiations as a stage for trialling their strength against the industrialised nations. Likewise, China’s export restrictions on raw materials do not receive adequate consideration.

The condemnation by the WTO will not, in all probability, persuade the country to increase its exports of raw materials. There is a danger that the EU will unilaterally liberalise its trade, which would result in a distortion of competition to the advantage of the other members of the WTO. This approach is already evident in this report. In addition, there is no proposal to regulate the problems involved in protecting intellectual property. I therefore voted against the motion for a resolution.

Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE), in writing. – (RO) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution. However, I think that the text ought to have included separate references to the agriculture negotiations, especially given the special nature of this sector and the economic climate in which it has been operating in recent years.
The WTO agriculture negotiations must be analysed separately and given special status, bearing in mind the concessions made so far to our partners, which have not been reciprocated with similar concessions, and the risk of putting European producers at a disadvantage on the global market.

The negotiations must be continued and concluded, but not at any price.

Rolandas Paksas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) I welcome this resolution’s provisions on the state of play of the negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda. I believe that comprehensive and balanced results will only be achieved if negotiations are concluded on all areas that are currently under discussion. The World Trade Organisation (WTO), as part of a global system of economic governance, is vitally important to the world, so we must make every effort to ensure that any WTO reform agenda is examined and analysed on the basis of the principles of transparency and that sufficient time is given for consultations in order to involve all members and other stakeholders. It should be noted that, in order to ensure economic growth and poverty reduction worldwide, it is necessary for all WTO members to continue to contribute to the comprehensive and balanced development of the WTO. It is also crucial to ascertain whether the changed circumstances since the beginning of the Doha Round do not render the original objectives of the Doha Round impossible to attain. I agree with the proposal calling on developed and advanced developing countries to support the capacity of the least developed countries to participate in this negotiation process. I believe that market access is not the only solution for many of the poorer countries because they do not have real opportunities to exploit this access. It is also crucial for the EU to continue to give priority to the multilateral trading system established by the WTO, because bilateral and regional agreements are not the best option.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I voted for this motion for a resolution on the state of play of the negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). This is because it maintains the conviction in the timeliness of the 2001 objectives of creating new trading opportunities, strengthening multilateral trade rules, addressing current imbalances in the trading system and putting trade at the service of sustainable development. It places particular emphasis on the economic integration of developing countries, especially the least developed countries (LDCs), arising from the conviction that a multilateral system based on more just and equitable rules can contribute to fair and free trade at the service of the development of all continents. The timeliness of these targets is unequivocal to the extent that Parliament’s passing of this resolution is not merely symbolic: it adopts it with the idea of communicating the desires of Europeans to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and with a view to contributing to the Eighth Ministerial Conference in Geneva, which will take place from 15 to 17 December 2011.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – I voted against. The liberalisation of agricultural commodities markets has had a terrible impact on small-scale family farming around the world, including in Europe. A free market has helped ruin millions of families. As most of our key amendments were rejected, we voted against.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted in favour of this text because I believe that it correctly highlights the full commitment of all the institutions to supporting a multilateral trading system in which the World Trade Organisation (WTO) will act as the guarantor of a trade system regulated by suitable measures. The WTO has a key role in ensuring better management of globalisation, more equitable distribution of its benefits and well-balanced economic growth. A balanced and fair conclusion of the Doha negotiations would be an
important sign of political confidence in the future of an equitable global trade system based on shared rules.

**Tokia Saïfi (PPE), in writing.** (FR) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution, as it highlights the positive aspects of this round of negotiations, and the way in which it is centred on developing countries in particular. It also puts forward certain ideas that I believe ought to be promoted more within the negotiations: food security; access to green goods and technologies, and extending the EU 'Everything but Arms' initiative to other countries. Above all, whilst stressing our commitment to a multilateral approach, it recognises the difficulties that this entails. The Doha round of negotiations is in deadlock and it is now time for members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to begin a ‘post-Doha’ phase. They must reassess the level of development of the countries taking part in the negotiations, and ensure they are given the positions and responsibilities that are genuinely due to them. They must also undertake to put social and environmental rules on the agenda of the talks, as it is on the basis of these that the current dumping is being carried out. A new mandate that draws upon all the useful lessons of the previous one must now be worked out, so that multilateral trade negotiations can resume as quickly as possible.

**Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE), in writing.** (FR) The Eighth World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference will take place in Geneva from 15 to 17 December 2011. Yet the Doha Round, which was launched in 2001 with a view to reviewing the rules on global trade, is at an impasse. We need to look beyond technical agreements and consider the substance. What is the purpose of the WTO? Whose interests does it protect? In this motion for a resolution, Parliament wishes to underline the importance of the WTO and the Doha Round, but above all to recap their aims: improving the way that globalisation is managed, a fairer distribution of its benefits and more balanced economic growth. They should also help to tackle new global challenges with a bearing on trade, such as food security, energy, sustainable development and aid for trade. World trade will be balanced if, and only if, the most developed countries take the necessary action to facilitate the integration of the least developed countries (LDCs). Europe needs to be fair but without being naïve: the crisis has heralded the end of ultraliberalism. We need to go back to an approach that protects our economy and our values while ensuring that others can also enjoy development and prosperity.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), in writing.** (IT) The Eighth World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference will take place in Geneva in December. What should we expect from these new negotiations? It will be difficult to expect a new effort on the part of developed countries for more concessions in terms of tariff subsidies. EU competitive margins are extremely tight, and therefore require a certain amount of flexibility in the use of export refunds, especially in certain sectors such as cereals, meat, dairy products and wine. Our farmers are competing on a market distorted by subsidies, with low global prices, and extremely stringent European quality standards. Among other things, the Doha Development Agenda negotiations will focus on the attempt to achieve food security – an issue very familiar to those of us on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and regarding which I would like to reiterate the need for consistent action, given its urgent nature. I welcome this new attempt at an agreement, but I am waiting to see tangible results from such negotiations. Therefore I hope that during these new negotiations it will be possible to take into account the difficulties currently faced by our farmers. I would like to conclude by sharing a statement made by the Director-General of the World Trade
Organisation, Pascal Lamy, which is that economically more developed countries now expect the leading emerging economies to compete on equal terms.


Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), *in writing.* – *(PT)* I am voting for this report, as it highlights the current failings of the political decision-making process and the role of institutional actors. I am also voting for it because it addresses the need for the actual implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon with regard to the principle of equal treatment between Parliament and the Council. What is more, it makes good suggestions on the improved involvement of national parliaments, on necessary technical adjustments for the quick use of European citizens’ initiatives, and on the reduction of administrative burdens, without making services less efficient.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), *in writing.* – *(LT)* I voted in favour of this report because I believe that the objective of better law-making in the EU is constant and must be implemented continuously. This objective covers many dimensions – a reduced administrative burden for individuals and economic operators, whereby markets would encourage people to work, a clear focus on public consultations, impact assessment and the simplification of legislation in force. In addition to all these dimensions the report assesses the implementation through better law-making of two fundamental principles of the functioning of the European Union – subsidiarity and proportionality. Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, national parliaments have begun to actively participate in monitoring compliance with these principles. However, in the opinion of the Members of the European Parliament, the deadlines within which national parliaments have to carry out their work are often too short, and I therefore believe that the way in which national parliament submissions are integrated into the working practices of the European Parliament still has to be improved.

Cristian Silviu Buşoi (ALDE), *in writing.* – *(RO)* A vote in favour of this report aimed at simplifying the legislative process which the European Parliament uses to debate and adopt laws is justified by the need to make the whole legislative process more efficient. I think that the plan outlined in this document has a real chance of success because it presents realistically the ways in which we can improve the administrative process. Furthermore, as for the initiative on drafting laws in a language which is accessible to the European Union’s citizens, I unreservedly support it as it protects the principle of legislative transparency and ensures that members of the Union can exercise their rights in full knowledge of the facts. In addition, I think that Parliament should cooperate with the Council during the entire legislative process to support and implement the principle of equality between the two institutions, which derives from the Treaty of Lisbon. Placing the emphasis on the need to keep the general public and commercial companies informed about the laws adopted by Parliament is another provision which I support, although this goal can only be achieved by improving communication about draft laws and the methods of implementation.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), *in writing.* – *(PT)* I voted for this report, as I consider it very important to make simple and clear laws that are accessible and easily understood, with a view to safeguarding the principle of the transparency of European legislation and to guaranteeing more effective implementation thereof, and to ensure that EU citizens are able to exercise their rights more easily.
Diane Dodds (NI), in writing. – I welcome the concept of better regulation in the EU and am happy to see key concerns and priorities reflected in this report. I especially welcome the recognition that, in today’s economic climate, it is vitally important that we identify any new EU laws imposed on Member States that may result in driving up business costs. This would be particularly detrimental to small and medium-sized enterprises. In the United Kingdom, small and medium-sized enterprises are already struggling to survive. Therefore any further financial burdens could lead to the downfall of these businesses. At a time when we should be encouraging entrepreneurship and growth in the market it is crucial that the Commission look closely at regulatory burden reduction for SMEs throughout the European Union.

Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I voted for this report, as it maintains that European institutions should contribute to making simple and clear laws that are accessible and easily understood, so that, firstly, laws may be more efficiently implemented, and, secondly, EU citizens are able to exercise their rights more easily.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I fully subscribe to the idea that it is necessary to develop legislation that is simple, clear and easily understood by the European public. Despite well-meaning statements, in-depth studies and lucid reports from various institutions, the truth is that European legislation continues to suffer from the evils for which it is frequently criticised: excessive volume, inappropriate complexity, unintelligibility and masses of references. These circumstances not only distance the public from decisions made at European level, but also contribute to feeding a debate, which is not always reasonable or thorough, on European intrusion into matters on which it should not be giving opinions or legislating if the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality were more scrupulously observed.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Our fellow Member, Mr Karim, has submitted a report entitled ‘Better legislation, subsidiarity and proportionality and smart regulation’ for Parliament’s consideration. The President of the Commission, Dr Barroso, in his communication ‘Political guidelines for the next Commission’, suggested transforming the Lisbon strategy, revitalised for growth and jobs, into the Europe 2020 strategy, with the objective of promoting competitiveness, and reducing the administrative burden through smart regulation. The objective of this programme, to reduce the administrative burden by 25% by 2012, will be difficult to achieve without increased commitment and action on behalf of all stakeholders, namely the European institutions and Member States. The Treaty of Lisbon introduced some changes, but until now very little has been done to implement genuine smart regulation. We must bear in mind that excess legislation does not create wealth; on the contrary, it destroys jobs. I therefore welcome the proposals made in this report, which I consider to be very sensible and a step in the right direction. I also hope that the measures referred to materialise within a short timeframe, since what we need is less legislation and better legislation.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, national parliaments play a bigger role in ensuring respect for the principle of subsidiarity. While a considerable number of contributions and reasoned opinions have been received so far, the exact modalities of this innovation, in particular the scope and content of the contributions, are still being worked out and calibrated. Parliament has thus far received over 300 submissions from national parliaments and it would be proper for it to take this opportunity to pronounce itself on the effective functioning of the systems put in place inside Parliament to accommodate this innovation.
and to identify any shortcomings and suggest improvements. The necessity of correlation tables accompanying the transposition of directives by Member States must be emphasised and Parliament should be innovative in coming up with incentives to make this happen for every single piece of legislation.

Real political leadership is required from all institutions and the Member States in order to strengthen the smart regulation agenda, but the Commission plays a key role in maintaining this issue high on the political agenda. I think it is appropriate that Parliament should at the same time investigate methods to increase its commitment to smart regulation, for instance by making use of inter-committee meetings.

Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE), in writing. – (GA)

It appears that the targets the European Commission set out in 2007 in relation to reducing red tape by 25% by 2012 will not be achieved.

Last year, while the President of the Commission was giving a speech in relation to the State of the Union, Mr Barroso said that the Commission had published proposals in relation to saving EUR 38 billion per year for European companies through reductions in red tape. A committed, active approach must be implemented.

Red tape and pointless regulation have a particularly significant effect on the small and medium-sized business sector. What it boils down to is that the European Commission has a duty to try its best to reduce the red tape that is choking the small business sector in Ireland and in Europe at the moment.

Louis Grech (S&D), in writing. – I am voting in favour of the Karim report, which endorses the principles set out in the Smart Regulation Agenda as key to ensuring EU legislation is simpler, less burdensome and more targeted. Currently, the incoherent, fragmented and uneven implementation of EU legislation across the board is largely due to lack of political will on the part of Member States to truly take ownership and implement EU regulations effectively at national, regional and local level. The enhanced role of the European Parliament and national parliaments introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, together with the general principle of subsidiarity, has rendered highly significant the active participation of Member States throughout the entire policy cycle of each piece of EU legislation. Having said that, the Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, must push for the creation of better mechanisms than those we have at present for gauging and reviewing how Single Market rules apply in practice at all levels in the various Member States, and the inevitable implications that these have for citizens, consumers and SMEs. Making legislation clearer, more accessible and user-friendly for our citizens and SMEs is the way forward.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this document because the current timescales allowed for national parliament engagement are often insufficient, particularly in the case of a subsidiarity check. The form of national parliament responses is also such that they are not classified as reasoned opinions or objections on subsidiarity grounds. Furthermore, it should be noted that frequently these are only made available to the European Parliament in the language used by the national parliament submitting the documents. It is therefore proposed that the Secretary General of the European Parliament should investigate methods of improving the way in which national parliament submissions are integrated into the working practices of the European Parliament.
Since 2005, a programme aimed at reducing the administrative burdens arising from European Union legislation has been in place. It seeks to reduce those burdens by 25% by 2012, thereby generating a 1.4% increase in GDP. My aim in endorsing the Karim report is to speed up this burden reduction process and simplify administrative procedures but without undermining the quality standards that must characterise a legislative process.

Institutional activities must be simplified, in the same way as we must explain our work to Europe’s citizens, who must have easy access to EU databases and legislative acts. Greater recourse to white papers and exclusive recourse to regulations in legislative proposals are just a few of the basic instruments that could ensure a smaller amount of legislation without its quality being affected.

The target of the programme is to reduce administrative burdens by 25% by 2012.

Member States should be required to justify their decision to introduce higher requirements in their domestic legislation beyond the standards set in the EU legislation being implemented.

The necessity of correlation tables accompanying the transposition of directives by Member States must be emphasised and Parliament should be innovative in coming up with incentives to make this happen for every single piece of legislation.

Existing legislation must be continually evaluated in order to ascertain whether it should be simplified or, as the case may be, abolished.

I voted in favour of this resolution. Real political leadership is required from all institutions and the Member States in order to strengthen the smart regulation agenda, but the Commission plays a key role in keeping this issue high on the political agenda. A Commissioner should therefore be entrusted with this issue as the main part of his or her portfolio. Parliament should at the same time investigate ways of increasing its commitment to smart regulation, for instance by making use of inter-committee meetings. The Commission will present a progress report on the smart regulation agenda in the second half of 2012. Parliament must make sure to follow up closely on every aspect in this area.

I agree with the sentiment expressed in this report, as it argues that the European institutions should contribute to drafting simple and clear laws that are accessible and easily understood. Legislative excellence ensures laws are actually implemented, allowing the EU public to exercise its rights more easily.

It is very good that the report highlights the current shortcomings of the policy-making process and the role of the institutional actors. Mention is made of the negotiation of the Interinstitutional Agreement on better lawmaking.
effective enactment of the Treaty of Lisbon with regard to equal treatment of Parliament and the Council and a proposal for better use of regulations instead of directives. I voted in favour.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing. – (DE)** The principle of subsidiarity is one of the main pillars of the EU. Unfortunately, this principle in particular is increasingly treated with contempt or thrown out through the back door. On the one hand, disagreeable decisions that, from a political point of view, would not be possible to implement at national level are railroaded in by the EU and, on the other, attempts are constantly being made to interfere in subsidiary rights and national sovereignty. The supposed strengthening of national parliaments is by no means able to offset the actual erosion of subsidiarity that is taking place. The development in this regard is worrying and it is not dealt with in this report. I therefore rejected the report.

**Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE), in writing. – (LT)** The law-making system is too complicated, and that is one of the reasons why we are unable to achieve our objective of making the EU more attractive and bringing it closer to citizens. At present, EU citizens unfortunately do not feel that they have any influence on EU law-making: they are unable to implement their law-making right, the relationship between the institutions is too complicated, and the gap between the legislative initiative and the legislation’s entry into force is too long. I would like to congratulate the rapporteur for examining many of these dimensions in his report. However, in order for the citizens of the Member States to feel like citizens of the EU, we not only have to set these proposals forth, we also have to implement them.

**Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE), in writing. – (RO)** I voted for this report, although I regret the omission from its text of a reference, which is currently apt, to establishing the ‘one in, one out’ principle.

However, I should mention that a few extremely important ideas provide an upbeat note. These are the possibility of introducing a ‘clarity test’, the Commission’s intention to submit a legislative proposal on the use of alternative dispute settlement mechanisms, an improvement in the EUR-Lex database, an exemption for SMEs from regulations where provisions would disproportionately affect them and, last but not least, the effective mainstreaming of multilingualism in the administration and publication of the results of public consultations.

**Siiri Oviir (ALDE), in writing. – (ET)** I supported this report and the principles developed therein of simplifying legislation and reducing bureaucracy, which hinders business development and European competitiveness. It is very important that greater attention be devoted to this problem and that it be dealt with consistently. Despite the fact that today large part of work is done by machines and people do not have enough work, we should avoid the creation of so-called social jobs in public administration. Public administration must be simple and unambiguous.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD), in writing. – (LT)** I welcome this motion for a resolution on better legislation, subsidiarity and proportionality and smart regulation because the European Union’s law-making process needs to be constantly refined and developed, and the decision-making process must be brought as close to citizens as possible. When drafting legislation, all European institutions must pay greater attention to the implementation of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Furthermore, it is very important to ensure that all EU citizens are able to use their rights as effectively as possible, so that they
can have a greater influence on EU policies defending their interests. Consequently, it is crucial for the public to be properly informed about the implementation of the European Citizens’ Initiative. The proper implementation of this initiative will help the European Union come closer to citizens and suitably implement the principles of direct democracy. Attention should be drawn to the importance of national parliaments to the EU law-making process. National parliaments must become more effective players in the political process, at both national and European levels. We must make every effort to ensure that the problem of democratic deficit is addressed and the administrative burden is reduced by developing cooperation between national parliaments and the European Parliament. It is crucial to stress that only through subsidiarity monitoring can national parliaments have a real influence on the European Parliament. Consequently, I believe that we must set longer timescales, which would enable national parliaments to provide a more detailed analysis on compliance with the principle of subsidiarity.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted in favour of the report on better legislation, subsidiarity and proportionality and smart regulation because one of the main objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy is precisely to make European legislation more effective and accessible in every European country. This is precisely why the text calls for the national parliaments of the Member States, acting in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, to work together and strive to develop and apply new European legislation while also collaborating with the European institutions. Better legislation means successfully meeting the objectives set, boosting the economy by helping businesses, and accelerating the European market by making it more competitive.

Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE), in writing. – (EL) Smart regulation involves the fast application of legislative acts in the EU, thereby minimising administrative costs and cutting red tape. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that the target of the programme to reduce this administrative burden by 25% by 2012 will be very hard to achieve. Therefore, we need more simplification and fast, ex-post evaluation of Member States’ directive transposition procedures. When simplifying procedures, a key role is played both by the EU institutions and by the Member States. Even though these are relatively technical and administrative procedures, administrative hurdles cause significant difficulties to the functioning of the EU, on the one hand, and to the public, on the other. The problems at issue are identified in the report, which is why I voted in favour of it.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I voted in favour of this report on ‘better legislation, subsidiarity and proportionality and smart regulation’. The smart regulation agenda was introduced as part of the Europe 2020 strategy, which aims to achieve ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ by the year 2020, primarily through the reduction of administrative burdens for businesses by ensuring the improved quality and simplification of existing EU legislation. It is a measure which will, according to studies, mean considerable savings for companies. At a time of economic crisis, it is up to the policy makers to find all possible means to streamline costs and combat waste, without ever compromising on quality. In this context, I agree with Parliament’s intention of remaining vigilant while monitoring the implementation of the agenda for the Commission’s smart regulation.

Miguel Portas (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) Simple and clear laws that are accessible and easily understood are crucial to guaranteeing that these are effectively implemented and to ensure that the public can exercise its rights. Increased Member State involvement and participation in the legislative process is an important step in this direction, especially
in verifying compliance with the principle of subsidiarity. The report points to various factors which must be taken into account to improve the legislation, namely less bureaucracy, better use of consultation processes, better use of legislative instruments, and better assessment of the impact of legislation, so as to comply with those fundamental principles.

**Phil Prendergast (S&D), in writing.** – I welcome Mr Karim’s report on the regulatory environment in operation in Europe at the present time. The report underscores and reaffirms the importance of both smart regulation and the need for the form and function of the Union not to exceed what is required to realise the objectives of the Treaties. It also stresses the need to engage with key stakeholders in relation to specific legislation, particularly SMEs in order to establish the problems they face when trying to increase employment and trade within Europe. It also reiterates the need to connect with civil society in order to gain information about the situation on the ground, which in turn leads to more effective legislation. This report is particularly welcome in light of the current economic environment wherein unemployment and poor growth are prolific. Having regard to this, we, as legislators, must do everything in our power to ensure there are as few unnecessary administrative barriers as possible for entrepreneurs and those seeking to create employment for the many unemployed in Europe.

**Crescenzio Rivellini (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) Today we voted in plenary on the report on better legislation, subsidiarity and proportionality and smart regulation. The report by Mr Karim expands on the Presidency Conclusions on the Lisbon Strategy, which were to emphasise competitiveness and a reduction in administrative burdens though smart regulation that works for people. The report has a clear focus on public consultations, impact assessments, comitology and simplification of existing legislation.

The main recommendations of the report are as follows. Member States should be made to justify decisions relating to the introduction into their national legislation of requirements that exceed the standards set by the EU legislative acts they are preparing to transpose. Parliament, which has thus far received over 300 submissions from national parliaments, should issue a statement on the effective functioning of the systems put in place within Parliament in order to identify any shortcomings and suggest improvements.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing.** – In favour. The smart regulation communication expands on the Presidency Conclusions from the Spring 2007 European Council on the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs and Commission President Barroso’s Political Guidelines for the Next Commission in which it was suggested to turn the Lisbon Strategy into the ‘EU 2020’ strategy, with emphasis on competitiveness and less administrative burden through smart regulation in order to make markets work for people, and with a clear focus on public consultations, impact assessments, comitology and simplification of existing legislation.

While all of this could be described, on the face of it, as a mere rebranding of the existing better regulation agenda, the placing of these issues higher up on the agenda must nevertheless be welcomed, and Parliament, together with the other European institutions and the Member States, must now do its part to ensure that the momentum thus gained is upheld and that activities are stepped up in all relevant areas.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) I voted for this text because it emphasises the importance of competitiveness and the reduction of administrative burdens through smart
regulation that can benefit people, and has a clear focus on public consultations, impact assessments, comitology and simplification of existing legislation.


Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting in favour. It should be noted that since the Treaty of Lisbon has come into force there is more weight attached to the legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights and the institutions have new responsibilities, about which we should remain vigilant. For example, I would stress the ‘European Citizens’ initiative’, which has become a new instrument of participatory democracy, appreciation of which is important.

Sophie Auconie (PPE), in writing. – (FR) The Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament stipulate that the Committee on Petitions must report each year to Parliament on the results of its deliberations and activities. In 2010, the European Parliament received 1 655 petitions, a fall of 14% from the 1 924 petitions in 2009. The environment remains the main preoccupation for petitioners, followed by fundamental rights, the single market and justice. The Germans are still the most active petitioners, then the Spanish and Italians. Increasing numbers of petitions are being submitted online: the figure rose to 63.2% in 2010. For my part, I am delighted that the Treaty of Lisbon has introduced the possibility of citizens’ initiatives. I continue to follow the work of the Committee on Petitions and have approved its annual activity report.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing. – (ES) I support the 2010 annual report, which aims to provide an overview of the activities of the Committee on Petitions. I also voted in favour of the new procedure for registering petitions put in place by the Directorate-General for the Presidency and the Directorate-General for Internal Policies.

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) I voted in favour of the report by Mr Meyer, whose work has successfully drawn attention to the activities carried out by the Committee on Petitions last year. In highlighting the data on the petitions submitted to Parliament, their number and origin, and the legislative areas covered by citizens’ requests, and in assessing the standard and quality of the interinstitutional relations between Parliament, the Commission and the Council, and with the European Ombudsmen, the report provides a faithful account of the situation regarding the use of this important instrument – petitioning of the European Parliament – which is available to the public.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because I am convinced that the participation of citizens in the European Union’s decision-making process is essential, and the opportunity for citizens to submit petitions to the European Parliament is an expression of such participation. In this report, Parliament evaluates the activities of the Committee on Petitions in 2010, indicating that the petitions received last year continued to focus on the environment, fundamental rights, the internal market and justice, and in geographical terms, the largest proportion of petitions referred to specific Member States. In the report, the European Parliament nevertheless finds it regrettable that the Commission has yet to address the Committee on Petitions’ repeated calls to inform the European Parliament of the progress of infringement proceedings relating to open petitions. Parliament also proposes the creation, as a matter of urgency, of a dedicated Web portal for petitions, offering an interactive template for the recording thereof.

Philippe Boulland (PPE), in writing. – (FR) As a full member of the Committee on Petitions, I specifically voted in favour of my committee’s activity report for 2010, which
essentially justifies our existence. In 2010, the Committee on Petitions received 1,655 petitions from European citizens. The environment remains one of their main concerns. In addition to the committee’s success, several other important factors should be borne in mind. It is the only committee that organises hearings for European citizens at each of its meetings. Its expertise and legitimacy are undisputed within Parliament because of its direct links to citizens. My colleagues and I have dealt with distressing cases, such as cross-border divorces and compulsory purchases of the properties owned by thousands of people in Spain under the Spanish law on coastal areas. The Committee on Petitions illustrates how Europe should be: willing to listen to citizens’ problems, committed to working together to find solutions and to protect citizens. Unfortunately, we still have limited scope for taking action and exerting pressure. The reason for this is a lack of cooperation from Member States and certain public authorities. It is vital that citizens continue to have confidence in our institution and continue to call on us.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The Committee on Petitions has informed Parliament of its activities during 2010, and this information reveals that there were fewer petitions than in the previous year. I hope that the people of the Member States, and particularly those of my country, use this ability to alert Parliament more regularly to the problems they face, so that the European dimension of citizenship and the institutions’ ability to respond to people’s specific problems become increasingly evident. I would acknowledge the work already been done by the Committee on Petitions and by Parliament’s services concerning the reception and due treatment of the issues petitioned, and I hope that this continues to increase in years to come.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) This report, drafted by Mr Meyer, concerns the activities of the Committee on Petitions during 2010 and aims to provide an overview of the most important events in this area over the year. With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, the European public saw its right to petition Parliament secured, and made a pillar of citizenship and a fundamental right, as enshrined in Article 227 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). More than just a collection of statistics, this report refers to the relationship of the Committee on Petitions with other European institutions, namely national and regional authorities. It is Parliament’s most dynamic committee, as it is the one that gives the European public a voice. Most of the time, it is the very Members of this House who are spokespersons for the public’s complaints and claims. Many a problem long overdue a solution is brought to a conclusion by this committee. It is no coincidence that the most broached topics concern the environment, fundamental rights, justice and the internal market. I welcome the excellent work of the rapporteur, and I am pleased with the results obtained by this committee.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This report on the activity of Parliament’s Committee on Petitions provides an overview of the committee’s activities, and offers an accurate and complete picture of its work, through a series of statistics on the number of petitions received, completed or handled by the committee, or on the countries or issues in question, making this an important quantitative tool in assessing its work.

The annual statistics show that most citizens turn to Parliament for assistance with matters relating to the environment, fundamental rights, justice and the internal market. As the report mentions, other petitioners seek a hearing for suggestions concerning the implementation of Union policy, and others approach Parliament to appeal against decisions made by national authorities and to complain about the judgments of national courts.
However, most complain about the incorrect application of EU legislation, either due to the imperfect transposition of that legislation or due to failures to apply, or breaches of, European rules.

Furthermore, the report just tabled and adopted undoubtedly represents a useful element for carrying out parliamentary work in its many forms.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing.—(PT) This report gives an overview of the activity of the Committee on Petitions and offers an accurate and complete picture of its work, through a series of statistics on the number of petitions received, completed or handled by the committee, or statistics on the countries or issues in question, making this an important quantitative tool in assessing its work.

The annual statistics show that most citizens turn to Parliament for assistance with matters relating to the environment, fundamental rights, justice and the internal market. As the report mentions, other petitioners seek a hearing for suggestions concerning the implementation of Union policies, and others approach Parliament to appeal against decisions made by national authorities and to complain about the judgments of national courts.

However, most complain about the incorrect application of EU legislation, either due to the imperfect transposition of that legislation or due to failures to apply, or breaches of, European rules. According to the statistics, in 2010 Parliament received 1 655 petitions, which represents a 14% decrease against the 1 924 petitions submitted in 2009.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D) in writing.—(SK) The aim of the annual report for 2010 is to provide an overview of the work of the Committee on Petitions, for which the calendar of activities is set by the citizens who exercise their right to petition the European Parliament. It presents a series of statistics on the number of petitions received, closed or dealt with by the Committee, the countries involved and the matters raised. Additional aspects, such as relations with other European institutions and with national and regional authorities or institutional changes with direct impact on the Committee's activities, complete the picture. It also examines the progress made in implementing each recommendation. Citizens bring before Parliament their concerns about the impact of various EU policies and legislation on their everyday lives. These are mainly matters relating to the environment, fundamental rights, justice and the internal market.

Last but not least, citizens use the petition procedure to appeal against decisions taken by national authorities and to complain about rulings of national courts. The European Commission has made 2013 the European Year of Citizenship in order to drive forward the debate on European citizenship and inform EU citizens of their rights. I consider it to be highly positive that the Committee on Petitions wants to support this initiative and offer citizens a direct link to the institutions, guaranteeing that their problems are heard.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing.—(LT) I welcomed this document, because a large number of petitioners turn to Parliament for redress on issues that fall outside the EU’s area of competence, such as the enforcement of national courts' decisions or passivity on the part of various administrations, in the hope that the situation can be resolved by these complaints being forwarded to the competent authorities at national or regional levels. I welcome the new procedure put in place by the European Parliament's Directorate-General for the Presidency and Directorate-General for Internal Policies with regard to the registration of petitions. We need to bring greater transparency to the management of
petitions: internally by giving Members of the European Parliament direct access to petition files via the E-petition system, by simplifying the internal procedure and through close cooperation between the Member States, the Chair and the secretariat of the Committee on Petitions, and externally by establishing an interactive Web portal for petitioners. The petitions process is important and should enable the committee responsible to seek and provide solutions and to defend EU citizens who petition Parliament. It is necessary to increase citizens’ participation in the EU decision-making process, with a view to reinforcing its legitimacy and accountability.

Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (PPE), in writing. – (PL) As a member of the European Parliament’s Committee on Petitions, I am fully aware how many Europeans are wrestling with various problems which they cannot solve at local or national authority level. Therefore they turn to us for help. Not all of the petitions we receive are the responsibility of the European institutions. We are not able to help in every case. However, as a result of our constant contact with petitioners, our committee is the one which has the most contact with ordinary, everyday problems. Whilst working on big ideas and wide-ranging strategies, it is very important that we should not forget what troubles Europeans on a daily basis.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, the Charter of Fundamental Rights became legally binding. Given the petitions received, fundamental rights form the second most important issue raised by petitioners. The incorporation of the Charter into EU primary law under the principle of subsidiarity means that Member States are responsible for compliance with the principles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. New responsibilities have been created for the decision-making and implementing institutions, as well as for Member States when implementing EU legislation at national level. The Charter’s provisions have thus become directly enforceable by European and national courts.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I welcome this report on the activities of the Petitions Committee in 2010. The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon confirmed the right to petition the European Parliament as one of the cornerstones of European citizenship and as a fundamental right under Article 227 of the new Treaty (ex Article 194 TEC), which provides that citizens or residents of the European Union, whether natural or legal persons, individually or in association with other citizens or persons, have the right to address a petition to the European Parliament on a matter which comes within the Union’s fields of activity and which affects them directly. This tool allows citizens to bring before Parliament their concerns about the impact of various EU policies and legislation on their everyday lives.

Véronique Mathieu (PPE), in writing. – (FR) I voted in favour of the annual report on the activities of the Committee on Petitions. The right of petition is a key democratic instrument that allows any European citizen to go directly to the European Parliament in order to seek a solution to his or her individual problems, to highlight failings in European policies, or to call on the European Union to take action in a specific field. Once again, this report demonstrates that European citizens are particularly interested in environmental issues and that we therefore need to do more for the environment. The report also highlights the lack of transparency surrounding petitions: it is essential that every petition received should be published online unless the petitioner has specifically indicated otherwise, so that every citizen can see the petitions submitted and can support them if he or she so desires. The report also reminds us that the Committee on Petitions is dependent on cooperation from the other institutions: it is vital that the Council cooperate even more
with the Committee on Petitions. I am using my vote to support the Committee on Petitions in its work for democracy.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The 2010 annual report aims to present an overview of the activities of the Committee on Petitions, whose business schedule does not revolve around the legislative programme of the European Commission, having instead been established by the public to exercise its right to petition Parliament. The annual activity report is aimed at presenting an accurate and complete picture of the work of the Committee on Petitions, through a series of statistics on the number of petitions received, completed or handled by the committee, or statistics on the countries or issues in question, making this an important quantitative tool in assessing the work of the committee. This overview is complemented by other aspects, such as relations with other European institutions, national and regional authorities, or institutional changes with a direct impact on the activity of the Committee on Petitions. Finally, the report examines the progress made in implementing the previous recommendations, which were aimed at improving the work of this committee.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. – The 2010 annual report aims to provide an overview of the activities of the Committee on Petitions, for which the calendar of activities is not fixed around the legislative programme of the European Commission but is set by the citizens who exercise their right to petition the European Parliament. The annual report aims to offer a precise and full view of the work of the Committee on Petitions. This report presents a series of statistics on the number of petitions received, closed or dealt with by the committee, the countries involved and the matters raised. These statistics represent an important quantitative tool for assessing the committee’s work. According to the statistics, in 2010 the European Parliament received 1,655 petitions, which represents a drop of 14% compared to the 1,924 petitions submitted in 2009. This clearly shows a change in trend following the constant rise in the number of petitions in recent years. I voted in favour.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing. – (DE) It is important for the citizens of the Union and for natural or legal persons to have a right of petition in respect of EU activities in order to bring the impact of EU law before Parliament. The main cause of complaint is the incorrect application of EU legislation, but decisions taken by national authorities are also appealed against or assistance sought with matters relating to the environment, fundamental rights, justice and the internal market, in which regard a number of petitions are declared inadmissible because there continues to be a lack of clarity about EU competences. The report stresses that the number of petitions on property restitution has fallen significantly in comparison to previous years. The European Parliament must step up its efforts specifically in respect of the unlawful legislation that is still in place, that is to say the regulations of the Anti-Fascist Council of the People’s Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) and the Beneš decrees. As the report does not mention this, I have abstained from voting.

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE), in writing. – (LT) I became aware of the work of the Committee on Petitions before I was even a Member of the European Parliament, when, during 2007-2008, I represented several tens of thousands of EU citizens who petitioned the European Parliament on the environmental impact of the Nord Stream gas pipeline. On the basis of this petition, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in 2008, and the Committee on Petitions examined the implementation of this resolution quite recently. I therefore welcome the report’s call for the Commission to ensure the correct implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the Strategic
Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) and the Habitats and Birds Directives by the Member States, based on recommendations from Parliament’s own competent committee. I would, however, like to comment that, unfortunately, the Commission has so far failed to take the European Parliament’s positions into account or take the action required. In future, discussions should therefore be initiated on even closer ties between the European Parliament and the Commission, particularly when Parliament draws the Commission’s attention to violations of EU law.

Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE), in writing. – (BG) I voted in favour of Mr Meyer’s report. The aim of the Committee on Petitions’ annual activity reports is to review the work carried out based on the available statistics.

These reports are extremely important for improving our Committee’s effectiveness. As MEPs, we all have a duty to defend the rights of Europe’s citizens. However, this applies even more strongly to members of the Committee on Petitions. This is why we need to focus our attention on several important points in the report. The slight drop in the number of petitions submitted, compared with 2009, may be an indication to us that the general public has become better informed about what our Committee does.

However, we must not stop making efforts in this area because we also notice a high number of inadmissible petitions where petitioners are still getting confused between national and European areas of competence. The large number of inadmissible petitions is also indicative of the need for the competent bodies and institutions to take some responsibility. Finally, it is important also to focus attention on the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon’s entry into force on the Committee on Petitions: the legally binding nature of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European citizens’ initiative, the European External Action Service and so on.

Siiri Oviir (ALDE), in writing. – (ET) It is vitally important that citizens of the European Union have the right and opportunity to appeal to the European Parliament with their concerns, and in accordance with the enactment of the Treaty of Lisbon, the right to submit petitions is one of the foundations of European citizenship. The report shows that for the second consecutive year, petitioners have most often submitted petitions on environmental topics, which means that this area causes the greatest concern and raises the most questions among citizens of Europe, and this is also a clear signal to the members of the European parliament. The number of inadmissible petitions unfortunately still makes up more than half of the total, since submitters confuse the competencies of Member States and the European Union, as a result of which increased attention should be devoted to raising citizens’ awareness.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I voted for this report on the activities of the Committee on Petitions in 2010. The timetable of activities of the Committee on Petitions is not established on the basis of the European Commission’s legislative programme, but is set by the public in the exercise of its right to petition Parliament. This is the overview provided by the annual report, a complete picture of the work of the Committee on Petitions, through a series of statistics on the number of petitions received, completed or handled by the committee, or statistics on the countries or issues in question, making this an important quantitative tool in assessing the work of the committee. The report also examines the progress made in implementing previous recommendations aimed at improving the work of this committee. I agree with the need for the Committee on Petitions to forge closer working links with similar committees in the national and
regional parliaments of the Member States, in order to promote mutual understanding of petitions on European issues, and to gain an insight into the various working methods of national committees on petitions so that the Committee on Petitions of Parliament is in a position to take a conscious and farsighted decision when rejecting a petition on grounds of competence issues.

Crescenzio Rivellini (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I congratulate Mr Meyer on the excellent work he has done. Petitions must be a pillar of European citizenship. Environmental protection and the defence of citizens’ rights were the Committee on Petitions’ main concerns in 2010.

I am disappointed that some Member States have failed to apply and enforce European environmental legislation, and I call on the Commission to monitor more actively the enforcement and implementation of such legislation at all times during the procedure and not just after a definitive decision has been taken. Furthermore, I regret that, despite the large number of petitions concerning the rights contained in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Commission consistently refuses to take action to prevent flagrant breaches thereof.

Robert Rochefort (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) The legitimacy of the European project is built on public support. This support can only exist if citizens have an opportunity to air their views, to express their concerns and to ensure that the institutions uphold their rights. I therefore welcome the work done by the European Parliament’s Committee on Petitions. The creation of the citizens’ initiative under the Treaty of Lisbon has served to reinforce this fundamental right. It must be supported and promoted, and the Committee on Petitions is in the best position to follow up on the requests made. However, in order for it to be as effective as possible, and to provide the best possible response to citizens, I believe that transparent cooperation between the European Commission, the Member States and Parliament is essential. Last of all, having a clear and accessible procedure is vital if we want participation across the board. To that end, we definitely need to establish a one-stop shop for petitions. I am therefore delighted that this report has been adopted.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – In favour. The 2010 annual report aims to provide an overview of the activities of the Committee on Petitions, for which the calendar of activities is not fixed around the legislative programme of the European Commission, but rather is set by the citizens who exercise their right to petition the European Parliament.

The annual report aims to offer a precise and full view of the work of the Committee on Petitions. This report presents a series of statistics on the number of petitions received, closed or dealt with by the Committee, the countries involved and the matters raised. These statistics represent an important quantitative tool for assessing the Committee’s work. Additional aspects, such as relations with other European institutions and with national and regional authorities or institutional changes with direct impact on the Committee’s activities, complete the picture. Last but not least, the report examines the progress made in implementing previous recommendations aimed at improving the work of this Committee.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted for this report because it provides a comprehensive overview of the activities of the Committee on Petitions in 2010. The report offers a precise and full picture of the work of the Committee, presenting a series of statistics on the number of petitions received, closed or dealt with, the countries involved
and the matters raised. These statistics represent an important quantitative tool for assessing the Committee’s work.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI), in writing.** – (DE) I voted in favour of the report – as I have already done in committee. The detailed annual data that are collected make it possible to determine the shortcomings and problems that we need to concentrate on. We now need to work on these problem areas.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE), in writing.** – (IT) I voted for Mr Meyer’s text on the activities of the Committee on Petitions in 2010. Despite a small drop compared to 2009, the Committee received petitions from European citizens exercising their right to petition on topics of primary importance such as justice, the environment, the internal market and fundamental rights.

**Motion for a resolution - B7-0475/2011**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing.** – (PT) I am voting for this motion for a resolution, as it aims to pressure the Commission to achieve a comprehensive EU strategy on homelessness. Backed up by national and regional strategies, it would have the long-term goal of putting an end to homelessness within the wider context of social inclusion. It is essential that this resolution’s demands be carried out. These are as follows: data on homelessness in the EU must be collected; it must have clear objectives, an integrated approach which encompasses all politically relevant fields, good governance, proper data collection, a proper housing policy; it must recognise the need to take into account the potential changes in homeless people’s profiles and, in particular, to consider the impact of migration; and it must include budgetary appropriations from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

**Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE), in writing.** – (LT) I voted in favour of this resolution on an EU homelessness strategy. This is a sensitive issue in the EU because homelessness represents one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation, and has increased in recent years in several EU Member States. I welcome the resolution’s call for the Member States to make progress towards the goal of ending street homelessness by 2015. The European Parliament calls in this resolution for the development of an ambitious, integrated EU strategy, underpinned by national and regional strategies, with the long-term aim of ending homelessness within the broader social inclusion framework. It is particularly important for an EU homelessness strategy to go beyond monitoring and reporting and deliver a package of activities to support the development of effective national and regional homelessness strategies and coordinated work by the Member States to reduce homelessness in the EU.

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE), in writing.** – (RO) People living on the street is the most visible and extreme form of poverty and exclusion. These deprived people do not have access to social, medical or educational services, as their needs comprise in particular the need for housing, then the need to find a job and, in general, the need to find a solution to get themselves out of this dire situation and become reintegrated into society and the labour market. During the last decade, EU-level policy coordination on homelessness within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion has enhanced and added value to the efforts made at national, regional and local level, with the need to build on this work as part of a more strategic approach. I think that it is vital to develop an ambitious, integrated EU strategy underpinned by national and regional
strategies, with the long-term aim of ending homelessness within the broader social inclusion framework. The EU homelessness strategy should be fully compliant with Member States' social housing policy, which legally enshrines the principle of promoting social diversity and combating social segregation.

**Pino Arlacchi (S&D), in writing.** – I voted in favour of this resolution because I value its aim to find a solution for one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation. Homelessness has increased in recent years in several EU Member States and is an unacceptable violation of human dignity. I believe that it is essential to involve all stakeholders, including national, regional and local policy-makers, in the fight against homelessness.

Considering that the fulfilment of the right to housing is critical for the enjoyment of a full range of other rights, including political and social rights, an important role should also be played by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). This Agency needs to work more on the implications of extreme poverty and social exclusion in terms of access to, and enjoyment of, fundamental rights. Member States must make progress towards the goal of ending street homelessness by 2015.

**Liam Aylward (ALDE), in writing.** – (GA) Homelessness is an extremely severe form of poverty, and the Commission must give extra assistance to the Member States as they grapple with this crisis. To this end, I welcome what is in this report. The objective in relation to putting an end to homelessness by 2015 will not be achieved if an integrated approach is not implemented that covers every relevant policy area, along with the wider issue of social inclusion. It is not enough that the homelessness strategy includes monitoring and reporting, it must include active measures for developing sustainable, effective, national and regional strategies.

The European Regional Development Fund was recently expanded to cover housing for marginalised people. That Fund and the European Social Fund must focus on the programmes for extreme poverty and homelessness. There should be easier access for organisations to the money available from the Commission and from the Member States and red tape must be reduced significantly. Why have social funds and action plans if they do not confer any benefit on the people who need them the most?

**Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE), in writing.** – (FR) We definitely need to concentrate on stabilising our banks and budgets in these times of financial and budgetary crisis, but that is not enough. It seems to me that we are not maintaining the balance by taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable in our societies, far from it. At a time when we still do not know for certain whether the aid scheme for our most deprived citizens will be maintained in coming years, this motion for a resolution on the European Union homelessness strategy, which has the support of a very large majority in Parliament, reminds us that poverty and social exclusion affect millions of people in Europe and that letting them fall by the wayside is not an option. The resolution specifically calls for a greater emphasis on housing policy in the European Union. Guaranteeing decent housing for all, meeting basic needs and providing access to quality services are daily challenges that urgently need to be addressed.

**Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), in writing.** – (ES) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution urging Member States to make progress towards the goal of ending street homelessness by 2015.
Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) I voted against this motion for a resolution on an EU homelessness strategy because of the many controversial points this document raises, particularly as regards immigration. In particular, the document calls for the allocation of housing to marginalised groups such as immigrants to be made easier and specifies that the right to housing will allow such groups also to enjoy political and social rights. I therefore voted against it.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution because homelessness represents one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation, and has increased in recent years in several European Union Member States. The European Parliament thus calls for an EU homelessness strategy to focus on the promotion of quality services for homeless people and urges the Commission to develop a voluntary framework for ensuring the quality of social services, as stipulated in the Communication on the European Poverty Platform. It also calls for the development of strong links between the EU homelessness strategy and EU funding streams, especially from the Structural Funds. The European Commission should promote the use of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) financing facility in order to guarantee homes for representatives of marginalised groups. I would like to stress that it is also crucial for the Commission and the Member States to reach an agreement and establish a framework for monitoring the development of national and regional homelessness strategies as a central element of the EU homelessness strategy. Furthermore, we should ensure that an EU homelessness strategy goes beyond monitoring and reporting and delivers a package of activities to support the development of effective national and regional homelessness strategies.

Philippe Boulland (PPE), in writing. – (FR) I voted in favour of the resolution on a European strategy to help the homeless. At a time when the Member States are attempting to repair the mistakes of the financial markets, very few initiatives are being taken to prevent citizens from becoming homeless or to bring an end to homelessness. This motion for a resolution is a timely reminder. The Member States must look at the issue of the homeless. They are being asked to collect information on these people so that their needs can be better met and they are being encouraged to exchange ideas in order to arrive at a supportive response. Monitoring at the European level of the progress in each Member State will give us an overall view of the issue so that we can move towards a Europe where every citizen will have a home. A citizen without a home is a citizen without rights. Because a home is absolutely essential to the enjoyment of a full range of other rights, including civil and social rights. The motion for a resolution sets a target of 2015 for bringing an end to the issue of homelessness. This is fine, but the Member States must now find the resources to meet this challenge. As this resolution urges, it is now time to go beyond declarations.

John Bufton (EFD), in writing. – I have a great deal of sympathy for people who are homeless and have no doubt that as a society we should do our utmost to enable them to rebuild their lives. However I voted against an EU Homelessness Strategy, as I firmly believe we do not require the Commission to develop a voluntary quality framework as stipulated in the communication on the European Poverty Platform. In the proposition of the legislation is the suggestion that the UK needs to rely upon the EU to develop a strategic framework for services where many organisations and charities already work tirelessly to combat homelessness. Instead any regulation by the Commission is likely to add red tape to services and slow them down, also costing substantial amounts of money to enforce
and thus redirecting resources away from the people who really need it. This is another attempt to push towards new EU regulation where it is not required.

Corina Creţu (S&D), in writing. — (RO) I voted for a homelessness strategy because this painful reality, which affects people in all EU Member States, is an unacceptable violation of human dignity. Homelessness represents one of the most severe forms of poverty and has increased in recent years in a number of EU Member States. This framework which has been adopted paves the way for enhanced and ambitious action on homelessness at EU level by identifying methods and means for the work the Commission has started on tackling homelessness to continue in the best way, while carrying on the activities from 2010 – the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D), in writing. — I supported this motion for a resolution which seeks to press the Commission to come up with an overarching EU homelessness strategy underpinned by national and regional strategies with the long-term aim of ending homelessness within the broader social inclusion framework. This resolution demands amongst other things that any strategy adopted must ensure the collection of EU homelessness data, must include clear targets, an integrated approach covering all relevant policy fields, proper governance, proper data collection, a strong housing dimension, taking account of changing profiles of the homeless population, and particularly the impact of migration, and, must include budgetary allocations from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing. — (PT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution, as it advocates an ambitious strategy on the part of the EU with the purpose of medium-term resolution of the problem of homelessness, within the context of European social inclusion policy. I would remind you that the problem of homelessness remains the reality in all Member States, and that it constitutes an unacceptable violation of human dignity.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. — (PT) Throughout Europe there are people who live in the streets in deplorable conditions, exposed to the elements and to the cruelty of the societies in which we live. The term ‘homeless’ is a euphemistic substitute for other, cruder terms, like ‘beggar’ or ‘vagrant’, as people falling into similar states of destitution used to be called. Rather than designing grand European strategies to put an end to this scourge, I believe that global thinking needs to be linked in with local action. In order for this to happen, there is nothing more effective than the social solidarity institutions already active on the ground, which really know the actual people living in these situations, not just the statistics, and which can identify the best ways for these people to move towards a better life. Without abandoning its programmes, research and measures on this issue, the European Union should aim to always act through the institutions already active on the ground.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. — (PT) The existence of the homeless is not a new phenomenon rooted in the current economic and financial crisis: they have always existed. We are used to seeing people sleeping in railway stations, underneath bridges, in the entrances to buildings, in run-down buildings, and so on. Yet the current crisis has only seen this socially deplorable and degrading situation worsen. Where, several decades ago these used to be people with drug- or alcohol-addiction problems, or bohemian beggars, today, due to worsening economic and financial conditions, especially the high interest rates that prevent many citizens from fulfilling their obligations towards banks, the paradigm has shifted: we now find young people, women and entire families living on the streets. Moreover, faced with this situation, the Member States remain inactive. At best,
they move them from city centres to the peripheries so that they are not seen by tourists or near financial centres. We all have an obligation to protect the weakest in society. The Member States, alongside the European Union through the European Social Fund (ESF), have a duty to minimise this violation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which enshrines an end to homelessness. In view of this, I unconditionally support this motion for a resolution which aims to implement a strategy for combating homelessness, about whose existence we should be ashamed.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** The motion for a resolution proposes a European strategy for homelessness, one of the most serious social problems and most extreme forms of poverty existing in the European Union, which urgently needs to be resolved. The existence of homelessness represents an unacceptable violation of fundamental human rights, of which the EU always boasts of being an ideal role model, lecturing others about it at any opportunity.

It is therefore crucial to prioritise actions promoting social inclusion, so as to ensure that no one sleeps rough and that even the time they potentially spend in temporary lodging is limited strictly to the time needed to provide them with appropriate accommodation: their own housing.

We consider it a positive step that the majority in Parliament has supported this resolution, urging the Commission to draw up an ambitious homelessness strategy and to support the Member States in drafting effective national strategies, including support from Union funds to finance projects for housing marginalised groups.

However, on top of all this, it is crucial to change profoundly the current policies that have led to this situation, in order to guarantee employment with rights, quality public services, living pensions and the minimum conditions needed to pay for decent housing, including water, electricity and sanitation.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** We voted for this resolution, which is aimed at achieving a European strategy for homelessness, as this is one of the most serious social problems and most extreme forms of poverty existing in the European Union, which urgently needs to be resolved. The problem of ‘homelessness’ represents an unacceptable violation of fundamental human rights, and it is crucial to prioritise actions that promote social inclusion, so as to ensure that no one sleeps rough and that even the time they potentially spend in temporary lodging is limited strictly to the time needed to provide them with appropriate accommodation: their own housing.

We consider it a positive step that the majority in Parliament has supported this resolution, urging the Commission to draw up an ambitious ‘homelessness’ strategy and to support the Member States in drafting effective national strategies, including support from Union funds to finance projects for housing marginalised groups in the Member States, wherever necessary.

However, on top of all this, it is crucial to change current policy profoundly, especially in the economic, financial and social areas, in order to ensure employment with rights, quality public services, living pensions and the ability to pay for decent housing, including water, electricity, sanitation, etc.

**Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK)** In December 2010, the European Parliament adopted a written declaration on an EU homelessness strategy to support Member States in developing effective national strategies in line with the 2010 Joint Report
on Social Protection and Social Inclusion. The 2010 Joint Report made it clear that the Member States should adopt integrated homelessness strategies focusing on key targets such as the prevention of homelessness and a reduction in its duration, targeting the most severe homelessness, improving the quality of services for homeless people and the supply of affordable housing. The 2010 European Consensus Conference on Homelessness called for an overarching EU homelessness strategy to support, monitor and coordinate the development of homelessness policies in the Member States. Finally, I firmly believe that an integrated approach to addressing this issue should include all important areas with respect to the changing profiles of homeless people and in particular the impact of migration.

Reporting on strategies to combat homelessness could be integrated into the National Strategic Reports submitted under the Open Method of Coordination in the social field. The currently open method of coordination requires statistical data that goes beyond the monetary indicators and these are not even provided by EU-SILC. I therefore believe that it would be appropriate for the Commission to ensure that Eurostat will collect comparable and reliable statistics on homelessness.

**Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE), in writing.** – (GA) There are people in every corner of the Union who are affected by homelessness. I wholly agree with what is in the report in relation to putting an end to homelessness by the year 2015. One of the goals in the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy is to put an end to poverty. It is an aim of the strategy to save at least 20 million people from poverty by the year 2020. A notable initiative in the strategy is the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

**Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), in writing.** – (FR) Seventeen per cent of the EU’s population are living below the poverty line; 8% of Europeans are experiencing severe material deprivation; there are 3 million homeless people, amongst whom there is an increasing number of young people, families and children. This situation is unacceptable and intolerable given the values that we defend within the EU and from the viewpoint of fundamental rights, respect for the individual and human dignity. Although last year was designated as ‘European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion’, the phenomenon continues and poverty is increasing to an alarming degree. I have, of course, voted in favour of this resolution, which urges the Member States to take urgent action to make progress and to bring an end to the issue of homelessness by 2015. This resolution must now be followed up by a true commitment: governments must now act. Our resolution also urges a truly European strategy for assisting the homeless, as very few initiatives are currently being taken to prevent citizens from becoming homeless or to bring an end to homelessness. The fact is, the EU can do more, especially and primarily by not reducing the budget of the European food aid scheme for the most deprived persons.

**Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), in writing.** – (FR) After the European Parliament’s adoption of a written declaration in favour of an EU strategy for the homeless in December 2010, the vote in favour of the motion for a resolution will only reinforce the message of determination and expectation that we are sending to the Commission and to the Member States, in favour of a European strategy on homelessness, the clearest manifestation of poverty and social exclusion. We have a duty to ensure a dignified life for all citizens, whoever they may be. Social policies can no longer be put in the background behind tight budget policies, of which we have an abundance. We must mobilise all of the tools available to the European Union so that, in future, the Stability and Growth Pact does not lead to the indiscriminate cutting of all possible finance for the services that assist these populations.
We must also encourage the Member States not to apply the rules of competition to social housing, but rather to finance social housing, so that homelessness is no longer an emergency issue in the future.

Brice Hortefeux (PPE), in writing. – (FR) Although 2010 was designated ‘European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion’, the phenomenon of homelessness continues to affect every European country, to an alarming degree in some Member States. The European Union is committed, within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, to reduce the number of people affected by or at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020. It is of course a priority objective and the concerns arising from the debt crisis should not obscure this phenomenon. The fight against homelessness calls for concrete, ambitious measures. I would like the Member States of the European Union to provide themselves with the resources needed to combat poverty and social exclusion by implementing an overall strategy which deals with every aspect of homelessness (housing, support, coordination of actions and of the players on the ground). That is why I welcome the adoption of the motion for a resolution on an EU homelessness strategy. At a time of sluggish economic growth and gloomy financial markets, this resolution will focus discussions once more on the human dimension of the crisis and allow us to send a strong political message to this effect to the Member States.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) I welcomed this motion for a resolution because I am convinced that the homelessness issue must be addressed in various European Union Member States, because homelessness continues to affect people in all EU Member States and is an unacceptable violation of human dignity. Homelessness also represents one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation, and it has increased in recent years in several European Union Member States. When implementing an EU homelessness strategy, the Treaty of Lisbon, which stipulates that the essential role and the wide discretion of national, regional and local authorities is providing, commissioning and organising services of general economic interest as closely as possible to the needs of the users, should be fully respected. I believe that it is up to the Member States themselves to define the remits of affordable social housing, and that an EU homelessness strategy should be fully compliant with the social housing policy of Member States, which legally enshrines the principle of promoting the social mix and fighting social segregation. Homelessness has emerged as a clear priority within the EU’s social inclusion process, and the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council must therefore discuss how to develop an EU homelessness strategy.

Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (PPE), in writing. – (PL) The phenomenon of homelessness affects people in all the Member States of the European Union. However, it is apparent that we are still not doing enough to prevent this phenomenon. I fully support the motion for a resolution on this strategy. I only hope this will not be just another document, one of many we have adopted, and that under the Europe 2020 strategy we will be able to protect at least 20 million people from the risk of poverty before the year 2020.

Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D), in writing. – (PL) On 14 September 2011, in Strasbourg voting took place on adoption of the motion for a resolution on an EU homelessness strategy. I think that homelessness and the social problems of those in poverty are important issues to which the EU should pay more attention. The right to dignified living conditions is a right guaranteed inter alia by the Charter of Fundamental Rights, so we should take appropriate steps to prevent homelessness in the countries of the European Union.
Homelessness is in fact one of the most severe forms of poverty and need, and in recent years many Member States have seen it increase.

In accordance with the principles of the resolution which has been adopted, Member States have been called on to end street homelessness by 2015. In addition, an ambitious integrated EU strategy to combat homelessness should be developed, underpinned by national and regional strategies and with the long-term aim of reducing homelessness in the context of a wider strategy of social integration. I think that a system to monitor progress in the fight against homelessness should be established, which would certainly contribute to its elimination. The above arguments persuaded me to vote in favour of the above resolution.

Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE), in writing. – (PL) Homelessness is a widespread problem not only in Europe, but also worldwide. In December of last year, the European Parliament adopted a written declaration on an EU homelessness strategy and to support Member States in developing effective national strategies in accordance with the Europe 2020 strategy, among others.

I believe that we should be conducting an active programme to combat poverty and social exclusion and above all supporting activities which aim to identify effective solutions to the problem of homelessness. The EU homelessness strategy supports these actions, which is why I have voted in favour of its adoption.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) Homelessness continues to affect people in all EU Member States and is an unacceptable violation of human dignity. Homelessness represents one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation. In several EU Member States in recent years it has increased.

One of the objectives of the EU 2020 strategy is to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion. To achieve this, we need a strategic approach. Member States should end street homelessness by 2015. The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council should discuss how to develop an EU homelessness strategy.

David Martin (S&D), in writing. – I voted for this report which urges Member States to make progress towards the goal of ending street homelessness by 2015 and calls for the development of an ambitious, integrated EU strategy, underpinned by national and regional strategies with the long-term aim of ending homelessness within the broader social inclusion framework.

Véronique Mathieu (PPE), in writing. – (FR) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution on a European strategy to help the homeless. We are seeking the development of a European strategy in order to put an end to the situation of the homeless. When it is realised that the life expectancy of a long-term homeless person in an urban area is only five years, we understand the urgency to put an end to this situation in Europe. The text proposes that the European Commission and the Member States supervise the progress of the national and regional strategies, and report back on the progress made in bi-annual or annual reports. To deal with this situation more effectively, to collect reliable information and work together on this issue, the Member States must arrive at a common definition and typology of housing-related exclusion.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (FR) The fact that there are still people homeless today is unacceptable in the world’s biggest economic power. This report rightly emphasises this fact in condemning it as ‘an unacceptable violation of human dignity’. It calls on Member States to put an end to this situation by 2015, and on the European Union
to help them by developing an ambitious strategy and not simply monitoring Member States’ results. I support all these proposals. It is a pity that the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, which this report claims to support, places poverty and deprivation at the centre of the European system and inevitably leads to an increase in the number of homeless people! I voted in favour of this text in order to encourage this crucial call to combat the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Homelessness represents one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation, and has been increasing in recent years in several EU Member States. This problem has been a clear priority for EU social inclusion policy. EU-level policy coordination in the area of homelessness under the Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion has enhanced and added value to efforts at national, regional and local level over the last decade, and there is a need to build on this work in the framework of a more strategic approach. The ambitious objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, which aims to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020, provides new impetus in the fight against all forms of poverty and social exclusion, including homelessness.

Louis Michel (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) This scourge of homelessness must be brought to an end. It is intolerable in today’s society, given the values defended by the EU and from the viewpoint of human rights and respect for the individual. Yet what are we seeing? Growing insecurity, resulting in an increase in the numbers of homeless people in the 27 Member States, despite the remedial actions pursued by many of the latter. With the adoption of the Europe 2020 strategy, whose main objective is to reduce the number of people affected by or at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020, the fight against homelessness has become, in fact, a priority for the EU Social Inclusion Process. So that nobody has to sleep on the streets, so that nobody has to stay in emergency hostels any longer than necessary, so that nobody leaves an institution without the option of rehousing, so that no young person becomes homeless as they make the transition to an independent life, the creation of an ambitious, inclusive European strategy, sitting within the wider framework of the Social Inclusion Process, is required.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. – This oral question followed up by a resolution seeks to press the Commission to come up with an overarching EU Homelessness Strategy underpinned by national and regional strategies with the long-term aim of ending homelessness within the broader social inclusion framework. I voted in favour.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing. – (DE) Homelessness is a wide-spread problem throughout the European Union that is difficult to resolve. There are many reasons why a person ends up homeless and there are many ways of getting people back out of this crisis situation. However, it requires coordinated cooperation between the public as well as the private organisations that are involved with this section of the population. Homeless people are on the margins of society as they do not enjoy the fundamental right of somewhere to live. That makes it almost impossible for them to enter into the world of work and to lead an orderly everyday life. The downward spiral continues ever further. Neglect and addiction problems are the inevitable results. I voted against the motion for a resolution, as I believe that the problem of ‘homelessness’ can only be resolved at national level, because each State has different means available and different social networks.

Rolandas Paksas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution because homelessness is a multi-dimensional problem requiring urgent decisions and an
effective, integrated homelessness strategy. It should be noted that homelessness is a key priority in the social sphere. It is an extreme form of poverty and social exclusion. I believe that both the EU and the Member States must establish and implement programmes for the prevention of homelessness. It is also very important to promote national initiatives and policy development in order to combat poverty and social exclusion. There should be a particular focus on those Member States in which the homelessness issue is deep-rooted. They must be provided with assistance at European level, especially financial assistance.

Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution, which calls on the European Commission to find ways of providing homes for 3 million homeless people in the EU by 2015. The economic crisis has exacerbated the situation of homeless people in the EU Member States. The lives of the homeless are undignified and unfulfilled and it is difficult for them to bring up their children as upstanding members of society. This phenomenon is unacceptable in the 21st century. We must integrate homeless people into the labour market and social society. To that end, more money could be used from the EU Structural Funds. By housing the homeless, the EU Member States would save money on health care and would reduce crime. Although the proposed declaration is ambitious and doubts have been raised over its implementation, we can no longer accept the fate of homeless people: to freeze and die on the streets. In Lithuania alone, almost 400 people die of cold each year. This should concern us all.

Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE), in writing. – (EL) Not only does the problem of homelessness continue to exist in Member States of the EU; in some cases it is getting worse and a new category of homeless people has emerged, the ‘new homeless’. The European platform for combating poverty and social exclusion may be ambitious, but it alone cannot address the entire problem and it is therefore vital that the EU immediately adopt new strategic actions other than formulating opinions and reports on the subject. The resolution responds to these needs, by proposing an enhanced and more proactive strategy to deal with the problem of homelessness at EU level, which will define methods and means for ensuring the best possible follow-up to the work started by the Commission on homelessness. That is why I voted in favour of it.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I voted for the motion for a resolution of the European Parliament, of 14 September 2011, on an EU homelessness strategy, since I consider it vital that this issue have a transnational focus. In fact, an EU homelessness strategy should fully respect the Treaty of Lisbon, which stipulates ‘the essential role and the wide discretion of national, regional and local authorities in providing, commissioning and organising services of general economic interest as closely as possible to the needs of the users’. In this context, it is up to the Member States to define the remits of affordable and social housing and an EU homelessness strategy should be fully compliant with the social housing policy of the Member States, which legally enshrines the principle of fighting social segregation. This comes together with the call to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) to work more on the implications of extreme poverty and social exclusion in terms of access to and enjoyment of fundamental rights, bearing in mind that the fulfilment of the right to housing is critical for the enjoyment of a full range of other rights, including political and social rights.

Robert Rochefort (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) 2010 was declared European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. On this occasion, the European Union decided that the issue of the homeless would have to be solved by 2015. However, we are far from
achieving this. If we are to believe the Caritas organisation, as we approach the start of 2012, 3 million Europeans are homeless. The European Union must grant itself resources equal to its ambitions. That is why, in the vote at the last part-session, I supported the European Parliament’s motion for a resolution on an EU homelessness strategy. This text urges the Council to consider the creation of an EU homelessness strategy and calls on the Commission to create a working group to consider the content of this strategy. It also calls on the Member States to urgently progress towards the goal of ending street homelessness by 2015. To achieve this, it would be very useful to have half-yearly or annual progress reports on the issue. The scope of the reports should include the reduction in the amount of time spent by the homeless without accommodation, the quality of the services provided for these people and access to affordable housing.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. — Ending homelessness is possible and must be a trans-European priority. The EP has today sent a strong message to the other institutions to stop ignoring this core issue and to establish a European strategy to end homelessness by 2020. Homelessness is not only a violation of fundamental rights, it is a violation of human dignity. Clearly, the economic crisis is impacting poverty across Europe, with homeless the most tragic and visible link in the poverty chain. There is a need to redouble efforts to tackle homelessness, rather than just recycling empty messages, and this means developing a coordinated Europe-wide strategy that covers all aspects of public policy. We need to focus on social innovation - like the ‘housing first’ approach - as the beginning of a process of social rehabilitation. This requires adequate funding at EU and national level. An EU strategy must focus on five core elements: the prevention of homelessness, the reduction of its duration, the concentration of efforts on the most serious forms, the improvement of the quality of services for homeless people, and the supply of affordable housing. The EP has taken the first step to this end and the Commission and Council must now act.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing. — (IT) I voted in favour of this document because it calls upon Member States to strive to achieve the goal of solving the problem of homelessness by 2015. To achieve this will mean developing an ambitious, integrated EU strategy, underpinned by national and regional strategies with the long-term aim of solving the problem of homelessness within the broader framework of social inclusion.

Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE), in writing. — (FR) Parliament is today urging the Member States and the Commission to draw up true strategies on homelessness and this is something that I welcome. According to some reports, three million Europeans are homeless. However, we have no harmonised research on this sad phenomenon and, despite the good intentions set out in the EU 2020 strategy (to reduce the poverty rate by 25% by 2020), in 2010, the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, the situation only became worse. The crisis and the migratory pressures resulting from the Arab Spring force us to go beyond the thinking stage and act against these injustices. Europe can do a great deal and, above all, can do better by imposing a uniform, analytical framework for poverty and homelessness and by developing the PROGRESS programme, which allows the exchange of feedback, experiments with new initiatives and the encouragement of microcredit. Moreover, the current mechanism, which makes projects relating to the housing of marginalised communities eligible for FEDER, would improve if it were promoted and extended. Finally, Europe must clarify its regulations on social services of general interest, especially in relation to social housing and emergency hostels for the most deprived people.
Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), in writing. – (PL) I voted in favour of developing an EU homelessness strategy. Homelessness is, today, a problem which affects all the countries of the EU, which is why we should challenge it on an international scale. Only by coordinated action at all levels, local, regional, national and international, can progress be made in combating homelessness. Once the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force, and with it the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the EU has to respect ‘the right to social and housing assistance so as to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources, in accordance with the rules laid down by Community law and national laws and practices,’ (Article 34(3)).

So with the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion the time has come for specific action. Not only do we need local and regional strategies for combating poverty, but also a common ‘library’ for exchanging best practice at international level. The EU homelessness strategy should focus on the promotion of high quality services for the homeless, and should include urban planning, housing construction and social policy.

Angelika Werthmann (NI), in writing. – (DE) In the EU, more than 80 million people are at risk of poverty – that represents 16% of the population. Of those affected, 20 million are children, and having a job is in itself no guarantee of secure living standards in the EU: 8% of those in employment are at risk of poverty. The motion for a resolution from the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs puts forward proposals for implementing the EU 2020 strategy, one of the objectives of which is to reduce the number of people affected by poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020. I voted in favour.

Motion for a resolution - B7-0474/2011

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I am voting in favour. In an effort to mitigate the consequences of climate change, the focus of European climate policy has been long-term reduction of CO\(_2\) emissions. EU policy is lacking a comprehensive approach to climate-relevant anthropogenic emissions. It is also important to supplement our efforts against climate change, and to take advantage of existing technologies and other instruments, like the Montreal Protocol, bilateral agreements, and so on. Other relevant policies include: (a) slowing down production and consumption of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), which potentially contribute to global warming; (b) reducing black carbon emissions, giving special attention to emissions affecting snowy or icy regions, including the Arctic, Greenland and the Tibetan-Himalayan glaciers; (c) reducing polluting gases which lead to tropospheric ozone formation.

Sophie Auconie (PPE), in writing. – (FR) This motion for a resolution calls on the European Commission to adopt a comprehensive approach in the fight against climate change, in other words, to include black carbon, HFCs, fluorinated gases and so on in its fight against climate change, as these gases also have an effect on the climate. However, I spoke during the sitting to make two key points: firstly, yes, we must also prepare to act against these gases with climatic consequences similar to those of CO\(_2\). Secondly, no the time is not yet ripe for action on this issue: it is essential to allow our industry to breathe and to adapt. I believe that, despite everything, this resolution is a useful indication to the international community of the European Parliament’s determination in the face of the climate challenges. More than ever, especially as regards environmental issues, government is all about planning.
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because in order to combat one of the greatest problems the world faces today – climate change – we must change the way we consume and produce energy. It is scientifically proven that anthropogenic factors – environmental factors formed or heavily influenced by human activity – encourage climate change. We must take urgent action to limit the overall global mean surface temperature increase, which may reach up to 2°C, reduce the depletion of the ozone layer, slow glacial melting and begin to develop a low-carbon strategy. Several fast-action strategies have been developed on how to reduce emissions of black carbon and gases and end the production and use of harmful chemical compounds within five to ten years. The European Union has also begun to apply a regulation under which there will be stringent and regular vehicle emissions tests. However, the damage done may be irreparable, and action must therefore be taken at European and international level as a matter of urgency.

John Bufton (EFD), in writing. – I voted against this report to show my disapproval of the European Union’s action on HFCs under the Montreal Protocol as a prime example of a non-market-based approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions at COP-17 in Durban. In a time of austerity, new stricter rules on greenhouse gases, mainly used in refrigeration and air conditioning systems, will create extra expenditure to people already struggling with a higher cost of living. In addition I would like to express opposition to creating a further burden for the car industry by pushing forward the idea of reducing bloc carbon emissions.

Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) The Member States must speed up their efforts to combat global warming and further reduce their emissions of fluorinated gases, used especially in refrigerators and air conditioning systems. The policy for combating global warming is focused essentially on carbon dioxide. However, taking stricter measures against other greenhouse gases would be cheap and effective. Targeting hydrofluorocarbon emissions is profitable as they can be reduced at a cost of between five and 10 centimes per tonne against EUR 13 per tonne for carbon dioxide. The European Commission must also tackle ‘black carbon’ (those tiny particles of carbon found in soot), in particular via legislation on vehicle exhausts. ‘Black carbon’ has a significant impact on global warming by absorbing the sun’s heat and accelerating the thawing of snow and ice.

Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I voted in favour of a motion for a resolution on ‘a comprehensive approach to non-CO₂ climate-relevant anthropogenic emissions’, which should take into account all sources, all existing options for mitigating global warming, and reducing production and consumption of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), black carbon emissions and gases that lead to tropospheric ozone formation.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) At a time when the debate on pollutant gas emissions has become unavoidable and in which maintaining the current energy dependency on oil and its derivatives is unsustainable, it is important to find alternative energy sources that are more environmentally friendly and equally reliable. It is also crucial that Europe find innovative ways of promoting growth that is sustainable and ‘greener’, in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy. Green growth that does not harm competitiveness requires a sustainable and consistent energy policy, the proper functioning of the emissions trading market and recognition for national projects that contribute to Union objectives.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) In recent times we have witnessed several climate-related disasters, such as the Fukushima tsunami, hurricanes in the Caribbean Sea,
long periods of drought on the African continent which have thousands of victims due to malnutrition, etc. Situations like these force us to reflect on the global consequences of climate change. In fact, there is a lack of integrated policies on controlling pollutant gas emissions (CO₂, CFCs, black carbon, and so on) both at EU level and at Member State level. Furthermore, some of the measures implemented have not had the hoped-for effects, such as the directive to improve air quality. If we do not take robust measures, such as the directive on reducing greenhouse gases from conditioners, it will be very difficult to meet the objectives set for 2050. In light of the above, I welcome the Commission’s objective of reviewing other regulations, and I am voting for this motion for a resolution, following the oral question on a comprehensive approach to non-CO₂ climate-relevant anthropogenic emissions, and drafted by our fellow Members, Mr Seeber and Mr Skylakakis, on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** This resolution broaches the pertinent problem of emissions into the atmosphere of non-CO₂ climate-relevant anthropogenic gas that could interfere with the Earth’s climate.

The almost exclusive attention given to carbon dioxide has contributed to obscuring, both at the level of public opinion and at the level of policy initiative, the reality that other compounds can contribute to what is known as the greenhouse effect. This attention is most likely self-serving, as it makes so-called ‘market solutions’ viable, such as the carbon market, and feeds the powerful interests queuing up to dominate this business.

This resolution indisputably has this merit: it draws attention to the consequences of other pollutants and to the need to take measures to control them. Some of these pollutants include methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆), halocarbons and halogenated hydrocarbons with strong global warming potential, and black carbon (soot).

The reference, albeit hesitant, to non ‘market’ solutions, and to their positive results, is equally important and should be valued. That is also true for the reference to the improper use of Kyoto Protocol flexibility mechanisms, such the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

For these reasons, we voted in favour of the resolution.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** This is a resolution with both positive aspects and some contradictions. However, the fact of the matter is that there are many different man-made atmospheric emissions that may interfere with the earth’s climate and the European Union’s approach to the problem of climate change has focused almost exclusively on carbon dioxide.

This cannot be unrelated to the fact that this is the compound around which it has been chosen to construct a scheme to create billions in fantasy financial assets through so-called carbon trading.

However, where they have already been tested, such market solutions have not proven effective. Quite the contrary, these solutions have shown themselves to be ineffective and misleading.

As such, as an alternative to so-called market solutions, it is important to adopt a regulatory approach to limiting those gas emissions which are likely to interfere with the earth’s climate. This approach must take into account the potential offered by scientific and
technical advances, the specific situation of each country and a necessary and profound change in the mode of production which currently dominates at global level.

Monika Flašíková-Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK) When the EU decided in 2008 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions, it showed its commitment to tackling the climate change threat and to lead the world in demonstrating how this could be done. The agreed cut of 20% from 1990 levels by 2020, together with a 20% renewables target, was a crucial step for the EU’s sustainable development and a clear signal to the rest of the world that the EU was ready to take the action required. This alone is not enough to deliver the goal of keeping global temperature increase below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. At the same time, the crisis has put heavy pressure on the EU economy. Businesses today are squeezed by depressed demand and the challenge of finding sources of funding.

With a lower carbon price, government revenue from auctioning could also be halved, adding to pressure on public finances and reducing another potential source of public funds available for the purpose of the fight against climate change. The requirement to find the investment needed in areas like electricity, heating, and transport to reach the agreed 20% renewable energy target has not gone away.

Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE), in writing. – (GA) This motion requests the European Commission to speed up efforts to reduce hydrochlorofluorocarbon emissions and recommends the gradual introduction of prohibitions on the use of hydrochlorofluorocarbons that damage the environment.

Françoise Grossetête (PPE), in writing. – (FR) It is essential to take fast, coordinated measures to combat global warming. CO₂ alone is not responsible for global warming: greenhouse gases such as carbon monoxide (CO), nitrous oxide (NOx) and methane also play a role. We must support innovation on the environmental level in our responsible industries. We must also press our trading partners to assume their responsibilities, just as we are doing. Let us not be the only ones to act.

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT) I welcomed this motion for a resolution because I am convinced that, both within the EU and globally, we need rigorous implementation of air pollution regulations and available technologies that can reduce NOx and CO emissions, which would reduce anthropogenic tropospheric ozone, a significant greenhouse gas. I believe that we need to develop a comprehensive European climate policy which takes account of all sources of warming and all mitigation options. In addition to considering CO₂ emission reductions, we should also place emphasis on strategies that can produce the fastest climate response.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing. – (SK) The objective of limiting the overall global annual mean surface temperature increase to 2°C (‘the 2°C objective’) became an international one after the Cancun agreements.

Failure to meet this objective will have enormous environmental impacts and economic costs, among others, increasing the likelihood of reaching tipping points where temperature levels begin to force the release of CO₂ and CH₄ from sinks such as forests and permafrost, and limit the ability of nature to absorb carbon in the oceans. A European climate policy must consider all sources of warming and all mitigation options.

The European Commission must inform the European Parliament of any actions it is taking in this direction.
David Martin (S&D), in writing. − I voted for this resolution which welcomes the European Union’s commitment to support action on HFCs under the Montreal Protocol as a prime example of a non-market-based approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions at COP-17 in Durban.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. − (PT) European and international climate policies have focused primarily on long-term reductions in CO$_2$ emissions through, for example, increased energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, and other low-carbon strategies. A comprehensive European climate policy able to benefit from taking into account all sources of global warming and all existing mitigation options, in addition to considering CO$_2$ emission reductions, should focus on the strategies that can produce the fastest possible climate response. The EU must therefore promote existing technologies that drastically reduce black carbon emissions, adopting regulations banning in the burning of forests and enforcing stringent and regular vehicle emissions tests.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), in writing. − In order to mitigate the consequences of climate change, while European climate policy has been focused on long-term reductions of CO$_2$ emissions, it is necessary to fight for preservation of nature by all means. I voted in favour.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing. − (DE) For as long as our planet has existed there have repeatedly been changes in the climate, as scientists can now impressively demonstrate. Glacial and interglacial periods shaped the planet and led to changes in flora and fauna. Now the Earth is said to be experiencing change once again. However, there is still reason to doubt that humans alone can be said to be responsible for these changes. New climate targets are agreed on at regular intervals, and failure to meet them sometimes incurs draconian penalties. Under the guise of ‘climate protection’ a lively trade is carried on that swallows up billions of euro worldwide without any certainty that it could actually make a lasting difference. I did not vote in favour of the motion for a resolution, because I believe, as mentioned, that there is no proof that climate change is caused, or even that it is being exacerbated, by the hand of man.

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE), in writing. − (LT) The European Union has set itself ambitious goals to become the world leader in the fight against climate change – we have also seen these efforts at the UN’s Climate Change Conferences. Nevertheless, we have to draw attention to the fact that it is not just carbon dioxide that has an impact on climate change, but also anthropogenic emissions. Unfortunately, without a single strategy on reducing these emissions, even though we are reducing the amount of CO$_2$, at the same time we are contributing to an increase in the amount of anthropogenic emissions. The EU’s strategy on the use of renewable energy estimates that, over the next 20 years, at least a fifth of all energy must be produced from renewable resources. The specific characteristics of certain Member States mean that a large proportion of such resources are biomass, which releases soot and other hazardous particles when combusted. At EU level we must therefore consider the issue of the need for a single strategy on all climate-relevant emissions.

Rolandas Paksas (EFD), in writing. − (LT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution, aimed at consolidating a comprehensive approach to climate-relevant anthropogenic emissions. Attention should be drawn to the fact that anthropogenic emissions are regarded as being among the most dangerous emissions to people and animals. Consequently, the Commission and the Member States must take fast action and develop a comprehensive European climate policy and strategies that would facilitate a rapid reaction to climate change problems. Given the danger of these emissions, technologies must be used in the
EU that would enable us to radically reduce emissions of soot and gases, and slash-and-burn methods must also be banned.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I voted for this motion for a resolution. Therein, Parliament informs the Commission that, amongst other things, fast-action regulatory strategies are available to reduce the production and consumption of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), black carbon emissions and gases leading to tropospheric ozone formation. These strategies can begin within two to three years and be substantially implemented within five to 10 years, producing the desired climate response within decades or sooner. This is particularly the case for some HCFCs whose public price is as low as EUR 0.05 to EUR 0.10 per tonne, in contrast to the price of carbon, which is currently over EUR 13 per tonne. In fact, as this is a race against time, Parliament calls on the Commission to inform them on whether steps are being taken to introduce rapidly new ways of dealing with this situation, in order to make up for lost time.

Rovana Plumb (S&D), in writing. – In an effort to mitigate the consequences of climate change, the European climate policy has been focused on long-term reductions of CO2 emissions. Scientific data prove that the EU policy is lacking a comprehensive approach towards the reduction of the non-CO2 climate-relevant anthropogenic emissions, namely the HCFCs, black carbon and pollutant gases that lead to formation of tropospheric ozone. The same data indicate that it is important to complement our efforts against climate change, by firmly and timely addressing the non-CO2 pollutants, while taking advantage of existing technologies and institutions. Relevant policy options include: (a) phasing down the production and consumption of HFCs with global warming potential, to accelerate the phase-out of HCFCs, and recover and destroy stratospheric ozone-depleting GHGs in discarded products and equipment, (b) reduction of emissions of black carbon, giving priority to emissions that affect regions of snow and ice, including the Arctic glaciers; (c) reduction of pollutant gases that lead to formation of tropospheric ozone, a significant GHG. The EU needs to develop a broader, more comprehensive climate change policy which would address the harmful effects of non-CO2 climate-related anthropogenic emissions, such as HFCs, black carbon and other pollutant gases which are particularly damaging to the lower ozone layer.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – In favour. Among other things the European Parliament: 1. Notes that European and international climate policies have focused primarily on long-term reductions in CO2 emissions, for example, through increased energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, and other low-carbon strategies; 2. Calls for a comprehensive European climate policy which can benefit from considering all sources of warming and all mitigation options; stresses that in addition to considering CO2 emission reductions, it should place emphasis on strategies that can produce the fastest climate response; 3. Notes that fast-action regulatory strategies are available to phase down production and consumption of HFCs and to reduce emissions of black carbon and the gases leading to the formation of tropospheric ozone, and that these can begin within 2–3 years and be substantially implemented within 5–10 years, producing the desired climate response within decades or sooner, in particular for some HFCs at a public price as low as 5 to 10 cents per tonne, whereas the carbon price is currently over 13 euros per tonne;

Licia Ronzulli (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I voted for this text because it highlights the fact that European and international climate policies have focused primarily on CO\textsubscript{2} emissions,
whereas what we need is a comprehensive European climate policy that will take into account all sources of warming and all mitigation options.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD), in writing.** – (IT) We have reiterated several times that, at a time when the economic crisis is reducing corporate investments and lower costs in third countries are encouraging European industries to relocate elsewhere, we cannot burden our system with further costs. Pollution is a global issue and the commitment to reduce emissions cannot and must not come from Europe alone. Either we reach a global agreement or European companies will be encouraged to transfer outside the EU as a result of the additional costs imposed on them. We therefore intend to vote against the motion for a resolution, as it clearly goes against the interests of our workers.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D), in writing.** – I very much welcome this initiative and the attention which is now being paid to addressing non-CO\(_2\) emissions. Given the disproportionately large influence on climate change of some of these gases, it is clear that any effective emission reduction strategy cannot focus solely on carbon dioxide. We must, however, ensure that emission reduction policies apply fairly across different sectors. I could not support some colleagues earlier this year when they voted for measures which would have disproportionately and negatively affected the agricultural sector, particularly small-scale farms. Agriculture can and should make a big contribution to emission reduction, but it must be done fairly, which means avoiding harming the most vulnerable farmers.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI), in writing.** – (DE) Ambitious and coordinated action at all levels is required in order to be able to combat climate change effectively. Therefore, the motion for a resolution from the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety rightly calls for a comprehensive European climate policy which takes into consideration all sources of warming and all mitigation options. In Cancún, the European Union made a commitment to help to limit the global annual mean surface temperature increase to 2ºC. The motion for a resolution contains numerous proposals, ideas and specific demands. For this reason, I have voted in favour.

*9. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes*

*(The sitting was suspended at 13.50 and resumed at 15.45.)*

**IN THE CHAIR: ROBERTA ANGELILLI**

*Vice-President*

*10. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting: see Minutes*

*11. Situation in Libya (debate)*

**President.** – The next item is the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in Libya.

**Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, President-in-Office of the Council.** – Madam President, I have the pleasure of representing here the High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton, who cannot be in Strasbourg this afternoon. She is on a trip to the Middle East, as you
probably know, to prepare for the UN General Assembly next week, so she has asked me
to speak on her behalf and report back to her as soon as possible.

For Poland it is also an important signal that we take part in this debate on behalf of the
High Representative, because Poland has been staunchly and seriously involved in the
efforts of the international community to help Libya. You may recall that the first Foreign
Minister who went to Benghazi was the Polish Foreign Minister, last May.

It is almost seven months since the revolution in Libya began. During this time the world
has witnessed the extraordinary courage and determination of the people of Libya. We
should take this opportunity to pay tribute to them.

Throughout these months, the EU has stood by the Libyan people and consistently
demonstrated its support for their aspirations: democracy, justice and freedom to live their
lives without fear.

The EU has focused its efforts on three main areas: first, the political and diplomatic arena;
second, immediate support for those affected by the crisis and third, support for Libya as
it moves into the post-conflict period.

At the beginning of the crisis an Extraordinary European Council was called, on 11 March,
as a result of which the EU was able to articulate clear messages to the regime: the violence
should stop immediately and Gaddafi should go. The legitimate aspirations of the Libyan
people should be respected.

Since then, the EU has adopted a wide range of restrictive measures designed to ensure
that money and arms do not reach the regime. Now that Gaddafi has fled Tripoli and many
of his followers have dispersed, the focus today is on the progressive lifting of sanctions
to allow the new authorities to meet urgent needs on the ground.

The EU has played a key role in the various international initiatives designed to bring about
a resolution of the conflict. The High Representative participated in the various meetings
of the International Contact Group on Libya and those of the so-called Cairo Group of
international and regional organisations, which was established on her initiative. The EU
will continue to engage energetically in the Friends of Libya Group established after the
summit in Paris on 1 September.

In the past months we have also witnessed the considerable suffering of the Libyan people
as a result of the actions of the regime. We have followed with profound concern the siege
of Misrata, the violence in the streets of Tripoli and the flow of refugees from Libya into
neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt.

The EU’s response has been substantial, rapid and effective. As a whole, the EU has provided
more than €152 million in humanitarian assistance since the beginning of the crisis. For
its part DG ECHO has deployed teams to Benghazi and to the Tunisian and Egyptian borders
and, as from 28 August, to Tripoli too. As a result, the EU’s assistance has included help
in the evacuation of more than 24 000 third-country nationals, including from Misrata,
and the provision of assistance to those fleeing the conflict. It has also included emergency
health assistance, help for the war-wounded, protection of the civilian population, including
humanitarian mine action, and the provision of adequate logistics capacity, coordination
mechanisms and air transport to deliver relief aid to the beneficiaries.

As early as May, the High Representative visited Benghazi and opened an EU office there.
The EU office has allowed us to maintain direct contact with the National Transitional
Council (NTC) as well as to coordinate European assistance on the ground together with those Member States present in Benghazi. We also identified, together with the NTC, areas where early support could be provided: the strengthening of civil society and the media, capacity building for the new authorities and security sector support. These activities were launched rapidly.

Mr President, honourable Members, events in the past few weeks have moved with breath-taking speed. The regime has collapsed and those around Gaddafi have fled. Colonel Gaddafi has been ousted from power but he retains influence to destabilise the country. According to NATO, he still represents a threat to civilians. We are following closely the negotiations between the NTC and Gaddafi loyalists in the few pockets of resistance.

Libya is entering a process of transition. The challenges that the interim authorities face are huge: ensuring stability; restoring public services and the public administration; launching a process of democratic transition; support for the economy, initiating a process of transitional justice, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

The coming months will be critical. The EU has been planning its support for Libya in the post-conflict phase for some time. We have been guided in this by a number of principles, including Libyan leadership and the need to ensure close coordination through the UN with all international partners.

As in the aftermath of every conflict, the Libyan authorities are in need of funds to satisfy the provision of basic services to their population. In order to support them we have already de-listed 28 entities subjected to EU autonomous sanctions. We are working, both in Brussels and in New York, to obtain the release of remaining frozen Libyan assets as soon as possible.

We are already in close contact with the NTC’s Stabilisation Team and with the UN through the Secretary General’s Special Adviser on Post-Conflict Assistance. We already have staff on the ground in Tripoli and, together with partners, are beginning the process of assessment of needs in critical sectors identified by the NTC. Good international coordination will be essential to significantly reduce the risk of duplication of effort, and the risk of the Libyan authorities being overwhelmed during this important transition stage. I am pleased to say that we have already agreed a provisional division of tasks for the ‘first needs’ assessments in Libya with our Libyan and international partners.

Finally, Madam President and honourable Members, I should like to thank Parliament for its strong support in the past months. The statements made and the resolutions adopted by this House, as well as the concrete actions taken by many Members of the European Parliament, have been instrumental in developing Europe’s thinking and making our position heard.

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, on behalf of the PPE Group. – (ES)

Madam President, Commissioner, if we consider that a 42-year dictatorship has been brought to an end within a period of six months, in theory that could sound like a relatively short time frame. However, if we take this into account and consider it in the context of the human lives lost, the suffering caused and the setback this will bring for generations to come, then I think our assessment will be significantly different.

In any event, everything remains to be done now that Muammar Gaddafi’s regime has fallen: provide humanitarian aid; guarantee security; establish order and control along the borders; bring about economic reconstruction, as well as a process of transition under
extremely difficult circumstances; and ensure that there is no impunity for crimes committed.

The President-in-Office of the Council, Mr Dowgielewicz, has just said – and I agree with his assessment – that, within the framework of both NATO and the European Union, this despicable regime has been done away with thanks, in particular, to the action taken by specific Member States – such as France and the United Kingdom – and thanks to the determination and courage shown by the Libyan people.

We should also acknowledge that the European Union, after some early wavering and remaining within the scope of its powers, acted swiftly and properly. It is true, as well, that Parliament was the first authority to call for the recognition of the National Transitional Council (NTC), thanks – if truth be told – to an invitation by the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. It should also be noted that France was the first country to recognise the NTC. We have EUR 154 million in humanitarian aid, and a newly opened EU Office in Benghazi and Tripoli, which should quickly be upgraded to delegation status and for which a head of delegation with auctoritas should be appointed as soon as possible in order to tackle the important task of coordinating EU action with the Member States, and also with the Office that the Secretary General of the United Nations Security Council.

Madam President, Mr Dowgielewicz, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, just three days ago in this Parliament we, like many others around the globe, commemorated the tenth anniversary of the vicious terrorist attack on the Twin Towers. The EU must make the Arab Spring one of its absolute priorities for two reasons: firstly, in order to live up to that cry for freedom and dignity that is spreading through North Africa and the Arab nations; and secondly, to prevent radical Islamic fundamentalism from taking root in the societies around us and interrupting the process of transition that is under way in those countries and, above all, to prevent freedom from being threatened once again by barbarity and fanaticism.

Ana Gomes, on behalf of the S&D Group. – (PT) Madam President, we in Parliament hope that the conflict in Libya is nearing its end. The brave Libyan people deserve the suffering caused by 42 years of brutal dictatorship and six months of war to make way for a free and democratic country. In order for this to happen, Colonel Gaddafi and his henchmen need to be found and brought to justice.

The European Union, which promptly established a presence in Benghazi in May, was quick to raise the flag in Tripoli soon after the liberation of the capital. Now it should also be swift in unfreezing Libyan assets, under the supervision of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, and in setting about identifying other financial resources which had been diverted to the Gaddafi regime so that they do not fuel the destabilisation of the country, and so as to ensure their return to the Libyan authorities.

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service (EEAS) must be swift in responding to Libyan requests for help in interim governance and in the process of transition to democracy, ensuring the necessary coordination between Member States, so that national agendas do not override a coherent political strategy for the Union itself. Moreover, there must be no doubt about the EU’s respect for the sovereignty of the Libyan people, and it should facilitate the coordinating role that falls to the UN in bringing together various international contributions to the process of economic and institutional restructuring in Libya.
In order to promote security and reconciliation in Libya, the immediate priority must surely be to disarm the civilians who were forced to take up arms, and reintegrate them into society and the labour market. The EU can offer its experience and take a leading role in efforts towards disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and therefore in the reform of the security sector, the preparation of constitutional and electoral processes, the construction of the justice system, and institutional capacity building in civil society itself.

The credibility of the provisional Libyan Government will principally depend on its ability to deliver on its promises to construct a democratic state that respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its citizens – Libyans, but also foreigners – and in particular the immigrants who suffered so much under Colonel Gaddafi and who continue to suffer even now, as they are often unjustly accused of being mercenaries in the service of Colonel Gaddafi merely because of their skin colour.

We therefore welcome the recent statements by the President of the Transitional National Council, Mr Jalil, in Tripoli, announcing that Libya will be a moderate Muslim country. We hope that this means that sharia, enshrined in the first constitutional declaration as the principal source of the law, will be interpreted in such a way as to ensure full respect for the rule of law and human rights, particularly those of women and immigrants.

We in Parliament hope that the transitional government will lead the process of national reconciliation and, within this framework, ensure the participation of women and young people in all political and economic decision-making bodies.

We Europeans must draw the necessary lessons from our past in Libya as an example of bad foreign policy, or rather a lack of foreign policy, due to the collaboration of various European governments with the Gaddafi regime, whether by exchanging terrorists for oil contracts or by selling arms and outsourcing torture under the renditions programme of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

We need a new European foreign policy based on European values and principles, which can respond to the clear wishes of the Libyan people and all those in the southern Mediterranean, in places like Tahrir Square, who are crying out for freedom and dignity.

**Kristiina Ojuland, on behalf of the ALDE Group.** – Madam President, although Muammar Gaddafi’s regime has finally been overthrown in Libya, the country lies in a devastating state after the civil war and is facing several problems as we speak.

The National Transitional Council (NTC) has taken on the responsibility of rebuilding a liberal and free Libya, where democratic ideas must be respected by everybody. It is a difficult mission, and I believe that we also have an extremely important role to play to ensure the endeavour is successful. We should support the implementation of democracy by every means, and oppose every action that obstructs it. We must support the creation of a liberal economy as well as a free society.

The economic recovery is pivotal in securing the country’s irreversible transition to democracy. Therefore, ALDE welcomes releasing frozen Libyan assets and lifting the EU sanctions. Thus, the future of trade relations between the EU and Libya can be based upon fair and liberal principles. The strategic economic sectors must be put to the service of the Libyan people, and oil and gas production have to be resumed in order to finance Libyan nation-building efforts.
The most pressing task for the new Libyan authorities is ending the violence and establishing the elementary basis for the rule of law. The stability and security of the country require the setting up of functioning state structures. From the experience of my own country, Estonia, I can say that building democratic institutions can take some time. On the one hand we need patience, but in parallel we need to have a clear commitment from the NTC to rebuild a new Libya based on the values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group. – (FR) Madam President, Presidents, I would like to talk about Libya, Syria and also the Middle East, because as I see it, everything is somewhat interlinked at present.

In the case of Libya, the European Union’s position is actually very simple. After some initial hesitation, the European Union has taken action: as has just been said, the European Parliament did push for recognition, which was a good move. We now need to maintain very open and honest discussions with the new National Transitional Council that is going to be appointed, because the real problem at present – and it is the same in Egypt and Tunisia – is knowing what Libya’s future constitution will look like. It is a very thorny problem.

I believe that we cannot impose our democratic model, but at the same time the European Union does clearly have a positive role to play in providing economic aid, investment and technical – rather than ideological – assistance as Libya begins to create a State that does not yet exist.

It is true that there are no political parties. It is a political desert: there are small groups, individuals and fighters. How do you turn fighters into civilians? In my view, this is where the European Union must bring its influence to bear: in the post-war period of establishing civil order. Of course, that is difficult, as is apparent in all the countries. How does one take possession of the weapons? How does one reorganise society around a democratic mechanism?

Sooner or later, Parliament, the Commission and the Council will need to have an in-depth discussion on the failings of our countries and our policies over the last five years, on how our relations and links with dictatorships have failed. Sooner or later we will have to learn from what we did and establish what we owe these countries.

On the subject of Syria, I believe that Parliament needs to impose further sanctions. As I see it, Aleppo is the real focus of the struggles in Syria. Those involved in international trade – and not just the oil industry – know that they no longer have a future with President Assad. That is why further sanctions are needed. The situation in which we find ourselves has some parallels with the situation in South Africa: the business world needs to understand that there can be no future with President Assad, who will survive one way or another. Aleppo is the key. That is why oil sanctions are needed and why European companies can no longer do business in today’s Syria.

Let me conclude with the Middle East. Baroness Ashton will try to persuade the Palestinians not to request recognition of their State in the United Nations. This is a serious matter. You should ask all those who are telling the Palestinians not to request this and tell us, here and now, what is the solution? Do not talk to them about negotiations, because there are none at present. Israel is not willing to negotiate. We need to be careful, because in the next couple of years, maybe in six months’ time, or in a year, the Palestinian territories might
turn the process on its head. The Palestinian Authority might slip the key under the door and pass it to the Israelis, saying: ‘It’s yours. All this is Israel. Call it Israel-Palestine.’ Then they will begin to fight for one man, one vote, which Israel will be unable to accept because the Palestinians will make up the majority, so Israel will be forced to create an apartheid State. At which point we will be compelled to agree sanctions against Israel.

The future is not rosy. By making a choice today to tell the Palestinians to wait and see, we need to tell them what to look for. That has been clear for months. At present, despite President Obama’s efforts, no one has succeeded in bringing the Israelis back to the negotiating table. I do not see much hope for the Palestinians while Mr Lieberman is the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Israel.

Charles Tannock, on behalf of the ECR Group. – Madam President, Free Libya Forces have courageously liberated Tripoli. They have control of the country’s key population centres. There have been few reprisals or abuses committed by the anti-Gaddafi forces, in contrast to the serious war crimes committed by Gaddafi loyalists and foreign mercenaries. The deranged despot Gaddafi has finally been overthrown and it is clear from this that the people of Libya are now keen to establish a pluralist democracy. I am not sure whether it is going to be liberal yet. However, though Gaddafi himself is no longer in Tripoli, some of his supporters are still at large and still pose a security threat until he is either killed, or captured and surrendered to the ICC.

My group, the ECR, strongly supports NATO in its continued operations – which are, I have to say, unique in that there have been zero casualties from a military point of view to date – to protect Libyan civilians. It is also vital that we support the NTC-led political transition that must now take place from a dictatorship of over 40 years to the ultimate goal, a government chosen by the people and thereafter subject regularly to elections to ensure its legitimacy to govern by consent.

I have to say it was not a proud day for the EU in terms of unity at the beginning, particularly the abstention by Germany in the Security Council over Resolution 1973. The UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, in contrast, must be congratulated on his courageous initiative alongside French President Sarkozy early on, speaking out as lone voices in the international community – though the wider community internationally must now continue to support Libya as it starts to rebuild itself. It has not just to recover from a war that has killed many of its citizens and build a democracy; it has to build this in the absence of any meaningful civil or political institutions.

The mountain that the National Transitional Council must now climb is great, and it will need all the friendly support it can get in order both to re-establish security in the country and to provide the basic services to its citizens, when right now many of the inhabitants of Tripoli, for instance, do not have access to clean running water. I have to say to the African Union, and South Africa in particular, get real. Gaddafi your friend has gone, please recognise the NTC as a legitimate authority in Libya.

Mercifully, once oil production restarts Libya will again be a rich country. We in the ECR therefore welcome the lifting by the EU of the freeze on assets held by the Member States, and believe that these should be returned forthwith to the NTC for reconstruction efforts and humanitarian aid. It will also be necessary to subject Libyan finances, including in the City of London which I represent, to the investigation of forensic accountants in order to determine the whereabouts of the billions that were stolen under Gaddafi’s rule. All this must remain nevertheless a Libyan-led process without any occupying foreign army.
We must also ensure that surrounding countries such as Algeria and Niger pledge to hand over Gaddafi, and any accused members of his family, to the NTC so that they may be put on trial for the crimes against humanity for which they stand accused, either in Libya, or before the ICC in The Hague. The NTC must for its part guarantee fair and transparent trials for all those found guilty of serious human rights crimes.

We congratulate Libya on its achievements thus far. We recognise the bravery of the rebels, in particular the long-suffering Berbers, that had the courage to fight this ruthless regime, and we offer our condolences to the families of the victims both of the regime and of the battle for freedom. We welcome the NTC’s constitutional declaration announced last month as a suitable interim constitution, and we must now fully support their quest for a new, democratic Libya, as a moderate Muslim country eschewing extremism of any kind.

Miguel Portas, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group. – (PT) Madam President, the Arab Spring is surely the most important world event to take place this year. I would therefore like to express my support for the proposal to award the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to this revolutionary process. This gesture would, and will, have undeniable symbolic value.

For years and years the European Union and its governments were complicit in dictatorial regimes that oppressed aspirations of freedom in the Arab world. Since then, this side of the Mediterranean has always preferred business to freedom, the repression of migratory flows to respect for human rights, and even silence to denunciation. This is a time of change, and the question is whether we really want to change, or simply to give the appearance of doing so.

In Libya the defence of civilian victims has turned into an aerial war for regime change, promoted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The military action undertaken by this organisation, led by Paris and London, has exceeded and distorted the very mandate of the United Nations (UN). This abuse is so overt that military action is still continuing, even though pockets of resistance are minimal. NATO bombing does not ensure the success of the revolution that has reached Tripoli: rather, at this point it is increasing the scope for business that the reconstruction of infrastructure will ensure for the various governments involved in the war.

Some people are very concerned about the oil exploration contracts that Total SA may acquire. However, my concerns are different. I would like the National Transitional Council to clearly uphold the commitments that it has made regarding national reconciliation and respect for human rights, in particular those of women and immigrants, and Europe must support them in this priority.

Every spring eventually turns to autumn, even in Libya. About half a million immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa fled Libya and are now in Tunisia and Egypt without the support that they need. This is the top priority at this time.

In addition, in Libya it was not only Colonel Gaddafi’s forces and NATO planes that killed civilians: unworthy acts have also been committed on the rebel side. In light of this, it is also vital to ensure an independent investigation that contributes to national reconciliation.

Our support for democratic movements has to be genuine. We must allow peoples to take charge of their own destinies, and Europe’s role should not be one of intervention or double standards. We cannot condemn the repression in Syria yet silence it in Bahrain. We cannot boycott oil from Syria yet accept it from Yemen. Indeed, we should not accept boycotts
that harm a country’s population. This is the only way in which the Arab Spring will bear fruit, because it will be the work of the Arabs themselves.

**Fiorello Provera,** on behalf of the EFD Group. – *(IT)* Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, in a statement on 5 October Commissioners Füle and Malmström expressed their satisfaction with the outcome of discussions with Tripoli on a cooperation agenda which included the management of migration flows, border management, pan-African policy and international protection for refugees and asylum seekers.

This ambitious agenda came to an end for the reasons we know – NATO’s military intervention and the change of regime in Tripoli. I believe that the first objective is to resume cooperation with Libya as soon as possible on these major issues – border management, migration flows, energy supplies and the fight against terrorism. That said, another equally important issue is to support Libya’s new leadership in organising free elections as the first step in a long process that will, I hope, one day make it possible to build a truly democratic and stable country.

Building a democracy is much more difficult than winning a war, especially if there is no previous memory of democracy in the country. I wanted to know what practical plans can be put in place in the short term to take action within civil society, especially in culture and education, which are key elements for building a true democracy in people’s hearts and minds.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI).** – *(DE)* Madam President, Commissioner, without a doubt, political upheaval is always accompanied by a certain amount of chaos. Whether Libya will founder in the chaos will probably depend, firstly, on whether it succeeds in establishing a democratic system but also, secondly, on how it deals with the past. If nothing else, outbreaks of violence associated with the Mubarak trial, just like the Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide, for example, indicate that dealing with the past seems to be somewhat problematic in the Arab world.

As soon as the gulf opens between the political leaders of the uprising and the military rebels, chaos is probably inevitable. The large quantities of seized weapons in particular are highly dangerous. Who will take the weapons away from the young enthusiasts? What happens when local rivalries erupt into weapon fire? Not to mention the possibility that heavy weapons or rockets could end up in the hands of terrorists.

A UN mission may indeed be necessary to keep the peace, but in view of the increasing national pride of the Libyans it could be misconstrued as interference. However, we would certainly face the hardest litmus test if the Islamists were to be able to utilise the power vacuum for their own purposes.

Therefore, the EU needs a well-thought-out Libyan strategy, although we know that the release of the frozen assets alone would be enough to finance the reconstruction of Libya. Once oil production is back up and running, however, an economic boom could set in, from which the EU could certainly also benefit accordingly.

**Elmar Brok (PPE).** – *(DE)* Madam President, President-in-Office of the Council, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, firstly, the fall of a dictatorship is good news. It is good news that this has primarily been brought about by courageous freedom fighters in the country. However, I would like to emphasise that, in particular, this is also the achievement of NATO and some of the Member States of the European Union, which took the leading role in this matter in every respect. It is also apparent, however, that, all in all,
a coordinated EU policy, which was also coordinated by the External Action Service, and sanctions helped to bring about this success. When we proceed in a coordinated way, it is clear that it can result in success.

We now need to help with the transition. In the long term, this will not so much be a question of money, as the oil-rich country of Libya will have plenty of money of its own. We need to help with the development of democracy and the rule of law and with training young people, with measures to develop infrastructure and multilateral measures with cross-border implementation with a view to a true Southern Partnership for the whole North African region, for the Arab region. However, we must also ensure that – and this is a warning for the Commission – when it comes to the money that we give, it must not be the case, as has often happened in the past, that 60, 70 or 80% of it is spent on having studies carried out, but that local projects are financed that people do not have to wait three or four years to see realised, but where something happens immediately, so that people who have brought about a revolution for two reasons – freedom and better standards of living – will have a future.

Allow me to make one last comment with regard to the Middle East in anticipation of a later debate: we need to support the two-state solution, which entails movement on both sides. The United Nations resolution must enable this to happen. This means that Israel must be willing to move on this issue, too.

However, it is also a question of the unity of the European Union, which we must not put at risk. I have every confidence that the High Representative, who is in the Middle East right now, is building a bridge in this regard. You know that, for historical reasons, my country has a particular obligation here and that this matter is not particularly easy for us, but we hope that bridges will be built here and that we as Europeans will be able to cross them together in the interests of a better future for the region.

Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D). – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, despite there still being some pockets of resistance by supporters of the old Libyan regime and even if, while Colonel Gaddafi is still around, the National Transitional Council still fears possible backlashes, it is right and proper to focus our attention on the post-war challenges.

The European Union’s role in the process of reconstruction and stabilisation of Libya is extremely important. Aside from the immediate priorities of food, medicine, a plan for security, public order, border control and the highly sensitive issue of withdrawing arms, it is important to prepare for medium- to long-term action. This begins with the contribution necessary for the election process that will open up to institutional capacity building in the transitional phase, and to economic and social development.

After the aggressive stage of the crisis which saw the European Union isolated, it is right to think that this is the time to strengthen Europe’s role with the right amount of determination. We do not just have a humanitarian duty, however important that may be, when thinking of the many migrants in Libya. We cannot fail to be present at the table that will redesign the geopolitical structure of the region, which now has another important protagonist in the shape of Turkey, as we are seeing at the moment with Prime Minister Erdogan’s triumphant visits to various Arab countries, just as we cannot delegate management of the post-war phase solely to the group of countries that took part in the NATO mission.
There are already signs of competition on the Libyan stage between some Member States which is not subtle and will not have a beneficial outcome. In fact, in the race towards the new Libya it is not difficult to see economic and energy-related interests. The plans for building a democratic Libya are not so clear, and this is what requires hard work and dedication. This is where the importance of the role of the European Union comes in, not least because the road before us is not an easy or a short one, and above all we must bear in mind that a democratic outcome is by no means guaranteed.

**Edward McMillan-Scott (ALDE).** - Madam President, I am sure the House regrets, like I do, the absence of Lady Ashton. On the other hand, I recognise that the work she is doing in the region is of primordial importance, not just for Middle East peace, but also for wider regional stability and security which, as has so often been said, has been dramatically altered by the extraordinary events of the Arab Spring and its fall-out.

I recall a debate in this Chamber on 8 March, when many of us were demanding that the European Union should recognise the National Transitional Council. I had the honour to be one of the first politicians in Europe to welcome Mahmoud Jibril, the current acting Prime Minister, to my office here. At that time, Baroness Ashton was extremely reluctant to commit herself. I think that was a pity, because European leadership on this question would have been quite accessible. Immediately thereafter, Mr Jibril went to Paris and got the recognition of the French President.

This Chamber has been the source of some informative and inspirational debate, but today we are looking at a Libya which has transformed since we last met here in July. Across the region, the developments from the Arab Spring are evolving in an unsteady way – whether it is in Egypt or in Tunisia, which I visited recently and is facing elections very soon now. My message to the House today, and to those listening from other institutions, is that we must be ready for change, but also for uncertainty, because the future is not as clear as we might have hoped a few months ago.

Can I conclude by saying that I do hope the House can support the consensus that the Sakharov prize should be awarded to the martyrs of the Arab Spring and some of the leading personalities within it. This would be an extremely important and timely gesture showing that we care about democracy and human rights, and that we want them to extend not just to Libya, to Tunisia and to Egypt, but far beyond that in the Arab world and elsewhere.

**Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Madam President, a very warm welcome to you, Mr Füle. I believe that Libya is currently very much at a crossroads. The next few weeks will be crucial. We receive alternately good and bad news. On the one hand, we hear that the water supply and education are returning to normal, but on the other there is the question of the role of the Islamists. The messages keep changing and it is not clear where things are heading. Now it is time, after months of divisions in Europe, to finally act in a united way. Now it is time to send out a united message.

Apart from humanitarian aid I see a few areas I think we should focus on. First, Europe should offer expertise in the area of mediation and reconciliation, which is vital in the immediate aftermath of a conflict that so deeply divided – and still divides – the country. Second, the European Union should support the new Libyan leadership in bringing all perpetrators of violence to justice while insisting that the rule of law is upheld. Third, the EU should offer its support, together with other actors from the region and in flexible ways, in the field of security sector reform and justice sector reform. Special attention needs to
be paid to the demobilisation and reintegration of all those who served in the armed struggle.

There is one more thing, however, that you should not forget, and that is the role of the private sector. I believe that the European companies that now scramble to tap into the country’s vast energy reserves have an important responsibility. These companies should adhere to strict transparency rules and declare where their money flows. The Commission could play a role here and encourage European companies to commit to a common code of conduct since we do not have binding legal instruments in place yet. Finally, I count on you to keep a close eye on the role of women in the new Libya.

Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR). – (PL) Madam President, Commissioner, looking at the post-revolutionary situation in Libya, I believe above all that the EU should ensure it presents a common position. We suffered when it appeared that we were not speaking as one. When we speak as one, as the European Union, our voice is heard and is clear and unambiguous.

Today, we very much need a clear-cut signal directed not only at Libya but also at other countries which have obtained their freedom as a result of revolution. However, we are actually talking about the people of those countries. I am very much afraid that our interest will end with the current very important period of transformation, which entails preparations for free elections, and that we will focus all our efforts on those elections. A great deal of work and a great deal of support from all the EU Member States is required so that we can send these countries a clear signal that we know how to help them and that we are showing them the way which many countries around the world have successfully taken. However, we should not stop at these tactical activities.

In thinking of the events in North Africa, let us not forget the young people who demonstrated in town squares and those who demanded freedom because they could not see a way to link their individual destinies with that of their countries, because they felt that they were not needed. Hence my proposal that we should not forget about long-term programmes, and not just those dealing with humanitarian issues and the lack of water. Let us stress very clearly in the context of the Southern Partnership that these programmes must also cover education and universities, giving those who protested and risked their lives a chance, so that they do not become bitter in 10 to 20 years’ time, feeling that although they took a risk, their lives have not changed. Today, too, the European Union has a responsibility towards the hopes and desires of the people who gained freedom in North Africa.

Charalampos Angourakis (GUE/NGL). – (EL) Madam President, the NATO war against Libya has culminated in the slaughter of large numbers of civilians in Tripoli and other cities. Military developments are being determined by the bombings by the NATO, EU and US war machine, which therefore bears full responsibility for these crimes. The forces of the so-called rebels, led by former associates of Gaddafi under the flag of the monarchy, are finishing off this work of destruction.

However, yet again we have seen the endless hypocrisy and barbarity of the US administration and of the governments of the EU Member States, as well as the role of international news agencies involved in imperialist propaganda. The aim of the war was not to forge an alliance between the imperialists and Gaddafi, but for NATO forces to gain complete control of the oil and natural gas before their competitors. They are trying to consolidate the strategy for the new Middle East and to crush popular uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East.
The decision by the EU Council on 1 April in connection with the EU land campaign in Libya proves that the governments are stepping up their imperialist aggression in order to secure a share of the spoils for EU multinationals in that country. The arm of euro-submission forces is long. Having supported the creation of the no-fly zone which ushered in this murderous war, they are now welcoming the victory by the rebels, for which read NATO, and are talking about a new leaf being turned in Libya. It is clear from the haggling over oil and reconstruction at the Paris summit that the only way forward for the people is to fight against imperialism, against the European Union and NATO; that is the way forward to a different society and to a change in fortune in the area, the only way to secure peace and cooperation between peoples.

Mario Mauro (PPE). – (IT) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to draw your attention to a passage in the resolution regarding Libya, on which we will be voting in plenary tomorrow. It is the passage which takes note of the speech by Chairman Jalil in Tripoli announcing that Libya wants to be a moderate Muslim country with a constitution reflecting this fact.

I believe this is a crucial factor, not only for the future of Libya, but also for the future scenario of all the countries in the Mediterranean area. Tunisia and Egypt will also have a new constitution. I am asking you and I am asking us as a Parliament what we are doing to present ourselves as interlocutors in this delicate stage in which new constitutions will decide how populations numbering millions of people will live together, and I am saying this because the constitutional issue is a very slippery and very complex one.

God exists in the constitution of the United States and also in the constitution of Sudan, but the result is not the same. God does not exist in the French constitution or in the Chinese constitution, but again the result is not the same. Announcing or not announcing values or non-values is not enough. We have to understand how we are building our future together.

Therefore I propose that there should be a mission of the European Parliament, such as the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, and a mission of the European Commission that does not try to tell the Libyans how to write their constitution, but simply tells them our convictions, what we believe in and what underlies our constitutions and our concept of democracy.

Véronique De Keyser (S&D). – (FR) Madam President, I have two points, which I basically share with Mr Mauro and Mr Provera. The first relates to Sharia law and the second to immigration.

I did hear that the European flag was flying in Tripoli, which is all well and good; however the Libyan revolution belongs to the Libyans nonetheless; and if we are going to support the transitional phase that is about to begin, we need to understand the full picture.

As regards Sharia law, which according to Mr Abdul Jalil is going to be a ‘soft’ version, I would like to know more. What is soft Sharia law? It is a question of interpretation. From one regime to another with the same constitution, Sharia can do damage.

During the dark hours of the war, we met some Libyan women here. They were absolutely remarkable women, in fact it was quite staggering – one of them had been raped over there. They said, ‘We want to have a say. We have fought for years and we will continue to fight.’
For all those women who have fought, who want to have a say and who want a different Libya, I think this constitutional framework is absolutely crucial. I am with Mr Mauro on this question, apart from a few small differences, but I want us to deal with this properly.

The second issue is that of immigration. I was one of the first to oppose the talks for the immigration agreement we wanted to make with Colonel Gaddafi, in a country that was blithely violating human rights, and we knew it. Now I hear that these talks are going to start up again; however we still have the same problem that this immigration policy is open to the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. This is a real problem.

However, is it not possible for us to have a different vision of how to solve this problem, and to think about immigration in terms of development? What needs to be done to help Libya make use of this labour capital, now that it needs migrant workers? Could we not invest in a joint immigration-development project, instead of picking up where we left off in the negotiations and ending up with detention centres that we have to visit to check that they are not breaching human rights?

I would like us to be creative, therefore, on this, and I call upon the Council and the Commission to resume their work on these two subjects with Parliament’s help, but with a completely new vision.

Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE). – (DE) Madam President, the situation in Libya today gives us hope that, in future, power, despotism and the rule of one man will no longer be the decisive factors determining life in Libya, because new state structures are being created, and here it is extremely important that the EU does what it can to ensure that these structures represent the rule of law, that all citizens are equal before the law and that there is legal certainty. It is extremely important for us now to concentrate on this in particular in this situation. It would, of course, be particularly desirable for the Libyans to decide to enshrine universal human rights, which are laid down in both pacts, in their constitution and to establish the protection of human dignity.

It is good that the EU is working to ensure that the death penalty is abolished in Libya. That is also possible in Muslim communities and societies, as we see in Turkey, where it has been abolished in peace time and at a time of war. It is also important for Libyan society to deal with the human rights violations of the past. In this regard, we know of successful and less successful examples from Latin American military dictatorships, and we should learn from the good examples.

Addressing the human rights violations also applies to the most recent past. We know that, during hostilities, it is not only one side that violates human rights. I would therefore ask that the report presented by Amnesty International documenting the human rights violations by both sides be taken seriously. Perhaps this is an opportunity to set up an independent committee, like the one in Tunisia, to analyse these crimes.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – (RO) Madam President, on Monday afternoon we asked not only to hold a debate but also propose a resolution on Libya during our current session. The argument we put forward was that it was a good idea to express our view via a vote before Gaddafi was captured or fled. I personally believe that the Gaddafi regime’s final days are numbered. I believe that it will not feature again during our next session, even if there are, as we know, strongholds of resistance, mainly in Bani Walid. However, Libya is gradually heading towards a transition which we all want to be democratic.
As previous speakers have also mentioned, the transformation and conflict which have created the current situation were obviously initiated by the Libyans. At the same time, European states have played an important role in:

1. achieving an international consensus on intervention and
2. ensuring that a number of states were involved in NATO operations aimed at protecting civilians.

This is precisely why we have a responsibility. The basic responsibility relates to rebuilding the institutions or, put more accurately, building a truly democratic political system which will respect human rights. I welcome the comment made by my colleague Mario Mauro. At the same time, we are all aware that this reconstruction process will not be able to start as long as uncertainty surrounds the security situation.

In conclusion, I would say that Libya's reconstruction also depends on national reconciliation, which means not only investigating and punishing crimes committed during Gaddafi's time, but also finding a way to ensure access to justice for all those wronged during the revolution, no matter who the perpetrators of the crimes have been.

Roberto Gualtieri (S&D). – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, after 42 years of dictatorship and six months of conflict Libya is at a turning-point in its history that could open the way to a future of democracy, peace and development. This future is in the hands of the Libyans and no one can expect to impose choices and ready-made solutions on them, but at the same time it is clear that the European Union has a great responsibility, a decisive role to play in supporting the process of stabilisation and transition to democracy in the country.

After being marginalised by the divisions among its members in the early stages of the conflict, a conflict the wise management of which can be attributed to NATO, the EU has gradually begun to demonstrate the capacity for action that we all value and which has produced concrete results, with the opening of the office in Benghazi, missions in Tripoli, which we would like to be more coordinated, external service action and ECHO (Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection).

This activism must now find its place in the context of a strong and credible political strategy capable of defining a multilateral framework that is both robust and effective, and of ensuring a true unity of purpose within the international community, preventing overlapping and competition and guaranteeing real support for the Libyan transition. The transition will inevitably be long and complex, and will have to focus on national reconciliation while preventing the creation of new divisions within the country. At the same time it will have to ensure progress and democracy, and guarantee the involvement of civil society and the creation of new ruling classes. During this transition the return to normality and restoration of public order means difficult problems such as border control, rebuilding the judicial system and the security forces, and controlling the widespread distribution of weapons, must be addressed as a matter of urgency, while at the same time the transition has to be based on a robust and credible road map that is both democratic and representative.

All this requires dialogue, commitment, leadership skills, as well as intensive planning and work to identify resources. It is therefore an important test for the EU, for the European External Action Service, and for its comprehensive approach, and the European Parliament is ready to play its part and to support this commitment.
Arnaud Danjean (PPE). – (FR) Madam President, I hope that the resolution on Libya that we will be voting on tomorrow, and on which there is broad agreement, will be just as relevant as the resolution that we approved here six months ago, where the bulk of the provisions have proved perfectly reasonable.

The condemnation and sanctions aimed at the Gaddafi regime, the introduction of the principle of the duty to protect civilian populations, if necessary through recourse to military force, and the recognition of the legitimacy of the National Transitional Council: all of these provisions were approved here before they were ever discussed in the European Council or implemented by the Member States. They form the backbone of the action taken by the international community.

We should honour all those countries, particularly the European countries, of which there are many, that have been steadfastly committed to supporting the Libyan people’s desire for freedom through both diplomatic and military means. I feel that it is also important to pay tribute to the French pilots who, on 19 March, wiped out the columns of Colonel Gaddafi’s troops that were marching on Benghazi, thereby preventing the town from being added to the roll-call of ravaged towns mourned by Europe, such as Vukovar and Srebrenica.

Six months on, obviously we need to avoid unwarranted optimism, because although Colonel Gaddafi’s reign has come to an end, the conflict itself has not, and also because the challenges associated with the embryonic transition are massive and far from resolved.

The European Union therefore needs to act now by taking a leading role in this delicate phase. We need to work with other international players to offer prompt assistance and support that go beyond the humanitarian efforts that have already been made and that focus primarily on supporting civil movements, establishing institutions and organising the security sector. First and foremost, these concerted efforts must be based on one clear principle, namely that this transition must be guided by the Libyans themselves and that no one, albeit with the best intentions in the world, can take the place of the Libyan people’s hopes for independence.

Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D). – (EL) Madam President, the battle by forces opposing the autocratic regime in Libya finally appears to have been won. The Gaddafi regime has gone, following a great deal of bloodshed. Today, the main concern is to reconstruct Libya on the basis of democracy, equality and peace. However, the situation is still extremely critical. Thousands of people are in dire circumstances, with no water, medication or food. Add to that the additional problems faced by refugees and it becomes clear that the European Union has an absolute duty to help this country get back on its feet.

Humanitarian aid is the top priority. However, establishing rule of law and democratic institutions, preventing a power vacuum and reconciliation are among the main challenges faced by the European Union.

The Union definitely did not come up to par in its response to the Libya issue. It failed to speak with one voice and allowed NATO to demonstrate that it is the only reliable player in the security sector. Today, we are being called upon to support the new Libya rising from the ashes and to guarantee respect for human rights, so that the people have a better future.

Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE). – (ES) Madam President, fortunately the Libyan opposition has successfully confronted Muammar Gaddafi’s dictatorship, with the help of the
international community. Now Gaddafi must be caught and judged for the crimes, violations of human rights, and possible crimes against humanity that he may have committed.

The most important thing of all at the moment is to focus our efforts on rebuilding the country and endeavour to help Libya become a democratic state based on the rule of law. There are certain vital elements for ensuring the country is secure and viable: establishing the normal functioning of infrastructures, particularly where water, electricity and oil are concerned; maintaining public order by means of a police force; and effectively collecting all the weapons that have been distributed throughout the country.

We should also remember the importance of supporting the Sahel countries: on the one hand, to avoid the extremely serious consequences for their security if mercenaries return and pro-Gaddafi forces flee to those countries; on the other hand, to support their institutions, which are enabling displaced persons from Libya to make an orderly return to their homes.

Finally, I believe that the deployment of a United Nations mission to the country would be key to achieving the objectives mentioned.

**Simon Busuttil (PPE).** - (MT) Madam President, what happened in Libya was a dream come true. I would like to congratulate the people of Libya for having the courage and determination to fight for their freedom.

At the same time I would also like to express my solidarity with the families of all those who lost their lives, who were the victims and martyrs of this revolution. I am proud of the fact that this parliament was among the first to call for a no fly zone, and one of the first to recognise the National Transitional Council. What now? Now we need to help Libyans take the next step towards a nation built upon the foundations of peace, democracy, justice and freedom. Now we must help them in the transition towards normality, so that the people of Libya can lead normal lives, with access to basic needs, like water and electricity, access to health care, and access to employment, which will give them dignity. There is a lot we can do. We can help Libya build democratic institutions which respect the law and the separation of executive, legislative and judiciary powers. We have a lot of experience we can offer in this regard, and in the building of a democratic environment. We must show that we are ready to back the people of Libya in every step they take towards democracy.

**Alf Svensson (PPE).** - (SV) Madam President, may the intentions and hopes of this resolution truly be realised so that we can see concrete action in Libya and from the European Parliament on the basis of what is stated in the resolution. It may perhaps also be appropriate to recall that the United States did not take the lead in this action – which I believe that we will also have to continue to be involved in – it was the EU that did that. It is perhaps also appropriate to recall that the EU, as several people here have already mentioned, was not united at the start. However, let us now show complete unity when it comes to helping to establish democracy in Libya.

We have learnt our lesson that there is no stability if there is no democracy. That is why it is so crucial now to emphasise in the constitution, as it has been said here, how important it is that the institutions are built on a democratic foundation. We can, of course, talk about the risks that the new Libya entails, but what choice did we have? I am sure that everyone agreed that Gaddafi had to go, and now we can feel satisfied that that has happened.
I also think that it is important to express a strong desire for relations with the countries of the EU not to be based primarily on oil contracts, but on lifting Libya into the democratic sphere. I very much like the expression used here by Mr Dowgielewicz, who spoke of ‘freedom without fear’. That is exactly what democracy is, and it is precisely what we want for the Libyan people.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – (GA) Madam President, I suppose after all the bad news about economic affairs that it is a good thing that we have good news to discuss. Without doubt it is good news that Colonel Gaddafi has been given his marching orders after being in power for forty-two years.

The revolutionaries and NATO should be praised, and within the European Union we should give credit to Britain and France, especially to David Cameron and Nicholas Sarkozy for the leadership and courage they have shown from the beginning.

We now must look to the future. Libya has particular advantages. They have financial resources that will be available to them in the future and they have oil wells that will ensure that they have a good standard of living. Baroness Ashton has a major role to play to ensure that there will be stability in the country and especially that they have a democratic government and that the people of Libya will be in charge of it.

Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE). – (FR) Madam President, the Libyan people need a new Libya, but Colonel Gaddafi will have to be halted in order to build that new Libya, because as long as this bloodthirsty autocrat remains on the scene, the civilian population will remain under threat.

Once that first step has been taken, reconciliation between the two sides will be needed, because although this conflict has taken on an international dimension through NATO’s intervention, the fact remains that it is a primarily civil war that has divided the country. It is not possible to rebuild a country that has been through a civil war without going through a period of reconciliation.

The National Transitional Council needs to rise to this challenge by laying solid foundations for democracy. For our part, we need to support the transition to the best of our ability and with much wisdom. We need to take a long-term perspective, not only in terms of financial aid but also with regard to the experience of democracy that we can offer Libya.

Katarína Neveďalová (S&D). – (SK) Madam President, Libya is currently at a crossroads. Only two weeks ago, the accounts of Libyan companies were unfrozen and the country can begin to move forward. A transition is occurring in this country from dictatorship to democracy, if all goes well. However, we know that similar regime changes are very difficult and lengthy. We can provide as an example the war in Iraq, which still has not produced any results, and the situation in the country is still highly critical. I therefore consider it very important that we closely monitor new developments in Libya and do everything possible to avoid further bloodshed. I fully agree with the statement by Ms Ashton. Indeed, it is high time that power in the country was handed over to the people. This situation is a challenge and a severe test of the people not only of this country, but also the entire international community. Let us therefore keep our fingers crossed.

Ioan Mircea Paşcu (S&D). – Madam President, after the taking of Tripoli the situation in Libya enters a new delicate phase – that of building the new state institutions. In the absence of an actor with enough authority to manage the process – see the army in Egypt or the lack of it in Iraq – that process will inevitably imply jockeying for power on the part
of all those involved in obtaining victory. The fact that most of those groups are armed and that those loyal to Gaddafi, who is still at large, are still active complicates the process.

Moreover, the administration of the country should be separated from state-building. The latter should not interfere with the former because, if it does, the discontent of the population could delay and complicate state-building. However, there is an external aspect too, namely how to provide support and at the same time not to get involved – as the victors are categorically demanding – and how to combine bilateral and multilateral elements in providing that support.

Finally, let us not forget that in this new phase the NATO strikes have become a highly sensitive issue, given that it is essential to avoid being perceived as interfering in the power game.

**Kyriakos Mavronikolas (S&D).** – *(EL)* Madam President, as every speaker has pointed out, the European Union needs to support the reconstruction of Libya. In other words, the whole of Europe needs to pull together and help the Arab nations in general to build their new states. Without doubt, if we fail to do so, there will be other countries that will do or will want to do that job.

Bearing in mind the adventurous stand which Turkey is currently taking in Eastern Europe, bearing in mind Turkey’s efforts to secure a leading presence in Libya, we should realise that, if the European Union wants to keep Turkey on the road to accession to the European Union, it needs to help these Arab nations and Libya in particular, so that Libya is not left with Turkey as its only example.

**Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE).** – *(FR)* Madam President, the fallout from the Arab Spring continues to have knock-on effects for all elements of our external policy. We therefore have a duty to address these challenges.

Today, the incredible hope born of the calls for democracy in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya needs to be translated into proper joint development projects. We have already identified the top priorities: humanitarian aid, cooperation on security, economic support and institutional assistance.

We now need to put those priorities into practice. Europe can make use of two existing instruments to support this development: the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean.

To this end, we need to strengthen these policies, particularly the section of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument that deals with cross-border cooperation. Indeed, this section allows us to finance specific projects to promote investment, social cohesion, environmental considerations and mobility in the Mediterranean basin. It specifically encourages the creation of networks of local and regional authorities which, by meeting and working together, can develop pragmatic responses to local needs and give citizens a very practical understanding of the aid that the European Union can provide.

**Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE).** – *(NL)* Madam President, around this time last year, the European Parliament tried to get some clarity about the EUR 60 million which the Commission had promised Libya for measures intended to keep migrants out of the country, in particular to protect Libya’s southern border, so that the migrants did not enter Libya and, thus, did not enter Europe from there. At the time, we tried to highlight the fact that,
many cases, these migrants were refugees, people fleeing dictatorships in sub-Saharan Africa.

We now have evidence that that was the case. Just look at the people who have been left behind in Tunisia and Egypt, who have fled Libya and who cannot return home: Somalis, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Sudanese, that is who the refugees are. There are still some 5 000 of them. I would like to ask the Commission and, especially, the Council if it is not possible for Europe to do something to relocate these people to Europe. My second question to the Commission is: what has that EUR 60 million which we gave Libya for things which we knew, even back then, were not right, been spent on?

IN THE CHAIR: ANNI PODIMATA
Vice-President

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL). – (PT) Madam President, the veritable massacre unleashed on the Libyan people by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and its main powers give us cause for concern. Five months of bombing, thousands of innocent civilians dead, infrastructure and social amenities destroyed, and a country in ruins: that is the inconvenient truth that those already launching themselves into pillaging the country’s resources and into the lucrative business of reconstruction are seeking to hide.

While oil and other Libyan natural resources are being carved up, they are preparing to rebuild what they have destroyed, at the expense of the Libyan people and the country’s sovereign resources. The Libyan people were, and still are, the victims of a flagrant violation of international law, of the United Nations Charter and of Security Council Resolution 1973, which, hypocritically, refers to the protection of civilians. These are the same civilians on whom NATO dropped its humanitarian bombs.

However, as reality has shown in other situations, when faced with aggression and imperialist war from the United States and Europe, people respond by resisting and fighting for peace, freedom and sovereignty, and by taking their destiny into their own hands.

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – (SK) Madam President, Libya is, after a long and fierce civil war, reaching a situation where finally they need no further weapons and military aid, and has time to consolidate the local situation.

Libya was a rich country before the war, however now it will be in need of our assistance. Citizens of the war-torn country will need basic food and water and, paradoxically, also fuel. They will need to repair war-damaged housing, schools, hospitals and looted shops. They will need to restore public administration, ensure internal security for its citizens and gradually restore state power. After a bloody period of uncertainty we now therefore find a difficult recovery period, during which it will be necessary to once more lend the people of Libya a helping hand. In addition to the necessary material assistance based on the provision of the basic needs of citizens, it will also be necessary to help with the building of a free democratic society and institutions that will take responsibility for the honest and fair conduct of the Libyan state.

We must therefore realise that our aid to the Libyan people will have to be long term if we do not want the fate of this country to be left in the hands of traders and adventurists.

Franz Obermayr (NI). – (DE) Madam President, Libya is to be a state governed by the rule of law – that is very good – but based on Sharia law – that is not so good. The person
who is to perform this miracle is Mustafa Abd al-Dschalil, who served as the Minister for Justice under Gaddafi until February. That is a worrying development. Libya is free, freed by Libyan rebels – I have great respect for that – but with substantial support from NATO. That will, of course, have its price. It is not without reason that Western democracies have already sought to contact Gaddafi in order to get their hands on the black gold. In the last few years alone, various Heads of State have curried favour with Colonel Gaddafi – Schröder, Berlusconi, Sarkozy, Blair, and discreetly in the background is the United States, which is very well aware that it can make more money from the export of crude oil technology and does not need to get its hands dirty in this regard.

Europe must therefore support Libya so that it can establish a democratic-pluralistic society, a society that builds the structures of the rule of law, respects human rights and knows that Europe can and must be a good partner.

Andrew Henry William Brons (NI). - Madam President, one does not have to be sympathetic towards the despicable tyrant Colonel Gaddafi to be sceptical about the West’s motives for support of the rebels in that country. It follows Gaddafi’s plan to operate a rather ambitious golden dinar policy of selling oil only for gold and bypassing the dollar. Furthermore, it has been admitted that British International Development Minister and former oil trader, Alan Duncan, arranged a deal between the National Transitional Council and Vitol, an oil company for which Duncan formerly worked. It is believed that under this deal Vitol, which is the largest trader of oil and refined products in the world, will have a monopoly over the trade in Libya’s oil.

It has also been revealed that the National Transitional Council has announced it will recognise the State of Israel, a step that many Arab countries are reluctant to take. I do not have a view as to whether or not this will be desirable, but I would not want to think this might have been a contributory motive for war.

Štefan Füle, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, I have had the great pleasure today of participating in this debate with the representative of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative, Mr Dowgielewicz, and thus of showing the integrated approach of the External Action Service and the Commission. I also think it is important to look at this debate from the position of our previous debate in March on our communication on a partnership for democracy and shared prosperity and also in terms of the European Neighbourhood Policy review. We should make sure that our reaction to crises like the one Libya reflects these very important principles that we have debated and later agreed in these two important communications.

I appreciate the strong message that has emerged in this debate. The European Union has a strong interest in ensuring the emergence of a new Libya, one that is democratic and fully integrated into the international community and the Euro-Mediterranean region.

I would like to make three points about our assistance.

Firstly, before the fall of Tripoli, we started cooperation with the National Transitional Council and civil society; our support includes technical assistance to help build state institutions and public administration capacity, support for the respect of human rights and democratisation, capacity building for civil society, assistance for education and the relaunch of schools, support for urgent needs in the health sector, and finally assistance to migrants and displaced people.
Secondly, the situation in Libya has evolved rapidly since the capture of Tripoli by opposition forces at the end of August. On 1 September 2011, an international conference of Heads of State and Government, international organisations and the Libyan National Transitional Council took place in Paris. Partners engaged in continued support of the interim Libyan authorities and established a Friends of Libya group of countries. The following day, 2 September, a technical meeting in Paris called by the stabilisation response team of the NTC (the National Transitional Council) with major donor countries established the principles and scope for the post-crisis needs assessment phase and financial assistance planning. It was during those meetings that the President of the European Commission, President Barroso, and later our colleagues – shared with other participants the paper ‘Responding to the challenge of stabilisation in post-conflict Libya’ and also an informal paper, ‘A rapid and effective European aid response for the challenges of stabilisation in post-conflict Libya’. I will make sure that this paper is made available to this House.

The strong messages passed by the NTC at these meetings were: respect for Libyan ownership; close donor coordination under the lead of the United Nations with a strong role played by the European Union and the World Bank; a pragmatic, operational and selective approach to the needs assessment on the basis of Libyan priorities.

At the 2 September conference, the European Union was assigned sectoral leadership for civil society, including women, border management, and public assurance through media messaging. This choice was made with the full support of the new Libyan authorities and, as my colleague already said, a joint External Action Service and DEVCO mission has been deployed to Tripoli since 11 September in order to prepare the needs assessment exercise.

Now, the European Commission is ready to mobilise, at the request of the Libyan authorities, further expertise and technical assistance for the post-conflict phase. In fact, we are re-focusing the medium-term funding foreseen for Libya for 2011-2013 (EUR 60 million) on the needs of the new Libyan authorities. What I am trying to say is that events have developed faster than our ability to distribute the financial resources.

During the debate, I took note of a number of very constructive proposals – such as from Ms Brandtner on issues of reconciliation, ensuring all perpetrators of violence are brought to justice, issues of security and justice, the role of the private sector including a code of conduct. I also heard Mr Mauro’s idea to send a joint team, which will certainly be considered, and also Ms De Keyser’s remark about looking at immigration from a different angle. I shall look at these seriously with my colleagues from the External Action Service, taking into account the principle I referred to earlier.

My third and final point is that Libya has ample resources. The swift unfreezing of assets should provide resources for reconstruction and restarting the economy. At the same time, it is important to ensure a sound framework for the management of oil and gas resources.

Once the stabilisation phase is over, the Commission considers that it will be important to set the appropriate basis for long-term relations with the new Libya. We should be ready to conclude an agreement with Libya similar to the agreements that are in force with all other neighbouring Mediterranean countries. This would send a strong signal that the European Union is ready to establish a strong partnership with Libya based on shared interest and mutual respect.

Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, President-in-Office of the Council. – Madam President, first of all I would like to say that I think this debate today proves that both the European strategy
and the international community’s strategy on Libya in the last few months have brought positive results. Libya has been an important test for the European Foreign and Security Policy after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. I think the European Union has passed this test very well.

This debate today showed that Libya is not just about some far-away country where people are fighting, but is an issue which is very important to the public in the European Union. Europeans are avidly following what is happening and what will happen in Libya. Of course, this puts an additional burden of responsibility on us in the European Union and we take this task very seriously. We have to support the Libyans in their newborn independence as much as we can during the difficult transition.

I think that the debate today also showed that in all those efforts to help Libya there is room for NGOs, civil society, business, governments, parliaments and international organisations. This is very much the approach that the High Representative is taking. The External Action Service will support all these efforts in all dimensions.

A number of speakers raised the question of the violations of human rights and the risk of violations of human rights. If you take note of the statement of the High Representative on this issue, it is very clear that this will be a very serious issue for the European assessment of the situation. It will, of course, also be an important responsibility for the NTC (National Transitional Council) to ensure that all international standards are observed where they are in control of the situation. Of course, the same approach will apply where the other side is concerned. In any case, the issue of human rights will certainly be at the core of European policy vis-à-vis a new Libya.

I will end here. Thank you very much for this debate and I look forward to the resolution that you will hopefully adopt tomorrow.

President. I have received six motions for a resolution (1) in accordance with Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place at 12.00 on Thursday, 15 September 2011.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Debora Serracchiani (S&D), in writing. – (IT) In recent years, many businesses have been encouraged to invest in Libya. The serious instability and the political and institutional crisis that has affected several countries in North Africa, especially Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, have forced many European businesses to abandon Libya, leaving behind moneys owed to them, equipment, and so on. Council Regulation (EU) No 204/2011 of 2 March 2011 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya, establishes that funds may only be used for humanitarian purposes and not to pay moneys owed or damages suffered by businesses/companies that had been operating in Libya. As a result many European enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, are struggling to collect monies owed for the provision of goods and services in Libya. While on the one hand Europe must guarantee support to the Libyan people and contribute to the country’s reconstruction, on the other I believe that it must ensure that European companies do not

(1) see Minutes.
suffer serious, irreversible damage due to a loss of liquidity resulting from uncollected moneys, and therefore it must guarantee their survival.

Adrian Severin (NI), in writing. – (RO) The exact causes of the uprisings in the Arab world remain to be identified. Apart from the future uncertainty surrounding such social upheaval, the ‘political engineering’ undertaken once again by the Euro-Atlantic players increases the danger level of the situation. The constant repetition of the self-deluding speeches from the EU has not stopped, while we are already witnessing in Egypt the reintroduction of curfews following the attacks against the Israeli embassy. In Libya the atrocities committed by rebels are being discovered and the reintroduction of Islamic law as a model of government has been announced. Turkey, a former strategic ally of Israel, is scaling down significantly the level of diplomatic relations with this country and stating that recognition of the Palestinian state is an absolute must. At the same time, the policy of establishing settlements leaves Palestinian self-determination without any territorial support, while the violence in Syria and Taliban attacks against NATO in Afghanistan highlight the West’s powerlessness in the region.

How will we then move towards a peaceful future? By abandoning the damaging geopolitical strategy which guarantees Israel’s security by supporting Arab regimes devoid of any legitimacy. By stopping the use of human rights as a tool for geopolitical purposes and the neo-colonial transfer of models of Western social structure to the Middle East. By supporting the cooperation policies which will put an end to ‘rent’ economies in the Middle East and, by extension, internal and external socio-political clientelism. By secularising international relations and ending the ‘cultural war’ between ‘redeeming Judeo-Christianity’ and ‘damned Islam’.

Rafał Trzaskowski (PPE), in writing. – (PL) The role of Europe in the political and military stabilisation of Libya is key. The manner of our engagement is also a test for the new instruments which we have available after the Treaty of Lisbon. Strong diplomatic engagement and financial aid form the basis of what is expected of us, but we should ask how we could act directly in the field. Many people would have liked to see a Common Security and Defence Policy mission in Libya. However, there is no longer agreement as to what form it should take, and it will certainly no longer have a mandate as this would entail the risk of direct combat. At this stage, constructive discussion and a decision to involve the EU in the field seems paramount, and would supplement the UN’s activities, both those which are planned and those which have already been undertaken. In the post-conflict phase, Libya will need many reforms, including those with which the EU has undoubtedly had a lot of experience, such as reform of the security sector. For the EU’s involvement in Libya to be successful, we need coordination all the way from the top – and we are pleased with Baroness Ashton’s cooperation with the Presidency – down to the structures responsible for preparing the mission. However, what is needed most of all is the political will of the Member States – its absence will pose the greatest threat to our credibility in Libya.

Dominique Vlasto (PPE), in writing. – (FR) Six months after its resolution calling for Colonel Gaddafi to leave, I am delighted to see that Parliament is debating a text setting out the future for Libya now that it has been liberated from this mad dictator. The EU, and France in particular, has proven its credibility in the international arena and shown that, when its values come under fire, it is able to restore law and order and to protect the populations targeted in appalling attacks. The process is not over, however. Although the military phase is coming to an end, the hardest part is yet to come: helping a wounded
population, enabling the populace to resume normal life, restoring security and rebuilding the country, its infrastructure and its institutions. In these unsettled times, the EU must stand alongside the new Libya but, above all, it needs to listen to the legitimate demands of the Libyans and support them in becoming dependable partners on the other side of the Mediterranean. I would also like to pay tribute to the coalition soldiers who, under the auspices of the United Nations, supported the Libyan fighters in their aspirations to freedom. The Libyans now need to drive the transition, to take their future into their own hands. The Union must have confidence in them and support them.

12. Situation in Syria (debate)

President. – The next item is the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in Syria.

Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, President-in-Office of the Council. – Madam President, honourable Members, it is again my pleasure to address you on behalf of the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission, Catherine Ashton.

The situation in Syria continues to be bleak. The regime has not stopped its violent repression and nearly every day we hear reports of Syrians being killed, injured, detained or abused. The overall death toll of the bloody campaign is said to be far beyond 2 000 people. The Syrian leadership confirms again and again that it is unwilling to listen to anyone, be it the EU or neighbouring countries in the region.

In this perspective, we can have no doubt that our clear position on the Syrian regime is right and needs to be maintained. Bashar al-Assad has lost all credibility due to the many promises he has repeatedly made and failed to fulfil. He has also lost his legitimacy as a result of the continuous large-scale use of brutal force against the Syrian people. There is no way forward for Syria with this regime, and we think President al-Assad should now step aside.

I am pleased to say that the EU has been able to accompany its strong position with adequate actions. We have swiftly broadened our restrictive measures and are progressively targeting, with asset freezes and travel bans, more and more of those responsible for the ongoing repression and, from now on, those supporting the regime.

Importantly, we have introduced an embargo on the import of Syrian oil. We expect it will have a major impact on the regime’s financial situation, since the EU consumes more than 90% of the oil Syria exports. We are going ahead for as long as necessary with further measures, including a suspension of new investments in the oil sector.

It is essential for us to explain properly why we have taken all these actions against the Syrian regime. Given the strength of our measures against the Syrian regime, we must be proactive and well-coordinated in communicating with our partners and public opinion in Syria and elsewhere. We must make it clear that we are targeting our sanctions so that we can ultimately achieve a halt to the violence and assist the Syrian people to accomplish their legitimate aspirations.

We must also reach out to the countries of the region which have increasingly expressed concern about the present situation in Syria. Their calls for an end to the continuous violence, and their appeals to the Syrian regime for a complete change of attitude, match
our own efforts and open the way for more concertation between us. This is even more relevant with regard to the Arab League, which has recently been in contact with the Syrian authorities and has tried to promote a more open approach in Damascus. One cannot but recognise that so far these attempts have not been successful, but that must not prevent the European Union from maintaining close contact with those regional partners which could, in a not-too-distant future, play a significant role in the evolution of Syria.

Finally, we must not forget about Syria’s future. Rightly, we ask questions about what comes next and what it will mean for the Syrian people, for the situation in the region and for others, including ourselves. We should do our best to know the alternatives and the different opposition groups, whether abroad or inside Syria.

Let me be very clear. It is time to encourage those who are capable of offering Syria a better future to unite and show political maturity and commitment to the values we share. We need to repeat time and again that there must be a peaceful political transition to democracy, led and owned by the whole Syrian people and free from violence. I believe the Syrian people can accomplish this.

(Applause)

Ioannis Kasoulides, on behalf of the PPE Group. – Madam President, over 2 600 people have lost their lives due to the lethal force used by the Syrian authorities against unarmed civilian demonstrators. This has continued for the last five months and the regime shows no signs of changing policy.

This is an intolerable situation. For how long will the international community continue to be a spectator to such bloodshed? Shame on the Security Council for not being able until now to agree on a resolution, contenting themselves with a mere statement. One wonders how Russia and China can remain passive towards these cold-blooded massive assassinations.

The EU, the Council and High Representative have correctly widened sanctions and used strict language of condemnation, but the time has come to toughen our approach towards Russia and China, as French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé has done. Surely it cannot be business as usual if the two Permanent Members fail in their duties.

It is also shameful to me that it took five months for the Arab League to undertake an initiative, and although details are unknown, I doubt if the Syrian people would be able to accept any arrangement falling short of their legitimate aspirations, and especially to be governed by those whose hands are stained with their blood. The more people are killed, the more it becomes apparent that the regime has crossed the Rubicon.

Richard Howitt, on behalf of the S&D Group. – Madam President, as Socialists and Democrats we support wholeheartedly the recent Council conclusions that the Syrian regime loses any legitimacy by choosing a path of repression instead of fulfilling its own promise of reforms. We call on President Bashar al-Assad to relinquish power immediately and we reject impunity for all those responsible for the gross violation of human rights. We back sanctions that target the regime, but which minimise the negative impact on the living conditions of the population.

Just today, I have been in touch with opposition contacts who inform me that there have been further protests in the city of Homs and in Hama, but also sadly state that the crackdown by government forces continues and that the death toll is rising. I join with
Baroness Ashton in condemning in the strongest terms the killing of the human rights activist Ghiyath Matar, a 26-year-old who had been instrumental in organising protests in the Damascus suburb of Daraya. He, like so many others, defied the security forces and paid the ultimate price. I am sure you will share my disgust at reports filtering out of the country today that Syrian security forces attacked the gathering of mourners at his very funeral.

We have just finished a debate on Libya. Of course we should call for the UN Human Rights Council to have a fact-finding mission immediately to the country, but we should follow the model of Libya and call for referral to the International Criminal Court. Indeed, I say today to our European representatives: you should be proactive in seeking support for that referral in the UN Security Council.

I believe too, whilst welcoming the strong condemnation of the violence by countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, that Europe must call for active follow-up by the Arab League following the Secretary-General’s visit – finally – to meet the Syrian authorities. As my colleague Mr Kasoulides said, the number of deaths is 2,600, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights this week. The Syrian people have demonstrated that things must change and face a terrible risk, but the current regime will not listen. We in Europe and the international community have to show that their cries are not in vain.

Marietje Schaake, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – Madam President, even in the face of the most horrific crimes in Syria, the EU finds it difficult to speak with a strong and united voice.

In Syria, snipers are shooting people for holding a cell phone, children are tortured to death, the Government is turning off water, electricity, food and medicine supplies to entire cities, censorship and misinformation are rampant, and cell phone networks and Internet are down. People are slaughtered and buried in mass graves, while the families are forced to state that these murders were the work of so-called thugs.

Ghayath Mattar, a human rights defender and activist for a peaceful transition in Syria, was tortured to death this week. The people who attended his funeral were shot at by State security forces. Surely this was the work of thugs – thugs of the Syrian State apparatus which no longer has any credibility or legitimacy. Let us not forget that the number of 2,600 estimated deaths refers to a father, a mother, a brother, a sister, a friend, a spouse or a child each and every time. The crime? Speaking out peacefully for justice, rights, opportunities and self-determination.

Meanwhile, the EU is not leveraging its weight. As Syria’s most significant trade partner, now is the time to impose further targeted sanctions. We must also explicitly force the economic elites who are in al-Assad’s camp to make a choice. Doing business with the EU means breaking with al-Assad, and al-Assad must be held accountable for his deeds.

The acts of the Syrian regime remind me of the Iranian regime’s acts, and we have strong reasons to believe that they are providing tools and know-how, but we must not allow the same to happen as in Iran in 2009 – for the people to be further crushed and oxygen, freedom and opportunity for a brighter future to be squeezed out of society even more.

People look to the EU to act as a global player. And the EU? It stares at its own navel. The EU must liaise much more intensely with candidate Member State Turkey to act sensibly towards Syria. While we welcome the shelter provided for refugees, I want to highlight that it is regrettable that Prime Minister Erdogan did not mention Syria at the Arab League
in Cairo yesterday. Even though I appreciate the presence of Commissioner Füle and Minister Dowgielewicz here, we would have liked to have seen Catherine Ashton here before this House today to discuss the EU’s foreign policy and the urgent situation in Syria in particular. I can only hope that her absence does not reflect the broader absence of the EU and the EAS on the ground at this crucial moment in time, but I am worried that it does.

I sincerely hope that the Polish Presidency will use this momentum of an all-time low to revive and strengthen Europe in the world. Process and results must not be confused.

Ulrike Lunacek, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group. – Madam President, on behalf of the Greens-EFA Group in this Parliament I also want to strongly condemn the escalating use of force against peaceful protestors in Syria and the brutal, systematic persecution of activists, pro-democracy activists, human rights activists and journalists. I also demand full access to Syria by international humanitarian and human rights organisations and international media.

We also fully support the resolution of the UN Human Rights Council of 23 August 2011 which demanded that an international independent commission should be dispatched to Syria to investigate the human rights violations in Syria which may amount to crimes against humanity. But there is another issue where I feel the European Union and this Parliament are not as united as they should be – an issue that Ms Schaake has also just referred to – which is the question of business relations with Syria. I agree that in our resolution we demand that sanctions are also put into effect on assets in Syria, on oil production in Syria, but my Group – the Greens – also requested that it should also be made clear that the EU Member States step up sanctions against Syria by banning European companies from investing in the Syrian energy sector.

This amendment has not got a majority in this House, so I ask whether we should not also demand that EU companies who are still investing in Syria, who are still getting profits from Syria, break with Assad and stop doing business with this cruel and atrocious regime.

Charles Tannock, on behalf of the ECR Group. – Madam President, when installed by the Syrian Ba’athist clique which surrounded him, President Bashar al-Assad was seen by many as a young reformer – a doctor like me, which implied some degree of compassion – and the man who would lead Syria away from the brutal dictatorship of his father, dominated by the Alawite sect, into a modern pluralist democracy. Alas this was not going to come to pass. Sadly, the infectious Arab Spring desire for freedom and democracy was never going to be acceptable to the Assad Damascus dictatorship, which instead gunned down thousands of unarmed peaceful protestors, including women and children, on the feeble excuse that some armed Islamists had joined the rebellion. Of course, this is ironic given the fact that Damascus has given huge support to Hamas and Hezbollah in the past.

Syria is not Libya and, sadly, al-Assad knows that we cannot launch a similar right-to-protect NATO military operation on the side of the rebels, but we can state our revulsion at Assad’s brutality, and we can apply stronger sanctions, including selective bans on investment from European companies and oil import bans, which are in place already, and we can treat the illegitimate Ba’athist leadership as the pariahs that they really are.

Andrew Henry William Brons (NI). - Madam President, events during the last year have been not only shocking, but also disappointing.

When Bashar al-Assad succeeded his father 11 years ago it was hoped that he would follow a reformist agenda, but it would appear that the real power might not be in the hands of
Bashar but in those of his hardline relations. The Ba’ath Party’s image was never democratic, but it is now one of violent repression, which is perhaps disappointing because its substantive policies, as distinct from its methods, are less Islamist and more secular than in most Arab countries. Indeed, its Christian population – 10% of the total – enjoys religious, though not of course political, freedom.

I would like to see a democratic reform of Syria, but we must not presume that all of al-Assad’s opponents are democrats. They include hardline Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood, who would replace a repressive secular state with a repressive theocratic state.

**Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE). -** (NL) Madam President, President Assad’s regime has now lost all legitimacy. We can no longer allow ourselves to simply keep talking about the fact that 2 600 people have died, while the whole world just watches and does nothing except enforcing an oil boycott. What we should be doing, and not just in Europe, is taking further measures that will hit the regime while sparing the citizens. That was my first point.

Secondly, we should ensure that the United Nations becomes more active than it has been so far. My third point is about the International Commission of Inquiry. The UN will send international observers and I assume that that observer delegation will actually be able to take some worthwhile action, with all possible support from Europe.

**Said El Khadraoui (S&D). -** (NL) Madam President, I concur with those members who have expressed their disgust over what is happening in Syria. The pressure to put an end to the current situation must be increased further, but we will not be able to do this on our own. If we are to be truly effective, we need a broad coalition – in the region itself, in particular.

That is why the European Union should keep track, not only of what Turkey is doing, but also of the Arab League’s initiatives – which are of a more recent date – and, in particular, the initiative approved by the League on 28 August. Amongst other things, this initiative calls for an immediate end to violence, the removal of the military from political and civilian life, the release of prisoners, presidential elections at the end of President Assad’s term in 2015 and, in the meantime, a transitional period, overseen by a government of national unity which will include representatives of the opposition and which will organise free elections before the end of the year. Obviously, they will also need a new parliament, which will subsequently draft a new constitution.

My question is whether you, as the High Representative and the representative of the Representative, respectively, could give a little more resonance to this initiative and in that way exert more pressure on the regime, not only from Europe, but also from within the region itself, in order to put an end to what is happening there.

**Louis Michel (ALDE). -** (FR) Madam President, Commissioner, the numbers of dissidents arrested, searches, assassinations and acts of torture are growing. It is stating the obvious to remind people that human rights have been violated across the board. Even so, the population is fighting for more dignity, more freedom and more democracy. The people deserve more support than mere posturing and rhetoric. We are well aware that if we do not take action, the movement could descend into a religious civil war that would ultimately benefit Bashar al-Assad’s party.

So let me remind you again that we are calling for the creation of a protected area in the north of Syria to provide safety for refugees and for serious consideration to be given to
whether we should simply expel the Syrian diplomats in European countries. Bashar al-Assad must be isolated completely. Turkey has now begun to take a harder line, and the Arab states are distancing themselves: Qatar was the first country to recall its ambassador, and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait have followed suit.

I think that we should also do everything in our power to persuade Russia and China to approve a resolution that includes sanctions.

Sajjad Karim (ECR). - Madam President, today, as professional snipers explode bullets in the heads of demonstrators in Syria leaving horrifying mutilations, it is quite clear that this is nothing short of pure terrorism.

I have previously, when we debated Syria, wanted to concentrate on the role played by online activists and I want to explore that further. It is quite clear that, without normal media outlets in operation, online activists are the only lifeline that people in Syria have today to let the world know what is happening.

The Government there has taken a two-pronged approach so far. Firstly, it seeks to block sites including Facebook, and then it decides to rescind that ban in certain cases, not out of openness but in order to try and identify those activists. It then moves on to a second stage, which is to arrest those activists who persist and then force those activists to pass over their usernames and passwords. They do that through the use of torture, including food and sleep deprivation, fingernail extraction, electric shocks, stripping naked and flogging and sexual abuse of female detainees by male security officers.

On 6 July, I attended this plenary debate and I wanted concentration on these issues. The High Representative very kindly then wrote to me on 26 July. In the letter she states, and I quote: ‘Despite the constraints of an environment which is so controlled by the government, the EU is developing practical actions to support the civil society and human rights defenders in Syria and beyond’. I ask you, what exactly are those measures in relation to online activists? What are we doing? What more can we be doing?

Finally, I simply say this. I met Mr Bashar al-Assad not so long ago. I found him to be a most charming man who, directly to our delegation, promised reform. He has not delivered. He is not going to deliver. He must go immediately.

Andreas Mölzer (NI). – (DE) Madam President, with a carrot and stick, that is to say with a few social concessions and brutal violence, the Syrian President is attempting to stay in power, we know that. Not only the West, but the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council, too, have called on Assad to make serious reforms and to end the bloodshed. Although the measures taken by the EU to date, such as the weapons embargo, freezing of accounts and a ban on the import of oil, are certainly damaging the Syrian economy, whether the planned investment ban can have any effect remains to be seen.

It is clear in any case that, with increasing economic pressure, the noose around Assad’s neck is tightening, as the dissatisfaction of the people is growing. Whether Syria is on the verge of a civil war remains open to question, however. Firstly, the military remains faithful to the regime and, secondly, there appears not to be a single town that is not under the control of the regime and thus could be the place for the start of physical resistance.

If Assad gives in to the economic pressure and a civil war really does break out, we can in any case expect a flood of refugees into the European Union. In my opinion, therefore, we need to take appropriate measures now.
Krzysztof Lisek (PPE). – (PL) Madam President, Commissioner, President-in-Office of the Council, as my colleagues have said, it is true that Bashar al-Assad took power on a wave of hope. Many diplomats, many politicians worldwide thought that if a young British-educated doctor took power in Syria, he would introduce reforms.

I would like to share a personal recollection. Two and a half years ago, I had the pleasure of chairing the Polish Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, and during our meeting with President Assad we asked him whether political and national reform would follow economic reform. President Assad’s answer was as follows: ‘There is no need. The people of Syria do not want it.’

Today we can see how wrong Mr Assad was. Today, tens of thousands of Syrians out on the streets are showing that they want a free state, that they want democracy, that they want to live in a normal country. We must support this action and that is why I am happy with the action that the EU has taken, and I am glad that we are cooperating with the United States. We must, of course, redouble our efforts to convince Russia and to convince China, and we must bring about a UN Resolution.

Carmen Romero López (S&D). – (ES) Madam President, President-in-Office of the Council, Commissioner, I am afraid I shall repeat what has already been said today, because we cannot really take any other course of action, and it is important for the EU to step up its level of contact with members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and other developing countries, so that our position with regard to Syria can be more decisive.

It is clear that some Member States are taking steps, but the EU should be more visible in that area and have more initiative, because the fact is that we are trying to avoid an armed conflict. The situation in Syria demands the UNSC resolution that Parliament is asking for: a resolution that not only condemns the regime but also supports the population that is risking its life to fight for democracy, and acknowledges that vital role.

That is why those countries that have finally recognised the National Transitional Council (NTC) in Libya should be pressured to do so before any military intervention takes place, because all anybody wants is to bring about a peaceful transition.

The European Parliament should therefore make it clear that no further deaths must be caused by the passivity and inaction of the governments that today are failing to bring about that peaceful transition.

Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE).- Madam President, we have already seen three changes of power in the Arab world and the whole international community is waiting for a fourth one. The brutal response by the Syrian Government to the legitimate protests of its own people deserves the strongest possible condemnation, while President al-Assad should face international criminal justice for his actions.

Allow me to offer my congratulations on the decision taken by the Council almost two weeks ago to impose the ban on oil imports from Syria, which account for almost a quarter of the Syrian economy. Unlike on some other issues, the EU Member States managed to come up with a single position on these sanctions and this should be applauded.

Nevertheless, we must discuss other ways in which to force Syria to stop the slaying of its own citizens. More intense negotiations must be carried out with key players on the Syrian issue: Russia and China, as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council,
and Turkey, as the key power in the region, have the potential to influence significantly the course of events in Syria.

**Corina Crețu (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, I too think that European diplomacy must send out a tough message to all the parties in the conflict in Syria to get them to sit down at the negotiating table in order to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis which has been causing bloodshed in this country for six months.

According to the assessment of the reprisals by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the death toll has reached 2,600. The Syrian regime itself acknowledges that the violence has resulted in thousands of casualties. We have been witnessing for months scenes of appalling violence against the opponents of the Damascus regime, ranging from opening fire on protestors and using heavy weapons to suppress demonstrators to acts of barbarity, such as inflicting torture on political opponents. We utterly condemn these brutal human rights violations and call for an immediate halt to any reprisals against the protestors.

I also believe that we must demand categorically for the troops to be withdrawn to barracks, political prisoners to be released and an independent commission to be set up to investigate the killings committed recently. There are certain key conditions for enabling dialogue to take place between the government and opposition. Indeed, if the Syrian authorities are going to pursue their policy of force against their own people, I think that international protection measures are needed to put an end to the massacre of civilians.

**Tunne Kelam (PPE).** - Madam President, systematic use of violence by the Syrian regime has become an international issue and requires international investigation. Let me express my admiration for the people who have continued their protests for almost half a year, risking their lives; risking being killed or injured. Syrian people have been able to unite almost the whole world around them, except Russia and some other states, in support of their quest for freedom; even the Iranian President last week called for an end to the violent crackdown.

The Syrian regime has lost not only the trust of its people but also its international legitimacy. I think this is the clearest and strongest message today. Two months ago it was not so clear. I am very happy to hear Minister Dowgielewicz talking about further sanctions against Syria. I agree with him, but I would also like to remind him that we need to stop EU firms investing in Syria and conducting business with its regime at this stage.

The EU should also use its whole weight to have all members of the Security Council on board to pass resolutions and sanctions. Finally, the EU should be prepared, whenever possible, to contact and help democratic opposition movements and groups to organise themselves and develop friendly cooperation. This needs organisation and preparedness from the side of the EU and also preparedness to provide the necessary finance.

**Emine Bozkurt (S&D).** - (NL) Madam President, after a very long period of deliberation, the EU approved more sanctions against the Syrian regime at the beginning of September. I would like to ask the minister and, via him, also Madam Ashton: when are we going to see the results of those sanctions?

Because we are still hearing very worrying reports coming out of Syria on a daily basis. They just keep on coming. On Monday, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said that around 2,600 people had been killed since mid-March. On Tuesday, Amnesty International announced that at least 95 people, including many activists, had died in
Syrian jails under suspicious circumstances. More than 13,000 refugees have crossed the border, and others who are trying to escape have been forcibly stopped by Syrian troops. Humanitarian aid is being blocked.

In July, in a debate attended by Baroness Ashton, I asked if we could demand an independent investigation by the UN Security Council into the human rights violations. I am pleased that, in August, a UN resolution was adopted which has made such an investigation possible. However, that is apparently still not enough for the Assad regime. What further action are you and Madam Ashton planning to take? Will there be more sanctions against the Syrian regime? Is it true that we will soon have a ban on European investment in Syria’s oil sector? Finally, in addition to imposing economic sanctions, what is the EU going to do to help Syria’s civilian population?

Pino Arlacchi (S&D). - Madam President, I am happy to see that the whole Parliament has a clear and strong position on the tragedy that is unfolding in Syria.

The S&D Group has just tabled a joint motion for a resolution which reflects the deep concern of Europe, the Arab world and the rest of the planet over the continued brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters perpetrated by the al-Assad regime. The figure of 2,600 has been quoted as the number of people whose lives have been destroyed by the brutality of the regime, but many more have been injured, tortured or detained.

Demonstrations and protests in Syria are demanding the ousting of al-Assad and his family and an end to the rule of the Ba’ath party. The same demand comes from the EU and the most important international actors. The protesters insist on the peaceful nature of their political movement but, in order to justify the atrocities against them, the Syrian regime claims it is confronting religious extremists. This message is false and misleading. All indicators and information show that no extremists are leading the democratic protests in Syria. We must reject the invitation of the al-Assad regime to listen to them and to the other Arab tyrannies on the spectre of mujahidism and similar threats. Our support for the Syrian democratic forces should continue and our revulsion towards the current regime’s course of action must continue to be total.

Just one final word about sanctions. Sanctions by the international community should be maintained, but we should be very careful to keep in place smart sanctions: sanctions against individuals, against prominent members of the Government and the al-Assad circle of power. That approach works. They should be different from the sanctions of the past that strengthened authoritarian regimes instead of weakening them.

I associate myself with the call by several colleagues for a ban on European companies which invest in energy and other sectors in Syria.

Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE). - (SK) Madam President, in recent months we have unfortunately witnessed the violent suppression of expressions of protest by Syrian nationals against the repressive state, a state apparatus to which several thousand civilians have already fallen victim. Persecution, deprivation of liberty, unjustified arrests, and particularly loss of life is now occurring in Syria on a daily basis, which completely throws the legitimacy of the current political leadership led by Bashar al-Assad into doubt. The European Union should therefore give a helping hand to the civil society to create a functional opposition, which would include all minorities, including Christians who exist there, which would then be able to contribute to a calm and peaceful transition in that country to democratic
rule. I believe that effective sanctions by the European Union will help to force Assad’s regime to abandon this violence.

**Sławomir Witold Nitras (PPE).** – (PL) Madam President, it should be clearly stated that the – I think I am right in saying – former President Assad has joined the group of graduates of prominent European universities in whom we have had great hope, but who, as it has turned out, have disappointed us. We should draw a lesson from this for the future, as those people who say we allowed ourselves to be deceived for many years are right; our hopes for reform in Syria were linked with President Assad – in vain, as it turned out.

We should be aware of the consequences for the future. I would like to have confidence in the decision-makers – in Baroness Ashton, in the Commission – that in future we will draw conclusions from this affair and apply them to other countries with which today we have normal relations but which equally are not pushing through reforms. First and foremost, democratic reforms should be brought in. Economic relations should not exclude everything else. These processes should run side by side.

**Véronique De Keyser (S&D).** – (FR) Madam President, it is hard to feel powerless in the face of what is happening in Syria. I fully endorse the outright condemnation of the situation in Syria, as expressed in this resolution, together with the call for Bashar al-Assad to relinquish power and all the proposed firm gestures, namely withdrawing our diplomats or expelling theirs and devising targeted sanctions. Yet there is no model for intervention. We are powerless but we could also unleash tragedy. For those who are familiar with Syria, the phantom of another Iraq has emerged. Should we introduce sanctions that are designed to force the regime into a corner and will impoverish the population? No. Do we need some kind of military intervention? That would be extremely dangerous. Should we take the same approach as in Libya and back the opposition in Syria in an attempt to support that way? I say again, there is no model for Syria: Syria is a real powder keg.

I think that for the time being we should contemplate diplomatic censure and should try to achieve something within the United Nations. We need to ask Baroness Ashton to visit her Chinese and Russian counterparts, whom she sees at the Quartet meetings, and try to achieve something. Whatever happens, let us not rush in headlong and think that the Libyan model can be applied to Syria, any more than the Iraqi model, which resulted in so much tragedy, can.

**Isabelle Durant (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Madam President, I very much agree with the comments made by Ms De Keyser.

I think that the Syrian resistance fighters are heroes. Every week, dozens are threatened, disappear or are shot under this bloodthirsty regime. They deserve enduring support in the form of all the measures described: fitting sanctions, political isolation, work within the United Nations.

Allow me, though, to refer to one individual by name: Dr Nached, a psychoanalyst who was imprisoned three days ago. This is someone who has been very active on human rights issues and questions of citizenship. She is a symbol.

On behalf of Dr Nached, but also on behalf of everything that she symbolises, I urge the High Representative’s representative here today, Mr Füle, to take action in support of the doctor, both in her own right but also in the name of all those who are already victims and those who will become so in future. I believe that we owe our unfailing support to all these...
individuals, and I am singling out this one symbolic figure, this woman who has fought for human rights, for citizenship, for a multi-faith solution, because in my view she embodies something more than the battle that we all wish to fight and which requires immediate and urgent action.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** – (RO) Madam President, I welcome this debate just as tensions in Syria are escalating from one day to the next. It is unacceptable for Syrian security forces to take control of the hospitals in conflict zones. Evacuating patients and disrupting the administration of medicines is a crime in itself.

I should mention the risk of the tensions spoiling relations between the various religious communities. This country is renowned as a melting pot of cultures which have lived together in harmony for centuries. Any conflict between the religious groups would be dangerous for the course of events in the country, as well as for the region’s stability.

I must re-emphasise the abuses being committed by the government against demonstrators and members of the opposition. The acts of violent suppression committed by the Syrian regime are a serious violation of fundamental rights, especially the right of free expression.

**Štefan Füle, Member of the Commission.** – Madam President, this is another issue where the Commission is working exceptionally closely with the External Action Service. In the face of the unacceptable violent repression unfolding in Syria, the Commission has reacted swiftly and was the first European Union donor to suspend its bilateral cooperation with the Syrian authorities on 25 May. The suspension was, for the first time in the region, based on the human rights violations committed by the Syrian regime.

The National Indicative Programme for the years 2011-2013 was also suspended. In fact, it has lost its relevance given the lack of will on the Syrian side to further implement reforms. It is clear that the Commission does not envisage further cooperation with the Syrian authorities at the moment.

Due to major operational constraints and the most recent political developments, the Commission is working jointly with the European External Action Service on clear instructions regarding the participation of Syria in regional programmes. This participation will be thoroughly assessed on a case-by-case basis.

In parallel, the Commission is currently working with the European Investment Bank on the suspension of its technical assistance to the EIB loan operations provided through the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership support fund. However, the Commission has not suspended all its activities in Syria. The projects directly benefiting the Palestinian and Iraqi refugees are ongoing and will continue. EuropeAid has also been actively exploring ways to further support Syrian civil society.

Under EuropeAid thematic instruments, several activities are also being implemented or planned in the field of support for civil society and human rights defenders. The European instrument for democracy and human rights allows confidential emergency support to human rights defenders, as well as support for the documentation of human rights violations, digital security, media and networking of activists.

Let me elaborate a little more on this issue. There are considerable risks in engaging with civil society within Syria under the current circumstances, especially for potential beneficiaries, and the Commission is cautiously preparing any new activity in light of the
‘do no harm’ principle. We are exploring ideas for supporting the so-called Syrian diaspora or civil society also outside Syria.

It should be stressed that the Commission is not losing sight of Syria. Once there is the possibility, we will do all we can to support Syria on its path toward a peaceful transition to democracy.

IN THE CHAIR: LÁSZLÓ TŐKÉS

Vice-President

Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, President-in-Office of the Council. – Mr President, thank you for this important debate and all the contributions that were made. I think it is clear that we must push for a coherent approach in the international community. Since this issue has been raised concerning China and Russia, I just want to stress and confirm that, of course, the Syrian issue is raised in all meetings with those partners, so there can be no doubt about our commitment to bringing all the international community on board on the question of Syria.

I think we also have to be very clear about our objectives. We have to act against the regime and in the interests of the people, so it is essential that when we talk about sanctions we understand what effects those sanctions may have on the population. I could, referring to the number of arguments that were made, give you a very long list of the sanctions we have imposed and, yes, I want to confirm that we are ready to go even further, but we all know that we have to measure those sanctions in such a way as not to harm the population but to make life difficult for the regime.

I also want to emphasise once again the need for unity of the people and a strict message of non-violence. This must also be very much present in our communication on Syria.

I also want to confirm briefly that indeed the EU delegation in Damascus has contacts with civil society in Syria and those contacts involve the network of Member States’ embassies. Of course this is not a very easy process; you can understand that the security situation in Syria is not conducive to easy contacts between the EU delegation and civil society, so if you allow I would refrain from further details in the plenary of the European Parliament.

President. I have received six motions for a resolution which have been submitted in accordance with Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure (2).

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 15 September 2011 at 12.00.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D), in writing. – I support this resolution which strongly condemns the escalating use of force against peaceful protesters and the brutal and systematic persecution of pro-democracy activists, human rights defenders and journalists and expresses deepest concern at the gravity of the human rights violations perpetrated by the Syrian authorities, including mass arrests, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, disappearances and torture and calls for an immediate end to all such barbarism. We further express solidarity with the Syrian people fighting for their rights, commend their courage

(2) See Minutes.
and determination and strongly support their aspiration to achieve full respect of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We call for an immediate, genuine and inclusive political process with the participation of all democratic political actors and civil society organisations which could be the basis of a peaceful and irreversible transition to democracy in Syria. Indeed we call for an independent, transparent and effective investigation into the killings, arrests, arbitrary detention and alleged forced disappearances and instances of torture by the Syrian security forces in order to ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are held to account.

**Katarína Neveďalová (S&D), in writing.** – (SK) Syria, unfortunately, unlike Libya, has a long way to go to achieve a democratic transition. The arrogance of President Assad’s regime still prevents any kind of success for the democratic opposition in this country. According to a UN declaration the resistance of the current opposition in Syria has cost the lives of 2600 civilians! These numbers keep growing. Only last week the Syrian police shot and killed at least six demonstrators in the capital Damascus. Sanctions by the EU on Syria are, unfortunately, lacking in effect, whether they were sanctions against a particular entity or more serious sanctions against the oil industry. These sanctions have met with criticism because they will have little impact. However, despite this not very positive development, we must not give up. The European Union has only limited options when helping in the transition or stabilisation of these countries, and economic sanctions are one of them. I therefore agree with the extension of sanctions and call upon Member States to seek to involve other powers such Russia and China, as international cooperation in issues pertaining to this country is still lacking.

**Cristian Dan Preda (PPE), in writing.** – (RO) The last resolution from the European Parliament on the situation in Syria was adopted a mere two months ago. Unfortunately, nothing has changed in the interim. The al-Assad regime continues to turn a deaf ear to the demands for freedom and social justice being expressed peacefully by Syrian citizens. Bashar al-Assad acknowledges only superficially that these demands are legitimate and cites the notion of an external plot to justify continuing the violent repression.

The additional sanctions adopted by the Council at the start of the month definitely mark a step forward. However, I want to stress that we urgently need to do more to get the rest of the international community involved in putting together a firm, coherent response at UN level, in conjunction with the Arab League. We have wasted enough time. We must send a clear message to the al-Assad regime: human rights violations in Syria will not be tolerated.

13. State of play of the Middle East peace process (debate)

**President.** The next item is the statement of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy regarding the current status of the Middle East peace process.

**Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, President-in-Office of the Council.** – Mr President, may I remind you and the House, as I mentioned in the first debate we had this afternoon, that the High Representative is actually in the region at the moment, ahead of the UN General Assembly next week.

There have been a number of important developments in the Middle East since High Representative Ashton briefed you on 6 July. The Quartet meeting in Washington on 11
July, which was held on her initiative, was an important step in this regard. It confirmed the central role that is being played by the Quartet in bringing international legitimacy to the process. It was a constructive meeting where a substantial discussion was held on how to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. It was emphasised by all that the over-riding objective is the resumption of negotiations. The parties need to be committed to a meaningful process that will produce results. Unfortunately the conditions remain such that this has not yet been possible, but all Quartet members are striving to achieve this objective.

In the weeks that followed that meeting the High Representative ensured that the momentum was retained, both in contacts with the Quartet partners as well as with the parties. To this end, on 27 to 29 August, the High Representative once again visited Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Her visit, the latest in a series to the region this year, was aimed at once again demonstrating her commitment, and that of the EU, to the peace process and continuing her efforts to help the parties resume negotiations. This was a message she reiterated in her meetings with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Ministers Barak and Lieberman, as well as with President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad. She also wanted to express the unity of the EU in its approach, as well as its openness towards any ideas and opportunities that may be helpful to the process.

The EU has repeatedly argued that the changes that have been witnessed in the neighbourhood, including changes in the countries around Israel, add urgency to the need to find a solution that will enable the people of Israel and the people of Palestine to live in peace and security together.

It is useful to recall that the EU has adopted a comprehensive position on the parameters on which it considers that negotiations should be based. This is not an attempt by the EU to establish pre-conditions, but rather a framework to allow meaningful negotiations to resume. In fact, a basic tenet of the EU position is that it would be able to accept any agreement that is reached freely by the parties.

Although you will be familiar with this position, I think that it would be useful to briefly outline these elements once again. They are: an agreement on the borders of the two states that is based on 4 June 1967 lines, with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties; secondly, security arrangements that, for Palestinians, respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over and, for Israelis, protect their security, prevent the resurgence of terrorism and deal effectively with new and emerging threats; thirdly, a just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee question; fourthly, fulfilment of the aspirations of both parties for Jerusalem. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both states.

Of course you will be aware that the Palestinians, with the support of the Arab Group, have declared their intention of taking up the issue of their status at the United Nations. The EU’s consistent position has been, and remains, that all efforts should focus on the resumption of negotiations. We will base our reaction to any resolution on two basic elements.

First of all, it is crucial that we maintain the unity that has characterised EU efforts on the Peace Process over the past months. It is clear that this has strengthened our position. The second factor is that any initiative at the UN should be constructive and aimed at achieving a return to negotiations. If this is the case, we should be prepared to engage and to contribute in any way that we can.
Those basic elements were thoroughly discussed during the informal Gymnich meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Sopot, Poland, on 2 to 3 September, which the High Representative also briefed on her visit to the region. Of course the ministers took this opportunity to exchange views on the various aspects presented by this situation, even though there is no proposal as yet. While it might be tempting to speculate over the repercussions of the various scenarios, it would be more prudent to react to a solid proposal. There was solid agreement on the fact that EU unity is crucial. Ministers reiterated their support for the High Representative’s efforts and gave their backing to her endeavours.

Since the Gymnich meeting, the High Representative has remained in constant contact with all the parties involved in this issue. She has decided, before going to New York for the UN General Assembly, to have another round of discussions in Cairo – taking advantage of a special meeting of the Arab League – and in Israel, where she is now. With all her different interlocutors she has reaffirmed the urgency of relaunching the peace negotiations and underlined the need to find a way out of the present stalemate.

In spite of the many difficulties that remain, the EU can still play a useful role in bridging the gap between the different partners and helping to define a possible compromise. The High Representative has every intention of upholding the EU’s responsibilities at this crucial moment for the whole Middle East. No-one can doubt that the process of reaching a compromise is going to be very complicated, but the EU cannot renounce what many have described as its moral obligation to strive for peace and reconciliation.

Irrespective of how matters evolve, I must express concern at the financial stability of the Palestinian Authority. The EU and Member States remain committed contributors, but the situation is critical. Other donors have not yet fulfilled their pledges; we should make every effort to encourage them to do so.

The EU is on record as having recognised that the Palestinian institutions have achieved a level of preparedness that is sufficient to support the obligations of statehood. This is the result of the vision and very hard work of Palestinian leaders, who have been able to accomplish this with a great deal of support and expertise provided by the EU, among others. We are therefore duty-bound to ensure that what has been achieved will not be needlessly lost.

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, on behalf of the PPE Group. – (ES) Mr President, President-in-Office of the Council, Secretary-General, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the interest we have been taking in the Arab Spring, as shown by the debate we have just had on Libya and Syria, should not distract our attention away from the situation in the Middle East and, in particular, from the upcoming United Nations General Assembly.

This issue can be approached from an outside perspective – any implications that the outcome of the General Assembly might have on the peace process, and any change to the status quo, count a great deal – and from the perspective of the internal dimension of the EU.

With regard to the external perspective, the peace process is in deadlock, as Mr Dowgilelewicz has just told us. We are seeing increased tension in the region – the most tangible evidence of that was the attack on the Israeli embassy in Egypt – and also very particular circumstances for the United States government. President Obama is going to have difficulty meeting the proposals he set out in his inaugural speech in Cairo, because
of the situation within the United States and also as a result of the electoral process he will soon have to face.

Mr President, in politics anything that is not possible is false; without wishing to prejudge the substance of the resolution that is going to be adopted, I believe that we should start getting ready to adopt a draft resolution that improves the status of Palestine within the United Nations.

This leads me on to the internal dimension of this issue: it is vital that the EU can express itself in a united voice on this sensitive point. Our past experiences in the United Nations have not been glorious. To be sure, we have shifted position in light of the new mechanisms established by the Treaty of Lisbon, and I believe that we need to focus all our efforts on three objectives: the peace process must move forward, and the status quo of a lack of negotiations must end; the chances to move forward on this issue must not be compromised or endangered; and the dignity of both parties in this conflict must be respected.

Mr President, on this point I feel that the EU’s greatest strength is its union, and its greatest weakness is its division. I would therefore ask Mr Dowgielewicz – I realise, of course, that the Commissioner and Baroness Ashton are doing all they can on the matter – to ensure that the European Union faces this sensitive issue without showing its customary division, and appears united by making a positive, active contribution to the progress that needs to be made in this conflict.

Véronique De Keyser, on behalf of the S&D Group. – (FR) Mr President, in eight days’ time, President Abbas will ask the United Nations to recognise the Palestinian state. This marks an historic moment that leaves us Europeans with our back to the wall – which is more than just a figure of speech in the case of Palestine.

In honouring the commitment made to recognise the State of Israel in 1948, Europe has consistently supported a two-State solution based on the 1967 border, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. It has not just said this, as in the Council Conclusions of December 2009. It has helped to build Palestinian institutions, not least by financing the Fayyad plan which, after two years, has succeeded in creating credible Palestinian institutions.

The time has therefore come to take the next step, the diplomatic step of supporting Palestine’s request in the UN. The Palestinians deserve this support, the Palestinians have a right to this support, the Palestinians believe in this support.

Some will say that the United States is not in favour. Can Europe do nothing more than meekly echo the United States? Since his famous speech in Cairo, President Obama has been back-pedalling and has been bogged down by the prospect of a second term. Forget the United States.

Some will say that nothing will change on the ground. They are right. It is true that we need to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible. Bolstered by their rights and the recognition of their State, the Palestinians must come back to the negotiating table, but they must do so on a far more equal footing, with new rights and new responsibilities.

Others will say, and indeed have said, that there is a danger that we will become divided. Whose fault is that? It is our fault, the fault of the European Parliament, because we are the voice of the people, not of the governments. An article in Haaretz indicated that most people are in favour of a Palestinian state. We have a duty to help our governments to
speak with one voice, to take a bold political stance, but also an ethical stance, because this
problem aside, Europe's entire credibility with regard to the Arab Spring is at stake. We
support Libya, we support Tunisia, we support Egypt and we deplore the suffering in Syria.
Yet the UN represents the Palestinians' Arab Spring: it is a peaceful solution, it is the way
of negotiation and the diplomatic route that is being pursued in the UN. We need to support
that, otherwise the Middle East will find itself plunging back into violence in the days ahead.

We have an historic duty today, a duty to establish peace in the Middle East. This is an
opportunity, and it must be seized on. That is my group's message to you today.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 149(8))

Ioan Mircea Paşcu (S&D). - Mr President, I would like to ask my colleague Véronique
De Keyser: how does the Palestinian proclamation of independence help restart negotiations
and bring the two parties back to the table to resume negotiations?

Véronique De Keyser (S&D). – (FR) Mr President, I would say to my colleague Mr Paşcu
that the issue here is not the proclamation of an independent Palestine, which happened
a long time ago, but the demand for recognition as a UN member, which is totally different.
The demand for UN recognition comes with duties and obligations, as well as the possibility
of accession to the International Court of Justice and to certain treaties. As a result, it
puts the two sides on something of an equal footing in the negotiations. Furthermore, it
places the negotiations within a multilateral framework. Consequently, this rebalancing
of the two parties could well bring more equanimity to the debates.

Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – (FR) Mr President,
Commissioner, President-in-Office of the Council, it is always interesting to see a
mini-debate take place within the same political group. You would think that you never
have the chance to talk to each other. Still, we have learnt a lot during this short exchange
of views.

That said, I am going to express a position that is – I believe – held by a majority in my
group but is not necessarily shared by every single one of its members. Honesty dictates
that I say so.

First of all, I would like to thank Mr Dowgielewicz – I apologise if I pronounced your name
incorrectly – for having explained to us very clearly – at least for those who are familiar
with the issue – where we are at and what we are trying to do.

You rightly mentioned the Quartet meeting held on 6 July, during which it was decided
that everything should be done to resume the negotiations which, since then, have not
resumed at all. That is the very least that should happen. We are now faced with a potential
Palestinian initiative and – if I am right about what is happening at the moment – with
all-out negotiations aimed at shaping this demand by the Palestinian Authority so that it
brings about the greatest possible unity among the Member States of the Union. This is an
effort that we support and that we hope will bear fruit.

However I also wish to be clear, ladies and gentlemen: for my part, and for many of my
colleagues, if ever this effort were to fail, if ever the United Nations General Assembly were
to consider a formal demand for recognition of the Palestinian Authority as a sovereign
State, I very much hope that the majority of the Member States of the Union – if not all –
would continue to support the clear position they have upheld since the end of last year,
the full details of which, President-in-Office of the Council, you have, in fact, discussed.
Because it must be very clear – and I will end here – that we cannot and should not ask the Palestinians to pay the price of the European Union’s unity. It is up to us, not them, to take on that responsibility.

Franziska Katharina Brantner, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group. – (DE) Mr President, we are in a tricky situation. Everyone saw it coming, and still we have no answer to it. By ‘answer’ I mean direct negotiations. The Palestinians have a right to their own state, and international organisations, not only the World Bank, have confirmed that the efforts they have made were successful. As regards the question of membership there is no simple ‘no’ – absolutely not – nor is there a simple ‘yes’.

I now come to the current situation. At the UN General Assembly a resolution will probably be adopted supporting a raising of the status, similar to that with regard to the Vatican. I very much hope that all the European States at least can vote ‘yes’ to this. Of course, it depends very much on the text and on the substance of this text. The EU is called on here to use its power. However, it is clear that that will only work if the 27 Member States speak with one voice.

I cannot quite understand what you mean when you say that we are waiting to see what sort of text we get. It is up to us what sort of text is produced. That is our task, the task of the 27 – that is our strength. The Americans will not be able to do it. They have stepped back. We Europeans are called on to word the text in such a way that all 27 can agree on it and so that we will have a large majority in favour of it in the United Nations. In order for this text to be acceptable to many, it should, in my opinion, contain four points. Firstly:

a clear statement on supporting Israel alongside a Palestinian state, its legitimacy and permanence. Secondly, parameters that address certain Israeli concerns about previous resolutions, such as 181. Thirdly, a separate clarification and reiteration by Europe of its commitment to Israel’s security. Lastly, I think there should be a possible timetable for membership which should be outlined in such a resolution.

Konrad Szymański, on behalf of the ECR Group. – (PL) Mr President, Europe is expected to have a political presence in the Middle East, to provide financial and developmental support. This is obvious. However, we seem to forget too often that the EU in particular should pay special attention to the religious liberties of all the minorities living in the region.

I would like to state that we need to exhibit particular sensitivity in relation to areas where huge, ground-breaking political changes are taking place. The most persecuted group of all are, of course, the Christians, who have lived there for hundreds, sometimes thousands of years, and in spite of this the radical wing of Islam is seeking to remove them from society. In Iraq, for example, Christians cannot manage their own schools, build churches or publish books. They are second-class citizens in their own country. This is part of a programme of religious cleansing imposed on the whole region by radicals. Religious freedom is interpreted throughout the region with reference to sharia law as freedom to pray in private. This is not consistent with the spirit of religious freedom in international law which permits the freedom to convert and to build churches, and allows religious publishing and education.

I would ask that our diplomats not forget the religious freedom of Christians in the Middle East, including the places we have discussed today, in everything we do in that part of the world.
Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group. – (EL) Mr President, on 23 September, the President of the Palestinian Authority will ask the UN General Assembly to recognise the Palestinian state. The Palestinians are making this move following laborious efforts to discharge their obligations towards the Quartet, because they believe that recognition of their State by that international organisation will kick start negotiations with Israel, which have been completely deadlocked for some time now.

As we all know, the Quartet, which includes the European Union, undertook to find a two-state solution by September 2011. One state, Israel, exists. The other was built by the Palestinians, by completing Prime Minister Fayat’s programme. Now this state is waiting for the international recognition it deserves, in the hope that, as a recognised state in the international community, it will sit at the negotiating table on equal terms with Israel in order to find a sustainable solution to the problem between them.

In addition to talks to resolve the political question, upgrading the status of the Palestinians would help to resolve other individual – but important – issues, such as security, the utilisation of water resources, the refugee question and the status of Jerusalem. The stated position of the European Union is that it supports the Palestinians’ request, but that it needs to be put forward, as they say, at the right time. We say that, for the reasons I have given, now is the right time.

Bastiaan Belder, on behalf of the EFD Group. – (NL) Mr President, first of all, I would like to put two questions to the Polish Presidency as regards the Palestinian diplomatic unilateralism towards the UN. As a co-signatory to the Oslo II Accords, the European Union committed itself to the negotiation process for the parties to the Middle Eastern conflict. My question is: why are the EU Member States now hesitating to speak out, jointly, promptly and clearly, on the basis of this clear international obligation, against an open violation of the Accords by one of the signatories? And that is even without mentioning those Member States which, according to press reports, have in various ways more or less rallied behind the Palestinian plan.

Furthermore, I would like to know from the Council what the European Union thinks about the announcement by the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr Mahmud Abbas, that he intends, in the event of Palestinian success at the United Nations, to use the international upgrade of Palestine’s status against Israel with the help of UN agencies, such as the International Criminal Court. I very much doubt that that will really help to establish the peace in the Middle East which we long to see.

Secondly, I would like to draw both the Council’s and the Commission’s attention to the alarming verbal aggression of the Turkish dignitaries, who are raising tensions in the Middle East. What do the Council and the Commission think of the Turkish rejection of the legality of the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip? See the UN or the Palmer report. What do they think of Prime Minister Erdogan’s announcement – or should that be ‘threat’ - of an increased Turkish navy presence in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean? We are talking here about a reckless action by a European Union candidate country.

What was particularly distressing to my ears was Prime Minister Erdogan’s assertion that the Israelis interpret any criticism as anti-Semitic. Let us bear in mind that this very Turkish prime minister is failing to squarely confront and tackle the hate speech and anti-Semitism in his national media. You cannot be proud of a country where anti-Semitism is routine, can you? That is what a representative of the Jewish minority in Turkey told me in a telephone conversation. When the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs speaks in one breath
of the Arab Spring and an Israeli Autumn, can we still talk of the peace process and the Turkish contribution? That is a deeply sad state of affairs. I hope that the Council and the Commission will declare where they stand on this issue.

Nick Griffin (NI). - Mr President, EUR 1 billion every year: that is the amount of taxpayers’ money that the Commission and Member States give to the Palestinian Authority. EUR 1 billion a year to a corrupt regime that does very little for its own people, while ordinary voters in our countries are crushed by rising taxes and inflation. It is unreal.

Worse than that, EU policy is based on the false concept that a two-state solution is workable. It might have been once, but it is too late now. The Palestinians are geographically dispersed: over two million live east of the 1947 armistice lines, a million in Gaza, and about a million in Israel. In the Occupied Territories, the illegal Zionist settlement programme has sliced their land into disjointed parcels.

Even if all the territories conquered in 1967 were included, Palestine would still be only 22% of the territory of the current Greater Israel. It would be an economic basket case, forever reliant on foreign aid handouts. The two-state solution sounds pretty, but it is simply not realistic.

Yet again, the EU is throwing money away on a policy doomed to failure. We must accept that we cannot solve every problem in the world. We should turn our attention and money to solving our own. Let us face it: thanks to the euro disaster, this place is not going to run out of problems. EU meddling in the Holy Land is not only stealing money from overtaxed British families; combined with even more massive US aid for Israel it encourages both sides to refuse to get serious about sorting out their own differences. None of it helps real people. It is a counterproductive waste of EUR 1 billion a year.

Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE). - (NL) Mr President, I asked Ms Ashton as early as June what European position she was planning to take on the Palestinian request that was in the pipeline. The EU is divided over whether or not to grant that request in the short term. However, there is something to be gained from this, because we are agreed on a two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital.

I understand the Palestinians very well. I understand their desire for rapid recognition, because negotiations have proved impossible. Not only are there too many settlements, but also the Israelis simply continue to build them, despite all requests that they refrain. That means that, even if a Palestinian state is recognised at the end of the negotiations, before long this state will be a patchwork of Palestinian and Israeli territories that will no longer be governable and will therefore lose the right to exist.

It is important that Mr Abbas can soon return home with something good to tell his people. We cannot allow him to leave empty-handed. We Europeans must ensure that there is a compromise, a solution. Indeed, we have to improve the status of the Palestinians. Israel stands completely isolated in the Middle East at the moment – and not even Mr Belder can deny that. That is painful to acknowledge, it is very painful, it is certainly painful to me, as someone who was brought up to be a right-minded European with a great deal of sympathy for the Promised Land. However, we have to recognise that patience is running thin and that something really has to be done now. The current situation is untenable and that is why a compromise between the Europeans is much needed.

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D). - Mr President, in the Middle East we are 60 seconds to midnight. Members do not need me to rehearse the conflicts that are under way and those
bubbling under the surface. The Arab Spring and its potential for a great leap forward can only be fully realised when the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and occupation is resolved. In this regard, Europe has to be consistent if we are to retain any shred of credibility with those who are struggling to construct a better way of governing themselves and providing a better life for their children. We all know that a negotiated two-state solution is the optimum solution. Palestinians decided over 20 years ago to accept a Palestinian state on the 1967 Green Line – 22% of their historic homeland – with Jerusalem as a shared capital with Israel.

Despite this historic compromise, Israel's current leadership refuses to engage, demanding negotiations without Palestinian preconditions, while laying down its own preconditions, such as continued colonisation of Palestinian land, and rejecting President Obama's basis for negotiations. President Abbas therefore has no option but to make a broad appeal to the international community, through the United Nations, in order to maintain his non-violent, political and diplomatic strategy for an end to the conflict.

All EU Member States support the establishment of a Palestinian state on the 1967 lines, and we have agreed that the PA is ready for statehood, so no major principle is involved. By voting for an upgrading of the state of Palestine in the United Nations, we will, however, reinforce the non-violent strategy of President Abbas. To do otherwise will shred our reputation in the region.

I urge the European External Action Service to strain every sinew to negotiate a resolution with the Palestinians which unites EU Member States in support of President Abbas's initiative, which reassures both Palestinians and Israelis regarding their core concerns, and which seeks to create the potential for revived, time-limited final status negotiations. That could possibly stop the clock.

Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE). - (IT) Mr President, Minister, Mr Nicolai, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I think that there are three things we can be sure of. The first is our deep friendship with the Palestinian people, a people that is suffering, that suffers every day. One has to visit the occupied territories to see the daily suffering of the Palestinian people, and this is a people to whom the international community owes a debt.

The second certainty is the tie that binds us to Israel as Europeans, a tie that is probably stronger than that with any other country outside the EU, because Israel is an indispensable part of Europe's cultural and moral identity; it is part of our family.

The third certainty, unfortunately, is that Europe is always divided or highly conservative in its positions. These limitations are clear also in this vote at the United Nations, which will probably be another mortifying occasion after the absence of any European policy to speak of in the Libyan crisis, and yet it is only up to us, Minister, Commissioner.

European citizens are finally asking for a qualitative leap, a position from Europe as a whole and, if possible, I hope there will be a position in support of the declaration of independence, as many Israelis too are asking, contrary to their government, and as Palestinians are asking from a basic sense of justice.

Support for independence would first of all be in line with the reality of the Palestine that there is, that exists despite everything, and that no one can cancel from the maps. Its identity paradoxically grows stronger in the national sentiment with every day that passes, thanks to the occupation. In second place the security and the very identity of Israel would be strengthened. This security and identity are guaranteed more by the existence of two
separate States with clear borders than by the prospect – and this is something we should ask the Israeli leaders in 20 years’ time – of a single State shared by Palestinians and Israelis.

Finally, this declaration of independence would be a break with the stagnant waters of European diplomacy and the negotiations that are going nowhere. If we fail to embrace this break then we are condemning ourselves, after the financial crisis, to remaining on the sidelines also of international diplomacy.

Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE). – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the continuation of the Israeli colonisation in Palestine has brought the peace talks to a standstill and has led the Palestinians to demand their accession to the UN, now that they have put in place credible political and economic institutions.

Europe is dithering at a time when it should be adopting an independent position and asserting itself as a player on the international stage. According to a very recent poll, the majority of French, German and British citizens think that the Palestinians have the right to a State that should be recognised by the UN immediately. The fact is, we represent the citizens of Europe.

The democratic awakening of the Arab world creates a new context which is likely to relaunch the peace process. The aspirations of young people are the same in Tunis, Cairo, Ramallah and Gaza. If we abandon the Palestinians, despair could lead to a new intifada, for which we would be responsible.

It is in fact a historic opportunity that is being presented to the European Union. It should include the recognition of this Palestinian state in its policy of support for the Arab Spring, instead of exerting pressure on the Palestinian Authority to force it to abandon its claim to fully fledged statehood at the UN, and instead of working on the Israeli Government so that it finally agrees to respect international law.

Peter van Dalen (ECR). – (NL) Mr President, the peace process in the Middle East does not look promising, in my view. The Palestinian Authority has threatened the UN with dire consequences if it does not proclaim a Palestinian state next week. I do not believe that such a one-sided step will bring us any closer to a peaceful solution. Quite the contrary.

The European Union is one of the largest of the Palestinian Authority’s financial backers and Europe should use this instrument to force Mr Abbas to return to the negotiating table. Solutions to the process can only be found at the negotiating table and that requires efforts from all parties. That call is now especially pertinent for the Palestinians.

Another factor which is certainly posing an equally great threat to peace in the Middle East at the moment is the Turkish Prime Minister, Mr Erdogan. He wants to restore the Ottoman Empire and is increasing the sabre-rattling. He is threatening to use Turkish warships to break the legitimate sea blockade of the Gaza Strip. The UN was right when it said that, above all, Turkey should have prevented the Gaza flotilla from setting sail. The Turkish Government failed to do that. Mr Erdogan is now trying to paper over this failure by threatening Israel and pushing the agenda for a Palestinian state. This man is clearly a risk to peace in the Middle East. That is one more reason not to take him seriously as a partner in negotiations and to call a definitive halt to Turkey’s accession to the European Union.

( The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 149(8))

Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE). – (NL) Mr President, I would like to know how Mr Van Dalen can possibly suggest that it is anything other than the settlement issue which is proving
the stumbling block to negotiations and that – as the Ministers of Foreign Affairs are also suggesting – Israel is not at fault, but the Palestinians are. Could you explain that? What is your position on the settlements?

**Peter van Dalen (ECR). -** (NL) Mr President, I wish Ms Oomen-Ruijten had listened carefully to my speech. If she had, she would not have asked this question.

I made two points: firstly, the current focus of the debate is the Palestinian Authority, which is pushing for a Palestinian state and thereby jeopardising the process and possibly encouraging all kinds of escalations. Secondly, I also said that all the parties should go back to the negotiating table, because it is there that a solution will be found to all the problems that exist. I made that clear.

**Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE). -** Mr President, I did not get an answer to my question. I wanted to know what the effect is of the settlement policies of the Israelis. I did not get that answer either in his speech or in his answer now.

**Peter van Dalen (ECR). -** (NL) Mr President, I made it clear in my speech that they need to sit down at the negotiating table together in order to discuss all the problems. The negotiating table is also the proper place to take a decision on any of the issues involved. Because this is only one of a large number of issues that need to be discussed, Ms Oomen-Ruijten. It is therefore, that this needs to be put on the agenda and not via a detour, via the United Nations and the declaration of a Palestinian state.

**Franz Obermayr (NI). -** (DE) Mr President, I would ask you to put a stop to this: the lady who is asking questions here is already packing up. She is not even waiting for a response. One blue-card question is provided for in the Rules of Procedure. This is an important subject and one that is urgent, and I ask that you allow everyone here to ask a question and also to have a chance to take the floor. I find this charade unacceptable and ask you to put a stop to it and to treat all of the Members present according to the same rules and guidelines.

**Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL). -** Mr President, many people in the occupied territories, in the Middle East and around the world have a hope that the vote at the UN will contribute in some way to ending the horrific oppression which the Palestinian people face. Unfortunately, whichever way the vote goes, their suffering will continue. There have been hundreds of resolutions, many condemning Israeli aggression and resolutions recognising and supporting an independent Palestinian state at the UN. Successive Israeli governments have simply ignored them. What I think is needed to bring about change is mass action, a third intifada by the Palestinian people against the blockade of Gaza, against roadblocks, against the apartheid wall, against incursions by the Israeli army and against the occupation itself. In recent months, there has been a magnificent movement in Israel with young people – working class people – participating in a social movement demanding social justice. 450 000 people demonstrated two weeks ago.

I would put forward that this movement should also take up the question of the oppression of their Palestinian brothers and sisters. Such a development would open up the prospect of forging a powerful alliance of the Palestinian masses and the Israeli workers fighting together against their common enemy, the Israeli establishment, fighting for socialist change in the region, a socialist Israel and a socialist Palestine.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 149(8))
**Proinsias De Rossa (S&D).** - Mr President, could I ask Paul Murphy for a direct reply to a simple question. Does he support the proposal of President Abbas for recognition of the Palestinian state in the United Nations? Yes or no?

**Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL).** - Mr President, I support the democratic right of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority to be recognised in the UN. I support the question of observer status. I would go further than that, but I do not think that, as a tactic, it is the correct method to use in terms of achieving liberation for the Palestinian people. I think emphasis has to be placed on building a movement of the Palestinian masses; on taking inspiration from the Arab Spring, the revolutions, and the power of ordinary people when mobilised to overthrow dictators to bring about significant change; and also on that movement linking up with ordinary people within Israel.

**Fiorello Provera (EFD).** - (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, everyone is convinced that it is both opportune and necessary to create two states which can live together and in peace. The difference of opinion merely lies in understanding how to achieve these goals.

The Palestinian Authority’s intention of unilaterally applying to the United Nations for recognition as a state is an initiative which, in my opinion, could harm the peace process and spark off chain reactions in the Middle East. There is clearly an intention to isolate Israel in a diplomatic sense and to present it with a fait accompli, right at a time when the peace agreements with Egypt are threatened by extremist positions and relations with Turkey are in crisis. The episode of the attack on the Israeli embassy in Cairo is the latest link in this chain.

The unilateral initiative by the Palestinians is in conflict with the principle shared by both parties, according to which the only solution to the conflict is bilateral negotiations between the parties. Unilateral recognition could therefore create further instability and make it even more difficult to build a democratic Palestinian state that could live in peace with Israel. I therefore hope that there will be a return to the key principles of the Oslo Accords, based on mutual recognition, peaceful coexistence, security and political rights.

**IN THE CHAIR: ALEJO VIDAL-QUADRAS**

*Vice-President*

**Diane Dodds (NI).** - Mr President, I am perturbed, but not surprised, by the lack of leadership shown by the External Action Service on this issue. I have listened very carefully to the representative of the Presidency and there are many issues we agree on, principally the need to get back to the negotiating table, because it is only there that a full and lasting settlement can actually come forward.

However, despite endless meetings and the lateness of the hour, we still have no position from the EU. President Obama this week reiterated the US position that if this issue reaches the Security Council they will use their veto in that forum. However, the representative of the Presidency – and I hope I quote correctly – says that only the EU can play a useful role in bridging the gap.

Surely we are entitled to greater clarity and a much more direct answer. Do the Polish Presidency and the Commission believe that the declaration of an independent Palestinian state at the UN will contribute to a positive outcome of the negotiations and stability in the region?
Hans-Gert Pöttering (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the people in the Arab world are fighting for freedom and democracy. In essence, it is about dignity. That is also what it is about where Israel and Palestine are concerned. Therefore, we are in favour of Israel and Palestine living together peacefully as two states, each within its own secure borders. We defend the security of Israel against any form of terrorism, but it is also true that the long-term security of Israel will be endangered if Palestine is denied its own state. In other words, the security of Israel will in future only be guaranteed if it has a Palestinian state next door.

The best thing would certainly be for the negotiations to result in the recognition of Palestine as a state in the UN. However, there is one prerequisite for this. According to a report from the Israeli non-governmental organisation Peace Now, Israel has built twice as many houses in the Palestinian territories since the end of the settlement freeze in October 2010 as it has in Israeli territory. In other words, it is taking away from the Palestinians the land that will form the basis of a Palestinian state. That is not only unlawful, it is also sending Israel further into isolation, because Israel's settlement policy towards Palestine is illegitimate. Therefore, if Israel does not declare a settlement freeze, there is no other option, in my opinion, than for Palestine to be recognised in the United Nations.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad are peace-loving people, and Israel will once again regret it if it does not make peace with these people. Let us not harm the Palestinian soul. Let us not violate the dignity of the Palestinian people. Therefore, let us have Israel within secure borders and Palestine within secure borders. The Palestinians are worthy of the same dignity as the Israelis.

Frédérique Ries (ALDE). – (FR) Mr President, Minister, the recognition of a Palestinian state is justified: it is a legitimate demand that we naturally support. However, it is because I believe that this cause is just that I also think that a solution for the Middle East urgently requires the negotiations to start up again.

One thing we do know, at least since the Oslo Accords, is that unilateral action has never ever helped the peace talks to move forward. Moreover, the mediators in this conflict – the Quartet and the Council – are very much confirming that this is the case. Just yesterday in Cairo, Baroness Ashton pointed out that the European Union considers the negotiations to be the way forward, and this was reiterated by our Council representative in his opening remarks.

Already I hear some of my colleagues, like many Member States, unreservedly supporting this Palestinian initiative in principle, even though there is no framework, text or plan on the table at present. In other words, a kind of blank cheque is being given to an 'Operation Palestine', a 'United Palestine' I should say in passing, which does not match the reality on the ground, where enemy brothers are reconciled, but – to cut a long story short – are reconciled in appearance only.

In reality, my fear is that unilateral action will permanently paralyse the negotiations by eliminating any room for compromise and by freezing the non-negotiated red lines, on which the Palestinian leaders will no longer be willing or able to move an inch. I fear this unilateral action turning into sterile diplomatic clashes, as the French Foreign Affairs Minister pointed out recently. There is no common European position at present precisely because there is no text – and I concur with Ms De Keyser and all the other speakers who have said the same – nor resolution, with only a few days left until the expected announcement.
However, I am convinced that everything will hinge on this text, on what the Europeans will convince the Palestinians to include in it, but also not to include in it. This just shows the influence that the European Union can and should have, provided it sings from the same hymn sheet of course. It also shows how difficult and ambitious our task is.

In the current state of affairs and with nothing on the table, I can only hope that this very belated text will enable the European Union to truly play its role, because I believe in a two-state solution, a negotiated solution, because I believe first and foremost in dialogue − I shall conclude, Mr President − a difficult dialogue, certainly, punctuated with agonising but necessary conflicts, particularly over the settlements.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 149(8))

Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE). − (FR) Mr President, I raised my blue card earlier on, but you did not see it. For I could have already asked Mr Provera the question I am asking Ms Ries, since they both used the same term −‘unilateral’ − several times.

I would like them to explain what they mean by that and to also tell me how they define the building by Israel of hundreds of kilometres of wall and hundreds upon hundreds of houses in the settlements.

I would like them to tell me how they can talk about unilateralism when we know that this initiative of recognising a Palestinian state is supported by 130 or 140 countries. I confess that I need the word to be defined for me.

Frédérique Ries (ALDE). − (FR) Mr President, I will be brief. I wanted to say something earlier on regarding the principle behind this blue-card procedure. I do not have the Rules of Procedure to hand, but I find it slightly regrettable that the blue card has become a sort of justification for confrontations that no longer have much to do with the speeches made here. This is very much the case in the heated debates we are having, particularly concerning the Middle East.

It seems to me that the point of the blue card is to respond to points made in our speeches. It should not turn into a kind of interrogation, overall inquisition or general *ad hominem* argument. This is a trivial point, but each time I take the floor in this House, Ms Kiil-Nielsen has something to say.

As regards the use of the term ‘unilateral’, this simply means that we are talking about a negotiated solution. This seems straightforward to me. I did explain this. I had one minute and thirty seconds allocated for that and it is not up to me to justify all the settlements. I have already referred Ms Kiil-Nielsen …

(The President asked the speaker to conclude)

May I at least answer the questions that were put to me? I do not know how much time has been allotted to me, but I am not going to take less time to answer the question than it took to ask it.

(The President cut off the speaker)

President. − The problem, Ms Ries, is that for the blue-card question and the answer, you each have 30 seconds.

In any case, your answer was clear.
Frieda Brepoels (Verts/ALE). - (NL) Mr President, after a peace process which has been dragging on for nearly 20 years, the only conclusion we can draw is that all attempts to reach a two-state solution have failed. I, therefore, view the question which the Palestinian Authority has raised as a last-ditch attempt to break the deadlock. Because even after recognition, which would obviously be hugely important on a symbolic level, the negotiations would still have to continue. The only difference is that then the two parties would be more equal than they are now.

Of course, it is of the utmost importance that the international community does not show any signs of division. The European Union should focus all its efforts on this. However, what can we say about the position of the United States and President Obama? Last year, he called on the General Assembly to recognise an independent Palestine, but is now threatening them with a blockade. However, I also find the position of the High Representative highly ambiguous, because we hear that she is trying to convince the Palestinian Authority to abandon the initiative. I wonder, though, whether this is being done to try to disguise the internal division in the European Union? The European Union must use its right to speak to send out a strong common signal in the United Nations, because we need a breakthrough now.

Struan Stevenson (ECR). - Mr President, can I take this opportunity to raise another matter of great urgency and great concern in the Middle East? I am referring to Camp Ashraf in Northern Iraq, home for the past quarter of a century to more than 3 400 Iranian dissidents who, as you know, have suffered from repeated attacks and harassment by the Iraqi authorities, culminating in a massacre on 8 April this year when 36 of them – unarmed civilians – were killed in cold blood.

As you know Commissioner, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has given the camp’s residents a deadline of 31 December this year to clear Ashraf. The clock is now ticking rapidly and although we have brokered a plan within the EU for resettling the residents to third countries, and some EU Member States – and even some countries outside the EU – have already started taking some of these refugees, we are running out of time and we are facing the prospect of another violent attack and bloodshed perhaps on a scale similar to Srebrenica.

I received information last night from UNHCR that the residents of Ashraf are protected under international law, but can I urge the Commission to follow the example of UN High Commissioner António Guterres and write to Nouri al-Maliki demanding an extension of the deadline to give us time to work on the resettlement plan, and in the meantime to provide some protection by getting a UN presence in Camp Ashraf.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL). – (PT) Mr President, recognition of the State of Palestine, with its pre-1967 borders, including East Jerusalem, and its recognition as a full member of the United Nations, constitute a direct and legitimate result of the principles enshrined since 1947 in all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations (UN).

Almost two decades after the conclusion of the Oslo Accords, and indifferent to all condemnation of it, Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories is advancing and becoming consolidated. Owing to the repeated shunning of a fair solution in line with international law on the part of the Israeli authorities, the prospect of resolving the conflict is under serious threat.
In this context, recognition of Palestine as a full member of the UN will be the most important and meaningful contribution that the international community can make towards the effective implementation of the two-state principle, which was established 64 years ago but has never been realised.

Mário David (PPE). – (PT) Mr President, we are discussing the Middle East peace process, but is there some process currently in progress that I have overlooked? Unfortunately, there is not. The European Union, like most of the international community, has repeatedly declared itself to be in favour of the existence of two peoples and two states, sharing the space between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean, and having the right to live in peace and security. However, without any dialogue between the parties, who have become entrenched in a mire of hatred and incomprehension which has lasted for 63 years, this has fuelled only extremism and frustration.

It is crucial that Europe and the Arab League become much more engaged in the search for a solution, through negotiation, for borders based on those of 1967, while allowing the majority of the Jewish settlements to remain in Israel. The issue of Jerusalem, a sacred city and the future capital of the two states, should be clarified and mutually accepted as a symbol of peaceful coexistence between two peoples who have an obligation to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, which describes this as a land of milk and honey. All the countries of the region should participate in resolving the issue of the Palestinian refugees, while the international community and, in particular, Arab peoples, should share the burden of the necessary financial compensation.

It is also absolutely essential that a military force, under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) and including US and Islamic forces, among others, be stationed on the ground to ensure that peace is maintained. This is the way to bring about courage and political will.

Marek Siwiec (S&D). – (PL) Mr President, no one in this Chamber questions the right of Palestinians to have their own state. No one in this Chamber questions the dignity of the Palestinian nation. In this Chamber we are debating whether unilateral recognition by being given UN membership will bring us closer to peace or not. In this Chamber we are asking which Palestine should be sanctioned by the UN, the cooperative one, represented by Mr Abbas on the West Bank, or the one represented by Hamas in the Gaza Strip? The Gaza Strip from which Israel withdrew unilaterally and which today is the source of rocket attacks. In this Chamber, thinking about how we could solve this difficult problem, this lost cause, and how we could build peace, let us not commit the greatest sin that we could commit in politics, that of naivety. Members who have spoken before me have said: ‘something must be done, something must be done.’ That ‘something’ must be deeply grounded in reality, and no unilateral solution will bring the Palestinians nearer either to having their own state or to peace, which is also wanted by Israel.

Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE). – (DA) Mr President, we are currently in an exceptional situation, and I would like to follow on from what Mr Pöttering said, because that was exactly what needed to be said. There is a lot of movement in North Africa, the Middle East and Palestine, and we support the fully legitimate right of people everywhere to be able to live in freedom and in a state governed by the rule of law. The only way that we can help the Palestinians now is to use peaceful and entirely lawful means, namely to support them in the United Nations. That will be extremely beneficial to the EU.

However, it is also Israel's only chance. The promised land is on the verge of becoming the lost land. Extremist, religious, nationalistic fanatics have completely taken over the reins
of power, and we are leaving the peace supporters in Israel in the lurch. I have heard so many pleas from them now for us to come and help them. We will not be able to do anything if the United States gives up and Europe takes a passive stand and is more concerned about being united than about meeting its obligations. Therefore, I would sincerely call on the Council, the Commission and the High Representative to take appropriate action. Choose the path of peace. Support the peace movements in North Africa and in Palestine and Israel. They deserve our help.

Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL). – (DE) Mr President, in Israel, too, thousands are demonstrating for social justice and democracy and indicating the connection between their desperate social situation, settlement policy and the huge military expenditure. The policies of those in power in Israel are directed against the Palestinians and also against their own people. The establishment of peace in the region is therefore in the interests of the people of both Israel and Palestine and of world peace – and urgently so. Anyone who does not support the inclusion of Palestine in the United Nations is not doing what is necessary for the security of the people in Israel and Palestine.

All forces in Europe must work to obtain a two-state solution, and political decisions must be taken. The recognition of Palestine’s diplomatic representations as embassies in all European States would improve the status of Palestine under international law. All European States must insist that the settlements, which contravene international law, be stopped. Only the equality of the Israeli and the Palestinian people can bring peace and social justice for everyone and marginalise radical forces.

Ioannis Kasoulides (PPE). – Mr President, the EU is called upon to play an important role at the vote on the resolution of the General Assembly on Palestinian statehood. After the success of EU countries within NATO in Libya, the relevance of the EU as an international actor will be tested if it succeeds on this occasion in having a common position, and is pivotal in arriving at a UN resolution that is acceptable to all which can get the peace process going.

The wording of the resolution matters: a single ‘yes’ and the ensuing reactions of Israel and the American Congress risk causing irremediable damage to the peace process; a single ‘no’ will jeopardise the credibility of the Palestinian Authority in the eyes of its own people, will encourage extremists and will further alienate the Arab world. Perhaps it should be: ‘upgrade Palestine to a status similar to that of the Vatican or Kosovo; acknowledge the entitlement of the Palestinians to an independent state on the basis of the 1967 borders, as described by President Obama in his recent statement, as soon as all the appropriate conditions have been met; acknowledge the entitlement of Israel to exist demographically as Jewish in character within internationally recognised borders and with all its security concerns guaranteed; oppose all unilateral actions, including new facts on the ground and settlement expansions; call for the resumption of direct negotiations guided by the above principles; and review the resolution in 12 months.’

Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we support the legitimate demand of the Palestinians for their own state, recognised by the international community, as well as Israel’s right to exist. However, one thing is clear. Long-term peace and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians will only be achieved by means of an agreement. Therefore, both sides must return to the negotiating table without delay. Time is running out.
The European Union must exert appropriate pressure, including on the Israeli Government, so that it will finally keep its promises, which it only ever makes in a vague manner. When we see the former Israeli ambassador in Germany, Avi Primor, clearly say in an interview today: ‘Benjamin Netanjahu has been promising a two-state solution for two years, but he is not doing anything about it, and the extreme right-wing coalition party in his government blocks everything that is on the table,’ then we also have to say that the ball is now in the Israeli Government’s court. It needs to take action at last and must not continue to fob the Palestinians off.

It will get us nowhere if once again we are told that it is to be put off again, because then we will still be in the same position in a year’s time. I believe that raising the status of Palestine in the UN, as has also now been done for the Vatican, is urgently required – Mr Kasoulides spoke about this. This is an important step, but without negotiations we will not achieve a lasting peace process in the Middle East.

However, a request and a clear statement by the European Union are necessary. Israel must now take the next step of its own accord; otherwise it will not achieve peace.

Michael Gahler (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, as EU Member States we are in agreement as far as verbal actions go; that is to say, we demand that both sides return to the negotiating table and refrain from taking unilateral measures until a solution is reached. The planned recognition in the UN General Assembly is a unilateral measure on the part of the Palestinians and the daily continuation of the settlement policy is a unilateral measure on the part of Israel. Here, too, we are probably still in agreement.

Now it gets exciting, however: do we want to deter both sides from carrying out these two measures to the same extent? I fear not, and my country, Germany, is also playing its part here, because if that were the case, we would then have to consider in practical terms, for example, how we could encourage the present Israeli Government in future to no longer ignore the implications of the common position of the international community with regard to the settlement freeze.

After years of increasing political frustration and out of deep concern for the future viability of Israel, I am now of the opinion that we need to take measures within the framework of our contractual relations with the government there, also in the interests of the people in Israel, because, with its continuing policy, the government is not contributing to peace, but rather to further radicalisation in the region. That has to be our starting point.

I fear that recognition in the General Assembly by however large a majority will, unfortunately, not help to revive the peace process. Let us therefore start with Israel.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 149(8))

Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE). - Mr President, I just want to ask Mr Gahler if he is really comparing illegal settlement building and so on with a totally legal approach in the United Nations. How can he call it unilateral when it is applied in a multilateral context? Are you really comparing illegal acts in Israel with a legal approach in the UN?

Michael Gahler (PPE). - Mr President, my actual point is that I want to get the peace process going again. I know that recognition in the Assembly will not strengthen this approach in Israel. To avoid giving the Israelis another reason not to come back to the peace process, I must offer the Palestinians something real in substance, which is enforcement of an end to settlement. That is my approach. I do not want the settlement
building to continue unimpaired and unpunished. Therefore I think the best way forward is to press for a stop to the settlements. I want the Palestinians, who want to gain something, to have something of substance, not only on paper.

Boris Zala (S&D). – (SK) Mr President, although the request submitted by Palestine to the UN Secretary General is not realistic, we do not know of course exactly what its content will be and where it will lead. At this moment, something else is fundamental and I am saying this just as an aside to the fact that we are all addressing the whole peace process and how it should appear. I believe that at this time, the stance and strategy of the European Union is important. It is not possible, and it would be against the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon, to leave that question to individual Member States and to avoid the opinion of the European Union as a whole. It would be a mistake, as the European Union is perceived in the world and especially in the Arab world as an arbiter of international legitimacy. The so-called ‘soft power’ lends the European Union great credibility. Baroness Ashton and her office must therefore expend every effort to formulate a common European position on the Palestinian request. If we are successful in this, then we will certainly be able to formulate our own European proposals for the UN Security Council, but without a common position we will fail again.

Paweł Zalewski (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, when we debate the problems of the Middle East and Palestine-Israeli relations, we are talking about three very important issues and values. Firstly, the right of Palestinians to self-rule. Secondly, the right of Israel to security. Thirdly, a lasting peace, which is the EU’s main interest.

In this context, we should consider every decision which will be taken, and also the proposal that has been submitted to the UN by Palestine. In brief, will this proposal and its implementation ensure peace? Now, I am deeply convinced of the fact that the Palestinians have the right to self-rule, but the process of creating a Palestinian state should take place in parallel with peace talks, talks which aim to build neighbourly relations, and in close cooperation with Israel. So it is extremely important that this should not be solely the creation of a state which really would not solve the problem, but that the EU should become firmly involved in ensuring this act will be linked with successful negotiations with Israel and conditional upon them.

Rosario Crocetta (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, if Arab dictators shoot at the crowd the West immediately responds, with no-fly zones, UN intervention, and so on. If, on the other hand, the Israeli air force bombs Gaza there is silence, because it is natural for Israel to bomb the Palestinian people. Yet the lack of a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is the main cause of conflict between the Arab world and the West, and it provides strength to extremists.

Today the Arab revolutions have brought a fresh wave of democracy to North Africa and the Middle East. This cannot fail to have an effect on the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis, too. The very existence of Israel is in some way linked to an understanding of this cause. Either Israel accepts the existence of a Palestinian state, or Israel will no longer be able to live in the same conditions in that region.

Within this framework, I believe that it would be very hypocritical for Europe not to give the Palestinians the same support that it is giving to those who are today fighting for freedom and rights in the Arab world and elsewhere. This is because I believe that the right of people to have their own land, to govern themselves, and to have their own state is an
inalienable right, and I believe that Europe should support the Palestinian resolution at the UN.

**György Schöpflin (PPE).** - Mr President, most of the attention attracted by the Arab Spring has focused on internal developments, and rightly so, but from the perspective of the Middle Eastern region as a whole, it is vital to recognise that the Arab Spring is also transforming the geostrategic environment. The balance of power between Israel and its neighbours has shifted.

Mubarak’s Egypt was committed to a policy of zero change, and this included relations with Israel. This is moving in a different direction as hitherto marginalised political forces in Egypt are emerging. Israel likewise had a stable neighbour under the repressive Assad regime in Syria, where the outcome of the pressure for change remains unclear. There is no guarantee that a putative end of the Assad regime will be of benefit to Israel. At the same time – others have mentioned this – Turkey has initiated a far-reaching improvement of its links with the Arab world and it has inevitably downgraded its relations with Israel.

In an ideal world, this should provide an incentive for Israel to find a settlement with the Palestinians and to do so quickly. Time is running out – I am entirely in agreement with Mr De Rossa here – and it is vital for Israel’s future security that it come to terms with the changes. If not, it will very likely be coerced into them in much less favourable circumstances.

**Sari Essayah (PPE).** - (FI) Mr President, Commissioner, President-in-Office of the Council, as many fellow Members have already said here, it is still not clear what the Palestinian representatives intend to propose at the UN General Assembly.

Many EU countries, however, can already see the problems that may easily be caused by a symbolic, unilateral declaration of independence, with no peace agreement. The reality of everyday existence will not improve: it will, instead, become worse. There will be more disillusionment and distrust, a complete deadlock in negotiations, and, at worst, violence.

Accordingly, the EU’s sole message in this situation should be to recommend the continuation of peace talks. The EU cannot support a unilateral declaration, because it would constitute a breach of the provision on unilaterally refraining from such a course of action contained in the Oslo Accords, to which it is itself party.

Support for a unilateral declaration would also be irresponsible, because Fatah and Hamas have now signed a letter of intent concerning a unity government, and Hamas is actually a terrorist organisation. After the local elections in autumn, it is very possible that control of the Palestinian territories will slip into the hands of Hamas. How could such a development in any way help promote the peace process?

**Alf Svensson (PPE).** - (SV) Mr President, if we were to ask whether we want the Palestinians to have their own state, everyone, naturally enough, would answer ‘yes’. Even Prime Minister Netanyahu is talking about a two-state solution. If the question is whether we want to reach a compromise, the answer is probably ‘yes’, too, as we know that both parties will have had to take part in a compromise or at least have indicated their acceptance in some way. Do we believe that the situation will be resolved if the international community takes a unilateral decision regarding a Palestinian state and Israel is left completely isolated? Politics, at the end of the day, has to be the art of the possible.
I do not believe that deep down we imagine that it is possible to take a decision without Israel being involved in the negotiations. That is what was stated in the Oslo Accords, and it is also what the Quartet has said, namely that both parties must be involved and that it is a question of negotiations. Those of us who are continually pleading for negotiations are clearly no less interested in progress being made in the peace process. Rather, we believe that it is a prerequisite for progress in the peace process that negotiations should take place.

I also believe that we are making it a little too easy for ourselves by talking all the time about the 1967 borders as if they could simply be there as something already in place and ready to use. The defining of borders is probably more complicated than that. That is why we need negotiations.

Georgios Koumoutsakos (PPE). – (EL) Mr President, today’s debate would be incomplete without reference to the very worrying developments over recent weeks in the waters of the Eastern Mediterranean. There is a great deal of tension; tension which may escalate into a real crisis. One of the main causes of this dangerous situation is the refusal by a candidate country, by which I mean Turkey, to accept that a Member State of the European Union, by which I mean the Republic of Cyprus, is entitled to exercise its legal and sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone.

The fact that this refusal has been accompanied by official statements and the threat of harsh response, from which military reaction is not excluded, if the Republic of Cyprus exercises these rights, is giving further cause for concern. It goes without saying, of course, that exploitation of these wealth-producing resources is compatible with the need to safeguard energy security in Europe and to diversify energy sources.

I truly hope, Commissioner, that it will not be necessary to take recourse to the mutual assistance clause in the Treaty of Lisbon. In order to avoid this, the European Union must be proactive and decisive in its dissuasive diplomacy. It must not wash its hands of the matter, especially when threats are being levied against Member States.

Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE). – Mr President, a negotiated two-state solution, on the 1967 lines, is an optimum solution; a negotiated solution, not a unilateral declaration. Many colleagues have mentioned this formula today and I fully agree with it.

Let us imagine that the resolution supporting a Palestinian declaration is adopted in the United Nations General Assembly. Even then, Palestinians would not be able to avoid negotiating with Israel if they wish to achieve peace. None of the core issues, including borders, Jerusalem, refugees and water, will be resolved by a United Nations resolution.

At the same time, a strong and very clear signal should be sent to Israel. Tangible efforts towards negotiations and sustainable peace with the Palestinian Authority have to be made, and one of the areas in which visible progress has to be made is in stopping the expansion of settlements. Visible progress and clear concessions are more than necessary.

Krzysztof Lisek (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, Commissioner, President-in-Office of the Council, ladies and gentlemen, we have already thoroughly discussed the UN resolution on recognition of the state of Palestine, which will probably be passed soon, but I agree with my colleagues who claim that this will unfortunately not bring us any closer to a complete solution of the problem of peace in the Middle East. Great politicians and diplomats have already tried to solve this problem, so far unsuccessfully. The only way to solve this problem is of course successful peace talks. I realise and we all realise that these discussions are difficult due to external conditions and due to the internal situation in
Palestine and the possibly even more complicated internal situation in Israel. It is not possible to hold bilateral talks at the moment, but hopefully the Quartet is a forum that we can count on and which the EU should actively support and in which it should participate.

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Mr President, after a brief period of relative calm, in the Middle East matters are beginning to become more strained. The new Egyptian administration does not feel too bound by the agreements concluded by President Mubarak with Israel. Inspired by the successes of the Arab Spring, the Palestinians decided to take the final step in the legalisation of their efforts to building an independent state, and addressed their request for the recognition of their rights to the United Nations. The people of Israel, who have for many years been squeezed by high taxes to ensure their defence, are demanding a more dignified and peaceful life. The Israeli Government wants to see nothing, hear nothing and negotiate with nobody, instead occupying more and more Palestinian territory. In the Islamic world, Israel has never been a very popular country and to be under the illusion that this early Christian island in a vast Islamic sea with an arrogant policy of occupying Arab land would not sooner or later provoke an open military conflict, would probably be naive.

I therefore believe that in order to maintain peace in this area, we should use all our diplomatic options and abilities to bring participants to the negotiating table in order to build two independent friendly countries.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** – (RO) Mr President, the priority for the Middle East, at the moment, must be to salvage the peace process. Negotiation is the only possible way of achieving a lasting peace. This is why it is vital for negotiations to be resumed as soon as possible. The leaders of both sides will surely bear these points in mind and avoid exacerbating tensions, which could jeopardise all the agreements achieved so far.

The international community, for its part, must be involved in mediating the situation. I welcome the efforts made by Baroness Ashton in this respect. Commissioner, can you tell us, though, whether there are contacts and direct negotiations going on between both sides at the moment?

Yesterday marked 18 years since the signing of the Oslo Accords. I hope that their spirit will live on, enabling us to overcome the current tensions.

**Franz Obermayr (NI).** – (DE) Mr President, throughout this whole debate, the new role of Turkey as guardian of the Islamic world is giving me cause for concern. Above all, Turkey is attempting to fill the vacuum created by the Arab Spring. Thus, Mr Erdogan – and this is, of course, crazy – is currently the most popular Head of State in the Arab world, even though he is not an Arab.

Mr Erdogan’s external policy is marked by the weakening of relations with the West in general and with Israel in particular. Thus, Ankara ceased its military cooperation with Israel, while at the same time Turkey significantly increased its military presence in the Mediterranean. Trade relations with Israel have ceased and Mr Erdogan is threatening to take further measures. This aggressive attitude at the expense of Israel is intended to help Ankara to establish its dominance in the region.

I very much hope for an easing of the situation. However, it must now be clear to even the most naive advocate of accession that, with this aggressive policy, Turkey has no place in the EU from either a geostrategic or regional policy point of view.
Eduard Kukan (PPE). – (SK) Mr President, it is frustrating to see the continuing long-term stagnation of the peace process in the Middle East. The Israeli and Palestinian sides have diametrically opposing views on the form and content of these negotiations. The negotiations should continue focusing on the acceptance of the requirements of both parties. Although it seems that the chances of a resumption of negotiations have diminished in the current situation, no one doubts the urgent need for progress in resolving the conflict based on a two-state principle. This should not, however, lead to a challenge to the legitimacy of the state of Israel, nor the right of Palestinians to achieve statehood. Now the European Union and its diplomacy should make every effort to restore negotiations and ensure their success. I think it will, amongst other things, be good preparation for the Union’s diplomacy in the preparations for the negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo, which are affecting its immediate neighbourhood.

Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, President-in-Office of the Council. – (PL) Mr President, Commissioner, honourable Members, today’s debate, which has touched on many different aspects of the situation, indicates the significance of the peace process in the Middle East. I will pass on the various themes of today’s debate to the High Representative, because as we all know in the forthcoming days and weeks her involvement in these matters will have absolute priority.

I think in summing up the debate we can all emphasise that the EU must not waste a single day or spare any effort if it wants to support the peace process. I think it is very important that diplomacy should become the tool which will decide the future of the region. I hope that diplomacy will bring results in the next few weeks. Our conviction is that the role of the EU in this process will be very significant.

I would also like to point out that we spoke about other themes today that some Members brought up directly. I would like to say a few words regarding the situation in Camp Ashraf. The High Representative is fully aware of the situation in the camp. She has already discussed the matter with Member States, emphasising its sensitive and delicate nature, and above all the key significance of the humanitarian situation. Members of the European Parliament should be fully aware that the High Representative is fully determined and is ready to work with all the partners involved in the matter, which are Iraq, the United States and the EU Member States. The High Representative will try to work out a solution to this very difficult problem.

Thank you for the debate. I do not want to summarise it fully because, as I have already said, it contained many different themes. I would also like to thank Parliament for showing such great commitment to the debate on the future of the Middle East and the peace process.

President. – That concludes this item.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Corina Crețu (S&D), in writing. – (RO) The spiral of uncertainty in the Middle East is likely to deepen as a result of the debate at the UN General Assembly on recognising the independence of the Palestinian state. Against the backdrop of the insecurity caused by the downfall of the regimes in North Africa this spring, relations between Israel and its main partners in the region, Turkey and Egypt, have quickly gone downhill.

The expulsion of the Israeli ambassador, Prime Minister Erdoğan’s intention to visit Gaza and the threat to step up the presence of its warships in the eastern Mediterranean are incidents which betray growing nervousness on the part of Turkey, in the wake of the
publication of the UN report on the Gaza flotilla. Similarly, the incidents at the Israeli-Egyptian border and the acts of violence which forced the Israeli ambassador to be evacuated from Cairo have worryingly aggravated its relations with the first Arab country that signed a peace agreement with the Jewish state.

I think that European diplomacy must take a more active role as a mediator in this region in our own backyard, whose chronic instability has a direct impact on us.

**David Martin (S&D), in writing.** – I welcome a Guardian newspaper report which says ‘The majority of people in the UK, France and Germany want their governments to vote in favour of recognising a Palestinian state if a resolution is brought before the United Nations in the next few weeks, according to an opinion poll. The three European countries are seen as crucial votes in the battle over the Palestinians’ bid for statehood at the UN, which meets next week. All three are pressing for a return to peace negotiations as an alternative to pursuing the statehood strategy, but they have not declared their intentions if it comes to a UN vote.’

**Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE), in writing.** – (LT) The international community will be forced to confront the Palestinian Unilateral Declaration of Independence. The European Union must develop a common position so that the Member States speak with a single voice, both when drawing up the United Nations resolution and when voting. However, even after the vote in the United Nations, the essence remains the same – a sustainable solution to this conflict will only be found via diplomatic means and bilateral negotiations. I believe that the Palestinian Authority has done its homework well, as has been recognised. It understands that the unilateral declaration may delay the reopening of negotiations, but it has secondary objectives. I believe that the Palestinians really want to establish a functioning state, and it needs borders, a government, democratic governance and peaceful co-existence with its neighbours. The question remains as to how this state will govern both parts of Palestine. Gaza is controlled by Hamas which is openly hostile to the Israeli state. On its own, a change of status at the United Nations will not resolve the problems. Only bilateral negotiations can do this. What follows after 20 September will depend to a large degree on Israel's reaction. It is worrying that, in the situation that is still evolving, Israel is losing long-standing supporters, and true allies are finding themselves in increasing isolation. Israel has the right to defend itself from terrorist attacks, but the building of settlements is not legitimate and it must be halted immediately.

**14. Composition of committees and delegations** : see Minutes

**15. Closing the gap between anti-corruption law and reality (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the debate on:

– the oral question to the Council on closing the gap between anti-corruption law and reality, by Monica Luisa Macovei, Mariya Nedelcheva, Simon Busuttil and Manfred Weber, on behalf of the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) (O-000148/2011 – B7-0419/2011),

– the oral question to the Commission on closing the gap between anti-corruption law and reality, by Monica Luisa Macovei, Mariya Nedelcheva, Simon Busuttil and Manfred Weber, on behalf of the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) (O-000149/2011 – B7-0420/2011),
– the oral question to the Council on stepping up anti-corruption measures, by Cornéis de Jong, Cornelia Ernst, Nikolaos Chountis, Søren Bo Søndergaard and Alfreds Rubiks, on behalf of the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left (O-000154/2011 – B7-0422/2011),

– the oral question to the Commission on stepping up anti-corruption measures, by Cornéis de Jong, Cornelia Ernst, Nikolaos Chountis, Søren Bo Søndergaard and Alfreds Rubiks, on behalf of the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left (O-000155/2011 – B7-0423/2011),

– the oral question to the Council on closing the gap between anti-corruption law and reality, by Jan Philipp Albrecht and Judith Sargentini, on behalf of the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (O-000172/2011 – B7-0424/2011),

– the oral question to the Commission on closing the gap between anti-corruption law and reality, by Jan Philipp Albrecht and Judith Sargentini, on behalf of the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (O-000173/2011 – B7-0425/2011),

– the oral question to the Council on implementing the EU’s anti-corruption package, by Ana Gomes, Claude Moraes, Rita Borsellino and Rosario Crocetta, on behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (O-000178/2011 – B7-0427/2011),

– the oral question to the Commission on implementing the EU’s anti-corruption package, by Ana Gomes, Claude Moraes, Rita Borsellino and Rosario Crocetta, on behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (O-000179/2011 – B7-0428/2011),

– the oral question to the Council on anti-corruption measures, by Timothy Kirkhope, on behalf of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (O-000190/2011 – B7-0431/2011),

– the oral question to the Commission on anti-corruption measures, by Timothy Kirkhope, on behalf of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (O-000191/2011 – B7-0432/2011),

– the oral question to the Council on closing the gap between anti-corruption law and reality, by Sonia Alfano, Renate Weber, Sarah Ludford, Jan Mulder, Louis Michel, Nathalie Griesbeck, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Nadja Hirsch, Stanimir Ilchev and Jens Rohde, on behalf of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (O-000193/2011 – B7-0433/2011), and

– the oral question to the Commission on closing the gap between anti-corruption law and reality, by Sonia Alfano, Renate Weber, Sarah Ludford, Jan Mulder, Louis Michel, Nathalie Griesbeck, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Nadja Hirsch, Stanimir Ilchev and Jens Rohde, on behalf of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (O-000194/2011 – B7-0434/2011).

Monica Luisa Macovei, author. – (RO) Mr President, we have wanted and now we have for the first time an anti-corruption mechanism in the European Union. It is ours, which means that we should support and apply it rigorously in every Member State. We need it to get us out of the economic and financial crisis, and the crisis of confidence.
The major corruption scandals in recent years and the debt crisis which has affected Member States have heightened the feelings of distrust among European citizens. European citizens who abide by the law and pay their taxes in my country, Romania, and in all the Member States must be certain that the money is not being poured into corruption, fraud and other types of abuse, particularly now when we have and are debating a variety of forms of financial assistance in the EU.

European citizens must be certain that anyone breaking the law is punished in every Member State, that money obtained illegally is confiscated and added to the public budget, and that there are fair, clear and minimal definitions and rules for punishing corruption and fraud.

Confidence in institutions, the justice system, financial systems and the political class is absolutely crucial for the EU’s unity. When we call for solidarity we must offer trust. This was the vision of the EU’s founders. This is why we urgently need to apply this mechanism and ask Member States to show honesty and rigour in applying it.

Reporting and verifying anti-corruption measures must begin with public procurement transactions, the justice system, fiscal agencies, political party funding and confiscating money and assets obtained illegally. We call on the Commission to make the battle against corruption a priority as part of the security agenda and provide financial and human resources. We should also remember when we are discussing the budget that this must be compared at least to the figure of approximately EUR 120 billion, which is lost to corruption every year in the Union.

We support this mechanism and thank the Commission and, in the main, Commissioner Malmström for the anti-corruption package adopted in June.

**Cornelis de Jong**, author – (NL) Mr President, Commissioner, we are in the midst of a euro crisis, a crisis that was obviously caused, first and foremost, by the irresponsible behaviour of financial institutions, but there were structural causes, as well. The extent of economic development varies quite substantially from one European country to another. This is not just a question of different levels of innovation and productivity; it is quite apparent that corruption is a huge problem in all of the Member States which are struggling.

As a group of like-minded MEPs, we have had an excellent dialogue with Commissioner Malmström about the urgency of combating corruption. I wish to thank her for that and for her proposals in this area, which I very much welcome. However, as far as current events are concerned, could the Commissioner tell me what role she is playing in discussions about saving countries like Greece? Has a master plan been developed for stamping out corruption, not only in this country, but also, for example, in Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy? Or are we, in practice, continuing to pay lip service to this policy area? My perception is that Commissioner Malmström is playing a leading role in the negotiations on support for euro area countries that land in trouble and where corruption is a major problem.

Let me sum this up, once again: corruption hampers the operation of an effective and fair tax system and gives rise to an informal economy which fails to contribute to the public purse or, thereby, to the common good. Public services, such as health care and education, are not accessible to all if there is corruption in those sectors and, thus, it is much more difficult to set up a knowledge-based economy. I would like the Commissioner to tell us which specific plans are currently in play for combating corruption in the weak euro area countries.
Finally, another question to the Commission, also an urgent one. What is the situation as regards the Commission's report under the UN Convention against Corruption? The Commission should set an example to the Member States here. Do you still have internal coordination problems or is this being efficiently addressed? Despite these comments, I, in any case, wish to support Commissioner Malmström's policy wholeheartedly and I have every confidence that she will also play an important role in the areas I have mentioned.

Jan Philipp Albrecht, author. – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, today we are debating the matter of combating corruption. We have already made it clear on many occasions that all sides of this House consider this matter to be extremely important and that the European Union must be active when it comes to making the combating of corruption the focus once again of internal security and cooperation in policing and judicial matters. I believe that it is important to treat this as a priority.

For us, that means that it is not only a question of taking appropriate measures in order finally to implement the existing agreements efficiently and effectively, but it is also a matter of finding resources, including financial resources, and utilising these resources to combat corruption in the European Member States. There is still work to be done in this regard, and it would actually be the order of the day to once again direct our overall priorities in the combating of organised crime at such areas as corruption and to concern ourselves less now with the areas in which we have already invested a great deal of energy in recent years.

I think it is important to take up this initiative of the European Parliament and to take appropriate measures. In my opinion, however, the most important thing in this regard is to make it clear to the Member States that it is also their job now to put forward appropriate proposals. In this respect, we are, of course, also relying on you as Commissioner to highlight where action is needed and to make it clear to the Member States that we want to see results, and we want to see progress in the combating of corruption and the combating of organised crime as a whole.

Ana Gomes, author. – (PT) Mr President, the supplying of German-manufactured submarines to Portugal and Greece is a glaring example of the web of corruption operating at European level and that has contributed not only to the violation of internal market rules, but also to the public finance crisis in the two latter countries. This proves that effective measures need to be taken urgently to combat corruption at European level.

The crisis that we are facing, and the onerous sacrifices that we are demanding of the public as a result, particularly in countries subject to financial bailout programmes, requires a serious effort, at national and European level, to combat corruption, fraud, tax evasion, and the impunity of those who are corrupt and those who corrupt others. The Commission and the Council therefore need to recognise that the memoranda of understanding concluded with Portugal, Ireland and Greece for financial assistance present numerous opportunities for corruption, especially as regards privatisation, and the renegotiation of public-private partnerships.

The European Commission therefore has a particular responsibility to give visibility to the fight against corruption, and to prioritise this struggle through such programmes, specifically for countries undergoing financial bailout programmes, but also in general, because it weighs heavy on these countries' budgets, on the pockets of the taxpayers, on the workings of companies and the internal market, on mutual trust between the Member States, and on public confidence in the European Union itself.
The Commission urgently needs to make progress with harmonising measures to protect those who blow the whistle on crimes of corruption, and with criminalising illicit enrichment in all the Member States, in line with the recommendations of the United Nations (UN) Convention against Corruption. At European level, we need to impose transparency and checks on financial transactions, especially for tax havens both inside and outside the EU, and European cooperation in the negotiation of agreements with offshore jurisdictions, in order to ensure information sharing.

The Commission and Eurojust should create faster and more efficient mechanisms for judicial cooperation, in order to ensure that Member States exchange evidence, documents and information, thus speeding up the processing of cases under investigation or at the trial stage, so as to ensure that the corrupt and the corrupters are actually punished. In saying this, I am referring to the ineffective and time-consuming way in which judicial cooperation between Portugal and Germany has taken place in the investigation into corruption in the case of the German submarines sold to Portugal.

This Commission communication is welcome, but it must be translated into practical measures immediately, as recommended by Parliament in the resolution under consideration.

Timothy Kirkhope, author. — Mr President, one of the words so often associated with the EU, rightly or wrongly, is that it is corrupt. In this Chamber we all know this is a sweeping generalisation, yet we can and should do more to deal with corrupt abuses of EU money.

I welcome action by the Commission and its use of a series of measures that tackle corruption both in the public and the private sphere. However, before we here pass legislation affecting the activities of our citizens, we need to begin by getting our own House in order and securing finally a positive statement of assurance on the EU’s accounts.

We all recall the debates surrounding the interinstitutional agreement attached to the last Multiannual Financial Framework. In the Institute of Internal Auditors, the Council gave a commitment that Member States would self-certify the money they spend on behalf of the EU, which is something like 80% of the EU budget yet, as we near the end of this MFF, we have still to see that promise fully implemented across the EU.

Therefore, I ask the Council and Commission for a firm statement today that they will step up their demands on Member States to provide full and proper self-certification of all EU monies, which hopefully would go a long way towards alleviating auditors’ concerns. Of course, we also need to see more naming and shaming of countries that fail to stamp out corrupt practices.

It was the involvement of this Parliament which forced the inclusion of self-certification in the IIA, and I hope this institution will have a continuing role to play in ensuring that the anti-corruption package really bites.

If the EU economy was a body, then corruption would be deemed a disease. We must control that disease at all times – but particularly when the economic body is weak – so that it cannot be allowed to spread, causing further, possibly irreparable, damage.

Sonia Alfano, author. — (IT) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I have studied the anti-corruption package presented by the Commission in June extremely carefully, and I have to say that I am impressed with the content of the package. It is a good
starting point, and all the European institutions, especially the European Parliament, must strive to achieve real, measurable results quickly.

Today corruption is the main route by which organised crime penetrates the legal economy and the public sector. Corruption creates criminal systems, and dangerous connections between entrepreneurs, politicians and public officials. It is estimated that the cost of corruption in Europe is some EUR 120 billion. I have to say that this is a conservative estimate given that in my country, Italy, alone, corruption accounts for EUR 60 billion a year, practically the amount of a financial package that at the moment would save my country from default.

With regard to the June communication and the proposals presented, I would like to ask the Commission what measures it intends to propose to improve the fight against corruption in the private sector. Can it give us some details about how it intends to improve financial investigations? What measures does it intend to propose to combat political corruption, and what point have the assessments of the review of the tender directive to combat conflicts of interest and of the draft directive for regulating concessions reached?

As Mr Albrecht has already said, this Parliament and these institutions have already been working on equally important problems, such as terrorism, for some time. This directive, the directive on corruption, gives ample space and visibility, and above all it gives us the chance to consider and to understand once and for all the extent to which organised crime is firmly entrenched in all 27 Member States.

In any case, Commissioner, this is what you said exactly one year ago, and these answers are crucial for us, especially considering the fact that in a month's time we will be voting on the report on organised crime in Europe, for which I am the rapporteur.

Jerzy Miller, President-in-Office of the Council. – (PL) Mr President, Commissioner, honourable Members, the Council is aware of the dangers of corruption and its negative effects on the economic and social life of EU citizens. It is a phenomenon that is systematically undermining citizens’ confidence in public institutions. In view of the above, the Council is happy to take on board any initiatives which serve to combat instances of corruption, and expresses its wish to actively support any action which aims to eliminate the problem in the public as well as the private sector.

In this context we should recall the provisions of the Stockholm Programme, which call for intensified action to combat corruption, inter alia by increasing coordination among Member States within the framework of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. It is also worth recalling the proposal for the European Union to join GRECO, a proposal which should be adopted in the future by EU Member States in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

In addition, within its internal security strategy and relating to matters of Justice and Home Affairs, the Council has referred to corruption as one of the challenges to the internal security of the European Union, awaiting further action at EU level. In this context I would like to express my admiration for the Commission for accepting an anti-corruption package, primarily for its decision to create an EU anti-corruption reporting mechanism. There must be no doubt regarding the EU's clear political will in its fight against corruption.

Adopting the report on combating corruption in the EU follows on from the assumption that even though there is no universal solution to the problem of corruption, the problem
is common to all the Member States of the European Union. As a result of periodic assessments and the publication of objective reports supported by facts, a new instrument is coming into force which gives the Member States an additional incentive to solve the problem of corruption effectively, particularly by introducing and enforcing agreed international standards in the fight against corruption.

The reporting mechanism, which is equally binding on all Member States, will ensure a transparent review is carried out of the functioning and efficiency of anti-corruption activities in the European Union and help to identify specific reasons for corruption, thus creating the basis for preparation of future policy and action by the EU to improve matters. The Council sees the new mechanism as another step in the direction of greater transparency in this sphere. It should encourage the Member States to ratify or successfully implement any important international instruments in this area.

In view of this, it seems right to test the potential of implementing the existing EU legal anti-corruption framework, particularly in the light of the possibilities offered by the Treaty of Lisbon. The Council will fully support rapid progress in negotiations on finding an acceptable solution to the European Union’s participation in GRECO. At the moment, we are awaiting the Commission’s proposals on negotiating directives in this area.

Regarding the role of the European Parliament, I would like to emphasise the Council’s obligation to ensure that Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union is fully respected. The Council is convinced that the development as well as the implementation of a comprehensive EU anti-corruption policy will only be possible if there is constructive cooperation between all EU institutions in order to strengthen interinstitutional dialogue and coordination, at the same time respecting each institution’s rights as defined in the Treaties. Parliament has an important role to play in this field. Relations between the European Parliament and civil society, businesses and citizens affected by the plague of corruption contribute to the fact that the Council will cooperate with Parliament as a partner in our obligation to combat corruption.

In addition, in accordance with Article 218(10) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Parliament will be informed immediately and comprehensively of every step of negotiations with international organisations. It should be remembered that criminal corruption repeatedly takes on an international dimension. The relationship of many people with financial institutions is based on mutual benefits resulting from their influence on key political and economic decisions. However, they threaten democratic institutions and procedures and hinder the investigation of corrupt practices. This is why a common anti-corruption policy is essential in order to combat the disease of corruption effectively.

Once again, I would like to stress that the Council is fully prepared to consider any initiative which the Commission regards as appropriate in order to further strengthen EU anti-corruption policy if its adoption is essential and in accordance with established procedures applied in the European Union’s legislative process.

**Cecilia Malmström, Member of the Commission.** Mr President, thank you for this chance to discuss corruption. I will try to answer the whole battery of questions that the different groups have submitted to me.

I am proud that we adopted the anti-corruption package just before the summer. It is an important step towards setting out an anti-corruption policy at EU level, but we still have
a lot of work to do. Let us face it: there are lots of rules, directives, regulations and international conventions, but what is lacking is not regulation: it is a commitment. It is a political will to have zero tolerance of corruption in all the Member States. That will does not exist to a sufficient degree.

For that reason, in the preparation of the anti-corruption report, the Commission will focus a great deal on the implementation and effectiveness of this. We will highlight in an objective manner the achievements, as well as the vulnerabilities, of the Member States’ anti-corruption efforts. We will focus on a number of cost-cutting issues of particular relevance at EU level, as well as issues that are specific to each Member State, which will be highlighted by country analysis and tailor-made recommendations. The effectiveness of the implementation will be assessed against a number of quantitative and qualitative indicators. We will collect and analyse information from various sources, building on the existing mechanism – GRECO, OECD, UNCAC, civil society and different networks.

We will be assisted in this work by a group of experts. This group will be set up by the Commission soon, following an open call procedure. We hope that we can include people from a variety of backgrounds – law enforcement, prevention of corruption, civil society, research, the private and public sectors, international organisations, etc. There will also be a network of local research correspondents consisting of representatives of civil society and academia. The Commission is planning to adopt the decision to set up the framework for the work of this expert group by the autumn, so that experts can be selected and start work as soon as possible. I know that you are expecting us to come up with the report next year, but I must tell you that it is not possible to produce a thorough, high-quality report before 2013.

We have analysed the option of bringing forward a legislative proposal under Article 83 of the Treaty, as you have mentioned. This could be an option in the long run, but for the moment we need to focus on implementation. That is why a legislative solution would be premature. Compared to other policy areas in which we have taken legal initiatives, we know relatively little about the extent and the implications of this issue. Long and intensive evidence-gathering, careful comparison with existing legal documents, and thorough analysis of the potential impact of a legislative solution would be needed to agree on common definitions and minimum sanctions. Also, as you have acknowledged, the main problem with anti-corruption policy is uneven implementation. Minimum standards on anti-corruption policies have already been defined through international instruments, but effective results are still missing and this is due to the lack of political will.

As part of the package, the Commission also adopted a report on the implementation of the framework decision from 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector. That report indicates that the quality of transposition remained uneven, notably as regards criminalisation of all elements of active and passive bribery and reliability of legal persons. Moreover, even for those Member States who had transposed such provisions, the information on the actual track record is rather scarce.

The Commission will therefore continue to work with Member States on improving enforcement and will monitor further progress. As regards other key international anti-corruption instruments such as the UNCAC, the two Council of Europe conventions and the OECD anti-bribery convention, they all have a dedicated monitoring mechanism and we will seek synergies and cooperate with them.
Regarding all the other international instruments – and you are aware of them – there are differences in implementation. Some Member States have not ratified and some have. In this context we have called upon the Member States to ratify the legal instruments without further delay, and we will keep on monitoring this in the report, calling upon Member States to do the necessary ratification. This will be monitored in the anti-corruption report, in the tailor-made individual recommendations to Member States. That report should therefore try to generate additional political commitment to ensure compliance with EU and international commitments. We are presently not intending to submit draft conclusions to the Council, as these matters have been addressed through the recently adopted anti-corruption package.

The report will be equally applicable to all 27 Member States. The specific circumstances of each Member State will be considered in the country analysis and the shortcomings found will subsequently be reflected in the tailor-made recommendations, but we do not intend to set up flying squads to send to Member States.

The contact-point network against corruption will be a very valuable resource for us, but more needs to be done in terms of specific deliverables and the focus of the EU contact-point network against corruption. We are intending to work closely with that network. We do not include in this any specific provisions on transparency, but of course transparency and accountability are, and will remain, key guiding principles when we adopt legislation.

Finally, I would like to stress once more – just as I did in the contacts we had before this report was prepared – that I really appreciate Parliament’s support, as well as the pressure that it is bringing to bear on the Commission and the Member States. Only by continuing this pressure will we achieve results. Your commitment and your recommendations, as published today and in the future, will be considered by the Commission. I will do my utmost to include them in further work. I make a commitment to you that I will keep you informed of all these steps.

Simon Busuttil, on behalf of the PPE Group. – (MT) Mr President, corruption is a serious issue for many Europeans. It is said to cost Europe around EUR 120 billion a year. That is almost the equivalent of the annual EU budget. Therefore, there is no doubt that we must step up our fight against corruption, not only in theory but also in practice. As Commissioner Malmström just said, we must show “zero tolerance” towards corruption.

We, as MEPs, have a role to play, and the EU can take action. After all corruption goes against basic European values. It has no limits and no borders. It can move from one part of Europe to another, and it can spread rapidly. Until now Europe has lacked the necessary instruments to fight this phenomenon effectively. This is why we are discussing this issue here today, to kickstart and instigate action which can help decrease this phenomenon by means of European instruments. In the resolution we presented and on which we are voting tomorrow, we are agreeing on the package of initiatives presented by the Commission earlier this year, for which I would like to thank Commissioner Malmström. At the same time, we are telling the Commission to make sure that Member States implement existing laws against corruption, their international commitments and national legislation. Above all, we are calling on the EU and the Member States to be more transparent, to introduce measures which fight conflict of interest and to take steps to keep an eye on those sectors where corruption is especially problematic. This debate is merely the beginning. It shall continue within the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and within the part-sessions, to make sure that the fight against corruption becomes a European priority.
Claude Moraes, on behalf of the S&D Group. – Mr President, there are in the Chamber today, I noticed while the debate was going on, many Members who have given literally most of their professional lives to tackling corruption.

What they want to see, and certainly what my Group wants to see, is some definition and highlighting of how exactly we will implement many of the elements of the package which, of course, we welcome.

Corruption is such a catch-all term that we must take the opportunity in this resolution to define and highlight what we can do and to be honest about what we cannot achieve. That is what people want in this Chamber today.

I welcome very much what the Commission has said, but I must say that the lack of transparency and the poor quality of transposition – as somebody who is near to this subject – is something which is very disturbing.

What we must do, and I know the Commission wants to do this, is define the immediate priorities. The Commissioner said we have to wait until 2013, but one idea we have had is that we may want to carry out interim anti-corruption reports before 2013.

I only say this because at a time of austerity, at a time when citizens want us to visibly fight corruption in the Union, perhaps this would send a signal that this is an immediate priority for us in the European Union.

Corruption is, of course, a cross-border issue which needs to be taken seriously by every EU Member State. It therefore needs tough legislation and effective evaluation mechanisms at EU level.

The Council and Member States must also fully implement the existing 1995 and 1997 EU Conventions.

One way we can make progress is to take the general approach of prioritising our fight within the context of our security agenda for years to come.

I notice I am over time, so I will just finally say that the various elements of this resolution are important, but the prioritising of those elements is important.

Renate Weber, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – Mr President, the ALDE Group welcomes the determination of the European Commission to promote transparency and fight corruption across the European Union.

Since corruption is a contagious disease that rapidly transforms itself into a structural epidemic, it has to be addressed by all possible means, from full transparency to harsh sanctions.

The current economic, social and, indeed, political crisis has at its origins years of misconduct, or even offences, which some government or private actors committed but were never punished for. Now the price is being paid not by those directly responsible, but by all EU citizens.

At such times I believe we must focus not so much on past achievements as on the things that still need to be done.

We should not turn a blind eye to our own practices. In March this year, the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians against Corruption stated in a resolution that we have a
responsibility to strengthen the confidence of the citizens we represent. In order to do so, we all, regardless of the countries we come from, have to be much more transparent when it comes to our own activities and the financial resources we handle. We need better rules on conflicts of interest and thorough implementation of these rules.

Codes of conduct with a clear and strict definition of conflicts of interest must be drawn up by all EU institutions, EU agencies and Member State governments and public agencies alike.

We, as politicians, must set an example. Therefore, we must take action to fight corruption and prevent it from infiltrating politics by means of strict rules on the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns in all EU Member States.

European citizens placed their trust in us by electing us to represent them; we have no right to betray that trust.

Zbigniew Ziobro, on behalf of the ECR Group. – (PL) Mr President, this morning, the Polish Minister of Finance appeared before Parliament to comment on the crisis in the euro area, and in his impassioned speech he presented a vision of war which could be brought about by the crisis in Europe. He provoked consternation and bewilderment in many of the MEPs present. These thoughtless words require an apology from me, as a Polish MEP. It would have been better if the Minister of Finance had presented specific proposals for improving the situation in the euro area or supported the fight against corruption rather than talking about war and spreading horrific visions.

When I was the Prosecutor General in the previous government, we took numerous measures in our fight against corruption. We showed great determination. However, the same cannot be said of Mr Rostowski’s government. That determination is no longer apparent. However, those people and officials who fought against corruption are now being systematically prosecuted. It is with great pleasure that I accept the European Commission’s initiative on limiting corruption. However, this can only take place if individual countries are genuinely determined to limit this disease.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 149(8))

Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (PPE). - Mr President, I want to ask Mr Ziobro whether he thinks that this debate is just continuing the election debate that is currently going on in Poland. That national debate does not have much to do with the report and the Commission’s efforts. I do not think it is very proper to bring up the euro crisis in this debate.

Zbigniew Ziobro (ECR). – (PL) Mr President, I would like to thank Ms Kolarska-Bobińska very much for her question, but as we are all too aware this debate concerns a very important issue, that of corruption, just as this morning’s debate at the European Parliament concerned an equally important issue, the crisis in the euro area, and that is why both now and previously we expected and are still expecting sensible speeches, not about war, not scaremongering, but concrete proposals which will serve to resolve the crisis in the euro area.

At the same time, as far as corruption is concerned we must do all we can to limit this dysfunctional state which has brought so much evil to Europe and to Poland as well. Equally, I hope that we can express ourselves as one, showing determination and consistency and that we do not just utter empty words.
Martin Ehrenhauser (NI). – (DE) Mr President, I know from personal experience how important real whistle-blower protection can be in combating corruption. It includes, firstly, a detailed definition of the concept, secondly, specific rights and obligations, thirdly, precise handling deadlines, fourthly, a right to a hearing and information, fifthly, specific training for EU officials and, sixthly, an independent point of contact that will explain the options while preserving anonymity.

Articles 22a and 22b of the EU Staff Regulations do not meet these criteria. In fact, in the EU institutions we do not have any real whistle-blower protection. What we do have, however, is an imminent reform of the EU Staff Regulations, and that is a huge opportunity. Therefore, my question to the Commission and the Council is this: are you willing now to reform Articles 22a and 22b? Are you prepared now to table a fitting and appropriate proposal in this regard?

Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE). – (ES) Mr President, corruption costs the European Union the same amount as its annual budget. Four out of every five citizens consider corruption to be one of the biggest problems for Member States.

On 6 June 2011, the Commission published the package of measures aimed at fighting corruption. That is commendable. These measures include the introduction of updated EU rules on public procurement, rules on auditing and regulatory monitoring of EU companies, development of a biannual report that identifies corruption trends, measures relating to the confiscation of criminal assets, a strategy to improve research on financial crime, and the action plan for improving statistics on corruption offences.

These proposals are warmly welcomed. Nevertheless, we need to show caution with regard to Member States’ individual compliance with implementation, especially when we consider the data provided by the report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, according to which 12 out of the 27 EU Member States have no anti-corruption rules or have minimal, insufficient standards.

That is why we have doubts about the Commission’s real capacity – despite its best intentions – to implement the measures it has proposed; it therefore needs to go further, guaranteeing that all the Member States make a real commitment to combating corruption, for this is of great necessity, above and beyond expert groups, political will or generalities.

We call for specific, legally-binding actions. That is what we are asking for.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – (ES) Mr President, I shall use my time to express my wholehearted support for the adoption of this resolution.

Parliament is right to support the work that the Council has carried out in the past, and now the Commission’s work, by promoting this important anti-corruption package, because Parliament is right to take seriously Article 67 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which states that there is a mandate for the approximation of criminal laws to combat transnational organised crime; and Article 83, which states that corruption is a very serious and clear example of transnational organised crime of economic significance – not only in times of crisis, although that is also the case, especially in the current crisis, because it totals an amount equal to 1% of the European Union’s GDP (shown to be EUR 120 million) – but also of political significance, because corruption undermines the precious relationship of trust between leaders and the electorate, between representatives and those represented, and between politicians and the public. Corruption is currently doing unquantifiable damage to the public’s faith in European Union politics.
Therefore, taking the fight against corruption seriously means reminding Member States that have not yet signed the Council of Europe criminal and civil law conventions on corruption that they should do so; it means remembering that some Member States have still not standardised their legislation and penal system or their system for the prosecution of corruption; and it also means saying very clearly to our citizens that we are serious about re-establishing democratic politics and citizenship through the fight against corruption.

Stanimir Ilchev (ALDE). — (BG) Mr President, the package of anti-corruption measures adopted by the Commission on 6 June this year is pragmatic and sound. This means that we are about to abandon a superficial and emotional attitude to the subject of corruption.

This package is impressive in promoting the ideas that legislation will become clearer and be applied more decisively, a monitoring mechanism will be created and that reports will be compiled every two years. In some countries, basic corruption models are still dealt with on a token basis. In order to overcome political demagoguery, we really need to be certain that the Commission will closely scrutinise every Member State so that it is sure that the legislative measures already adopted are being applied systematically, without any compromises.

Another very useful step will be to specify the actual definition of corruption because a symbiosis has occurred between Western market expansion and traditional Eastern culture. This symbiosis generates incredible ingenuity in terms of corrupt practices.

We also have to accept that greater transparency is an absolute must when we come up against a combination of corrupt motives, a conflict of interests and an unwieldy prosecution process. In such cases, it will be a good idea, Commissioner, for the Commission to gather an important body of evidence, highlighting the actions of individuals, corporate entities, parties and officials.

Franz Obermayr (NI). — (DE) Mr President, it is estimated that corruption costs as much as EUR 120 billion a year in the EU, corresponding to around 1% of the GDP of the EU, in other words almost the entire annual budget. Particular attention should be paid in this regard to the bankrupt states. Sixty-three years ago, President Harry Truman – almost like a prophet – already saw that, in the same way as a rotten apple infects all the others in the basket, the Greek corruption can spread via Italy to ruin the whole of Europe.

How do things stand today? According to Transparency International, Greece is the front-runner when it comes to corruption. However, in order for the Commission’s measures not to remain toothless, the elements of the offence of corruption must be uniformly defined. We also need efficient and dissuasive sanction mechanisms, because otherwise the EU will indeed soon turn into a basket of rotten apples.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 149(8))

Martin Ehrenhauser (NI). — (DE) Mr President, I just have one brief question: Mr Obermayr, do you believe that whistle-blowers play an important role in the combating of corruption? My second question is: if yes, what will you do to ensure that the EU institutions maintain adequate whistle-blower protection?

Franz Obermayr (NI). — (DE) Mr President, firstly, thank you for the question. Of course, it is important for those who help to establish clarity to receive appropriate protection. It must also be guaranteed that this role is appropriately safeguarded. You have already put forward a couple of proposals yourself for what steps should be taken. I believe that
provisions also need to be enshrined in the Staff Regulations in this regard in order to give the officials the appropriate options.

Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE). – (BG) Mr President, corruption is a problem about which we must speak out vociferously. It is a problem that is widespread throughout the whole of Europe and beyond its borders. Losses due to corruption amounting to EUR 120 billion bring us to the heart of the problem.

We are facing a common European challenge, requiring a common, sound, well-coordinated response. The only remedy to corrupt practices is transparent actions. This means showing transparency in that we acknowledge its existence, as well as transparency in the measures taken and transparency in the controls and sanctions which follow.

I will focus on four important aspects. Firstly, in order to define specifically the scope of this problem, independent, reliable indicators need to be found and used. They provide the foundation and must be applicable to all Member States. Secondly, it is important for European countries to share their experiences in combating corruption and for us to identify good practices. On this point, let us not be afraid to draw on the experience from the last countries to join the European Union, which are Bulgaria and Romania.

Thirdly, cooperation must be strengthened between the various national, European and international institutions involved in combating corruption. Let us show that Europe has the political will to tackle the problem. Let us use this opportunity to help our countries at a time of economic crisis to block the flow of resources from corruption.

Finally, concrete measures will send a strong message to Europe's citizens and will help us overcome the crisis of confidence which is prevalent at the moment in and towards Europe. This is precisely what is making the European Parliament get involved as a guarantor of the ever-strengthening direct link with citizens in the fight against corruption.

Rita Borsellino (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, Member of the Council, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I too would like to join my colleagues who have welcomed the anti-corruption package approved by the European Commission on 6 June. Corruption is a transnational phenomenon and European-wide measures are needed to fight it.

According to estimates from Eurobarometer, the vast majority of our European citizens believe that Europe should do more. How can we fault them? Many Member States have lacked the political will to fight corruption. One only has to consider that some European countries have still not signed the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

If we think of the devastating effect of corruption on democratic processes, citizens’ rights and confidence in the rule of law, it is clear that the national anti-corruption measures adopted by Member States to date are not sufficient to curb what is a growing problem. The European Union has to give a unified, strong response, especially now, in the midst of an unprecedented economic crisis, which is having an impact on people's lives, on the survival of welfare and pension systems, and on the ability of institutions to guarantee essential services.

Each year corruption causes the loss of EUR 120 billion, the equivalent of 1% of the European Union GDP. Every day it siphons off resources belonging to the EU and to Member States that could be used to provide key services – education, children’s services, employment and transport. In other words it siphons off clean resources from services to support people.
We therefore need to be more courageous and more firm, both in overseeing the implementation of anti-corruption measures, and in intensifying and strengthening measures to combat corruption at EU level. More specifically, we cannot talk about combating corruption unless we are capable of adopting at least basic standards for defining the crime of corruption, which there is no trace of in the package just launched.

The same goes for the definition of standard parameters for measuring the extent of the problem in Member States, which is essential for preparing an adequate response. For example, we are in favour of relaunching the network of EU anti-corruption contact points, as I proposed in the resolution we will be voting on tomorrow.

Roberta Angelilli (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I will be repeating points that have already been raised by my colleagues, and I am pleased that we are all clearly in agreement here. EUR 120 billion lost to corruption each year is too much, because it is a terrible strain on our economy: these are resources that are unjustly and unacceptably stolen from our society, our citizens and our businesses.

The results and data from Eurobarometer polls are also striking: they show that eight out of ten citizens feel that corruption is a truly serious problem and one which we must do more to tackle.

Thus, the priority is to adopt an EU-wide anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy that will impose real obligations on the Member States to implement the anti-corruption package adopted by the Commission in June, for which I would like to congratulate Commissioner Malmström.

Collaboration between the Member States, Europol, Eurojust and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) is equally important, precisely because it involves genuinely extensive cooperation aimed at punishing corruption-related crimes and also restoring a high level of transparency in financial transactions.

Rosario Crocetta (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank Commissioner Malmström for having forcefully raised the issue of an anti-corruption package, however I must be honest. Those who, like me, live in a Mafia-controlled area and have also paid and continue to pay a terrible price for it, are not amongst those who are convinced that a magical law is all it takes to finally put a stop to corruption. This seems to be the main problem and cause of the state of emergency we currently find ourselves in.

Corruption is an ancient art, much older than the world itself, and has probably now become part and parcel of the way in which politics is done, not only in Italy, but in many other countries too. I strongly support what the Commissioner said: we must ensure that we fully emphasise the importance of this policy.

When considering how to combat corruption, we must start by asking ourselves how public procurement procedures are conducted; what the threshold is for cases in which a degree of discretion is allowed; whether or not a monitoring network exists to monitor, for example, whoever wins a contract; how people have accumulated their wealth; whether or not there are any rules for tracing money; and how we check whether politicians who have been found guilty have actually been sentenced and imprisoned, or ascertain whether they are still members of parliament, protected by their parties and the laws of their country.
We should start a revolution, so to speak; I personally would make the fight against corruption, the Mafia and organised crime the focus of this second half of the parliamentary term, in order to tell the Spanish ‘Indignados’ that we want a better Europe, a freer Europe, a more transparent Europe, and to tell the young people participating in the Arab Spring that we too want to change the world, and that we want to enact serious change. So, congratulations, Commissioner, but let us do more.

Carlos Coelho (PPE). – (PT) Mr President, Mr Miller, Commissioner Malmström, I also feel that there is a common cause in this debate, namely the fight against corruption, for the social, economic and political reasons that have already been mentioned here by Ms Macovei.

I believe that the finger has already been pointed at countries in this debate. I have also seen documents which mention Greece, Bulgaria, Italy and Romania. However, the truth is that there is not a single country in the European Union that is not affected by the scourge of corruption. Several speakers have talked about the issue of cost. Indeed, it is shocking that the annual cost of corruption can be anything like the overall value of the EU budget.

I would therefore congratulate Commissioner Malmström on the anti-corruption package of 6 June, which I believe represents a step forward in the fight against corruption. I was very pleased to hear the Commissioner say that laws are not enough. What is needed is political will and zero tolerance. I was also glad to hear her say that it is important to single out Member States that are slower to transpose or implement these measures, and that this will be included in the reports. We know that sufficiently demanding legal frameworks are already in place, but the fact is that implementing them at Member State level is very different.

Finally, Commissioner, you are also correct when you say that it is necessary to maintain and improve police and judicial cooperation, to which I would add that there is also a need to make the European agencies work together towards this.

Cătălin Sorin Ivan (S&D). – (RO) Mr President, Commissioner, I would like to congratulate you on this package of laws. In fact, when we talk about the battle against corruption, we need to speak about democracy in the relevant state, about public procurements and about transparency in the spending of public money. We must automatically talk about public-private partnerships, depoliticising the national management authorities when we are talking about European funds, the independence of the judiciary and depoliticising the control bodies in the relevant state.

Commissioner, when you are looking for support in the Council, I want you to bear in mind an extremely important point. From the president to the last member of the government, it is not fighting corruption that is a national policy in Romania, but corruption itself.

Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE). – (EL) Mr President, we have heard a lot of interesting points today in this debate. However, there is one other point that needs to be made. Corruption among government officials is not an issue that can be addressed solely with sanctions on governments and Member States. As they say, it takes two to tango. On the one hand, there is the government official who is being bribed, who takes the bribe, the illegal commission; on the other hand, however, there is the person, the individual or, more often, the stakeholder or company offering the bribe.
Legislative and political initiatives by the Union should therefore pay equal attention to imposing sanctions both on the Member States and on those involved one way or another in bribery cases. There should be no immunity from fraud at any level. National economies, which have no money to spare, are being deprived of the EUR 120 billion lost in the European Union every year due to corruption.

As the subject of today’s debate is closing the gap between law and reality, the first thing we should look at is how we can close the legislative loopholes in numerous Member States once and for all and how, at the same time, we can provide every European citizen with appropriate instruments for reporting corruption directly, easily and securely.

**Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (PPE).** – *(PL)* Mr President, Commissioner, we must fight corruption on many levels at the same time, at the European, national and local level. That is why the Commission’s statement is so important: it will expedite measures to fight corruption. I am very pleased that the Commission has presented an anti-corruption package, especially since it emphasises the monitoring of this phenomenon and above all stresses the proper implementation of legal instruments already in existence.

As we know, one of the problems of the European Union is that we do not implement EU legislation to its full extent. At the same time, and this is something which seems very important to me, we should not even be satisfied with this existing legislation. We need new instruments and policies which will continue to fight corruption. This is what we have done today in voting for a regulation for monitoring the energy market. The aim of these regulations was greater transparency and responsibility, which are key in the fight against corruption, particularly on the energy market. I would like to emphasise that we must also fight against corruption in separate policies for individual sectors, and not just speak in general terms about introducing certain instruments. This is possible as we can see from the Commission’s example.

**Marietta Giannakou (PPE).** – *(EL)* Mr President, the package presented by the European Commission is important, as is the fact that the Council and Commission are addressing this issue in a concerted manner. Corruption is, of course, an international threat to the security of Europe and to the security of the Member States. In reality, apart from corruption at political level, there is currently a great deal of corruption at other levels, such as cyberspace, which are used by organisations to the extent that their prosecutors and the police authorities are always one step behind. There is also a connection here with democratic procedures, in that there are people with a great deal of money who can influence the functioning of democracy and we do not know where their money comes from or, often, who they are.

Times are therefore such that we need to take coordinated action. That does not mean that we are optimistic that all this can be resolved, because all the things to which we are well disposed – the open borders, freedom of movement, the Internet and so forth – are, of course, basically a convenience for the corrupt. Drugs and arms smugglers, in particular, criss-cross the whole of Europe building up huge empires. As you know, even smuggled cigarettes are as expensive as normal cigarettes.

However, a coordinated step-by-step approach which properly monitors and helps to wake up national governments and allows the European Commission to put pressure on national governments to take action is, I think, the best we can start doing at present.
Milan Zver (PPE). - (SL) Mr President, Commissioner Malmström, if 78% of Europeans would like to see ... demand a more effective fight against corruption and if this fight costs European taxpayers at least EUR 120 billion, then it is clear that we have not been successful at fighting corruption at a European Union level.

Of course, I would like to welcome the measures, – the package of measures, rather – that have been prepared by the European Commission this summer to fight corruption, but this does not go nearly far enough. There are not enough mechanisms for reporting corruption to the European Union. It is not a substantial measure. What we need in the European Union is a common authority that will prosecute corruption and fight organised crime.

There is, therefore, no urgency for us the European Union to join GRECO, which functions within the Council of Europe and is responsible for the fight against corruption or, rather, for coordinating the efforts of Member States in this regard. We need our own institutions of this nature and that means undergoing structural reforms, and not just drafting legislation.

I know that there are problems. There is not enough political will. Some Member States have not yet signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption, there is not enough of an administrative, political or business culture, particularly in the new Member States, some new Member States. I am also aware that we even have different concepts and different definitions of corruption.

Nevertheless, I think that these problems can be overcome in the future and I would like to emphasise that we are only at the very beginning of organised combat against corruption and organised crime.

Salvatore Iacolino (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, there is no doubt that this package is an important piece of the jigsaw, but it still needs to be implemented in practice. Anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategies are part of a package which must put a firm stop to the rampant growth of this problem affecting all the Member States.

While greater cooperation is necessary between Member States, what we need above all is a shake-up of public procurement procedures, because although it is true that this is a problem that concerns the private sector, there is no doubt that the public sector is particularly affected by it, too.

We must protect honest business owners and citizens and instead punish those who fraudulently breach market regulations and the ground rules, in order to protect the licit economy. This must be achieved with political will, as Commissioner Malmström stated, and by a package that must be applied to individual Member States, too, because, if the legislation is to be implemented in practice, as indeed it must be, then the Member States still have a lot of work to do.

We need tough, consistent and bold penalties that result in powerful and, why not, innovative measures against organised crime in the most significant cases; I refer in particular to seizure and confiscation. These are concrete measures that will probably ensure the zero tolerance to which Commissioner Malmström rightly referred.

Elena Băsescu (PPE). – (RO) Mr President, more than 70% of European citizens regard corruption as a major problem in their own country, according to the latest Eurobarometer poll. It is therefore our duty to take the appropriate measures to address these concerns.
This means that not only is a united approach required at EU level, but also sustained political commitment. I welcome the general anticorruption package presented by the European Commission, as well as the resolution introduced by my colleague Ms Macovei.

In Romania, a lack of knowledge of procedures has resulted in a series of irregularities in the management of European funds. This is why I think that, apart from the monitoring and assessment measures, particular attention needs to be given not only to selecting and training officials, but also to informing the public, especially at local level.

I hope that the general anticorruption report submitted by the Commission in 2013 will be objective and identify best practices for fighting corruption.

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – (SK) Mr President, corruption is a serious problem in modern democratic society. Although the European Union has made great efforts to create measures and legislation to counter this adverse phenomenon, several Member States have been dragging their feet in their implementation. At a time when the representatives of the Fair Play Alliance confirmed that European anti-corruption legislation meets the required parameters, it is important to expend some effort on the promotion of its application. We must therefore focus more on the monitoring mechanisms of independent experts and civic organisations so that that their work might contribute to the uncovering of alleged corruption and the better application of existing regulations. We should also strive to accelerate the investigation process and provide better protection for whistle-blowers. It would also be good to harmonise penalties for corruption carried out by foreign nationals across the EU. I firmly believe that it is only through peaceful, patient and systematic work that we can be successful in this endeavour.

Eduard Kukan (PPE). – (SK) Mr President, I believe that the European Commission’s package of measures to fight corruption will become an effective instrument in this fight. If four out of five EU citizens regard corruption as one of the most serious problems, as already mentioned by several colleagues, we must act decisively. Such perceptions of reality require a clear response, the restoration of confidence in the transparency of institutions and a strong political commitment on our part. The Union must make the fight against corruption one of its political priorities towards the Member States, as well as in relation to other countries. This applies especially to all the candidate countries: here the European Union must act more vigorously and require concrete results. For future Member States it should be our priority to do the utmost to suppress corrupt practices before their accession to the European Union. Candidate countries for membership must have a clear position and show the results of the implementation of national anti-corruption policies. The fight against corruption must therefore be an integral part of both our internal and also external policy.

Cecilia Malmström, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, thank you to those of you who are left. I think it has been a most useful debate and it shows that we are taking seriously the concerns of citizens, to which many of you have referred. The vast majority of our citizens are very concerned about corruption and want Europe to act more in this regard. As many of you have also said, there are clear links between corruption and organised crime; there are huge amounts of money involved – taxpayers’ money, citizens’ money – that could be used for other things, especially in these times of austerity. Corruption also erodes the legitimacy of the political system of all of us, of our authorities and of our public institutions, and that is devastating for a democracy. Corruption is also therefore a threat to our democracy.
We have to remind many of our political leaders that they actually ran for election on a non-corruption agenda. I think it is time to deliver on that right now because, as I have said and many of you have repeated, it is not lack of legislation that is the problem: it is lack of implementation and it is lack of political will.

The Commission is of course not the police. We cannot send anti-corruption squads to different Member States, but we can work with the existing networks, with civil society, with Europol, with Eurojust, with the Experts’ Group that we will set up and the groups that already exist in Member States, in order to get a better picture of what needs to be done. We must push for implementation of what has been decided and ratification of international instruments.

I do not think we are in a position, Mr Moraes, to make an intermediate report, but we will not sit silent until 2013. We will have hearings, we will have seminars, we will have different activities, public consultations with all of you involved and we will try to develop those indicators, those definitions that are so important, yet very difficult, and that we need to get right. In all this, I would like to work very closely with the European Parliament.

The report is of course not a magic wand, but we can describe the state of play in the different Member States, we can identify shortcomings, we can make recommendations, and I would like very much to work on a thematic aspect. Public procurement would, of course, be one of the most prioritised themes that we would highlight.

We need to keep on pushing. Mr Ehrenhauser, I would like to say to you that protection of whistleblowers throughout the EU is very important and there is very uneven protection of whistleblowers in the Member States at present, and this is also something we need to look at.

There is a lot to do. One very important element is to keep the debate alive all the time, to keep on pushing, and I am looking forward to working with all of you in this very important area.

**Jerzy Miller, President-in-Office of the Council.** – (PL) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, you have had a very interesting debate which confirms the importance of the issue we have discussed today, not only on a financial level but above all on something which I think is much more important – a loss of trust between those in government and the citizens. This trust is something which is essential in order to have any real influence on public life, not only through the force of law, but above all by applying that law.

On two occasions I stressed the need for transparency in areas particularly susceptible to corruption. If we spread ourselves over too many areas we will probably be much less effective. We should focus on what clearly emerged from the first report on the dominant areas – not only dominant from a subjective point of view, but also in the opinion of experts and scientists, presented in a measured and standardised way – comparing Member States in selected areas susceptible to corruption.

Now for the matter of implementing anti-corruption legislation. It really is shameful that some Member States are delaying its introduction and the Council should certainly bring to their attention the necessity of completing their work in this area. However, on the other hand I am a realist, and the introduction of European legislation into national law will not solve the problem. The solution is to be found in the effective application of this legislation. We know from the indicators we currently use that sometimes countries which have introduced the full range of legislation are not at all safe from the disease of corruption.
Effective application of the law, including in the dimension of international cooperation, both among police forces and judicial systems, are essential if we are to make any significant progress.

Concerning transparency of sanctions, if we are not equally transparent in enforcing the consequences of breaches of the law on corruption, any dialogue between those in government and the citizens will be incomplete.

There is one more very important matter: sharing good practice amongst Member States. Corruption is not equally severe in different areas of the European Union and this is why it is possible to transfer good practice from one country to another; it is just a question of perseverance and consistency.

The final matter which I stressed was that of the confiscation of property acquired through corruption. This matter, which relates not only to corruption but also to other forms of organised crime, is also not a strong point among Member States, and it is well-known that this delay in something which was expected a lot sooner is still causing a lot of debate.

To sum up, the Council will attempt to mobilise those Member States which have delays in their legislative procedures to make up the time and, by sharing common achievements, to reduce the level of corruption, especially in those areas which are particularly susceptible.

**President.** – To conclude the debate I have received one motion for a resolution (3) pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow at 12.00.

**Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Vladimír Maňka (S&D), in writing.** – (SK) Corruption is one of the trans-national threats that continue to challenge the internal security of the Union. The results of corruption have implications across and beyond EU borders.

Four out of five EU citizens regard corruption as a serious problem in their country.

Corruption costs us an estimated EUR 120 billion per year, representing one percent of the EU GDP.

It undermines the rule of law, distorts the market and plays a role in the current economic crisis.

All EU institutions, EU agencies and Member States should ensure more transparency.

Commission and Eurojust should ensure a more efficient and speedy exchange of documents and information between national courts on corruption cases with a cross-border dimension.

The Commission must ensure policy coordination of the anti-corruption mechanism.

**16. Agenda for next sitting: see Minutes**

(3) See Minutes.
17. Closure of the sitting

(The sitting closed at 21.20)