

## WEDNESDAY, 11 MAY 2011

### IN THE CHAIR: JERZY BUZEK

*President*

#### 1. Opening of the sitting

*(The sitting was opened at 09:05)*

**President.** – Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to apologise for the delay. There was a very exciting and interesting discussion between President Barroso, Commissioner Lewandowski and the leaders of the political groups, so we are a few minutes late. There is now a very important discussion ahead of us and I would like to invite you to this discussion.

#### 2. Implementing measures (Rule 88): see Minutes

#### 3. Delegated acts (Rule 87a): see Minutes

#### 4. Main aspects of the common foreign and security policy and the common security and defence policy - Situation in Syria and in Camp Ashraf - Report: Albertini - Annual report from the Council to Parliament on the main aspects of CFSP in 2009 - Report: Gualtieri - Development of CSDP following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty - Report: Muñiz De Urquiza - The EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the joint debate on:

- the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the main aspects of the common foreign and security policy and the common security and defence policy (Article 36 TEU) (2010/2986(RSP)),

- the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in Syria and in Camp Ashraf and the situation of the Coptic Christian community of Egypt (2011/2690(RSP)),

- the report by Mr Albertini, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in 2009, presented to the European Parliament in application of Part II, Section G, paragraph 43 of the interinstitutional agreement of 17 May 2006 (2010/2124(INI)) (A7-0168/2011),

- the report by Mr Gualtieri, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the development of the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (2010/2299(INI)) (A7-0166/2011) and

- the report by Mrs Muñiz De Urquiza, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations (2010/2298(INI)) (A7-0181/2011).

Before we begin, I would like to say a few words. On Monday, we remembered Europe Day, a day in celebration of the European Union. Without doubt, what we most need in the European Union today is a common foreign and security policy. We face historical challenges, only one of which is the need to overcome the crisis which has been imported into Europe. We must prepare for this kind of situation in the future and solve the problems of the crisis which exist outside Europe, too, and not just those inside Europe.

We also have the growing disorder in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, as well as the renewed unrest in Tunisia and Egypt. We should not forget our eastern neighbours – indeed, a few days ago, we launched Euronest. We have our common European diplomacy, which needs to be an effective tool for action outside the European Union, because it is not possible to solve problems inside the European Union today if we do not begin seriously to solve problems outside the European Union. The European Union must have greater political strength and not just economic strength.

**Catherine Ashton,** *Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – Mr President, this will be the first of three contributions that I will make to honourable Members this morning, so I want to start by giving you my vision of the issues that face us and also to try and touch upon some of the detail of the issues that honourable Members have added to this debate, knowing the importance that you attach to them. Let me begin.

There are storms blowing across the countries we call our neighbours – Arab spring, winds of change, whatever imagery we use. None of us in this House know where it will end and what that end will bring. Aspirations are high and expectations too that the revolutions will have been worth the blood that has been spilt, worth the turmoil and fear, worth the economic havoc in a world already grappling with the worst economic problems for decades.

The uprisings across North Africa and the Arab world pose great challenges for Europe, but also opportunities we cannot afford to miss. Two principles have to underpin what we do. The first is that we in Europe know how long and painful the journey towards liberty can be. Our own path to 20th century liberal democracy was a very slow one. The European Union itself was born in the ashes of conflicts that remind us how terrible life can be when democracy breaks down. Add into that the mixed record of Europe's empires and some humility is in order, even as we assert that democracy is the necessary foundation of human progress.

Second, democracy is, of course, about votes and elections – but it is also about far more than that. What we have learnt in Europe the hard way is that we need deep democracy: respect for the rule of law, freedom of speech, respect for human rights, an independent judiciary and impartial administration. It requires enforceable property rights and free trade unions, and is not just about changing governments but about building the right institutions and the right attitudes. In the long run, surface democracy – democracy that floats on the top with people casting their votes freely on election day and choosing their government – will not survive if deep democracy fails to take root.

But there is no certainty – not in the outcome in any country – and no quick fix or short-term solution that will create the world so many people want to see. Meanwhile, the spectre of religious intolerance casts its shadow – witness the recent events in Egypt – finding its excuse in uncertain times to play on fear and to wreak destruction. Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right that must be protected everywhere. We need

to condemn all those who seek to use religious belief as a means of oppression, and support those who advocate tolerance, whether in Syria, in Pakistan, in Egypt or elsewhere.

Europe has choices to make too. When we look at our neighbourhood, we have to be ready to rise to challenges that are being asked of us. I can make hundreds of statements – and I do. I deplore, I condemn, I urge, I demand, but we also need to act and that action has to come in different forms.

Let me mention sanctions. We impose sanctions against regimes that treat the lives of their citizens as worthless, with people killed at the hands of police or security services that they command. Sanctions on Syria were imposed yesterday – an embargo on arms, an asset freeze and a travel ban for 13 key individuals in the regime, the freezing of our association agreement and of our cooperation with Syria. Let us be blunt and clear, as I was with the Foreign Minister of Syria yesterday. What is happening in Syria is a popular aspiration for democracy and the rule of law – it is not some foreign plot. By failing to see what it is, the regime loses its legitimacy and estranges itself from the people and from the international community. Violent oppression and threats inside and outside are tools of an era that is long gone. Our concern, in this House and in the European Union, is with the people of Deraa where the UN has been refused access, in Baniyas where the crack-down continues, in Hama where the tanks have moved in. The Syrian people will not bow to tanks. We say to the regime to change course, and to change course now.

*(Applause)*

I said yesterday to Minister Moallem, the Foreign Minister of Syria: You must allow immediate and unhindered access to humanitarian support and to the media. Only then can your claims of support for peaceful protests be substantiated.

In our eastern neighbourhood – in Belarus – President Lukashenko failed to use last December's presidential elections to show his readiness for change and a more open and democratic, European society. Not only did he not take this chance but, in using violence against peaceful demonstrators and multiplying the number of political prisoners, he has shown contempt for democracy and the rule of law. I met with the families of those who have been imprisoned and I know that he left us with no other option than to adopt strong sanctions in response, targeting those in the regime responsible for the crack-down, including President Lukashenko himself. I also know that we should step up our support for civil society and for people-to-people contacts.

Then there is our direct engagement in Camp Ashraf. What happened on 8 April is deplorable and has, and had, my strongest condemnation. I have been adamant that we need a strong united EU response. I have written to the Foreign Minister of Iraq and I spoke to him again yesterday. While I do not question Iraq's sovereignty over all its territory, it has a duty to protect the human rights of Ashraf residents.

I have condemned that violence and called for an inquiry – an inquiry that has to be as thorough as it is independent and that should tell us exactly what happened. But, as honourable Members know from the letters I have received individually and collectively in this House and beyond, there is no simple solution here. Several options for a long-term solution are being considered, with the United Nations in the lead, all of them with challenges. I am very grateful for the work of this House, for the work of those who have travelled there and for the contributions I have received. We need to take this also to the Foreign Affairs Council and we need to discuss this with the UN High Commissioner for

Refugees. Our Ambassador to Iraq arrives today, and she knows the importance that I attach to this issue. We need to pursue and make sure that we find the correct course of action here, but the inquiry and the condemnation are absolute.

In Yemen, too, the Gulf Cooperation Council has put forward its proposals and President Saleh has once again hesitated. I spoke to him not long ago. We talked about the discussions he had had with the opposition and the proposals on the table. I told him that he knew what he had to do – in the interests of his country – and that he should do it. In my meetings in the Gulf, I met with the King of Bahrain. We discussed the initiative there for the dialogue without preconditions that the Crown Prince has put forward, and I urged him to pursue that dialogue. The current course there is not the answer. We need to see fair and civil trials, if there are trials in Bahrain, and that the death penalty is avoided in all circumstances.

In all of these cases, it is about the direct engagement that we have and the pressure that we apply and the directness of our approach. Be under no illusion: we are very clear, I am very clear, with all of the leaders I speak to about what I believe needs to happen, and I do so with the support of this House and with the support of the Foreign Affairs Council of the 27 Member States.

Of course I want to talk about Libya. There are Members of this House who wish we had a stronger defence and security policy. I say to them this: in the last few weeks and months, we have seen how far we have come in some ways, but also how far we still have to go. We did engage together to plan the military support for humanitarian needs: ready at the request of the United Nations to support the people with resources from across Europe. Just as we did when the terrible earthquake struck in Haiti – military hospital ships, heavy lifting equipment, civilians and military working side by side in that case. Do not misunderstand: I know that humanitarian aid is apolitical and that humanitarian workers must not be put at risk but, in the primary objective of saving lives, sometimes it is only the military who have the equipment or people to achieve that – delivering aid at speed, putting in place the infrastructure – and that is why, should a UN request arrive, we will be ready to help.

We need to get faster and smarter in how we do this. I am the first person to say and admit that there is much more we need to do, and I will talk more of that later on this morning.

We are improving our collaboration with NATO, sharing details of our operations for the first time as part of continuing to develop our relations. Last Friday, I co-chaired with Secretary-General Rasmussen the meeting of the PSC Committee and the North Atlantic Council in our first ever discussion on Libya. There is also our collaboration with the African Union with President Jean Ping, and the Arab League with Amr Moussa and, of course, his successor, and with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and Professor Insanoglu, under the leadership of the UN special envoy, Al-Khatib. It was in my discussions with Ban Ki-Moon that we agreed to bring together the regional organisations for a meeting in Cairo and to follow up after the contact group meeting in Rome.

We are discussing together how to play our part in the future of Libya – to support the national dialogue, to help with the constitution and to prepare for elections. I have sent two missions to Libya to meet with and work with young people and with the women in Libya. As the leader of my team said to me, it is the first time that they have ever discussed a constitution – words and arguments they have never known before. They talked of how they longed for the end of the regime, so let us also be clear: Gaddafi must go from power and must end his regime.

(Applause)

I intend to open an office in Benghazi so that we can move forward on the support we have discussed with the people ...

(Applause)

... to support civil society, to support the interim transitional national council and Mr Jibril (we have had many meetings with him); to support security sector reform; to build on what the people told us that they wanted. They want help with education, with healthcare, with security on the borders, with the kind of support that we are able to give and want to give them. And with all that we do, the silver thread of human rights runs through our work.

Then, there is the new Neighbourhood Policy – a different level of ambition and vision. Mutual accountability is at its core: the EU and the neighbourhood are responsible to each other for delivering on the commitments that we make to the countries and to the people of our neighbourhood and to the people of Europe.

Building on what we have already talked about are mobility, market access and money, or the ‘three Ms’, as a simple way of describing it. Some things are extremely important to support these countries into the future. One example is the mobility of young people. These are young societies where young people long for greater opportunities, and the European Parliament has a big role to play in supporting those opportunities for young people to gain benefits and knowledge from Europe. So too with Member States: the opportunities to travel, to study.

For businessmen and women, it is important to have the chance to explore new markets, to sell their goods and services, and they are in the gift of our Member States, some of whom have long relationships with the countries concerned, but who now need to step up and provide those opportunities.

On market access, we know that we have a genuine contribution to make to stimulate economic growth and the recovery. You know the effect of this turmoil on the economies of the countries we are describing. Some of these countries rely on us as their major export market and the source of their imports. Allowing those countries to develop their markets could make a real difference, supporting not just the opening of markets but how they gain access to them, ensuring that they can reach our standards, and ensuring that they have real opportunities. Nowhere is that more true than in small businesses, but we have to have the political will to do it. We have to have the political will to be committed to ensuring that we make our markets available. That is a challenge. It is a challenge in any circumstances; it is a challenge in economic times, but I would argue it is a challenge we have to rise to because, if we do not, then the failure of the economies in our neighbourhood will have a direct impact on us.

Then there is money, or rather resources. Not just what we can do in direct support – although that is important – but what we can leverage. We have already hosted a meeting of senior officials from around the world and from the big financial institutions to discuss what we might be able to contribute if asked, and will, but in consultation with our neighbourhood, we have to do more to support resources coming together more effectively.

Nowhere will this policy matter more perhaps than in Tunisia. Prime Minister Essebsi’s speech on television may help as the country moves towards elections on 24 July, but he

acknowledged the problems of a country where economic growth rates are down to between 0 and 1%. We have to ensure support to Tunisia, to its economy and its civil society, and that means thinking not just of the long term, not just of the importance of a new strategy, but of what we do now and how we support countries – Egypt, Tunisia and others – right now with the budgetary problems that they have. That is the reason we have started discussions with the financial institutions, with our Member States, with those who are engaged in wanting to support these countries, because helping them deal with deficits when tourism has collapsed, when the economy is not working properly, matters right now. Honourable Members must understand that there is an immediate urgency and there is a long-term strategy, and we need to have both in what we do.

On Egypt: I have been there three times in recent weeks and I have spent a lot of time with some of the young leaders from Tahrir Square, and also meeting some of the women. The women in particular are looking for the stronger voice that they believe they have been promised in the future of Egypt. I met one woman who will be a presidential candidate and who is determined to show that women have that role to play in Egypt. I have talked with many government ministers, and let me give you the example of the Planning Minister, Fayza Abounaga. She wants to build houses for people; she has a big vision of what building a million houses over twenty years could mean for Egypt.

We need to take these big visions from countries with whom we are working and translate them into what it is that we can provide and support. So, integrating training and education, infrastructure around housing programmes, opportunities for small businesses to grow, working with UN women – as I am – to consider how we build safer communities around the housing projects, how we work together to design a much bigger, grander vision that is built upon what the Egyptian people want. I am talking to the Foreign Minister of Egypt, Al-Araby, who is committed to working closely with us on the Middle East Peace Process, keen to develop the strength of the relationship that we already have, and keen to see us as partners in collaborating in the region.

There will be many challenges for Egypt in the coming months and years. We have to be there to support them through each of those challenges and be willing to put our resources, our knowledge, our expertise and our contacts in favour of supporting them.

I have always said in this House and beyond that the External Action Service is a force to prevent and resolve conflict, so let me just mention, too, that this is why our role in Serbia and Kosovo matters. It is why the vote that we won at the UN, the voice that we now have, can play its part. It is why we have to engage the leaders in Bosnia to get them to get their eyes off the floor, to get them from thinking only about their own communities to thinking about the needs of their country, and to see their future and to see the European Union.

It is why too we play a role in the Middle East Peace Process. Honourable Members know well that stability in the Middle East requires peace. The quest for a negotiated agreement has dominated the region for decades. We have brought new vigour to the Quartet in recent months. I hosted a Quartet principals meeting in February and the follow-up of the Quartet envoys has been working with the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators for the very first time since the Quartet was established.

I wanted another principals meeting in April, and we have prepared a substantial statement based on our position. I continue to believe a negotiated solution is the way forward, and we will stay engaged and have another envoys meeting later this month.

We, too, have been a strong supporter of Palestinian state-building, so when the ad hoc Liaison Committee meeting was hosted by us on 13 April, I listened to the praise for the work of Salam Fayyad, for his remarkable achievements in governance, the rule of law and human rights, education, health and social protection – sufficient for a functioning government according to the World Bank. I have acknowledged the importance of Palestinian reconciliation behind President Abbas as an opportunity and something that the European Union has called for for years.

What is happening now is the most serious effort so far to establish unity, which is, in itself, key to achieving the two-state solution. I have been in close contact with President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad, as well as with Egypt, the Arab League, the United States and with Israel. Non-violence, the continuation of state-building and abiding by existing commitments will be crucial, and we must judge this effort by its results. I do believe that Israel should hand over the tax revenues owed to the Palestinians, but I want to be clear that our position on Hamas has not changed and Israel's security remains a key concern for all of us.

I also want to say that I do not consider a flotilla to be the right response to the humanitarian situation in Gaza. I have been there twice. I continue to highlight the plight of the people, especially asking for more access to enable the economy to start to develop. The situation there frankly, especially for the children, is awful. We have put forward proposals to Israel to support that greater access. I want to see the people of Gaza with a future, but I also want to see Gilad Shalit, captive for years in Gaza, given the chance to go home to his mother and father whom I have already met.

Europe's experience tells us that true democracy is the necessary foundation of tolerance, of peace and of prosperity. In North Africa and the Arab world, that destination will not be reached quickly or without setbacks, but building deep democracy is the only way that destination will be reached at all. We have the experience to help every country that asks us now to help them make that journey to democracy. It is why I am proposing to support the endowment for democracy which will enable us, too, to use our resources to support opportunities, particularly for young people, to engage in political life, to support the development of political parties, to enable people to do what honourable Members in so many countries represented here had to do themselves – i.e. develop the political process by building those political parties, civil society, and deep roots that mean democracy flourishes and grows.

I often say when I visit these countries that it is not about electing a government so much as the right to be able to throw a government out. Democracy is about being able to say bye-bye as well as hello, and that is important: knowing that you have the right to use your ballot box, once, twice, three times, four times to change your government, to demand of your government, is critical, and you can only do that when democracy is deep and flourishing. It is why what we have seen happening in Cote d'Ivoire is so important, seeing President Ouattara finally take his place, and the role we have played has been significant in supporting that process. It is why it is good to see the Nigerian elections going well and Goodluck Jonathan now being appointed properly. It is good to see democracy begin to take hold and flourish and deepen, and that is what we have to support.

Change does not necessarily ensure progress, but progress absolutely requires change. That means we have to be more determined to act. Some of the things I describe require Member States to act, some require the Commission to act, many need the support of this House, and we have to decide that we will all play our part. If we only do it when the media's

attention is on those countries or on us, then we will fail. We must be in this for the long haul and we have to be determined in saying to our neighbours not just that they should start the journey towards democracy, but that they should complete it.

There have been three excellent reports which I shall speak on in my next intervention, but I do want to thank the rapporteurs. I am going to end with a very small quote from an anthropologist, a woman I admire very much, Margaret Mead. She said: 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has'.

**Joseph Daul**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, foreign policy has been dominated by the revolutions – some more peaceful than others – taking place in a number of neighbouring Mediterranean countries and, more recently, by a symbolic event in the fight against international terrorism, namely, the end of the Bin Laden era.

What is Europe's role in all of this? Are we willingly and actively involved in the situation? Yes, we certainly are. The action being taken in Libya under the auspices of the United Nations and on the initiative of certain European Heads of State or Government has demonstrated that, when it wants to, Europe – or some of Europe – can act decisively in difficult times.

Does this make us a key international player with influence to match our economic strength? The answer is a resounding 'No'. Europe is still effectively a bit player, at best a Tom Thumb in politics and geostrategy, despite the ever-increasing expectations of European public opinion. Europe backed stability and development aid in the Mediterranean. Yet the people are – quite legitimately – demanding political freedom and are fleeing their countries because there is no prospect of a life of dignity and opportunity for them and their children. The humanitarian assistance that we have provided over recent months has definitely been useful.

Baroness Ashton, we need to do more. Have we begun to learn from these events? I would like to think so. What is worse is that the waves of migrants coming to our shores in flimsy vessels, who are dying at sea – and let me point out that we have inadequate information on the number of deaths – are all too often met by division, quarrelling, closed borders, with some countries even calling into question the Schengen Area, an essential instrument for freedom of movement.

*(Applause)*

Is all of this worthy of Europe, of European values, principles and ideals? I do not think so, nor does my group, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) nor, I am sure, do the majority of Members in this House.

Ladies and gentlemen, the reason why we are meeting with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy this morning is that we sought to give Europe a voice and a face under the Treaty of Lisbon. We now need to move on and take action. That entails making choices and sticking to them. What, then, are Europe's priorities? Relations with our eastern and southern neighbours? Combating terrorism? A solution to the conflict in the Middle East? Trade policy? Tackling all of the above at the same time is no easy task.



Who are our preferential partners? The United States, emerging countries, or others? How can we achieve the best results? By leaving individual Member States free to define their own policy, as we have for the last 60 years, or by speaking with one strong voice?

Ladies and gentlemen, an intergovernmental solution is no longer the right approach to foreign affairs, security and defence: instead, we need more Europe. We need to move away from national egos and towards greater effectiveness at European level.

Baroness Ashton, we will only have a robust foreign and security policy if we put all our weight behind and all our energies into a few clearly defined objectives. Ladies and gentlemen, 2011 should be the year of the Mediterranean, of combating terrorism, even of achieving a breakthrough in the Middle East conflict. If Europe is capable of becoming a key player in this area, it will be able to put the errors of its youth behind it.

Let me close with a quote from someone very familiar to you: John Paul II. 'Do not be afraid,' Baroness Ashton. We have made savings of EUR 4 billion in the European budget. Please come up with some proposals for using that money, rather than returning it to the Member States.

*(Applause)*

**Martin Schulz**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (DE) Mr President, in a European Union where we are seeing moves towards renationalisation in all areas, the Treaty of Lisbon should be used as a tool for creating a new community policy: the common foreign, security and defence policy.

This is the first important general debate which we have held with Baroness Ashton and, if we look back to the early days, it was already clear then that there were certain governments which did not want the title of 'Foreign Minister of the European Union' to be used and this has ultimately led to the name of 'High Representative' being chosen. This is understandable, because, alongside tax policy and domestic policy, an independent foreign policy is one of the key features, you might almost say an identifying feature, of national sovereignty. Particularly in the field of foreign, security and defence policy, transferring this sovereignty to a supranational institution is a brave and also a difficult move.

However, we in the European Parliament, together with the High Representative, need to ask a quite different question. This question is: What is the role of the Union as an independent body in international policy? Over the last few days, I have read articles about Baroness Ashton which have astonished me, because they criticise her absence and her lack of policies. This criticism comes from people who think only about making their own national foreign policy and their own national interests the very top priority and who, without consulting with any of their partners, take unilateral decisions which will ultimately divide Europe rather than unifying it.

We only need to look at the mission in Libya. There has rarely been a more obvious split in the European Union's international policy and in its international involvement than over the question of how we behave towards Libya. There is a tendency in the major capitals of the European Union to regard the EU's foreign, security and defence policy as a continuation of each country's own national policy financed with European money. The larger the *Auswärtige Amt*, the Foreign Office or the *Quai d'Orsay*, the more pronounced this tendency is. Baroness Ashton, you will undoubtedly receive broad support from Parliament if you say to these people that, although you respect their unilateral interests,

the common European foreign policy cannot take the same direction. This policy will be defined by you, the High Representative, in all the areas of consensus.

I am in favour of opening an office of the kind you have described in Libya, because you as High Representative, the Union itself, and Parliament as an independent body, all have credibility in humanitarian and political terms. We are more credible than the states which have taken military action in Libya out of necessity, but whose arms exporters also had the largest trade stands at Libya's most important arms fair last autumn. Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Belgium are the main suppliers of arms to Colonel Gaddafi's army which is fighting the rebels in Libya. That is not the sort of credibility which Europe needs.

*(Applause)*

The credibility which Europe needs is that of soft power, which helps to establish democracy, which opens an office to support developments in civil society and which does not define international cooperation with the European Union in terms of subjugating others to the unilateral diplomatic and economic interests of the Union, but instead encourages policies based on an equal partnership between different regions of the world. That is my vision of the foreign, security and defence policy of the European Union.

You have mentioned the three Ms: money, mobility and market access. In the next phase, you should add the three Cs: coherence, concreteness and the community method. In my opinion, with the three Ms and the three Cs, you will find partners in the European Parliament. We in the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament know that we are still in the early stages of the cooperation between you and Parliament and there are certainly some areas for improvement. This is why I am repeating my offer on behalf, I believe, of the majority of the Members of this House. You will undoubtedly find more support for your vision of a common foreign and security policy here than among the 27 foreign ministers, all of whom I respect, but who all have one problem, which is that they are foreign ministers of individual countries.

*(The President interrupted the speaker)*

You, on the other hand, are the diplomatic representative of an entire continent.

*(Applause)*

**Guy Verhofstadt**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, on Saturday, I had a long meeting in Cairo with the new Egyptian Prime Minister, Mr Sharaf. The conclusion of this meeting, and my conclusion also after this meeting on my second trip to Cairo in the last two months, is – as you have indicated – that we need to give massive help to these revolutions in North Africa and especially to developments in Egypt. We must stop making our little paternalistic adjustments that we have announced up to now.

I shall give a short comparison. Do you know how much money was transferred under the US Marshall Plan? For years in a row? 1% of GDP every year. USD 162 billion in actual money. And what are we talking about and promising Egypt? One billion. Not 162 billion, but one billion. Not in 2011, not in 2012, but in 2013, when we have the possibility to do so. I think that is nothing at all. What I expect from you and from the Commission – because it is apparently Commission money we are talking about – is not big plans about changing the Neighbourhood Policy. We need to do that in the future, but what I expect is direct budget aid given to Egypt as fast as possible, because by the end of the year, they

will have no money in their budget and that could be the beginning of a counter-revolution in Egypt. Direct budget aid or cancelling the country's debts – that is the way forward immediately. An announcement today in that direction would certainly be helpful for Egypt and for the Egyptians.

My second message is about Syria. Let us be honest, Baroness Ashton. Syria is a huge disaster. What is happening there – and I have no other words to describe it – is nothing less than an Arab Tiananmen. An Arab Tiananmen. People massacred by tanks and by snipers every day. 800 people killed to date. 8 000 people arrested to date. People tortured in the most brutal way in order to release passwords on Facebook and the names of comrades working on Facebook. Soldiers who do not want to shoot at their own people are themselves shot by the secret services of the army and of Bashar al-Assad. From what is happening today in Syria, it is very clear that there is only one way to describe Bashar al-Assad, and that is as the most brutal dictator in the world at the moment. That is the clear analysis we can make today.

(Applause)

So what can be done? I see 800 people killed to date, 8 000 people imprisoned, some of them tortured every day, and we are freezing the assets of 13 people, but not Assad. I say this is an unbalanced approach. It is, in fact, ridiculous, and it is not helping to press the Assad regime to change its direction. It is not enough to say 13 people and one of Assad's brothers is there, and one of his nieces or nephews is on the list. No, there are hundreds of people you have to put on the list immediately, as fast as possible, to apply real pressure.

I can understand your approach a little bit. You are saying that if I leave Assad off the list, maybe it will help him change his attitude later on. OK then, make that very clear here today in the debate. I want you to declare that you give Assad a few days. If, in these few days, he does not stop what is happening at the moment, then freeze all assets, not only of the 13 people but of the whole Assad family.

(Applause)

Impose a travel ban not on 13 people when 800 are killed, but on the whole Assad family and declare what is very important. They are waiting for that.

Yesterday, we had a link directly with people in Syria who are saying that you have to strengthen the sanctions, otherwise he will not stop. Declare that the Assad family will never be considered by the European Union as the real representatives of the Syrian people, and that they will be accountable for their crimes. Do it right now. That is what we expect today from you. You can help to stop this Arab Tiananmen. It is not true that we play no role: we play an essential role and the people of Syria are waiting for this clear message today. Not tomorrow. Today.

(Applause)

**Charles Tannock**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, the major development in the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) this year has undoubtedly been the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Baroness Ashton, as Vice-President/High Representative, you have recently come under pressure for its lacklustre performance. However, you can only ever be as effective as the Member States will allow you to be and, of course, you are reluctant to use your own powers of initiative – an approach which I fully support. On the one hand, the EU wants to carve out its global role

as a diplomatic heavyweight but, on the other hand, the CFSP requires unanimity, which means compromising to preserve the interests of individual Member States, particularly the big ones.

This hybrid *sui generis* approach to EU foreign policy vindicates those of us who opposed the creation of the EEAS in the first place, believing then that the EU's global ambitions would undermine national sovereignty. Paradoxically, it now seems that national sovereignty is undermining the EU's global ambitions, as we saw recently over what happened in Libya. The ECR, my group, nevertheless remains constructively engaged with the EEAS. We wish it well. We hope it will work. It needs to bed down, and we want to see budget neutrality and more political accountability.

Although the Vice-President/High Representative has made excellent senior appointments – I have seen some of these before the Committee on Foreign Affairs – I must ask why she has been short-changed in a stitch-up by the Commission, which seems to have retained a disproportionate amount of resources for EU enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy. This split does not provide value for money to EU taxpayers, nor does it serve our foreign policy interests.

Can I now make some specific requests, firstly on the imminent Gaza Flotilla Mark II? Can you, Madam Vice-President/High Representative, put pressure on Turkey to stop this dangerous provocation at a time when Israel is under enormous tension and pressure, with missile attacks from Gaza and the renewed passage of Iranian warships through the Suez Canal? And how will the EU engage with a new unitary Palestinian Authority that has Hamas, a terrorist organisation banned by the EU, as one of its components?

Secondly, Madam Vice-President/High Representative, will you broker a solution for the closure of Camp Ashraf in Iraq?

Next, will you condemn forthrightly and totally the passage of the Bahati bill in Uganda, which allows the execution of homosexuals?

Lastly, I entirely agree with Mr Verhofstadt: I commend you in all your efforts to stabilise the Middle East and North African countries and, in particular, your condemnation of the killing of Christians in Egypt, but why, as Mr Verhofstadt has pointed out, has President Assad of Syria been left off the EU sanctions list after the brutal killing of innocent civilian protesters by his forces in recent days?

**Daniel Cohn-Bendit,** *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group.* – (FR) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, I would just like to put some questions to you today, Baroness Ashton.

Firstly, on the subject of Syria, like Mr Verhofstadt, I would like to know what is stopping Europe from placing President Assad on the EU sanctions list? Which country or countries are currently preventing the European Union from taking the only possible decision? Please tell us. If Mr Westerwelle is the obstacle, then tell us that it is Mr Westerwelle: at least that way, we will know what is shaping different Member States' policy.

Unlike the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we are not going to suggest that President Assad is the answer to President Assad's dictatorship. If that is what we are being asked to think, it really is unbelievable. The only solution for Syria is for President Assad to relinquish power in Syria: that should be Europe's position. It is therefore obvious that President Assad and his whole family need to be included on the list – not tomorrow, not

the day after tomorrow, but today. If that is not feasible because a unanimous decision is required, then you need to say what is hindering progress. It needs to be stated publicly so that we can have a proper debate in Europe.

Secondly, what is preventing Israel from paying the taxes due to the Palestinians and why? Of course we need to maintain security in Israel, but the Palestinians should not have to suffer in order to maintain security in Israel. That cannot be the solution.

(Applause)

My last question: 600 people died on the Libyan coast a few days ago. A vessel was in the area. We have been told that it was not a NATO vessel, that it was not the *Charles de Gaulle*. Apparently it was a Maltese vessel. I would therefore like to know: what boat was it and what information is available? Who failed to rescue the 600 Libyan refugees? In the 21st century, surely no one is going to tell me that it is not possible to identify the ship in question. The lack of action constitutes a crime: that of failing to provide assistance to persons in danger.

**Lothar Bisky**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (DE) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, during the course of this debate, you will hear not only praise, but also criticism. To be honest, it is clear that EU foreign policy has failed in some areas, including in the Arab world, in Afghanistan, in finding a resolution to the Palestinian problem and in the conflicts among our eastern neighbours. The question that I would like to ask is: What is the reason for this? With 27 different nations making decisions, how can we reach a consensus within the EU and within the common foreign and security policy?

It is obvious that foreign policy is a policy of individual interests. However, the time when the West could assert its own interests without taking into consideration its partner nations and their people is long since past. The EU must show that it is open to adopting a policy of reconciling interests. The main factors which contributed to the failure are double standards and a tendency to think in military terms. The Members of this House almost cheered when the UN Security Council decided to take military intervention in Libya. Today, I think all of us are at a loss when it comes to events there. What are we doing for the people of Gaza or Darfur? How can we give the 1.4 billion people living on one dollar a day the right to a life of dignity? My group is particularly concerned with this question.

The revolutions in the Arab countries have one important demand in common. They are all calling for justice and fairness, both in the distribution of wealth within society and in democratic participation in political decision making, including international relations. The EU must respond to this demand. In order to achieve this objective, we must work together to develop international law and not simply interpret and implement it unilaterally.

**Bastiaan Belder**, *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – (NL) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, I have a number of burning questions on developments in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. What position will the European Union take, through its Member States the United Kingdom and France, in the United Nations Security Council in September in respect of the unilateral efforts of the Palestinian Authority to proclaim a Palestinian state, separately, it should be noted, from the peace process with Israel?

This question, High Representative, is all the more pressing after Fatah and Hamas last week re-established Palestinian unity whilst completely ignoring the conditions of the parties, in other words, including the European Union, for a unified Palestinian Government, namely, recognition of the State of Israel, the renunciation of violence and terrorism and

compliance with earlier commitments. In the meantime, Hamas is making clear that it does belong on the European Union's list of terrorist organisations. Hence my pressing question: how, in this new situation, will the European Union apply its own Quartet principles? Conducting business as usual with Ramallah implies at any event letting go of these fundamental principles of peace. All of this will cause serious damage to European-Israeli relations and it is of very little help to the peace process, on the contrary, in fact.

**Gabriele Albertini**, *rapporteur*. – (IT) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, the subject of European foreign and security policy is especially crucial at this particular historic juncture, which is marked by an extraordinary wave of protest that has taken hold in the Mediterranean and is also spreading across the Middle East.

In view of this serious crisis affecting the whole of the southern Mediterranean and now spreading into the Arabian Peninsula, the European Parliament must act as a sounding board for all these protests by ordinary people. They are risking their lives, clamouring to improve conditions and to start the transition to democracy by toppling the current regimes. This House wants to deal directly with the High Representative and Vice-President, Baroness Ashton, particularly because of our role in controlling the budgets of civilian and military missions under the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and the common security and defence policy (CSDP).

The first part of the report particularly concerns the relationship between Parliament and the other institutions, primarily the Council and the Commission, driven by the post-Lisbon approach to European politics. Another very important subject is the EU's multilateralism, which benefits, above all, from the recent establishment of the European External Action Service, which has at last come into being. In this regard, I have to welcome the recent resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly granting the European Union observer status within the Security Council, thus acknowledging what the Treaty of Lisbon enshrines.

We have tried to produce an appraisal that corresponds to the current situation as far as possible. The report rightly highlights the great wave of civil protest in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and also in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, and points out events, contexts and expectations for each of these countries, as well as other subjects of particular interest, such as our strong transatlantic alliance and our hugely important relations with Russia.

Enlargement, support for civil rights and the establishment of the rule of law, diplomatic relations with the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), the Arab-Palestinian conflict and condemnation of the bloodiest regimes are some of the subjects of the report that I am submitting to your vote.

**Roberto Gualtieri**, *rapporteur*. – (IT) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, the common security and defence policy (CSDP) is going through an extremely difficult time.

Just when developments in the international system require the European Union to become a credible actor in security and defence; just when the European approach to crisis management through supporting democracy rather than exporting it appears to be more suited to the challenges of our times; just when the economic crisis makes the option of developing a common defence inevitable; just when the Treaty of Lisbon provides new instruments to develop the CSDP within the framework of an integrated approach; in short,

just when a quality leap in the CSDP has become necessary and possible, the European edifice seems to be creaking dangerously and there is a real risk that the ambitions and possibilities of the CSDP will have to be drastically downsized.

The report I am presenting seeks to tackle this contradiction and suggests possible answers for the other institutions. With regard to the Libyan crisis, we do not confine ourselves to expressing our disappointment either at the European Union's inability to define its position and take joint action or at the restrictions placed on the EUFOR Libya mandate. We believe the time has come for a European political initiative, in conjunction with our other partners, to bring about a ceasefire and to hold negotiations that will put an end to the Gaddafi regime and begin a transition to an inclusive democracy. NATO's military intervention is clearly unlikely to solve anything and it will do well to adhere scrupulously to the mandate of the UN resolution, avoiding any disproportionate use of force.

At the same time, we hope that CSDP assets will be used effectively to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population under attack and that future operations will be planned in such a way as to support the development of democracy in Libya. The Libyan situation also calls for reflection on a wider scale, and I believe it reinforces the report's suggestions. Responsibility for the future of Europe and for security and defence, of course, lies primarily with the European Council, its members and also its President, who represents the Union in matters of foreign and security policy at that level.

We say to them clearly that bilateral cooperation and coalitions of the willing cannot replace the CSDP as the Union's policy. We do not find the idea of renationalising this policy convincing, not because we are Treaty purists, but because, if it were renationalised, this policy would not be equal to the challenges that lie ahead. We propose that Parliament should enter into a strategic dialogue with the European Council, which we call on to discuss Parliament's recommendations, to draw up a proper foreign policy strategy and to devote an extraordinary meeting to European security and defence.

We call on you, Baroness Ashton, to intensify your efforts to build a consensus among the Member States and to make use of your multiple functions to improve consistency between the CSDP, the common foreign and security policy and the other facets of the Union's external action. The European External Action Service is an instrument with enormous potential for this work. The report puts forward several proposals for the role it should play, starting with that of being a crisis management board able to provide a genuinely integrated response to crises, and we are delighted to see that it is taking shape. The Libyan situation also confirms the inadequacy of Europe's military capability, which is well below the overall high level of national defence budgets.

It is quite obvious that strength only lies in unity. This involves pooling, sharing, strengthening of the European Defence Agency, permanent structured cooperation, development of an efficient and competitive European defence market, strengthening of the industrial and technological base, and enhancement of joint command and control capabilities. The inadequacy of these capabilities has been a factor preventing Europe from responding promptly to the Libyan crisis, starting with setting up a permanent operations general headquarters. The report formulates a large number of concrete proposals on this and other issues, such as the integration of external and internal security policies in a way that respects the primacy of the Community method.

It is noteworthy that in this respect, the main pro-European political groups are united, and I thank the shadow rapporteurs and coordinators for this fruitful collaboration.

Parliament is ready to support the development of a CSDP that is fully integrated with the Union's external action and is rooted in the values and principles of Europe. Baroness Ashton, we hope you can respond convincingly to us both in words and, above all, in deeds.

**María Muñoz De Urquiza**, *rapporteur*. – (ES) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, Henry Kissinger defined the world of his time as militarily bipolar, economically unipolar and politically confused.

Today, international order is multipolar in all areas and, due to globalisation, is politically complex. Globalisation implies, among other things, the dispersion of centres of power and the collective management of common problems and interests. New international organisations and fora have emerged – an example is the summit diplomacy of the G20, G8, G7, etc. – and there are proposals to reform the traditional international organisations.

In this context of change, and given the international legal personality of the European Union, it is vital that we urgently redefine the role that the European Union plays on this stage and that it takes its due place in the multilateral order so that it can fill the role of a relevant global player assigned to it by the Treaty and which this institution is requesting of it, along with European society at large, dare I say.

This process has already begun with the approval of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on 3 May, which will allow the European Union to participate in the General Assembly's work. This is an historic event and a diplomatic triumph that we need to recognise without equivocation and for which I congratulate you, Baroness Ashton. However, given the complicated nature of the negotiations for the approval of Resolution 1973, we can anticipate the arduous work that awaits you to update and rationalise the representation of the European Union, which is fragmented and dispersed and has an *ad hoc* status in each of the 249 multilateral agreements involving the European Union.

This does not only depend on you, clearly. It also depends on the non-EU states that are members of the various multilateral organisations. It depends also on organising the most effective form of representation within the European Union, and by organisation I mean an arrangement involving yourself – the European External Action Service – the President of the Commission, the President of the European Council and the now residual participation of the rotating presidencies of the Union. It also depends on the Member States transferring the pre-eminence of representation to the European Union, particularly in the case of international organisations committed to policies for which the European Union has exclusive competence.

Baroness Ashton, we can all remember the Copenhagen climate change summit as an example of the useless cacophony that is brought about by over-representation of the European Union and its Member States. We can also remember how well representation of the Union worked in the World Trade Organisation or in the Food and Agriculture Organisation. Moreover, we can remember how disconcerting multiple representation of the various presidencies of the European Union can be in summit diplomacy, or the dysfunction that can arise through not implementing the provisions of Article 34 of the Treaty of Lisbon on the coordination of the European members of the United Nations Security Council when the common positions of the European Union are put forward. Mr Schulz has referred to these flagrant dysfunctions in his speech.



I am referring, in this sense, more to the Member States than to yourself, in the call to construct the role of the European Union in a more structured multilateral world order and to draft a real EU foreign policy, setting aside any renationalising tendencies and temptations that are appearing in a number of our Member States.

However, while we are essentially appealing to the Member States to construct this role of the Union, we are also appealing to your commitment to put your capacity for political initiative and your services to work in order to raise the level of the European Union's external representation and rationalise it.

We are at an historic moment for the world and you have the opportunity to lead the EU's international role with, for example, initiatives such as the one you have announced of opening a Union office in Benghazi. You can count on the support of this Parliament, and not only its support, in fact, but also its mandate to establish a rational, structured and coherent representation of the European Union on the international stage as soon as possible.

**Catherine Ashton**, *Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*. – Mr President, I would like to thank Members for their contributions.

One of the themes that came through very much in what all of the group leaders said – although Mr Tannock pointed out that his group had never been in favour of the EEAS – was the desire to see, if we have one, the unified approach. I agree. I do not lack any ambition for what Europe can be. What I have to deal with is the reality of what we actually are. We passed a Treaty, and I joked that when the Treaty was passed, I was handed it and given a pencil and those were the resources that I began with. It is pretty much true, but we are not where we will be. The challenge we have is how to make sure that, not just this House and the desire of honourable Members with the passion that I feel here, but also the Commission, the Council, the Foreign Affairs Council, the Development Council, the Defence Ministers – all things that I chair and am responsible for bringing together – move with that same ambition. It does not surprise me at all, and I do not think it surprised honourable Members either, that on the way to this, particularly at a time when so many things are happening, we find that it does not necessarily work as effectively as you would like, or indeed sometimes as I would like.

What we need to do is continue that level of ambition for where we want to get to. That applies in everything we do, whether it is the sanctions we impose – where we need the 27 because we need unanimity – or whether it is in the approach that we take on support for the countries of Egypt and Tunisia. As Mr Verhofstadt said, we need the support of the Commission to really move and change and have a new strategy and a new ambition in the long and the short term.

Well, we support people right now. All of these things require us to shift and make changes. We are on that journey. I am not complacent about it at all, but I am realistic about exactly where we are. You can challenge me – and you should as often as you like – to try and make this move faster, and I will do so. But do not accuse me of a lack of initiative, of not being ambitious for it, and of not saying this loud and clear in the Foreign Affairs Council, in the media and elsewhere, because that is not true. I am really ambitious for this. I am really determined that Europe can be so much more than it is, but it requires us to get on that journey and stay on it together. It is difficult for individual Member States with individual constituencies to necessarily always be able to look at this through the lens of

what is best for Europe in the world, and not what is best for the domestic situation. I understand that too.

I agree with what Mr Daul said about neighbourhood terrorism and the Middle East peace process as being some of the key objectives that we have in terms of the work we do this year. It is why we have been so engaged, for example in Libya, on bringing together the regional organisations – the African Union, the Arab League, the UN and the OIC. This is really significant work in terms of thinking through how we are going to move forward in a process that it is currently extremely difficult. How do we get to the point where Gaddafi has to go? We have the dialogue where people can see the future, and that work goes on all the time. It is absolutely critical and it requires us to have a united front.

Mr Schulz said that there is a long way to go. I agree. We have much more that we need to do, and we need to make sure that the building of democracy is a big part of that journey, but we are on that journey as well in terms of what we can do. I like the three 'C's. I think we can become much more coherent. I think we can be better in cooperation and, of course, communautaire is the objective I know this Parliament has. So please keep the pressure on me, but do so also in terms of Member States.

Regarding the Marshall Plan, I think what General George Marshall did with the initial USD 13 billion that he got from Congress in 1948 is an extremely good model. It is a good model, too, because of the different things he did. He got loans, services, advisers and the breadth of things that could make a difference, so I think that it is a good model. It is not the plan we talk about for obvious reasons. People want something that is new and for them, but it is significant. I agree with you about the support and the issues of debt. That is why we are in discussion with countries with whom those countries have that relationship, and it is also why we are in discussion with the Commission.

I agree about the terrible violence in Syria. I am not in any way lacking in ambition for what we should do with Syria. What we have got is again a journey on sanctions. We started with the 13 people who were directly involved in the repression of the regime. There was a lot of discussion, Mr Cohn-Bendit, about whether President Assad should be on and there were lots of different views. I cannot just give you a list of Member States who said yes or no. There were strong views about how we do this, bearing in mind some of the situations. The decision was taken that for the first list, no, but we will look at it again this week. I assure you that my determination is to put the maximum political pressure that we can on Syria and to try and make sure – as I did when I spoke to Foreign Minister Moallem yesterday – that they understand the significance of what they are doing and that they take this closing window to actually change course and make a difference.

Mr Tannock, you talked about many things to do with the support of the 27, your desire to see us get the proper resources and being short-changed. I do not think we are short-changed. The institutions of Europe are all focused in the same direction. We have got to make sure that the ambitions that you have for what we can achieve can actually be realised. I have to find the resources for opening an office in Benghazi. Supporting better our delegations in Iraq, which some honourable Members discussed with me this morning, requires resources. We have to find them, both by being better and more efficient – I agree with that – but also by recognising what we have to do.

I have already talked about the flotilla, some of the issues concerning the Palestinian authority and the discussions that are going on – Mr Belder, you raised them too – between Fatah and Hamas. I made it clear that our position on Hamas has not changed, but I made

it clear that we support ways in which President Abbas can bring unity with Palestinians with his technocratic government and with elections, which is going to be so important. We have not changed our position, and we are very clear that we are cautious in looking at this situation.

I also wanted to make some reference to what Mr Bisky said when he talked about the poorest in the world: 'support life with dignity' was his expression. I think what we do with the Millennium Development Goals and the work that we are doing in collaboration in bringing development together is going to be so important for that in the future.

Just quickly – because I do not want to take up too much time – I want to talk to Mr Albertini about his report and to quote from it. He talks about coherence and says 'Coherence requires, first and foremost, the political will of the EU Member States to overcome their differing outlooks'. Absolutely. We know that, if we are going to be successful in implementing Lisbon fully – and this is what the report says – we need that sustainable funding in the next framework as well. I agree with the report in so many ways, but especially on the need to be proactive in promoting our values and in using all of the policy instruments that we have. I am also keen to improve the dialogue that we have.

One of the greatest difficulties we have is time – how much time to spend – and I want to make sure that we are using the best possible time in discussions with you. Mr Gualtieri, you and I had a good discussion yesterday. I agree about the importance of moving forward, particularly on pooling and sharing which will be part of the discussion with the Defence Ministers next week. We have got to make sure that we use the resources of Europe more effectively. It is a very simple idea to pool and share, but it is very powerful. We have big military potential, largely untapped, so decisions to use military assets and to support each other in pooling and sharing are something that we need to take forward. We are also trying to improve the work of the European Defence Agency and to take up some of the challenges that we have clearly seen in the responses that we have had in recent weeks, especially in Libya.

Finally, I would like to thank Ms Muñiz De Urquiza for this report and for her support on the UN. I think in the work that I did at the UN last week I have demonstrated my personal commitment to the power of multilateral action. We have got to look at the EU in the UN system and in all of the other international organisations. We have got to be clearer in our voice and more prominent and more creative in what we do.

That just leaves me to thank the first round of speakers and to say that I look forward to some final remarks at the end.

**Jörg Leichtfried**, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on International Trade.* – (DE) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, in the discussion on European foreign policy and Europe's position in the world, we are agreed that there is a need for improvement because of a variety of different circumstances. However, we could follow the example of a similar area of policy which already functions extremely well, in other words, external trade policy. The European Union has sole responsibility for external trade policy. It is the only player and the only representative of the Member States. It is not constantly being denounced on the basis of national vanity. We may disagree in other areas, but here we are strong and united.

It is time for us to use our strength to ensure that the people living in our partner countries can benefit from the values that have helped us: human rights, social security, justice and

freedom. This new dimension of European foreign policy is something that we should and, indeed, must follow up to make the world a freer, fairer and more social place in future.

**Krzysztof Lisek (PPE).** – *(PL)* Mr President, Mrs Ashton, permit me first to thank the rapporteur, Mr Gualtieri, for his hard work, and also to thank the other shadow rapporteurs with whom I had the pleasure of working. I would like to say that, as a newcomer to this role, I had expected sharp altercations, particularly since the report has a certain military aspect to it, but as it turned out, the work progressed very peacefully.

In Mrs Ashton's first speech, when she spoke about the conflicts which have broken out in North Africa, she said that we do not know where they will end and what that end will bring. Of course, we cannot say that the common security and defence policy will be a wonder drug for all the world's evils, but development of the CSDP would certainly mean we would know more about those conflicts and that we could perhaps prevent or resolve them. I am thinking, here, about the conflicts which have broken out in North Africa and the Middle East, and also about the frozen conflicts which are still smouldering in Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria and the occupied territories of Georgia.

It is to be welcomed that Mr Gualtieri's report covers many issues – it is a fairly lengthy report. For reasons of time, I will not mention many of them, but I would like to touch on two things. Firstly, the question of the operation of European Union missions. In the Subcommittee on Security and Defence, we spoke many times about how we must learn from mistakes or from certain shortcomings so that these missions function better in future. The question of the planning and management of European Union operations remains an open one. The ministers of the Weimar initiative have raised this in a letter to you, Mrs Ashton. We are hoping for specific action in this area.

Finally, I would like to mention EU-NATO relations. I welcome the fact that you maintain permanent contacts with the Secretary-General of NATO and the Secretary of State of the United States. We must continue these contacts, so as not to duplicate what we do – simply in order to save money. We know revolution is not possible, Mrs Ashton, but we do expect you to take action which will aid evolution.

#### IN THE CHAIR: ROBERTA ANGELILLI

*Vice-President*

**Véronique De Keyser (S&D).** – *(FR)* Madam President, Baroness Ashton, you have faced many criticisms over the last few days, Baroness Ashton. Some are no more than cheap political moves and my group has condemned them. Others, however, cannot be dismissed out of hand and I would like to share my concerns with you.

It is true that we do not always have a clear grasp of the EU's external policy, particularly in terms of what it is aiming to achieve, in other words, its purpose. Your communiqués are adopted but are often low-key, from which we can deduce that there are probably differences of opinion within the Union, which is, in itself, a message, albeit a negative one. So, you set to work, you have your meetings, make your phone calls, you give it all you have got, there is no doubt about that, but the results of these efforts are, unfortunately, diluted in the media ruckus, and hence the Union's foreign policy appears extremely weak in the face of the thunderous speeches delivered by some European Heads of State.

Yet here you have an extraordinary political space opening up in front of you with the Arab revolutions, and the role of European diplomacy in that space needs to be made very

clear, because beyond the specific characteristics of each country, it is true that everything is connected. For instance, the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation would have been inconceivable without the Arab revolution in Egypt and also without the recent bloody repression in Syria. Indeed, it is because Bashar al-Assad has crossed the red line that Hamas suddenly no longer feels at ease in Damascus and is considering moves to Qatar and Cairo, and that it wanted to hold last-minute negotiations when it had been negotiating for ages. These opportunities need to be seized!

So what is our current policy on Syria and the Middle East? As I have said, it is unsatisfactory. Furthermore, I share the anger of some of my fellow Members regarding the Syrian exception and now the exception for Bashar al-Assad, who has avoided sanctions. This needs to be explained to us better, Baroness Ashton.

One more thing. Unless an eleventh-hour candidacy is received from Kuwait or Nepal, at the instigation of the United States, we could well see Syria heading up the UN Human Rights Council on 20 May. Can you really see Syria chairing the UN Human Rights Council?

Baroness Ashton, sanctions are not enough. Have you campaigned against Syria chairing the UN Human Rights Council? Have you pushed for an international inquiry into the massacres? Even if you do not manage to persuade the Heads of State – and I agree with Mr Cohn-Bendit here – say so, do not leave us guessing! It is this ambiguity that weighs us down.

As for the Middle East, I am not exactly in agreement with you. You have cautiously welcomed the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation, but will you engage in dialogue with Hamas? Are we to repeat the mistakes of 2007? As we know, the situation is certainly very complicated. However, I think we need to grasp this opportunity. Hamas has supported the Arab peace initiative. Both parties have made incredible concessions to form this government. In the agreement governing the formation of this future government, which will take place in a month perhaps, there was acceptance of the concept of elections, of the Palestinian Authority, of the fact that Mahmoud Abbas could take part in negotiations, and of the concept of the 1967 borders, which are both an essential requirement and an implicit recognition of Israel. So do not tell me that you still stand where you stood two years ago. That would be unthinkable for us.

Baroness Ashton, the matter is urgent. Caution in politics is no replacement for boldness: they must go hand in hand. Parliament will always be behind you if you have the courage to provide a strong vision.

**Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE).** – (DE) Madam President, Baroness Ashton, we are still a long way from a common foreign policy which is really worthy of the name. You are being criticised for this, but it sometimes seems to me that you have been made the scapegoat in a situation which is outside your control and which is caused by the fact that the Member States do not have the political will to agree on a common approach.

Let us take the example of Libya. First of all, Italy blocked the imposition of sanctions, then France recognised the transitional council in Benghazi without any consultation and, finally, Germany abstained during the vote on the resolution in the UN Security Council. There is nothing you can do to change this, but it gives Europe a negative image. In Syria, we should have imposed stronger sanctions, but here, we also needed unanimity. There are some Member States – Greece, Italy and Spain have been mentioned in the press and

Germany may also be one of them – which are opposed to this. In this case, you must stand up here and say: ‘We have only been able to put 13 on the list’.

The need for unanimity is paralysing us. It no longer works with 27 Member States. We must make the next quantum leap forward in our common foreign and security policy. I would like to make this quite clear to Mr Tannock and his Tory friends.

What can you do? Make public the fact that European cooperation has failed and identify who is responsible. Make use of the community instruments, in particular, to promote democracy.

I was surprised to hear you speaking here so openly about the European Endowment for Democracy. We are in the process of drawing up a report on the subject with Mrs De Keyser as the rapporteur and we are evaluating what the requirements are. I must make it quite clear that we do not want a second European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which is bureaucratic, slow, over-complex and unpolitical. We need a solution that is unbureaucratic, fast, simple and political. If you can bring this about, you will have our full support.

**Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR).** – (PL) Madam President, Mrs Ashton, one of the most moving moments of my life was in December 2007, when I was present at the symbolic opening of the border between Poland and Lithuania by President Kaczyński and President Adamkus, a ceremony held to mark the fact that Poland and Lithuania were joining the Schengen area. I would like to say that for us – people who grew up behind the Iron Curtain – freedom of travel and a Europe without borders are tangible examples of the success of European integration. I would like to make an appeal: under no circumstances should a return to borders in Europe become a political tool or an attempt at a populist response to what may perhaps even be real problems. The Schengen area is a great achievement and we should protect it.

Thank you, Mrs Ashton, for saying that our position on Hamas has not changed. The problem is, unfortunately, that the position of the Palestinians and of President Abbas on Hamas has changed. I would like to appeal to you, Mrs Ashton, to ensure that the huge amount of aid which is going to the Palestinian Authority is not used by Israel’s enemies for attacks on what is, at present, the only democracy in the region. I would like to remind everyone that Israel is the only country in the Middle East in which the Arab population can and does make use of the right to elect its representatives to parliament.

**Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE).** – Madam President, I should like to make this point to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative: Europe’s foreign policy currently lacks leadership, boldness and Community method, and this at a time when the Union has more foreign policy instruments at its disposal than ever. You, as you often say yourself, are in listening mode: listening to national governments and waiting until they have pronounced themselves. Then you present the lowest common denominator, and often at times when events have already moved on

On Syria, for example, what are you convinced of? Should Assad be included or not? What is your opinion? We would like to hear that. Do you want to threaten sanctions or not? You ask us, you did that in your reply, to put pressure on governments, so tell us which ones. Open the debate.

Sure, Member States often lack the political will to act in a unified and decisive way, and they do not want to see you strong, but believe me, Baroness Ashton, they will not support

you and will not save your life as High Representative. They are not a guarantee for you to stay in your job, I promise you. And also this does not change the fact that the Lisbon Treaty envisaged a stronger role for you. You are the rotating Presidency. You are Vice-President of the Commission. You can take initiatives. You should set the agenda. You should set out in front your opinions, your decisions, and then let Member States react.

If you do not take initiatives, at least do not kill those of others. For example, the review of the Göteborg Programme on Conflict Prevention: ten years ago, it was initiated by Anna Lindh. The Hungarian Presidency started a review and wanted you to take it over, but you stopped it. I do not understand why. I can only recommend you dare more, delegate more. Follow Margaret Mead, whom you cited. Be the agent of change that we need. I promise you: only this will save your position, and nothing else.

**Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) Madam President, Baroness Ashton, I think that you are right to feel wronged by the criticism levelled against you. How can you be to blame when you are bound by the decisions taken by the large states in the European Union. However, I have one more question: will those levelling criticism here against their governments do any different from what they are denouncing when they are in power in their countries? I also agree with what Mr Schulz said: that until recently, European states were selling arms to those whom we have now discovered to be dictators. However, policy means foresight, it means prompt diagnosis of problems; otherwise, we are simply conducting a post mortem.

European states are bombing their recent partners; at the same time, however, they are bombing and destroying the arms they themselves sold. Obviously, you cannot sell new weapons without destroying the old ones. For us, if the European Union is to progress, it needs to develop a policy based on principles of peace, detached from military means and interventions, and to promote the demilitarisation of international relations. The Union needs to liberate itself from nuclear weapons and to help denuclearise the planet. That will be a moment of glory for the European Union.

A word about a neighbouring country in the Middle East: Turkey. Dozens of journalists are in gaol in Turkey and it still has 40 000 troops occupying half of Cyprus and violating the rights of Turkish and Greek Cypriots. This is where I call on Baroness Ashton to see promptly in Cyprus what we saw too late in the Arabian Peninsula.

**Fiorello Provera (EFD).** – (IT) Madam President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, the attacks on Coptic churches in Egypt and the killing of Christians are signs that religious intolerance is worsening, betraying the spirit of unity shown in Tahrir Square, where Copts and Muslims demonstrated together against the regime.

Coexistence and social stability are essential for an orderly transition to democracy, but they are made impossible by this lack of tolerance. The authorities in Cairo must therefore make a greater commitment to protect minorities and to oppose Salafi extremism, which is a negation of the principles of modern democracy to which the Egyptian people aspire. Economic development, with the resumption of foreign investment and, above all, tourism, is unthinkable without tolerance, order and stability.

It is therefore in the interests of Egypt and the world that Europe should grant generous aid, but this aid must be conditional upon an effective policy to protect minorities, in line

with the 'more for more' principle that you, Baroness Ashton, proposed together with Commissioner Füle.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI).** – (DE) Madam President, Baroness Ashton, current events in Syria are once again making us aware of the dilemma that the European Union finds itself in with regard to the Middle East and what is happening in North Africa. For many years, we have given our support to despotic regimes and dictatorships in the Arab world. Now, when President Assad begins taking brutal measures against his own people, we are, of course, dutifully condemning his actions and imposing half-hearted sanctions. This is not what is meant by credibility, in my opinion. For the Arab world, democracy and human rights have obviously never been much more than empty words. It is clear that attempts are being made to conceal the fact that Brussels or, in other words, the European Union, has primarily been acting in the geopolitical interests of the Americans in this region.

In particular, the helplessness of the European Union in the face of all the developments in the area of the southern Mediterranean gives cause for concern. We welcomed the coming of democracy when the revolts and uprisings began. What is happening now in Tunisia? At best, the situation can be described as chaotic, with the transitional government about to be overthrown again. Egypt has what seems to be a permanent or temporary military dictatorship which is persecuting the Coptic Christians. In Libya, there is a civil war in which the divided Europeans are intervening half-heartedly with half of their resources.

However, the Americans may find that Syria is a hard nut to crack. President Assad does not even need to worry that the army will turn against him under external pressure. There is also no protective power which could bring him down. Nevertheless, regime change in Damascus would definitely have far-reaching consequences for the entire region. The first Syrian refugees who are arriving in Turkey may be the vanguard of a major influx of people fleeing the conflict.

As a result of the current situation in Syria and Libya, we in Europe and in Brussels urgently need to develop an autonomous policy which is not dependent on or influenced by Washington. Unlike the USA, Europe is directly affected by events in the region because of its geographical proximity. However, we must not allow ourselves to be dragged further into the Libyan civil war or we risk becoming a target for terrorism and extremism.

**Eduard Kukan (PPE).** – Madam President, with regard to the report on the EU as a global actor, developments on the international scene show there is an urgent need for the EU to act more swiftly. This means being ready to face global challenges. The Lisbon Treaty has created the framework and necessary instruments for such action.

We should start by addressing global governance gaps. Examples such as the Copenhagen climate change summit, the United Nations General Assembly resolution on enhancement of participation rights – congratulations to Baroness Ashton – or EU participation in the International Monetary Fund show the necessity not only of addressing these issues, but also of finding a common strategy.

The report shows where the effort should be intensified. One of the most important fields is strengthening our role and coordination in the United Nations system. The same applies to the international financial institutions and multilateral security organisations. All this will not happen automatically. It will take time and consistent and coordinated actions on our side. What we urgently need is a long-term strategy clearly defining the steps and



actions we need to take in order to consolidate our place on the global scene. I hope that such a strategy will be proposed soon by Baroness Ashton and that we will have an opportunity to discuss it here in Parliament.

I have one further remark, which has more to do with the Albertini report. This Sunday, there were local elections in Albania. I was the head of the EP ad hoc delegation which participated in observing the elections, and I have a message to share with you. The citizens of Albania – I am not speaking about the politicians but about the ordinary people – look at us – the EU – with trust and hope. They hope we will help them to find a solution to the very difficult political situation into which politicians have led their country. Compared to our global ambitions, what is needed here is a small step. How good can we be in our home field? However, it is a test that we have to pass successfully and with dignity.

**Hannes Swoboda (S&D).** – (DE) Madam President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, as shadow rapporteur, I would first of all like to offer my sincere thanks to the rapporteur, Mr Albertini, for his very positive cooperation on this report.

In this report and, of course, in this debate as well, we have rightly focused primarily on southern areas and on the Middle East. I do not want to repeat what Mr Schulz, Mrs De Keyser and others have said. I would just like to refer briefly to the situation in Palestine and Israel.

I believe that the reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah and their readiness to found a state represent a major opportunity, because founding a state involves commitment and responsibility. We must definitely make that clear. We need the recognition of Israel, we need peace in the region and we need a renunciation of the use of violence.

*(Applause)*

That is extremely important. However, Israel must also recognise an independent Palestinian state in just the same way as Hamas must recognise the state of Israel. Only when we have this two-state solution can we also bring about peace in the Middle East.

I want to look not only southwards but also eastwards, because, on the one hand, I headed a parliamentary delegation to Turkmenistan and, on the other, yesterday I was appointed as Parliament's rapporteur for Russia. Despite the understandable focus on the problems in the south, we must not forget how important our eastern neighbours are. Turkey also plays a major role in this respect. We should not simply regard Turkey from the perspective of an accession candidate. Turkey must also be our partner, in particular, with regard to the situation in the Mediterranean. However, it is also important for us to strengthen our contacts with Turkey when it comes to the Black Sea region and to include Turkey in our common European foreign and security policy. This does not necessarily have anything to do with the question of accession.

Secondly, partnership with Russia is a very important factor. We want to establish a partnership with Russia, but we need to negotiate from a position of strength and self-confidence. This is something which we are sometimes lacking in. While Russia has too much, we have too little. Only when we are on an equal footing will we be able to reach an agreement. Although I am very much in favour of this partnership, which must be a strategic partnership, I am very surprised by the pressure that Russia is now exerting, in particular, in Ukraine. Previously, we would have described the members of the governments of Russia and of Ukraine as friends, but the way in which Russia is now behaving towards Ukraine is far from fair. The same goes for its behaviour towards some energy suppliers

and we have also seen this in Turkmenistan. Therefore, we must make it clear to Russia that we want a partnership based on equality and on common interests. Our objective must definitely be to establish a genuine and active partnership.

On the subject of Central Asia, Baroness Ashton, we want to become involved, but we have no representations there. I know that there are financial problems, but we urgently need diplomatic representations in the area. We want to buy energy from these countries. We want them to move towards democracy and to respect human rights. However, we are not really becoming sufficiently involved. Mr Morel is an excellent man and he is doing a very good job, but it is not enough. We need to establish more representations in these countries in Central Asia which are our neighbours. Either these countries will look only to China or to Russia, or they will at least have a chance to look towards Europe. I believe that this is important.

Finally, I would like to make it quite clear once again that we want to give you our full support. What you have said today is absolutely right. We in Parliament would perhaps like you to say it a little louder and more directly, even though that is not always your style, because then we would be able to give you even more support than we otherwise do.

**Andrew Duff (ALDE).** – Madam President, I should like to say this to Cathy Ashton: you spoke lucidly of the problems of getting agreement amongst 27 Foreign Ministers. But the Treaty of Lisbon allows you not to do so: you can form coalitions of the willing and build up a systematic form of reinforced cooperation.

I think that if unanimity can only agree upon a list of 13 Syrians to sanction, then it is the imperative of unanimity which ought to be scrapped. My advice is to find the avant-garde, to forge a core group of politically willing states and work with them to forge a common policy.

**Geoffrey Van Orden (ECR).** – Madam President, Baroness Ashton will not be surprised if I express disappointment, not in the performance of the European common security and defence policy (CSDP), but in the fact that she still insists on flogging this particular unnecessary and very expensive dead horse.

She may claim that the European Union has been engaged in some 25 missions with a CSDP label. Well, it is all about the label: few of these missions stand up to scrutiny. They are either missions better performed by NATO, straightforward civilian missions, or they are passive missions involving military personnel. They have usually come about because the European Union has begged somebody to invite it to do something. Currently, there are military operations being conducted by NATO in Libya. Having failed to get a mandate to enforce the maritime embargo, the EU has been desperately trying to get the UN to invite it to carry out a humanitarian assistance programme.

The fact is that neither NATO nor the UN wants the EU pretending to get involved militarily. Of course there is a great need for humanitarian assistance and the EU could play a useful role, but not in a way that merely seeks to promote a misplaced military ambition. The trouble is that the very existence of the CSDP and all its duplicative structures is divisive and encourages allies to think twice about robust commitment to NATO operations.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Nicole Sinclaire (NI).** – Madam President, would my colleague agree with me that, with regard to the UN, if there was a single seat for the European Union on the UN Security

Council – which is much mooted at the moment – that would constitute a significant transfer of sovereignty from the UK, and indeed France, to the European Union? Surely the current UK Government, of which he is a supporter, would definitely not support such a transfer of sovereignty?

**Geoffrey Van Orden (ECR).** – Madam President, I would like to thank the honourable Member for that question.

Of course, this is another of the baleful consequences of the Lisbon Treaty. I find totally unacceptable the idea that the United Kingdom and France should indeed give over their United Nations Security Council seat in order to enable the EU to sit at the Security Council table. I do not see that either Member State would be willing to do that. Unfortunately the Lisbon Treaty encourages that, which is, as I say, one of the reasons why we so object to it.

**Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE).** – Madam President, I should like to say this to the Vice-President/High Representative: I appreciate very much what you said in your first speech on your policy and what you have been doing with North Africa – Egypt, Tunisia, Libya – and especially the focus you put on the young people and women there, and your approach to deep democracy that has to be rooted. I think that is essential, and all of us here in this House share that view with you, so I hope this will be successful.

On the other hand, I agree with many of my colleagues that Assad should have been included in the sanctions. As my colleague, Danny Cohn-Bendit, asked you, who is the one – or who are the ones – who blocked it in the Council? Is it Mr Westerwelle or who? Tell us, and you will find support from us if you are transparent and open with us. I think that will get support for you. Explore your mandate. You will have more support here from us if you tell us more about what is going on in the Council. Go ahead and tell us.

I think that is true for coherence as well, as you and so many others here have said. In the Albertini report that we will be voting on this week, we also call for the national policies to be supportive of the EU positions and of you, and I call on my colleagues here in the European Parliament, those of you who are from government parties in your own countries: tell your foreign ministers and your prime ministers to support the common European policy and not just look into your own domestic interests, including in foreign policy, otherwise we will never get a common European foreign policy for which we need you, Baroness Ashton, to lead, to be ambitious and to be bold in your commitments.

61 years after the Schuman Declaration, which we celebrated two days ago, we need more Europe than ever. What we want is very concrete: conflict prevention and civilian crisis management, Lady Ashton. We demand that in the External Action Service, we have independent impact assessments as a standard procedure for the qualitative evaluation of the security, human rights, gender, social and economic effects of each CSDP mission and we need more civilian personnel in these missions as well.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Nicole Sinclair (NI).** – Madam President, for a start, I pay tribute to my colleague who has just spoken for her tireless work on human rights. She talks about a common EU policy on foreign affairs, etc. But does she share my dismay at the hypocrisy of the European Union? As she and I both know, the EU is opposed to the death penalty, and yet the joint statement by President Barroso and President von Rompuy on the death of Bin Laden says

that it 'shows that such crimes do not remain unpunished'. Does that imply acceptance that the death penalty is a punishment?

**Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE).** – Madam President, with regard to my colleague's remark, the death of Osama Bin Laden was not a death penalty. What took place was a killing, and I personally would have preferred it if the United States had apprehended him and taken him to court.

However, that is not meant to be a criticism of her.

What she is saying that Mr Barroso stated was not hypocrisy. It was a statement that was made. I might be critical of it and, as I said, I would have been more in favour of having Osama Bin Laden tried in an international criminal court, for example, but that has not happened. However, I do not attach any hypocrisy to this because we need a common European position. On the death penalty, I think things are clear in this continent at least – although not in other parts of the world, unfortunately.

**Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)** . – (FR) Madam President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that the words that you used during your first speech about your desire for there to be a Palestinian State, after inter-Palestinian reconciliation, are very important.

This Palestinian agreement is a key political event, and contrary to what has just been said here, Hamas has, for the first time, agreed to the PLO and the Palestinian Authority acting as its negotiating partners. It accepts the 1967 borders and the Quartet's conditions, including the rejection of violence. A transitional government in charge of preparing for elections is due to be put in place. Therefore, conditions are ripe for the United Nations to recognise the Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital, next September.

Leaving aside what you said earlier, Baroness Ashton, what further steps will the European Union take to recognise the Palestinian State and champion this idea before the United Nations?

Also, can you tell us what initiatives you and the EU intend to take to ensure that the Israeli Government hands over the tax revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority?

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Le Hyaric, I see things in exactly the same way as you do. The unity between Hamas and Fatah really is an historical step forward. It may now perhaps be possible to make progress in the process of reconciliation between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Baroness Ashton has made it very clear that the second flotilla will be a completely unnecessary provocation which could harm this process. Would you and your group now distance yourself from your support for this flotilla in the same way as happened yesterday here in Parliament with the substantial involvement of the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left?

**Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)** . – (FR) Madam President, no, that flotilla is European civil societies acting to lift a completely pointless blockade. If the public authorities, States and ourselves had upheld international law, we would not be here and the Palestinians would not be living in the prison that is Gaza as they have for far too long now.

**Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD).** – (EL) Madam President, my congratulations to Mr Albertini on his report and for referring to the principles and priorities of the CFSP, the defence and

security policy. Of course, the world is changing; the European Union is being called upon to face huge challenges and it needs to take serious action in order to do so. Threats from ongoing poverty, the social exclusion of large swathes of the population, spiralling unemployment, geopolitical changes in the Arab world, take particular note of that, natural disasters and immigration are the basic problems at present and presage tensions for the future.

In particular, the question of immigration, which has become a sore point recently between Italy and France, has called the Schengen Agreement into question. In my opinion, we cannot ignore the immigration problem, but we must handle it cautiously and decisively. Yes to solidarity, but yes also to the maintenance of social structures. Any debate on the Schengen Agreement must, in my opinion, be accompanied by amendments to Dublin II.

**Nicole Sinclaire (NI).** – Madam President, I have words of sympathy and support for Baroness Ashton: I was watching a BBC programme recently on which you were being interviewed by Jeremy Paxman, who asked you some very pertinent questions and you felt very uncomfortable. He asked you from whom you actually take your orders and which of the 27 nations you can actually speak about – and I think those questions have resonated in the Chamber today.

There is not one common policy, is there? We saw this with the UN resolution on the no-fly zone in Libya, when Germany voted against it. How can we have a common policy when one of the major EU countries actually votes in opposition to two other major EU countries? You have an impossible task.

My words of support – and I was relieved to read in the Sunday papers that you denied you would be quitting your post – are these: as someone who is very critical of a common EU policy and of the EU taking sovereignty from my country, I wish you to stay in post for as long as possible because, while you are there, I do not think we are going to have much problem with loss of sovereignty. After all, when you were the leader of the UK House of Lords, and you pushed through the Lisbon Treaty, which created your GBP 313 000-a-year job, you actually said, over and over again, that this was just a tidying-up exercise and not a significant transfer of sovereignty. You said that repeatedly to the House of Lords. So there is no point asking you questions, because can we get an honest answer?

**José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE).** – (ES) Madam President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, the central factor in this overly broad debate should be the situation in North Africa and the Near East.

We must approach this debate without extolling virtues – Baroness Ashton has rightly highlighted some positive elements; I would emphasise the good or, rather, the better provision of information between Parliament and the European External Action Service – yet also without concealing defects, and a voice as sensible as that of Giorgio Napolitano, our former fellow Member and President of the Italian Republic, has reminded us of this recently.

Among the negative aspects, and despite the efforts of Baroness Ashton, is the different yardsticks against which the cases of Libya and Syria are measured in the United Nations Security Council and also in the Council of Ministers of the European Union. Also among the negative aspects, Baroness Ashton, is the situation of Camp Ashraf: you are aware of the positive, constructive and moderating role that my group is playing in the development

of foreign policy, and believe me when I say that the importance and sensitivity of the Iranian dossier has not escaped me.

However, in spite of the warnings about the humanitarian aspect made to your services, to your collaborators, to your cabinet and to your Director-General, and despite the fact that I submitted a draft statement to you myself, you did not speak out until there had been 32 deaths and more than 300 wounded. You can draw your own conclusions.

You yourself said this morning that we have to act and we have to be coherent, particularly in relation to the defence of human rights; especially by taking risks, Baroness Ashton, when there are lives in danger.

My question to you is this: with regard to the Cuban dissident, Juan Wilfredo Soto García, who was arrested, beaten and finally killed, are you willing to call for an investigation to shed light on these tragic events? If this investigation shows that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the beating received and his death, are you willing to condemn them?

**Kristian Vigenin (S&D).** – (BG) Madam President, Lady Ashton, I listened very attentively and with great satisfaction to your speech and I did not hear a single word with which I am not in agreement. Nevertheless, you will encounter, both in this Chamber and among the European Union's citizens, harsh criticism of our ability to demonstrate a single approach and joint actions.

The Treaty of Lisbon created important conditions enabling the European Union to speak with one voice on the international stage. This voice, through you, speaks clearly. However, success can only be achieved if the other voices remain silent or are at least quieter. On the contrary, what we see is uproar. So far, we have a cacophony to offer the world, in which it is often difficult for us to hear the important message which the European Union wants to convey.

I think, Lady Ashton, that our institution – the European Parliament – is your natural ally in the battle involved in implementing the Treaty of Lisbon. Use us as much as you can because we are writing today the next report for the common foreign and security policy and because the exceptional dynamic activity going on in 2011 gives us a chance to put our own house in order.

I fully endorse the assessment that our support for the countries in North Africa, particularly for Tunisia and Egypt, must be provided in two stages. One long-term stage has already been largely outlined. However, Egypt and Tunisia need support now, this very year, and on a scale way beyond what is being discussed at the moment.

There are two aspects to the Arab revolutions. One was the lack of freedom and democracy, while the other was lack of social prospects and a sense of hopelessness. The revolutions will only be able to succeed if these two problems are resolved in tandem.

At a conference in Tunisia, organised by the Party of European Socialists, attended by representatives of parties and movements from the whole region, we asked the European Union for an emergency programme which will support the democratic processes now, immediately. The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament is also significantly increasing its commitment to the region. I am mentioning this to emphasise how important it is for us to make a commitment at every level.

Finally, I want to say that the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly was created last week. This is a clear signal that our Eastern partners want stronger political dialogue with the European Union. Let us not forget them.

**Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck (ALDE).** – Madam President, words are tools, words are instruments and words can be weapons in foreign policy. Therefore, they should be used sparingly and prudently, but there are occasions when they must be used decisively.

I would like to say to the High Representative that I sorely missed her voice during the very first few days of the horrors perpetrated by the Syrian authorities. I believe that the courageous citizens who were – and still are – demonstrating in Syria at great personal risk have missed your voice even more. There are rare occasions when one needs to speak up immediately. This was one of them.

Let me now turn to the Middle East. I believe that withholding of taxes collected in Palestine by the Israeli Government is an ill-inspired action, and what is more, it is inconsistent first to demand that the authorities of the West Bank and Gaza should find an arrangement – an agreement – and when the agreement comes, to take this decision then. Moreover, this decision is extremely cynical as it is very likely that the European Union will have to make up for the financial shortfall in any case.

So I support all my colleagues who have called – and I call myself – for a new impetus to a peaceful solution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, which, of course, must be based on the two-state solution.

**Mirosław Piotrowski (ECR).** – (PL) Madam President, despite the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which governs the common foreign and security policy, little has changed. Existing diplomatic offices have been given new names, but the Union has not strengthened its position as an actor on the global stage.

One might wonder if it is possible to operate a common policy for the 27 Member States of the Union at all. Conclusions like this flow directly from the Albertini report, which notes a lack of will on the part of Member States to conduct a common policy and the statements of some representatives of those Member States which have created the impression of disunity. Similar conclusions are found in the Gualtieri report, which draws attention to the widespread overlapping of defence programmes and the consequent wasting of limited economic resources. NATO, therefore, continues to be the only effective force, and the Left-wing voices in Parliament, expressed in writing in a minority opinion and demanding, among other things, the dissolution of NATO, are dangerous and frankly anarchistic.

**Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Madam President, Baroness Ashton, the excellent report by Mr Gualtieri concerning the common security and defence policy includes an important stocktake of the situation. I would like to highlight four priorities for the security and defence policy which we should follow up over the course of the next year.

The first is that we must carry out a realistic assessment of the joint missions and, in particular, an external evaluation. We must also incorporate them into our regional policy concepts. This applies, in particular, to the Horn of Africa.

Secondly, we need to make progress in pooling and sharing military capacity. We must ensure that the separate route which the French and British are following is brought back into a common European solution. The European Defence Agency has ideas on this subject.

You should put these ideas on the table and ensure that there is a public debate, so that we can make progress.

Thirdly, we need a public discussion about a new European security strategy. The paper produced by Mr Solana in 2003 was a positive contribution at the time. However, the world has moved on and we need a public debate.

Fourthly, we urgently need to come to an agreement with the parliaments of the Member States about joint parliamentary supervision of the common security and defence policy.

If we, by which I mean you, Baroness Ashton, and this Parliament, can succeed in making progress with the common security and defence policy in these four areas, in a year's time, we will be very happy with what we have achieved.

**Sampo Terho (EFD).** – *(FI)* Madam President, I would also like to greet Baroness Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who honours us today with her presence. This is my first speech, and I would therefore like to greet all my fellow Members in the European Parliament.

I wish to comment briefly on the creation of the EU's common foreign policy. Having a common, stronger voice in our foreign policy is certainly a good thing, but it cannot diminish the importance of the foreign policy of the Member States themselves, or its flexibility or independence. We have to ask: who does the EU represent if it is not the Member States? Again, we have to ask: who do the representatives of the Member States represent, if the EU represents them?

It must be a basic principle that structures are not created twice over and that the Union's structures do not swell needlessly. That is so, especially because it is very questionable as to whether the citizens of the EU in general also desire integration in the area of foreign policy.

**Béla Kovács (NI).** – *(HU)* Madam President, the Treaty of Lisbon, with its excessively complicated changes, renders setting up institutions and defining duties difficult. Even the existing institutions are unable to perform their proper functions due to the many changes. Thus, chaos rules everywhere, and everyone is confused.

The question arises: what sense is there in creating and vesting with power the European External Action Service, which still has not commenced operations? Defence and security is an area everywhere in the world which requires rapid reaction and action. While the composition, locations and positions are being debated, the European Union is passing up the opportunity of being able to function meaningfully in this area. Once it has been established, it should work and be effective. For precisely this reason, we must do all we can in order to launch the service as soon as possible.

Regrettably, in the area of external relations, the country currently holding the Presidency cannot shape a programme for foreign affairs, common defence or security, and thus, my fellow Members, you have no other choice than to support Mrs Ashton's work, which is starting with great difficulty.

**Elmar Brok (PPE).** – *(DE)* Madam President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, you have our support for the ongoing development of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and for ensuring that it functions effectively, Baroness Ashton. This applies, in particular, to the process of establishing the representations, where considerable improvement is needed as a result of the funds and the limited time available.



In addition, it is a major problem that every European foreign minister currently feels the need to run once round Tahrir Square carrying his or her national flag. However, despite this behaviour, we must ensure that our common strategy is made clear. It is our job and also your job to achieve this. We must make use of the positions, in actual fact, there are three of them, which have been brought together in the Treaty of Lisbon and which you represent, not to find and then to implement the lowest common denominator among the Member States, but instead to take over political leadership, so that the common position is given a greater role and is so convincing that we can carry the other countries along with us. This is extremely important if we really want to make progress in this area.

Earlier, you agreed with Mr Gualtieri about pooling and sharing. I would like to thank him, Mrs Muñiz De Urquiza and Mr Albertini. However, we need a three-pronged approach involving leading, pooling and sharing. Those are the three things that we should have. There are many individual points which we could raise here and which require tasks to be shared. What progress is being made in Ukraine? Will war break out between Azerbaijan and Armenia at the end of the summer? There are signs that this will be the case. Of course, there are also the major questions relating to the Arab world, which many of my fellow Members have referred to. How should we react to events such as the flotilla, which, in my opinion, is a provocative act? How should we deal with President Assad? How can we ensure that the People's Mujahedin in Iran does not receive any support, because I am opposed to supporting it, but, at the same time, guarantee that Camp Ashraf is not attacked again and its occupants killed? We need to take a sensible approach in order to identify a common position.

We will help you to establish the European External Action Service (EEAS). However, we also expect the type of leadership which will allow for policy making at a higher level and which will convince the Member States, despite the complex requirement for unanimity. This will only be possible with convincing leadership. We will continue to wait for the results that follow from the development of the EEAS.

**Richard Howitt (S&D).** – Madam President, can I start by congratulating the Vice-President/High Representative on her personal success in negotiating the compromise in the United Nations on EU speaking rights, where others had failed. Whatever people in this Chamber, or anyone else in the European Union, think about our common foreign and security policy, this is the most outstanding objective endorsement of the ambition that you and we have for the Lisbon Treaty, a foreign policy that has real trust and respect from our foreign partners.

As Socialist coordinator on human rights, I also want to congratulate the High Representative on her strategic review of human rights and on the commitment in her letter to foreign ministers to integrate human rights with trade development and other EU policies and to achieve 'specific deliverables'. In this Parliament, we called on her to create a human rights and democracy directorate and to consistently meet human rights defenders in all of her visits, and we thank her for doing so. When she says that ending the death penalty is her personal priority, this Parliament must also give her our strong support.

Our group supports Ms Muñiz De Urquiza in calling for greater visibility for the EU in the Human Rights Council. We back Mr Albertini in saying that the EU must act, as well as speak, in the face of human rights violations. We emphasise Mr Gualtieri's conclusion that respect for human rights can never be compromised. On behalf of my group, I also want to record our support on the issue of returning tax revenues to the Palestinians.

This is our annual debate on foreign policy, and in the next year, we hope to see clear outcomes to the human rights review and significant steps to developing a human rights culture in everything that the European External Action Service does.

**Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE).** – *(FI)* Madam President, the events in North Africa have once again shown that the EU's common foreign policy is behind the times and ineffective. The EU's calls for a respect for human rights and democracy mainly look like a delusional Don Quixote in rusty armour battling with windmills, when compared to the lucrative arms trade engaged in by the Member States of the EU.

Seven of the world's ten biggest sellers of weapons are EU countries, EU Member States, and weapons have been sold to Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain and Yemen. Baroness Ashton, might it be time to make a ban on the export of weapons a priority for EU foreign policy?

The coordination of 27 different foreign and security policies is not the easiest of tasks, and you cannot blame the captain alone for the shipwreck. Member States have a right to their own foreign policy. We could, however, expect one or two things from the skipper, namely, initiative and ideas, and we are still waiting.

**Struan Stevenson (ECR).** – Madam President, following the appalling massacre in Camp Ashraf on 8 April, the situation there remains critical. Another bloody attack could take place at any moment. I have just returned from Baghdad, where I led a small delegation of MEPs in high-level talks with the President of Iraq and senior government ministers.

I have now brokered a solution to the Ashraf crisis, which you have seen, Baroness Ashton. It requires the involvement of the UN, the US and the EU and needs your active encouragement to achieve the resettlement of the 3 400 refugees from Ashraf to the US, Canada, Australia, Norway, Switzerland and the EU Member States, or wherever they have family or other connections. This is the only option that can avoid another humanitarian catastrophe, and it has been agreed by the people of Ashraf themselves.

The European Parliament relies on you to seize this opportunity to save innocent lives and avoid further violence and bloodshed.

**David Campbell Bannerman (EFD).** – Madam President, Europe Day this week was supposed to be a celebration of European national identity. It is not. It marks the ongoing replacement of European nation states with an EU supranational government, meaning above nation states. This is in contrast to intergovernmental, where nation states freely cooperate, but do not cede powers to a higher central authority.

The Libyan no-fly zone illustrates the difference. The intergovernmental United Nations agreed a no-fly zone pioneered by nation states such as Britain, France and the United States, whilst nation states such as Germany and Russia abstained for their own valid reasons. The intergovernmental NATO is now conducting that operation through voluntary participation.

In contrast, the supranational EU vigorously opposed David Cameron's proposal for a no-fly zone. It is ironic that the Red Baroness herself, Cathy Ashton, stood against this no-fly proposal, her aide reportedly calling it 'headline grabbing desperation'. The lesson of this is that principal nations act intergovernmentally while supranational bodies merely fiddle as Libya burns.

**Mario Mauro (PPE).** – (IT) Madam President, High Representative, ladies and gentlemen, your job, Baroness Ashton, is a very difficult one and you carry a heavy burden on your shoulders. I hope you will take my questions not as provocation but as an aid to reflection. Baroness Ashton, at the end of our joint debate, we shall vote on the report on the European Union's role in multilateral organisations.

Two years ago, at the hearing that preceded your taking office, I asked you what your position was on the European Union having a single seat in the United Nations. You replied on that occasion that you had not had time to think about it. The Muñiz de Urquiza report contains the Millán Mon amendment defining Parliament's position on the issue. What is yours today? Have you had time to think about it over the last two years?

Baroness Ashton, 17 May is Europe-Iraq Day in Baghdad. The EU presence in Iraq consists of two officials and one ambassador. These three people operate in the British compound. You would rightly like to find the resources to resolve the situation. To help you, I would point out that there are seven EU officials in the Bahamas. What happens that is so infinitely more decisive for the fate of the European Union in the Bahamas compared with Baghdad? Would it not be better to have 17 officials in Baghdad, since we are close to signing the first EU-Iraq agreement in post-Saddam history? Might they perhaps even resolve the Camp Ashraf drama *in situ*, since I am sure that your personal intervention could easily lead to a positive solution to it?

Baroness Ashton, you have already intervened on the subject of the Egyptian Copts; however, not only has the persecution continued, but today, it is a worrying element in the so-called 'Arab Spring'. The communications from the European External Action Service still talk of it as being a conflict between extremists. However, only Christians are dying and only churches are burning in Egypt. What is preventing us from acknowledging the truth, calling it by its name and extricating the Copts from their awkward position as hostages to a fundamentalist political project?

**Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D).** – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the turbulent events laden with uncertainties and hopes that are changing the political geography of the southern shores of the Mediterranean are increasingly posing a challenge to Europe and its external policy. In view of what is happening, it should be increasingly important for the European Union to be able to rely on a sound, consistent external policy capable of dealing with a difficult present and planning for a problematic future, in which international relations will be altered and the world will be profoundly changed.

In view of the strategic repositioning of countries such as the United States, China and Russia, and growing shortages of raw materials and energy resources, Europe should develop a crucial, decisive role, but it is quite clearly showing itself to be unprepared for such challenges.

For some time now, it has been moving too slowly towards coordination of the external and domestic policies of its Member States. There has been no substantial progress. Evidence of this is, on the one hand, the lacklustre action deriving from its external policy and, on the other, the obstinacy of certain countries that are nostalgic for a colonial period that can no longer return and insist on believing that they protect their interests better by doing things alone and not delegating anything to European authority. We need to turn over a new leaf. Baroness Ashton, you have an important role; please fulfil it to the utmost, in the knowledge that the time available is quickly running out.

**IN THE CHAIR: MIGUEL ANGEL MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ***Vice-President*

**Jelko Kacin (ALDE).** – *(SL)* Mr President, Baroness Ashton, you embody the political ambitions of the European Union through the common foreign and security policy.

I would ask that you pay a visit to Iraq, in person, as soon as possible. You need to be seen in Baghdad, and indeed in Kurdistan.

The Americans will be leaving the place by the end of the year and there will be a great void after they have gone. However, the European Union does not have a presence in Iraq or, to be precise, our diplomats there are so few that they are invisible or unable to make themselves visible.

What they want in Iraq is our and your personal presence, they want political cooperation, and they want economic cooperation.

I welcome your statement today on Bosnia and Herzegovina – that was a fine statement, but you have failed to appoint a head for the delegation in Sarajevo.

By failing to appoint a head for the delegation in Sarajevo, you are playing into the hands of many who are destabilising Bosnia and Herzegovina both internally and externally. Appointing a head would put a stop to that.

**Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR).** – *(PL)* Mr President, Europe is today facing two problems. The first is the need for a new vision of the Neighbourhood Policy. I was in Tunisia recently, and I saw how much is being expected of the European Union. We are in permanent contact with Ukraine, and I know that there, too, they are hoping for more – more opportunities for the development of social cooperation and more contacts, and they are hoping that we do not retreat into our European selfishness.

I know it is difficult for you to carry out your work, Mrs Ashton, because you are on your own and it was not you who decided this – this is how the EEAS was set up – but the impression is being given that in the autumn, we thought Belarus was the most important issue, while today – a little like children who have become interested in something else – we are looking at North Africa. What is needed is a new vision of the Neighbourhood Policy, and that, today, is in your hands. In recent months, you have shown you are a strong person and that you are up to this task. Perhaps Europe should not, today, as in the days of ancient Rome, be defending itself along a Limes line, along the Rhine or some other place, but should be proposing a bold political vision, not just one concerning the problem of immigration, but a political vision. One might say that the fate of Europe, today, at this historic moment, is in your hands, Mrs Ashton, and we are very much counting on this.

**Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PPE).** – Mr President, atrocities are happening in Camp Ashraf – atrocities that we obviously condemn and about which we are profoundly concerned – but I would like to ask Lady Ashton what instruments we are using apart from words? Are we considering trade measures, aid measures, and other concrete and real measures, rather than persuasion, which is fruitless?

Regarding Neighbourhood Policy towards the countries on the doorstep of the Union, I think this is the most important part of your portfolio, Lady Ashton. It is the core of foreign policy, because if we fail there, we fail in overall foreign policy.

The naked truth is that we are in retreat and in defensive mode in the southern neighbourhood and the eastern neighbourhood. We have been taken by surprise. Lady Ashton says there are storms in the neighbourhood. That is the word she used. Where is our meteorological road map? Time is a key factor in this policy and a scarce resource. In our Neighbourhood Policy, we are always lagging behind events. Even Lady Ashton's and Commissioner Füle's review of the European Neighbourhood Policy is delayed for the third time – and delayed in her office.

Our sin is inaction. Foreign policy is about acts that change the course of events, not about words, series of meetings, fruitless persuasion and floods of statements. We should be using real and hard instruments to change things in Libya, Syria, Camp Ashraf and Belarus. Following Member States and waiting for permission from Foreign Ministers to go ahead has become Lady Ashton's doctrine and she treats it as virtue. It is the wrong approach. It condemns our foreign policy to the lowest common denominator and to always being late. We want a High Representative to lead, not to follow.

Our debate has two weaknesses. First, we very often content ourselves with condemnation and making ineffective visa bans, which are ridiculously weak instruments. We also call for more money, to clear our conscience, but there is a lot of Arab money which is not invested in Arab democracy and Arab prosperity.

**Libor Rouček (S&D).** – (CS) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, developments in North Africa and the Middle East are extremely important to security and stability in Europe. The Arab and Muslim nations here are going through a process of political democratic emancipation which might be termed the 'Prague Arab Spring'. Young people from Tunisia to Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain are demanding more freedom, more democracy and more human rights.

It is not only in the political and security interests of the EU but, above all, also our moral duty to provide broad assistance to our Arab friends in their struggle for emancipation, because the values they are fighting for are also our values, and the successful fulfilment and application of these values is also a fundamental precondition for lasting peace, stability, development and prosperity. Broad assistance should not mean interference, however, because the development of civil society, democracy and the rule of law must, in my opinion, remain in Arab and Muslim hands. Only in this way can these nations and societies become long-term parts of the global ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE).** – (NL) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to begin by congratulating the High Representative on the success she enjoyed in New York. Strengthening Europe's role at the United Nations is a good thing. It does lead me to a number of questions, however.

What is our and your message to the General Assembly? How can you get a single common position from the Member States without falling back on the lowest common denominator? What specific action – Mr Daal asked the same thing – will we subsequently undertake in order to realise our message?

Mr President, we are all facing mammoth challenges to which we need to find an answer. These challenges are not only to be found in Bahrain, Yemen, Iran and Armenia. They are also to be found in our immediate neighbourhood: Belarus, Syria, Egypt and Libya. These challenges are very real. There is suppression, war and violence against religious minorities,

refugees are flooding towards us and too slow a start has been made in establishing the rule of law and democracy.

Baroness Ashton, you are our figurehead, the figurehead of the European Union. We cannot allow ourselves, the European Union, to be left behind in discord and indecision. You have a crucial role to play, both formally and informally, not just behind the scenes, but also in the meeting rooms and, in particular, beyond them. I am aware, I do realise, that you have to tread on eggshells, but you should know that we, the European Parliament, support you as you push on to convince the Member States that a joint European approach is worthwhile, push on to achieve an effective, coherent and common foreign policy and to be the face of that policy, push on in order to get the best people in the best positions in the External Action Service and push on in order to strengthen Europe's position and that of its citizens, who are the important thing. Do more, therefore. Do more in Syria and do not lend your support to half-baked solutions.

**Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D).** – (EL) Mr President, Lady Ashton, today, we are debating the key issues in the field of the Union's foreign policy and three important European Parliament texts on the role of the European Union in the world. However, the question that we are all asking in today's debate is if, in fact, there is a common foreign policy. With Europe delaying in finding its feet and appearing to be cowardly, weak and, for a long time, to have no voice in the historically important event of the last decade, by which I mean the uprisings in the Arab world, with the Member States failing to take a united stand on the critical UN Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya, and with the Union hesitating on Syria, I wonder whether perhaps the question has already been answered in practice.

We had high hopes following the Treaty of Lisbon. However, if the Council is not up to the job, when national selfishness and personal strategies prevail in decision making, then Europe and the European ideal have lost yet another battle.

**Michael Gahler (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, I share the opinion of my fellow Members with regard to the unfortunate and inconsistent approach taken by individual governments to the challenges currently facing us. I also join with Baroness Ashton in calling for the debate to be extended to include the national governments. I would specifically like to ask what benefit government A or government B hopes to gain from pressing ahead unilaterally or from blocking a decision. What is the benefit? It must be greater than the impact that we can have by taking united action in the Union. I believe that some governments would find it difficult to explain their actions.

However, I am confident that we are in the painful process of learning from our mistakes. The financial crisis and the debt crisis have, to a certain extent, had a beneficial impact by creating a greater sense of cooperation, in particular, as far as the common foreign and security policy is concerned. Other speakers have referred to pooling and sharing. On 8 April, the EU Military Staff submitted 300 projects from the Member States in this area. I would like to know what you now plan to do with these projects. Are there plans to use this initiative to launch the permanent structured cooperation which has not yet been put into operation? Will you ensure that the European Defence Agency and the EU Military Staff have central responsibility for implementing this initiative?

Mr Bütikofer listed four priorities for the next year which I largely support. On several occasions, the European Parliament has called for a White Paper to be drawn up on the security and defence policy. What is your opinion on this? Are you prepared to bring

together the existing units within your service that are working on these questions to make one department which could be called the operational headquarters?

**Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo García (S&D).** – (ES) Mr President, firstly, I would like to congratulate you on your work, Baroness Ashton. If you do not mind me saying, you are like a hard-working ant, who achieves results little by little while the grasshoppers chirrup and laze around in the Member States.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will forgive me for not going any further, because colleagues from my group and fellow Members from other groups have expressed the same opinions. I just want to make four points, which could be seen as levers to help you act, elements to support you in making the common foreign and security policy ever more worthy of this name.

Firstly, unlike the situation on other issues, European public opinion is 65-70% in favour of a common foreign and security policy.

Secondly, this very Parliament, except for a small eurosceptic minority, supports federal European action, above all, in foreign and security policy.

Thirdly, the most pro-European, most pro-federal Member States, which do exist: form an alliance with them ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE).** – (ES) Mr President, I would like to start with two initial observations. I prefer individual debates to a joint debate. We are dealing with separate issues, which deserve independent and in-depth discussion. Meanwhile, I would like to echo the words of Mr Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra about the death of the Cuban dissident, Mr Soto.

Please allow me to make three additional comments.

Unfortunately, when all of us were hoping we could focus on the European Union's external role these years, the serious economic and financial crisis has been taking up all our efforts. However, a great number of external challenges, particularly in our Mediterranean neighbourhood, mean we cannot afford to wait. The European Union must have a political and economic presence in the processes of change taking place in the Arab world.

I am also celebrating, Baroness Ashton, the fact that the European Union's voice in the United Nations General Assembly was finally strengthened in New York last week as the result of a vote that received widespread support. I congratulate you on that, given that last year's disaster raised worrying questions about the future role of the Union in the world and in international organisations.

However, the divergent European votes on Resolution 1973 of the United Nations Security Council highlight the enormous difficulties – I stress, enormous difficulties – involved in achieving an effective common security and defence policy.

To summarise, Baroness Ashton, you and Mr Van Rompuy, who also has many responsibilities in foreign matters, have the huge task of convincing the Member States of the need for unified and coherent external action. The two of you will have to work hard to push, drag and lead, at a moment in history that we had intended to tackle with the new instruments of the Treaty of Lisbon.

**Marek Siwiec (S&D).** – (PL) Mr President, let us stop moaning that we do not have a common European policy. In some areas, we do have a common policy, while in other areas, we do not. In fact, as far as the Neighbourhood Policy is concerned, a common policy is in operation. The new Member States are able to support the West in North Africa in a unique way because the West does not have the necessary credibility. That credibility is provided by those who carried out the revolutions in the countries of Eastern Europe. In the East, we all have interests in these matters – in the East just as in the West. However, the old Member States have the money, they have the means. We need that money to pursue a common Neighbourhood Policy in both the East and the South and to build our credibility.

While we are talking about policy in the area of defence – what kind of a defence policy is it in which Europe does not have an army? Sixty European aircraft are operating over Libya – 60 deaf and blind aircraft. There is no intelligence service, and these aircraft are not in a position to carry out their mission effectively. If the Americans had not joined the mission at the beginning, the mission would not have achieved anything. There would be no effect at all. So let us stop moaning that we do not have a common policy. As long as we do not have a common army, we will not have a common policy on security and defence.

**Arnaud Danjean (PPE).** – (FR) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, the Libyan crisis has, unfortunately, once again illustrated the European Union's difficulties in existing diplomatically and militarily. However, it would be most unfair to blame you solely for the lack of political will displayed by the Union, even if many of us believe that more decisive action could have been and should have been taken.

It is also true that the Member States bear a great deal of responsibility for this inability to come up with a coherent, effective and visible policy on this matter, while our US friends relied heavily on Europe to act. The Libyan crisis aside, however, we must be mindful of the major strategic developments that mean that we must not give up on the ambition of a common security and defence policy, as enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon, and which you, Baroness Ashton, must continue to inspire, support and speak up for.

Taken together, the unprecedented fiscal constraints on defence budgets, the many international crises and the United States' strategic redeployment are significant factors that leave us no choice but to take our destiny into our own hands. Faced with these many crises and threats, we cannot just hand over the keys to our US friends and allies or to NATO. Neither the United States nor NATO was able to end the 2008 conflict between Georgia and Russia, for example, and nor can the United States or NATO observe the current ceasefire there. It is the European mission that has full legitimacy.

We can clearly see in Libya that the United States did not want to be in the front line and that NATO's minimum undertaking is insufficient.

Baroness Ashton, the common security and defence policy is not just something achieved over 10 years or just an ambition enshrined in the Treaties. It is also a strategic requirement, and you must be at the forefront taking the necessary initiatives.

(Applause)

**Andrey Kovatchev (PPE).** – (BG)... (poor recording)

Mr President, it is becoming clear that administrations in some of the capitals in our Union now realise what the Treaty of Lisbon stands for and find it difficult to adopt a foreign



policy initiative which does not come from them. This is precisely why we need strong European leadership, which will have courage if there is a need to bang on the table and demand Member States to adopt a common position. I appeal, of course, to Member States as well not to attempt to renationalise our foreign policy and to help you, Lady Ashton.

We need not only strong European diplomacy but also effective civilian and military capabilities so that we are not only, at the moment, the biggest, albeit a 'toothless' donor of development and humanitarian aid to the world, but also a serious player in global politics. I believe that the European Union's own military capabilities will also provide assistance to our US and NATO allies, both in a political and military sense, especially with regard to our close neighbours. Any conflict confirms this.

I support the pooling and sharing of our defence resources and the integration of our security and defence policy. We need a common security and defence strategy. However, having an effective European foreign policy and our own defensive capabilities without having our own intelligence service and a facility for gathering information is like having a house without a roof. This issue must be put on the agenda again. Either Member States need to exchange information more efficiently with the external service and the European Union, or the European Union needs to have its own information and analysis channels.

Finally, I want you, Lady Ashton, also to raise the issue about a more serious implementation of the readmission commitments of safe countries with which we, the European Union, have concluded such agreements.

**Alojz Peterle (PPE).** – (SL) Mr President, in the future, we can only expect ever more challenges in the area of foreign policy and security, which makes the emphasis on credibility even more important. Without credibility, we cannot be effective.

Credibility means, first of all, adherence to our values and principles. Madam Ashton, I agree with you that we must not forget the origins from which the European Union was born.

Many years ago, it put the human being centre-stage. Let us honour human dignity and all cultural identities and let us make a greater contribution to the inter-cultural dialogue.

The world expects the European Union to play a stronger role, not to have 27 individual foreign policies. Greater unity does not mean that we have to lose diversity.

To conclude, I would emphasise three matters:

- first: we urgently need to break the deadlock in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a new outbreak of violence is possible;
- second: we urgently need to find a way to a unified and strategic relationship with Turkey, of which there has hardly been any mention today;
- third: I am pleased to see your determination with regard to Camp Ashraf; our voice in opposition to violence against civilians must be clear and decisive there and everywhere else in the world.

**Alejo Vidal-Quadras (PPE).** – (ES) Mr President, on 29 July 2009, Iraqi troops violently stormed the Iranian refugee camp in Ashraf and shot or beat to death 11 people living there. The attack was repeated on 8 April this year, when 35 were killed, either by bullet wounds or by being crushed by armoured vehicles.

Baroness Ashton, you were warned months ago by Members of Parliament that this latest massacre was going to occur, and we repeatedly asked you to act on this.

You ignored our warnings for months and only reacted after the catastrophe. Although better late than never, the next aggression could be a bloodbath of horrendous proportions if you fail to make this humanitarian crisis one of the top priorities on your agenda right now.

There is a solution, as Mr Stevenson explained to you. We hope you will take immediate and firm action to make it possible, and we welcome the commitment you made this morning.

Three thousand four hundred defenceless men and women, surrounded by tanks, are looking to us, trusting that our actions will match up to our values. Parliament has done, is doing and will do everything in its power. We are asking you to have the same interest in saving these lives.

If you act as we hope, you will have us at your side. If not, your conscience and this Chamber will hold you to account.

**Dominique Baudis (PPE)** . – (FR) Mr President, the European Union has finally imposed sanctions on Syria. Unfortunately, however, it appears to have done so with some trepidation, taking care to avoid calling the head of the Syrian regime into question.

This lack of determination and clarity is obviously interpreted by the demonstrators as a form of abandonment and by the authorities as an indulgence enabling them to step up their repression, a repression so cruel that it is unimaginable that Syria may be elected to sit on the UN's Human Rights Council when the country's authorities are right now refusing UN observers access to the city of Deraa, the scene of terrible violence against unarmed civilians.

Having Syria on the Human Rights Council would be an insult to the victims and their families, and an encouragement for that regime to use brute force against its own people, with complete disregard for the values that the Human Rights Council is supposed to uphold.

So, Baroness Ashton, what diplomatic options do you have in mind in order to avoid such a disaster?

**Anna Ibrisagic (PPE)** . – (SV) Mr President, as I only have one minute, I will be very brief. Two of my fellow Members have already mentioned the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the fact that the situation there is getting more complicated. All of the reports also indicate that the situation has changed dramatically over the last few weeks. In light of the fact that certain military movements can be observed in the areas of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia, in other words Nagorno-Karabakh, my question is whether you, Baroness Ashton, are aware of the developments in the situation and whether you are doing anything to prevent a possible escalation, not only in this conflict, but also in the occupied territories of Georgia? I would merely like to bring this matter up with you as a starting point and I will also send you a written question later. Thank you.

**Ana Gomes (S&D)** . – Mr President, how can the EU be a force for law and human security without identifying and trying the criminals who let refugees die in the Mediterranean. Baroness Ashton, Bashar al-Assad should not just top the list of those subject to EU sanctions

but should be put on the list of criminals to be tried by the ICC or European courts for the brutal repression of the Syrian people.

In Libya, besides the office in Benghazi, the EU should have already employed EUFOR, not just to support humanitarian assistance to the people under attack as in Misrata, but to implement the arms embargo via sea or land borders as recommended by this Parliament. For that, we do not need any other UN resolution or request; all we need is political will from Member States. If you take the initiative, Lady Ashton, and confront EU governments with their responsibilities, this Parliament will strongly back you. Finally, as Palestinian reconciliation is a major step ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Antonia Parvanova (ALDE).** – Mr President, while unrest in the Middle East and North Africa requires the European Union to play a greater role in the Mediterranean region, I would like to raise the point of the second flotilla to Gaza.

We all remember the outcome of the first flotilla and its consequences for talks and attempts to resume the peace process in the Middle East. As you mentioned, Madam Vice-President/High Representative, you doubt that a new initiative of this kind would end in a more positive way. I would like to ask if you can update us on actual humanitarian needs in Gaza, as well as on the goods and support currently channelled through the existing crossing points from Israel and Egypt. Did you, or do you intend to, engage with Member States and with the Israeli authorities to discuss the development of this initiative and maybe to propose a positive contribution by the European Union that could lead to a more responsible outcome?

**Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE).** – Mr President, my comments are for Baroness Ashton.

Vice-President/High Representative Ashton, you have very clearly heard this morning that Parliament will fully support your leadership role and is demanding that you take the initiative in our common foreign and security policy. You have also heard the many questions by colleagues about who and which Member States are blocking our common efforts. My suggestion to you would be that, now that the European External Action Service is putting in place its rules on access to information and access to documents, please make this a modern organisation which is accessible to citizens and which does not deal with foreign policy as if it were only the domain of some secretive diplomats. I am sure this would be the best way to boost our common efforts for a truly common foreign and security policy.

**Peter van Dalen (ECR).** – *(NL)* Mr President, Baroness Ashton, there is a major threat in the Middle East. There is discrimination, including structural discrimination, against Christians in various Islamic countries. The Christian community in Iraq has already been more than halved. We are now seeing the same thing happening in Egypt. There are attacks on the ancient Coptic community, there are innumerable cases of daily harassment, forced marriages, and it is pretty much impossible to build a church. Last February, I received 60 Copts here and they called out for help.

I therefore have two requests of you, Baroness Ashton. Make the Copts a top priority in your policy. A stop must be put to the systematic discrimination against them. Secondly, on 20 January, we asked, in this House, for an EU strategy for freedom of religion and the permanent monitoring of such a policy. Will you make that a reality, please. I would appreciate your reaction. Thank you for your patience.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Mr President, the foreign, security and defence policies of the European Union are principally policies in defence of the economic and geostrategic interests of the European powers. Increasingly, they are aligned with the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and relegate cooperation and development aid to second place.

The results of this are largely catastrophic, as is clear from the cases of Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Libya and other countries. In general, there is a policy of double standards protecting the economic interests of European arms manufacturers, which have made millions by selling arms to dictators who have subsequently used them to massacre their own people and those of neighbouring states.

Consequently, some of the key questions arising from this debate are whether policies on the arms trade will finally be changed, and what exactly is going to be done to put an end to the expansionist and warmongering policies of Israel ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Mr President, Baroness Ashton, it is clear to us all that we cannot expect you to set up extensive security operations in crisis areas throughout the world in the short time that has elapsed since the creation of your office.

On the other hand, your office already provides you with extensive scope for negotiating in any place where the EU can play a useful role through its opinions and political influence. One of the problems directly affecting the EU and where there is a need to look for a solution through sensitive round-table negotiations is the occupation of EU territory by the Turkish army in Cyprus.

Turkey is a privileged partner of the EU and, on the outside, declares a definite interest in becoming a full member of our European group. I therefore firmly believe that you should make full use of the potential that is already available to you through your role in solving this thorny issue, in which the EU is directly involved.

**Andrew Henry William Brons (NI).** – Mr President, it is self-evident that foreign and security policy is the defining role of a sovereign state. To make it the role of a supranational authority ignores or devalues the vital question of relations between Member States, or is, in fact, an admission that they are no longer sovereign states.

There is nothing wrong with an EU policy of avoiding all European wars, but I would reject the supposition that a surrender of sovereignty is necessary to achieve that. It should also be the function of every European state to defend Europe's great achievements from distraction or dilution. Aggressive wars in which European nations have no legitimate interest must be avoided at all costs. Equally, we must not engage in behind-the-scenes agitation in a hypocritical attempt to plant so-called 'European values' in inhospitable soil.

We must avoid Europe being the repository of migrating Third-Worlders. Their cultures are the product of distinctive peoples. Bring the population of the Third World to Europe ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Marco Scurria (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I thank Baroness Ashton for the report she has put before us today. However, I should like to point out to her that public opinion in Europe is unfortunately not aware of the European Union's presence.

As many of my fellow Members have also mentioned, our external policy is still in a rudimentary state, as can be seen from certain events that have happened in recent days.

Europe cannot remain absent from Camp Ashraf: it is a camp where not only international policy is measured but also human rights protection. It is our duty to intervene in that part of the world, just as it is in Syria. This country is in a really very serious situation, in which human rights and the chance to oppose a dictatorial government must get the European Union interested ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Boris Zala (S&D).** – Mr President, only one remark: I think Ankara's increasingly active foreign policy poses new challenges and opportunities for European foreign policy. Madam High Representative, I think that it is necessary to establish an institutionalised dialogue on key strategic issues such as energy policy, stability in the Western Balkans and the Caucasus regions, Iran's nuclear dossier or the democratic awakening under way in the Middle East.

Turkey, in particular, can play a constructive role in helping the EU consolidate the gains of the recent democratic awakening in the Middle East. However, such dialogue should not substitute but complement and reinforce Turkey's accession track.

**President.** – Mr Albertini now has the floor to speak for the two minutes he has remaining as rapporteur.

**Gabriele Albertini, rapporteur.** – *(IT)* Mr President, in my first speech I had four minutes available and I only used up two. Now that I have two minutes, I would like to ask to be allowed to use four minutes for my final speech.

**President.** – You are quite right that you have four minutes. You say you have used two, so you have two left, if that is the case.

You have four minutes for your speech.

**Gabriele Albertini (PPE).** – *(IT)* No, Mr President, in my first speech, I spoke for two minutes and I had four minutes available ...

**President.** – Mr Albertini, you have four minutes for your two speeches. You have used two. Please take the floor and we will be flexible, but I obviously do not want to get to a point where nobody will hear you. I want you to be heard, and if we waste another five minutes, nobody is going to listen to what you have to say.

**Gabriele Albertini (PPE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, since I will not manage to say what I had to say in two minutes, I will give up my speech.

**President.** – Many thanks, Mr Albertini. We are all grateful to you and it is a pity we cannot listen to you.

**Roberto Gualtieri, rapporteur.** – *(IT)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I believe Mr Albertini was right because as rapporteur, he had four minutes for his speech and two for his reply. I therefore take the liberty of pointing out that he should have his four minutes.

For my part, I think this has been a useful and important debate, which shows how united Parliament is and how ready it is to offer its support for consistent and effective external action by Europe. We have not only heard recriminations for the obvious limitations shown

by Europe in recent events, but we have also heard proposals offering a kind of strategic partnership between Parliament and the other institutions in order to make Europe a credible actor in security and defence matters. I believe this partnership would be not only an opportunity but a necessity as well because, if what we have been saying is true, which is that Europe's integrated approach is its main potential, achieving that integrated approach will require the support of a body endowed with clear legislative and budgetary powers. For that reason as well, I think we should find a balanced solution to the matter of interparliamentary cooperation.

It has become clear from the discussion how we must act. We must first of all assess the possibilities offered by the Treaty: by permanent structured cooperation and by Article 44, which makes it possible to delegate the task of carrying out a mission to particular Member States, but within an EU procedural framework, which is not the same thing as renationalisation. We need to make use of existing structures – starting with the European External Action Service – and set ourselves ambitious tasks in the field of capabilities. Of course, we also need to know how to offer leadership ability.

We would like to thank Baroness Ashton for her commitment and for the important statements she has made. It is an attractive thought, as she said, that a small group can do great things, but Europe is a great civilised power which cannot shirk its responsibilities.

**President.** – Mr Albertini, please accept my apologies. I have found out exactly what the situation was. You had four minutes plus two. You spoke for three minutes in your first speech. Therefore, you have three minutes left and we will proceed with all the flexibility required.

**Gabriele Albertini,** *rapporteur.* – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, during a hearing in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, a Member asked the High Representative/Vice-President a loaded question. He said that, when Henry Kissinger was criticised for the United States' isolationist stance, particularly in relation to the European Union, he replied 'There is no fellow foreign minister nor a phone number I can call to speak to Europe'.

The Member then asked Baroness Ashton, 'Is there a foreign minister and a phone number he can call now?' Her very British answer was: 'Yes, I do that job, although I am called High Representative/Vice-President and not foreign minister. There is also a phone number, but it is answered by a machine saying to press 1 for the British position, 2 for the French, 3 for the German, and so on'.

Baroness Ashton, you have heard the speeches by many of my fellow Members, and this message is also in my report. You have a number of voices in the world, but you listen to ours – Parliament's – more because we always support a European policy, and not just that of the Member States, to which you reply in the Council, or that of the Commission, to which you reply in the appropriate places.

I would like there to be a third place in which you could express your third loyalty. This place is in the middle of this Chamber, behind the podium, because you are the Council, the Commission and also Parliament. I believe this dialogue needs to be developed and strengthened in order to achieve democratic legitimacy for our external policy, directed and controlled by Europe's citizens. We will help you carry out this role.

**María Muñoz De Urquiza,** *rapporteur.* – (ES) Mr President, with regard to Camp Ashraf, we can do nothing less than join in the condemnation of the human rights violations that

have taken place there. However, this condemnation of human rights abuses must never be confused with political support for the movement in Camp Ashraf.

There is a democratic opposition in Iran, represented by the Green Movement, by various political groups within the Green Movement, and the condemnation of human rights violations should in no way be confused with political support for this group.

In addition, I ask the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative that, when she launches or opens this investigation into the situation in Camp Ashraf, that she also investigate the human rights abuses being committed against the population by the Mujahedin, which have been witnessed and documented by organisations such as Human Rights Watch.

In relation to my report, Baroness Ashton, I would particularly like you to take note of paragraph 6, which calls for the drafting of a White Paper with a strategic focus on the European Union's role in international organisations through to 2020.

I would like to thank the shadow rapporteurs for their help in preparing and drafting this report, and I would also like to decry the fact that some infinitely small-minded political forces in Parliament prevented my report from mentioning an academic organisation that contributed a study to serve as its basis. This was the *Fundación Alternativas*, which provided a good foundation for me, as well as the shadow rapporteurs and the secretariat, in our work to produce this report. I hope the report will prove useful in politically determining and stimulating the redefinition of the European Union's role in international organisations.

**President.** – I would like to say to Mr Stevenson that a decision was made before I took the chair not to use the blue card procedure in this debate, precisely in order to be able to give the floor to all Members who asked to speak.

**Catherine Ashton,** *Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – Mr President, I should like to thank honourable Members for what has been a full-ranging debate. Mr Albertini, I am happy to stand anywhere as long as it is actually in the room – I suspect there may be a few people who would prefer it if I was not – and I am very happy to speak from the podium; it is the obvious place between the two. I do appreciate very much the work that you, Mr Albertini, and the other rapporteurs have done in producing what I think are really useful and helpful reports in terms of addressing the breadth of European action.

But I want to say, too, that there is greater coherence than perhaps anyone listening to this debate might imagine. We do have strong united foreign policy positions on a whole range of issues, from the breadth of our concerns on human rights to the specific work that we are doing on the Middle East, in our neighbourhood, on Serbia/Kosovo, on Bosnia, or in our approach in Africa, where we now look at the situation hopefully beginning to be resolved in Cote d'Ivoire but worrying today in Uganda.

All of these positions are worked out with the 27 Foreign Affairs Council ministers and I have to pay tribute to them. I think that we are moving inexorably to a greater sense of coherence. There is a lot more to do – I do not dispute that – and there is a lot more that you would wish us to do; but do not let us underestimate what we have already managed to achieve and the journey that we are on to do that. So I want to pay tribute to them and the fact that they often speak on behalf of all of us too; we cannot be everywhere in the world all at once. Today, we have Foreign Ministers in different parts of the world carrying

messages on behalf of myself, on behalf of the European Union. That is an important aspect of what we do as well.

Can I say, too, that we are almost always the first to produce statements, the first to come out and say what we think should happen. It was my office that produced the non-paper on sanctions on Syria; we are in the driving seat. Not always reported, may I say, not always put forward in the press across the European Union, but we are the first to actually put out our statements and we produce hundreds of them to make the point consistently of the importance of what we do; and consistency is a critical factor in what is being discussed today.

In the course of our debate, we focused on certain parts of the world, but in the course of further speeches, honourable Members have raised a whole range of different issues which we still must continue to deal with.

Mr Salafranca talked about what has been happening in Cuba over the weekend with Mr Soto and we are looking carefully at that. We have asked for more information on that case because clearly that is an area of enormous importance.

Some honourable Members have asked about Gaza, about making sure that the aid is getting through, that we continue to support the people of Gaza – which we do, but we are engaged in a dialogue to increase and improve that.

Then there are the events in Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia, where we have been in discussion with both, and where we are looking to support what France is doing in terms of trying to drive forward the process there.

In Albania, we have been in discussions with the Prime Minister and with the opposition to try to get the dialogue moving.

And, of course, across Africa, I mentioned two countries, but we could talk about many more, not least as regards what is happening again today in Sudan and the importance of ensuring that South Sudan is created with the best possible chances of success

And then there is Ukraine, an important neighbourhood country which was mentioned I think by Mr Saryusz-Wolski and others too.

We have a breadth of things to do and we must continue to do all of them. So, honourable Members, I would just say to you it is important to recognise that.

Let me just, in the final minutes I have got, kill off a few of the myths which have grown up. I am not looking for a Security Council seat. I looked for proper status for the EU on the UN General Assembly, and we got that with nobody opposed to it, and honourable Members will know that took a lot of work, and I pay tribute to all of those involved, but we now have that stronger voice.

I think it is important too that we look at what we are really doing on CSDP; let us not mess around with descriptions that are not true. In Libya alone, we managed to support through our aid 55 000 people being able to get home. I did not oppose a no-fly zone in the European Council and Prime Minister Cameron will back that up; that is not at all what I said. What I said was that for it to be effective and to be done quickly, it was important that those who could act quickly should do so.

On our delegations, I support trying to strengthen what we have in our delegations opening in Benghazi, and what we do in Iraq. But let us not play this off against what happens in



other countries like the Bahamas. The staff in the Bahamas are development staff from the Commission working on rural programmes, on agriculture, for some of the poorest people, and we should not, in my view, see this as being an 'either/or' situation.

Honourable Members, we have to do as much as we can to support countries across the world. So I end as I began by saying that we do not lack ambition, we need the resources to do the job properly, we need to be able to be consistent, we need to develop and strengthen what we do, and that is what we will do, but we will do it by taking the 27 Members of the European Union on that journey with us, leading sometimes, pushing sometimes, working alongside sometimes, and your support will be invaluable to that.

*(Applause)*

**President.** – The debate is closed.

The vote on the three reports will take place today at 12:30.

*(The sitting was suspended for a few moments)*

### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Elena Băsescu (PPE),** *in writing.* – (RO) I would like to congratulate my colleague, Mr Albertini, for drafting this thorough report. It touches again on subjects where more active involvement is required from the EU. I can mention here the Eastern Partnership and Black Sea Synergy. These two initiatives play a vital role both in strengthening relations with the states in the immediate vicinity and in terms of energy security.

Organising the Eastern Partnership summit for this autumn and setting up the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly are promising signs indicating that these guidelines are being implemented.

Strengthening relations with the Republic of Moldova is also included among the common foreign policy priorities, in view of signing the association agreement with the EU. Mentioning this point will ensure positive progress in the negotiations between both sides.

I would like to emphasise in this Chamber the importance attached to settling unresolved conflicts, particularly the one in Transnistria. I welcome this step, especially in the wake of the failure of the Vienna dialogue conducted last month. I support continuing the negotiations in the 5 + 2 format.

**Proinsias De Rossa (S&D),** *in writing.* – Europe must not fail the Palestinian people yet again. Now, following the unexpected reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas, which commits to establishing a technical, non-party interim government and early elections, Europe must grab this opportunity to play a positive role in the region. It can do so by working with the interim government which is to be formed in the next few days; by supporting early elections; and, most importantly, undertaking to fully respect the outcome of elections and working with the new administration that emerges from those elections. Europe cannot, on the one hand, work with democratic movements in Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Egypt, and refuse to work with a government democratically elected by the Palestinian people. Israel's initial response to the reconciliation, withholding Palestinian Authority (P.A.) taxes, is illegal and potentially catastrophic for peace, putting at risk the state-building efforts of Prime Minister Salem Fayyad. The EU must step in to fully cover the loss of this income while making it clear that we will recover that money from Israel

by freezing all money due to Israel from the EU to the same value, until it stops this further breach of international law.

**Ágnes Hankiss (PPE)**, *in writing*. – In 2010, I submitted a written question to Commissioner Malmström to see what action the Commission had taken to uncover the role of non-governmental organisations in financing terrorism. The fact that the organisers of last year's flotilla are planning to repeat their action on the anniversary of the incident and MEPs from the GUE and Greens/EFA political groups organised a hearing at the EP on 10 May put the issue yet again in the spotlight. If we Europeans consider peace, democratisation in the Middle East, the eradication of extreme poverty and the development of living conditions in Gaza as our ultimate goal, the appropriate means for the facilitation of this noble cause is not the flotilla, as VP/HR Ashton pointed out earlier today. We cannot refer to something as humanitarian action that is not necessarily what it seems. Judge Bruguière, the respected and recognised counter-terrorism expert, proved that the organiser of the flotilla, IHH, had maintained contact with al-Qaeda. The umbrella organisation of IHH, Union of Good, supports the activity of extremist radicals through selling weapons to them. I ask fellow MEPs to refrain from exploiting the Middle East crisis for their own political goals, which do not have anything to do with the peace process and from a biased attitude which very much sounds like the language and mechanism of the Communist and Soviet attitude towards Israel.

**Jiří Havel (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (CS) The motion for a resolution shows clearly that there are still serious shortcomings over fulfilment of the relevant provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon. It does not look good to Member States when the European Parliament (EP) 'urgently requests' the European Council to develop a 'European foreign policy strategy', or when it calls on the European Council 'to go about this task on the basis of political dialogue with the EP'. If there was a European foreign policy strategy already today, the equilibrium of the EU in that regard would be much better, for example, concerning the movements in the Arab world and the double or even triple standards applied towards the countries from this region.

The positions taken by the EU towards the increasingly turbulent developments in the Balkans represent another problem. The EU has not yet found the 'key' to this region and lacks a systematic approach. The result of this, among other things, is that the prestige of the EU and the attractions of EU membership go into free fall in the Western Balkan countries. The ideas of Valentin Inzko, High Representative of the international community and EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, regarding the approach towards Serbia will not resolve the situation, but will rather do the opposite.

**Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) Last week, a particularly significant event took place. After lengthy negotiations, we finally managed to convince our partners from the United Nations to grant the EU a new status in the organisation. This is a definite success, especially in view of the General Assembly's initial resistance. However, we must not fall into the trap of triumphalism and think that from now on, the EU will present a uniform standpoint in the forum of the United Nations. The fact that we will now be represented by the President of the European Council or the High Representative does not mean that Member States will present a common standpoint on particularly controversial topics. The example of Libya shows how deep the divisions between us are even in matters which would seem obvious, such as the protection of the civilian population. So we need to say clearly that without the political will from Member States, this decision will be meaningless. This is why I cannot agree with Mrs Ashton that the world will hear one, clear voice from

the EU. Instead, I am afraid that for a long period of time, we will have to deal with many voices, as the uniform views of the EU will be weakened not only by the permanent members of the Security Council, but also by the Presidency, which is searching for its niche after the Treaty of Lisbon. How does Mrs Ashton intend to establish a uniform voice for the EU at the United Nations, and how does she intend to build a good image for the EU in this organisation?

**Tunne Kelam (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I am encouraged by the approach of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: realising that what counts, in addition to statements, are actions. I would like to remind you, Baroness Ashton, of Joseph Daul's advice: do not be afraid, and you will have the support of this Parliament.

It is our joint responsibility to make authoritarian rulers believe that we take our basic values seriously. This means, first of all, conditionality: readiness not only to suggest and implore, but also to cause pain, i.e. to apply real sanctions to regimes which do not respect even the lives of their subjects. I agree that sanctions against Syria have to include hundreds of people, not just a dozen.

I thank you for your condemnation of the massacre in Camp Ashraf on 8 April 2011. I strongly suggest that, in this case, you follow the clear message of the European Parliament from April 2009: we need a clear and convincing message that the EU really cares about the lives of 34 unarmed members of the Iranian opposition and will no longer tolerate the brutal crushing of their liberties and dignity. I ask the Commission to take the lead in the proposed resettlement issue.

**Jaromír Kohlíček (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (CS) The common foreign and security policy is always a major problem in the EU. On the one hand, the large states are traditionally used to relying on their own forces, with France and Great Britain in particular still feeling they are great powers. This can be seen in their approach to solving foreign policy problems. In recent times, this has been oriented rather towards a military solution to any sort of dispute, as they neglect peaceful solutions in favour of intervention. I think there is reason to believe that today's world is heading towards multi-polarity, and it is a peaceful foreign policy that is in accordance with international law and the UN Charter. Instead of military ventures, the latest of which is unfolding before us in Libya, what today's world needs is to put all of its efforts into fighting poverty and illiteracy, and into solving other serious problems. In order to do this, it is absolutely essential to have arms control and disarmament, including general agreements on the dismantling of nuclear weapons. Assistance in mitigating the consequences of disasters should be an important element in EU foreign policy. These operations should not be linked to military deployments. Police deployment is possible only in extreme cases, on the basis of a UN resolution, and in order to protect workers in the social, health and public service sectors, and to train the police. The common foreign and security policy must be rigorously separated from NATO. For these reasons, the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left refuses to back this report.

**Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) A week ago, the UN General Assembly authorised the EU to speak with one voice at its meetings. From now on, high-level representatives will be able to convey the Union's message in the highest international body. This provision is a significant step forward in the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, but it is not enough. The EU needs a real strategy so that it can actually apply the

powers conferred on it by the Treaty of Lisbon. Be it in the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, NATO, the WTO or the G20, the EU should no longer have to hide in the shadows. What is more, we should take the lead in establishing a global parliamentary system. High-level diplomacy is obviously needed, but it must be carried out in consultation with the people. And how better to achieve that than to enable citizens from the world over to be represented at the UN? There is the European Parliament, but there are also regional parliaments, such as the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. What we need today is a world parliament. Baroness Ashton, the European Union must be ambitious. I hope that this proposal will appear in your White Paper.

**Kristiina Ojuland (ALDE)** , *in writing*. – First of all, I would like express my sincerest gratitude to Baroness Ashton for the EU's full support to Estonia in trying to resolve the hostage crisis in Lebanon. The kidnapped Estonians are, however, still at the mercy of their abductors. Therefore, we would be grateful for your further involvement and assistance in the resolution of the situation.

Coming to the future of the common foreign and security policy, I would like to call for more coherence and consistency when dealing with non-democratic regimes. We have applied sanctions on Belarus, but we have not done so with regard to the Magnitski case in Russia, although this had been pointed out by the European Parliament in the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2009 and in the European Union's policy on the matter.

We are still committed to the one-China policy, while Beijing has recently become more suppressive and violent both in Tibet and the Uyghur region. Instead of flirting with Beijing, we also ought to pursue a free trade agreement with Taiwan, which is a prosperous democracy. The one-China policy is outdated and morally undermining to the image of the European Union. Let us align our policies with our values.

**Ioan Mircea Paşcu (S&D)** , *in writing*. – The Lisbon Treaty provided us with a major opportunity to move forward in the field of defence and security. But, as evidence indicates, this is not enough. In spite of the relatively numerous operations, there is still an evident divorce between the instruments we are equipping us with – see the battle-groups, for instance – and the improvised collection of national means we actually employ, when the EU is required to intervene. Take Libya, for instance: because of the absence of political consensus and proper military assets, a 'coalition of the willing' – a concept we were so adamantly opposed when others have used it before – had to be formed and NATO had to be called in to take command! Practically, Libya completely sidelined our CSDP, exactly at a time it was needed and, therefore, had the chance to demonstrate itself in practice! In consequence, my opinion is that we have to look again at our CSDP, to see what it really needs to become a functional concept, both politically and militarily, so next time we would need to appeal to it, it will not let us down like this time.

**Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)** , *in writing*. – (FI) Our common foreign and security policy is at a crossroads. The Treaty of Lisbon has made it possible for the Union's foreign relations to develop in a way which was formerly impossible. The progress so far, however, has been quite slow. Our common European values nevertheless allow us to build a European foreign policy that relies on sustainable development and human rights.

We need a clear European external agenda in order for the EU to be able purposefully to promote a global policy based on multilateralism. Crucial elements in that policy would

be support for the work of the UN and a clarification of the EU's policy with regard to the UN.

**Cristian Dan Preda (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) The situation in Syria is deeply concerning. We do not have complete, reliable information as the foreign press has been refused access. However, the repressive measures carried out by the Assad regime are intensifying and have already resulted, based on the figures supplied by the NGOs, in the murder of 600-700 civilians and the arrest or disappearance of another 8 000 people. Syria's citizens have been demonstrating for nearly two months and they must not be left on their own to fight for democracy. Brutal repression is unacceptable and must be stopped. The EU must take a leading role in the quest for a speedy solution. This is why I would like to welcome the restrictive measures adopted by the Council against the Syrian regime at the start of the week. However, we need to do more, in cooperation with the Union's partners, to urge the Syrian authorities to halt the repression. Assad is isolated. Only the Gaddafi regime is condemning at the moment 'the international conspiracy attacking Syria's national security', a statement which says a great deal about the situation in Syria. Finally, I would like to stress that, in the current circumstances, Syria's application for a seat on the UN's Human Rights Council is unacceptable.

**Traian Ungureanu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – The protracted violent actions against the Coptic Church in Egypt and largely against Christians in the Middle East require an immediate response from the European Union. An essential part of the Christian-European heritage is under threat. People are persecuted in their hundreds of thousands because of their religious beliefs. The new Egyptian authorities benefited from widespread sympathy and direct EU financial and political support. But now, after churches were burned and Christians killed in a renewed wave of attacks, the time has come for the EU to make it abundantly clear to the Egyptian authorities that they are responsible for the internal security of the country and for the protection of the rights and livelihood of all Egyptian citizens. Suspicions that the Egyptian authorities turned a blind eye to or even encouraged religious violence should be dispersed by a firm undertaking that the Christian community will be safe in Egypt. The EU should ask for explanations from the Egyptian authorities and make it clear that further violence will be followed by the cessation of European financial and humanitarian assistance. This unequivocal warning should condition all present agreements and should be included in all future agreements with Middle East governments.

**Zbigniew Ziobro (ECR)**, *in writing.* – (PL) During the January debate on the situation in Tunisia and Egypt and the freedom of religious expression, I mentioned the tragic situation of Christians in Arab countries, particularly the Egyptian Coptic Christians, who are being persecuted. I pointed out the radicalisation of Islam, which is directing its aggression against the followers of Christ. It can be seen, today, that my misgivings were justified. Clashes in the vicinity of the Church of St. Menas are only the tip of the iceberg with regard to the tragedy of Egyptian Christians and the silence from international organisations. In this context, it would be worth recalling the attacks on the St. Bishoy monastery in March of this year, which were ignored by Parliament and Mrs Ashton, when the Egyptian army fired at a monastery full of refugees from Cairo, and the actions of the Salafist Islamic community which holds extreme views. In April, they carried out a series of attacks on Christian buildings in Beni Ahmad, Bashtil and Kamadir. As we can see, the European Union still cannot work out a cohesive reactive strategy towards human rights violations in Asia and North Africa and how to prevent them in the future. We should put more pressure on the Egyptian authorities to defend the Coptic Christians. It is essential

to strengthen the section for the prevention of religious intolerance of the Subcommittee on Political Affairs of the European External Action Service, with particular regard to persecuted Christians

### IN THE CHAIR: STAVROS LAMBRINIDIS

*Vice-President*

#### 5. Voting time

**President.** – The next item is the vote.

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

**5.1. Indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs (A7-0095/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.2. Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement (A7-0089/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.3. Permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles (A7-0093/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.4. Narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors (A7-0098/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.5. Controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors (A7-0090/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.6. Braking devices of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors (A7-0092/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.7. Driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors (A7-0096/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.8. Rear-mounted roll-over protection structures of narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors (A7-0101/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.9. Excise duty applied to manufactured tobacco (A7-0100/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.10. Denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation (A7-0102/2011, Sajjad Karim) (vote)**

**5.11. Textile names and related labelling of textile products (A7-0086/2011, Toine Manders) (vote)**

*– Before the vote*

**Toine Manders**, *rapporteur*. – (NL) Mr President, we have agreed a joint statement with the Council. The minister, Mrs Györi, who was able to speak here last night, has asked me to read it out, as she has lost her voice. It contains four lines:

A joint statement by the European Parliament and the Council. ‘The European Parliament and the Council are mindful of the importance of providing accurate information to consumers, in particular, when products are marketed with an indication of origin so as to protect them against fraudulent, inaccurate or misleading claims. The use of new technologies such as electronic labelling, including radio frequency identification, may be a useful tool to provide such information while keeping pace with technical development. The European Parliament and the Council invite the Commission, when drawing up the report pursuant to Article 24a of the regulation, to consider their impact on possible new labelling requirements including with a view to improving the traceability of textile products’. That is all and now the Minister will nod I hope.

### **5.12. Exceptional trade measures for countries and territories participating in or linked to the EU’s Stabilisation and Association process (A7-0243/2010, Vital Moreira) (vote)**

– Before the vote on Amendment 14:

**Vital Moreira**, *rapporteur*. – Mr President, I have an oral amendment to my own written amendment. In Amendment 14, I propose to replace ‘countries’ by the expression ‘countries and territories’.

The purpose of this amendment is quite straightforward. It is meant to align the wording of this paragraph with the title of the regulation itself. The title reads as follows: ‘exceptional trade measures for countries and territories participating in or linked to the European Union’s Stabilisation and Association process’. Without this correction, there would be a discrepancy between the regulation itself and its title. That is why I ask for your support and the adoption of this amendment.

*(Parliament agreed to accept the oral amendment)*

– Before the vote on the motion for a legislative resolution:

**Vital Moreira**, *on behalf of the Committee on International Trade*. – Mr President, I have a mandate to ask for the postponement of the vote on the legislative resolution.

**President**. – Does the Commission have something to say on this?

**Máire Geoghegan-Quinn**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, the Commission welcomes the Member’s proposal. It will leave time for more examination of the amendments that were adopted, and will allow Parliament and the Council time before the first-reading vote.

**President**. – The report is referred back to the Committee on International Trade.

### **5.13. Radio spectrum policy (A7-0151/2011, Gunnar Hökmark) (vote)**

#### **5.14. Amendment of the Rules following the establishment of a common Transparency Register (A7-0173/2011, Carlo Casini) (vote)**

**President.** – Dear colleagues, I have a statement to read.

The Casini report on the interinstitutional agreement on a common transparency register between the European Parliament and the Commission represents an important step forward in regulating relations of MEPs with outside interests. Before we proceed to the vote on the report, I would like to underline that the ongoing activities of the working group on the code of conduct for MEPs and outside interests do not intend to put into question the substance of the agreement reached with the Commission and the content of the Casini report. They rather aim at complementing the framework by adding new aspects and, in particular, at strengthening the applicable rules as regards access of interest groups to the European Parliament premises.

*(Interjection from the floor: 'Amen!' Laughter)*

#### **5.15. Interinstitutional agreement on a common Transparency Register (A7-0174/2011, Carlo Casini) (vote)**

#### **5.16. Corporate governance in financial institutions (A7-0074/2011, Ashley Fox) (vote)**

#### **5.17. Free trade agreement with India (vote)**

#### **5.18. EU-Japan trade relations (vote)**

– *Before the vote on Amendment 1, Part 2:*

**Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE).** – *(PL)* Mr President, in this amendment, the PPE Group would like the word 'strongly' to be removed from paragraph 2. I hope there are no objections.

*(Parliament agreed to accept the oral amendment)*

#### **5.19. Preparing forests for climate change (A7-0113/2011, Kriton Arsenis) (vote)**

– *Before the vote on paragraph 36, Part 2:*

**Kriton Arsenis, rapporteur.** – Mr President, I cannot imagine anyone in this room voting against a ban on construction in places where land was burned by intentional forest fires with illegal purposes. This is very important for countries across Europe, and what is said in the second part of paragraph 36 and paragraph 37 is an attempt to ensure legality and combat criminal activity against forests in Europe. I would like to ask for a roll-call vote on these two texts: the second part of paragraph 36 and paragraph 37.

**President.** – Paragraph 36, Part 2, and paragraph 37 shall be put to the vote by roll call.



**5.20. Annual report from the Council to Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in 2009 (A7-0168/2011, Gabriele Albertini) (vote)**

– *Before the vote on Amendment 2:*

**Giles Chichester (ECR).** – Mr President, while you are enjoying yourself with your jokey and unorthodox approach to dealing with requests from the floor for check votes, may I humbly submit that, if you were to go a little slower, the interpretation could keep up with your announcements, and we could then vote in a more timely fashion. You are going a little fast and there is a little delay.

**President.** – Mr Chichester, what I will retain from this intervention is what I assume is your approval of my unorthodox ways.

– *Before the vote on paragraph 33, initial text:*

**Gabriele Albertini, rapporteur.** – (IT) Mr President, it is pointless for me to quote it. It is included in the explanation of vote: it begins with ‘welcomes’ and ends with ‘manner’. You can read it in the text.

*(Parliament agreed to accept the oral amendment)*

– *Before the vote on Amendment 7:*

**Gabriele Albertini, rapporteur.** – (IT) Mr President, in this case, too, the text is included in the voting list. I would just like to make one comment: the subject is the protest against the condemnation of demonstrators in Bahrain and criticism of that conduct.

**President.** – Mr Albertini, no, it is the oral amendment to Amendment 7 after paragraph 45.

**Gabriele Albertini, rapporteur.** – (IT) Mr President, I made a mistake when reading the text. We deleted the name ‘Macedonia’ in order to avoid trampling on some people’s sensibilities, including those, I believe, of the President.

Therefore, only the expression ‘former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’ was used. We deleted the name ‘Macedonia’.

*(Parliament agreed to accept the oral amendment)*

– *Before the vote on Amendment 14:*

**Nick Griffin (NI).** – Mr President, I have to echo Mr Chichester’s earlier intervention. We are being given by our interpreters the choice to vote ‘no’ after you have said ‘Εγκρίνεται’ [‘Adopted’]. I am not aware that the ability to speak Greek is required of MEPs. If it is going to be, please tell us. If not, please slow down slightly.

**President.** – The answer to this question is that the ability to speak Greek is required by MEPs.

*(Applause and laughter)*

Listen. I can do this extremely slowly but this is how this goes, dear colleagues, I have not changed the way I do the votes every time. As you know, all the interpreters have a voting list in front of them. If they do not, they should. It does not depend on how fast or how

slowly a President announces in whatever language the numbers; the interpreters have the list in front of them. At any rate, I will try to be a little slower if that would make it better. Is that OK?

**William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD).** – Mr President, you speak very good English, as you have amply demonstrated. Why, therefore, do you persist in this charade – pantomime – of speaking this unnecessary Greek?

*(Prolonged noise)*

– Before the vote on paragraph 85:

**Gabriele Albertini, rapporteur.** – *(IT)* Mr President, please excuse me. I may be wrong, but I do not remember voting on the oral amendment to paragraph 68.

Unless I am mistaken, we have skipped the oral amendment I mentioned earlier concerning condemnation of the attitude of the Bahraini Government. We should therefore proceed to the vote.

**President.** – Mr Albertini, the answer to that is that we adopted Amendments 13 and 18 and so the original paragraph on which you had the oral amendment fell.

– Before the final vote:

**Robert Goebbels (S&D).** – Mr President, I wanted to support Mr Albertini. I think we could vote his oral amendment as an addition to the paragraph we voted on because it would be positive if this House were to condemn what is happening in Bahrain, especially the death sentences.

*(Applause)*

**Hannes Swoboda (S&D).** – Mr President, I want to support that because it must have been a mistake, either in our voting lists or in our voting procedure, but there was such unanimity in supporting it that it would be very strange if it were not included.

I think the House would agree with the proposal by Mr Goebbels and Mr Albertini to vote on it as an addition or as a separate paragraph.

*(Parliament agreed to accept the amendment to paragraph 68)*

## **5.21. Development of the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (A7-0166/2011, Roberto Gualtieri) (vote)**

– Before the vote on Amendment 18:

**Krzysztof Lisek (PPE).** – *(PL)* Mr President, I have tabled an oral amendment. I apologise for this procedure, but the dramatic events in Libya have caused us to consider it important to add a few words. On the third line, after the words ‘deployment on the ground’, we would like to ask for support for the following words, which are ...

*(The Member continued in English)*

‘appeals to the Council to provide immediate humanitarian support to Misrata and other population centres, specifically by naval means; is profoundly concerned about the increasing number of victims of the conflict in Libya and the Gaddafi regime’s reported use of cluster munitions and other arms against the civilian population’.

**President.** – Mr Lisek, excuse me but the oral amendment has fallen because we have adopted amendments to paragraph 71, so I am sorry to say that we cannot vote on this. The paragraph has changed according to the amendment we have filed.

**Roberto Gualtieri, rapporteur.** – Mr President, the oral amendment reads as follows. The original text recognised that ‘NATO constitutes the foundation of collective defence for those Member States which belong to it’ and here is the addition, ‘and reaches beyond its Member States’.

*(Parliament agreed to accept the oral amendment)*

## **5.22. The EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations (A7-0181/2011, María Muñoz De Urquiza) (vote)**

– *Before the vote:*

**Gerard Batten (EFD).** – Mr President, on a point of order, on the next report, which is the Muñoz De Urquiza report, I am applying to speak under Rule 167 on roll-call votes. Going back to the Arsenis report, on Amendment 25, one of my colleagues over there requested a roll-call vote because he felt it was important. You granted it to him.

There is no provision for this in the Rules of Procedure and you did not ask Parliament for approval. We have all enjoyed the unorthodox powers that you have granted yourself today, so I would like to ask for the same provision. Because this is important to me personally, I should like you to grant me a roll-call vote on every amendment on this report under the same Rule whereby you granted it to the gentleman over there.

**President.** – Colleagues, under our rules and our practice, granting roll-call votes or not is in the hands of the President every time. The President may grant a roll-call vote if he feels it does not disrupt the session or, for example, if there are many requests, he may ask the House. There is no particular rule one way or another. I just want to make this clear to everyone so that we do not set any precedent here that was not intended to be set.

Under the circumstances, nevertheless, I have no objection to granting the request in this particular case, but I would very much like to ask Members not to abuse this potential because, if they do, then the President will ask the House every time and there will be contentiousness where there should be none. If you insist on your request, I will take every one of these as a roll-call vote.

*End of voting time*

## **6. Explanations of vote**

### **Oral explanations of vote**

#### **Recommendation for second reading: Toine Manders (A7-0086/2011)**

**Francesco De Angelis (S&D).** – *(IT)* Mr President, I voted in favour of the report on the labelling of textile products because I think that Europe could and should do more to support enterprises in the industry. The proposal made by the Commission was purely technical and aimed to simplify the current provisions regarding labelling.

Yet Parliament achieved two significant results. Firstly, textile products comprising non-textile parts of animal origin – fur and leather – must show this information on the labels in order to allow consumers to make informed choices. Secondly, by 2013, the European Commission must present an impact study on the introduction of labelling, clearly showing which garments have been produced in Europe, and which outside of Europe. The latter objective is an important milestone for the competitiveness of European textiles in Europe and the world.

**Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, congratulations to Mr Manders for having succeeded in drawing up this proposal. It has proven to be more complicated than it looked at the start. I am pleased that we succeeded in reaching agreement on this Textile Labelling Regulation, which will strengthen the textile industry's competitiveness and benefit consumers by providing a greater choice of new and innovative products. It is a good compromise that I believe the Council will be able to live with, too.

During this process, I have not disguised my own scepticism regarding the introduction of origin labelling. I am therefore also pleased that we agreed on a text that merely requires the Commission to analyse the need for origin labelling. Thus, the agreement will not lead to the introduction of mandatory origin labelling. I will be unable to vote in favour of a regulation that makes it mandatory for businesses to provide this country of origin label. I know that the Council is of the same opinion. Unfortunately, yesterday's debate highlighted the fact that Commissioner Tajani does not share this view. If we do not succeed in avoiding this, I will then take up the fight against it.

**Alfredo Antonozzi (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, the proposal for a regulation on which we are being called to vote undoubtedly has the merit of bringing together in a single text all the existing legislation relating to textile products. This regulation will make it possible to simplify and improve the existing regulatory framework on the development and use of new fibres, as well as supporting the development of innovative products and encouraging innovation in the textile and clothing sector.

I welcomed the fact that Mr Manders considered other aspects too, such as the reduced administrative burden for Member States resulting from the transposition into national law of the technical adaptations required by the addition of the names of new textile fibres to the harmonised list. While I consider that we could have gone further by introducing a specific article regulating the indication of origin of textile products, I voted in favour of the proposal for a regulation.

**Cristiana Muscardini (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, this regulation is vital for the European textile industry because it guarantees a free market in compliance with rules that prevent the irregularities and illegal practices of the past. We wish to favourably highlight the institutions' decision to welcome the proposal and to explore the problem of the traceability and origin of products in order to ensure that European consumers are correctly informed, even though the timescales established are too lengthy. Ultimately, the objective is to safeguard consumers.

I would point out that last October, Parliament, by a large majority, voted in favour of the proposal for a regulation on the indication of the country of origin of certain products – including textile products – imported from third countries, and that to date, the Council has not opened negotiations or discussions with Parliament, even on an informal level. I would like to thank the Hungarian Presidency for having included the issue among its priorities, but I would also ask for the debate to be accelerated, or else we run the risk, for

example, of providing safeguards for European consumers with regard to foodstuffs but not with regard to manufacturing products.

**Paolo Bartolozzi (PPE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, the report on the labelling of textile products which we endorsed today marks an important step towards simplifying legislation for the benefit of consumers and all the European manufacturers working in the industry. With this regulation, we are laying down new rules on labelling in the textile industry; we are focusing increasingly on innovation in the sector and on speeding up the integration of European legislation, in order to benefit from innovative products safely.

The text proposes, in fact, to combine the three directives on the labelling of textile composition into a single European regulation, simplifying the existing regulatory framework and improving the transparency of procedures. Therefore, we cannot help but applaud the positive result achieved today in safeguarding European production. At the same time, however, we cannot fail to mention the indication of the country of origin issue. We hope that a further step forward can be taken soon with the approval of legislation regulating indications of origin in this sector as well.

**Peter Jahr (PPE).** – *(DE)* Mr President, in my opinion, this report is attempting to solve two major problems. Firstly, the aim is to promote innovation. This means that the process of including new fibre names in the standard list of names must be made more transparent and must involve less red tape. Secondly, origin labelling must be improved. Here, we can honestly say that this point has not yet been finally and satisfactorily resolved. I would like to make it very clear that this is not the fault of the rapporteur. This was simply due to the widely differing opinions held by members of the Council which the Commission could not reconcile. I hope that we will continue to work on this issue, because origin labelling is becoming increasingly important. It is one of the rights of consumers. I would like to see a discussion on this point in the near future in the European Parliament and I would like the Commission to submit a proposal.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, quality, labelling and traceability: these are the consumer protection tools that guarantee product excellence. Until today, Europe was the only market in the world without legislation on this issue, which put it at a disadvantage relative to its main trading partners.

Today, the European Parliament has made its voice heard, by adopting a regulation capable of safeguarding the excellence of the European textile industry. Our production and manufacturing needs protecting, particularly at a time of economic crisis such as the one we are currently experiencing. Until now, we have managed to achieve recognition through research and innovation, which guaranteed the production of innovative textile fibres.

Consumers will no longer run the risk of buying textile products that are potentially harmful to their health perhaps because they have been treated with chemical agents. Adoption of this regulation finally guarantees due protection of the rights of over 500 million European citizens. From now on, it will no longer be possible to deceive them with incorrect labelling.

**Emma McClarkin (ECR).** – Mr President, today, we have voted on the addition of new textiles and fibres and labelling-related matters. From the outset of this textile report, I have been of the opinion that Parliament should keep to the scope of the proposal as it was originally designated and that the extension of this scope was not compatible with the aim of simplification for putting a new fibre on the market.

I have concerns about the provision of a review clause which will ask the Commission to investigate the possible introduction of a number of labelling requirements which have little added value and would place unacceptable burdens on businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises. This includes the harmonisation of size labelling, social economic labelling and, most worryingly, a radio frequency identification tag which would increase costs for business and prices for the consumer.

Nonetheless, from this report, I feel that some of the provisions in this regulation will make a difference, will improve the application process for business and enhance consumer protection, especially on the labelling of animal-derived products. But we need to be mindful that we are legislating for the real world, not making a wish list for an ideal world, and that Parliament should stick to its areas of competence in future.

**Daniel Hannan (ECR).** – Mr President, may I begin by saying that I hope you will continue to address this Chamber in your native tongue, which matches any language in the world for its accomplishment, its diversity and its antiquity.

There are times when reading the voting list is a more eloquent comment on the behaviour and nature of this Parliament than almost anything else I could say. Let us just look at the subjects of some of these reports: indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs; approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement; permissible sound level and exhaust system of motor vehicles; narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors; controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors; braking devices of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors; driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors; rear-mounted roll-over protection structures; excise duty applied to manufactured tobacco; denominations and technical specifications of euro coins; textile names and related labelling of textile products ... and I could go on.

There is almost no nook or cranny of our national life so remote that Brussels has not curled its tendrils thither, choking out the natural light and blocking out the native growth.

If Brussels confined itself to cross-border issues, then no one would have a problem.

#### **Report: Gunnar Hökmark (A7-0151/2011)**

**Jens Rohde (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, during the debate, a great deal was said about Mr Hökmark's report on our radio spectrum policy programme – something that does not sound very glamorous, I have to admit. However, it is actually a question of whether we can secure broadband connections and cheap data transmission for our citizens in future. I will very briefly say that, when we are trying to look into the future, it is quite impressive that the negotiators, and our rapporteur in particular, have succeeded in achieving such a broad majority in favour of the report that we voted on today. That was the result of very fine political skill and all credit to our rapporteur, Mr Hökmark.

**Peter Jahr (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, radio frequencies are a very scarce and valuable resource in our modern society. Therefore, it makes sense to coordinate the use of these frequencies efficiently throughout Europe. Broader access to the radio spectrum is important not only for businesses, but also for the citizens of the European Union. For this reason, we should take particular care to ensure that this policy is developed in line with economic, social and cultural interests. In particular, we must not allow this regulation to put at risk the direct wireless transmission used in Germany in regional theatres, at rock concerts and in churches.

I would also like to ask the Commission to sit down with the Member States and work closely with them in this area and not to interfere in their national powers.

**Report: Carlo Casini (A7-0173/2011)**

**Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, following today's vote on the lobbyists register, I think it is important to state that lobbyism is essentially a good thing. It is actually an indispensable part of the democratic process. Without lobbyism, politicians' knowledge, facts and opinions with regard to all aspects of society would be far too limited. Therefore, all of us in this House and the press have a responsibility to ensure that, behind what we do, there is a critical, but also true, picture of what the issue is all about.

Secondly, I would like to say that, as we know, the best is the greatest enemy of the good. The fully legitimate demand for transparency, as reflected in the debate and the vote today, must, of necessity, be balanced so that we do not, with the best of intentions, destroy a well-functioning system. The demand for total transparency, mandatory individual registration of everything under the sun, an ethical control committee and so on, are, in the best case, expressions of something naive and, in the worst case, part of a populist political agenda that will do more harm than good. In practice, this is about trust. If deemed necessary, control must be in line with what is feasible in practice in respect of the work process. I would also like to contest the vote on paragraph 9. During the very quick vote, I got the impression that we did not actually obtain the right result.

**Report: Carlo Casini (A7-0174/2011)**

**Jens Rohde (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, I am in complete agreement with Mr Løkkegaard. I am not sure that we obtained quite the right result in the vote on paragraph 9, but if we did, there is something not quite right with the perception of reality in this House. It is absolutely right that we should have as much transparency as possible. However, to demand that we all publish the names of everyone we hold meetings with is, of course, absolutely absurd. It is absolutely absurd because when is a meeting a meeting? This has to be defined. Does it include when we meet in the corridor or on the bus or somewhere else? Does it include telephone meetings and Internet meetings? When is it classed as a meeting? What about many of those people we are having meetings with today from rebel movements in North Africa? Are they to see their names in the newspapers? Surely not? In this regard, it should be logical for it always to be possible to guarantee that people can come to us in confidence. In any case, I will never be involved in breaking this confidence.

**Alfredo Antonozzi (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, making it easy for citizens to scrutinise how decisions are made, together with the processes, elements and resources that influenced them, helps both to ensure greater transparency and to close the gap between the European institutions and citizens, which is often discussed in relation to legitimacy and to the so-called democratic deficit in the European Union.

Great progress has been made in the last few years. One need only think of the register of interest representatives adopted by the European Parliament in 1996, or of the Commission's 2006 proposal to the European Parliament for a 'one-stop shop' register for lobbyists. The approval of the Stubb-Friedrich report by this House led to the creation of a joint working group. We can safely say that the results achieved by that group with regard to the objectives set by Parliament are more than satisfactory.

I fully agree with Mr Casini's report, as the transparency of political institutions is a fundamental condition of their legitimacy. This is why I have supported the proposal.

**Salvatore Iacolino (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, there is no doubt that this regulation marks an important step in the process aimed at focusing attention on the European institutions. There needs to be more transparency, more publicity, more clarity of conduct and accessibility of information, and finally, a common transparency register.

If we think that in the United States, the law governing lobby groups was introduced as long ago as 1948, we realise that they undoubtedly have a role to play, and while they essentially represent predominantly selfish interests, they must be duly taken into account. This is a forward-looking draft report, and while it is not the finished article, it is undoubtedly a way of safeguarding the legitimacy of the activities and decisions of the European institutions. For this reason, I voted in favour, as I am absolutely convinced that this is the path we must take.

**Jim Higgins (PPE).** – Mr President, I think we owe a debt of gratitude to the Sunday Times for exposing the 'amendments for money' scandal.

As a result, as you know yourself, a working group has been established by the Bureau to introduce binding codes of conduct for all MEPs. Part two of cleaning up the act is what we did today by voting for this report in huge numbers.

I believe that the register of lobbyists is long overdue, but I have a number of reservations. First of all, I think that it should be mandatory. However, it is a step in the right direction and it is worth noting that the lobbyists themselves, the reputable lobbyists, actually are in touch and are in favour of compulsory registration.

I am disappointed, however, that the Council has not signed up to the proposal. It is worth noting that the three MEPs who were exposed in terms of the 'amendments for money' scandal are all former government ministers.

The registration of lobbyists is a big issue and lobbying is a big issue, and we need to push on, use this as an experiment and hopefully, in the future, make it compulsory and mandatory.

**Daniel Hannan (ECR).** – Mr President, the moment the lobbyist arrives in Brussels, he perceives immediately that this was a system designed by, and for, people like him. He is usually a man, although his female equivalent can increasingly be found stalking our corridors in her sharp trouser suit.

This is a system where decisions are taken – I would say in smoke-filled rooms, but these days in smoke-free rooms – behind closed doors with the voters frozen out. You had a perfect example of that with the new restrictions and bans on herbal and alternative medicines which came in a couple of weeks ago. Such a ban would never have passed a national parliament, all of them being subjected as they were to real anger from their constituents. However, the big pharmaceutical corporations understood that they could push through in this system what they could never get through the national legislatures, precisely because this system is much more invulnerable to public opinion. So, yes, let us have this register – I voted for it and my group supported it – but the real solution is to disperse the power away from these unaccountable Brussels and Strasbourg institutions back to genuinely answerable national, democratic parliaments.



**Report: Ashley Fox (A7-0074/2011)**

**Daniel Hannan (ECR).** – Mr President, the government of Singapore and the authorities in Hong Kong and Shanghai are scouring London and the other financial centres of Europe looking to recruit the people who have been driven abroad by the excessive regulatory burden being imposed by the European Union. Our generation is witnessing an epical shift in wealth and enterprise from Europe to Asia. It is our tragedy to live at a time where, just as Asia has discovered the secrets of decentralisation, diffusion of power, enterprise and personal responsibility, we in this part of the world are going in the opposite direction, copying the old Asian empires – the Mings, the Moguls and the Ottomans – in regulating, uniformising, standardising and taxing.

Of course, it is my own country, my own capital city of London, which will be most adversely affected by these new restrictions, but the EU as a whole has an interest in preventing this haemorrhage of wealth, of jobs and of enterprise from Europe to younger and more virile economies. Again, the solution is to push powers down back to national authorities which have genuine affinity and allegiance from their voters.

**Motion for a resolution B7-0291/2011**

**Jens Rohde (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, India is the largest democracy in the world, it is one of the world's fastest growing markets, and it is well on the way to becoming a knowledge-based economy. In light of this, it does, of course, make perfect sense for us to conclude a free trade agreement. It is also in our own interests. The question therefore arises as to how on earth the Left can be against this free trade agreement. How can anyone be against lifting millions of Indian people out of poverty, and how can the Left be against fighting for an open market for European enterprises? I find it incomprehensible. I simply cannot understand why it is so difficult to learn from history. Free trade is good! Free trade is good! Free trade is good! Free trade creates growth, freedom for people and, therefore, also peace.

**Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL).** – Mr President, I voted against the motion for a resolution that deals with the negotiations for a free trade agreement with India. In my opinion, the conclusion of any such agreement negotiated by the European Commission would only serve big multinational corporations, both in India and in Europe.

In contrast to the last speaker, in my opinion, the trade negotiations are not driven by the interests of raising people out of poverty and improving people's living standards; they are driven by those big business agendas to get more market access and increase profits.

I stand with the poor farmers, trade unionists and workers of India who oppose the FTA as it will mean a further undermining of living standards and working conditions for large parts of the Indian working class, in particular, those that work in the large informal sector.

Furthermore, this FTA agenda and its drive to enforce intellectual property rights and data exclusivity endangers access to cheap generic medicines that are produced in India. Today, these generics are of vital importance to people across the world suffering from the likes of HIV and AIDS. Because of the profiteering of the private major pharmaceutical companies, they simply cannot afford the branded equivalents.

**Mitro Repo (S&D).** – (FI) Mr President, the free trade agreement – to be signed with India is the most remarkable of the EU's free trade agreements negotiated so far. The European

Union must emphasise the importance of social responsibility. We know very well what India's biggest problems are: child labour, poverty and inequality.

We are now to conclude a trade agreement, the real beneficiaries of which are industry and big companies in Europe. The European consumer, of course, certainly benefits from India's cheap labour force, as reflected, for example, in lower prices for products, but that should not be allowed if India's primary producers are going to suffer.

It is hypocritical to claim that Europe is a pioneer in the area of social responsibility. In offering free trade benefits, the EU must insist that the problems are addressed, and must oversee the process. It is important that the Commission incorporates into the free trade agreement legally binding clauses relating to human rights, social and environmental standards and the social responsibility of companies, and that it ensures, moreover, that these demands are met.

**Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, it is, of course, interesting, and in its way charming, that there can always be Members of this Parliament that are against free trade. In a way, I think this is fantastic. However, I would like to say that I fully support it. I believe that free trade is the way forward, and it is also free trade that should show us the way forward with regard to India. The reason it has been so long coming, of course, is that there are problems with various details – major details we could say – namely, the question of generic medicines, which the previous speaker also mentioned. I would call on both parties in this matter, in other words, both the EU and India, to try to find a solution to this problem that both respects copyright, because that is absolutely essential, and, at the same time, ensures that practical means are provided to enable the many poor people in India to obtain cheap medicines.

Finally, there are some critics who believe that we should not follow the bilateral path in the negotiations and enter into bilateral agreements. They believe that this goes against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations. I think that this is completely in line with the WTO. We need to do something to make sure that we do not founder any more than we are already doing in the WTO. It is quite simply necessary to have these bilateral agreements, and therefore I welcome them.

#### **Motion for a resolution B7-0287/2011**

**Jens Rohde (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, it is amazing every time we discuss free trade in this Parliament. A few old radio signals from Radio Tirana always turn up in the debate. At any rate, that is the impression you can get when you listen to the thoughts of the Left on free trade. They thereby make it clear that they have not learnt anything at all from history.

We are now talking about the region of Japan. The EU and Japan are two of the world's largest economies. Together, we account for a fifth of global trade. We invest significant sums in each other's economies, we have common interests at global level and yet the negotiations are only progressing slowly. Therefore, let us say from our side that the barriers must be removed. We have to accept that concessions are needed from both sides, because together our economies can complement each other and create innovation, growth and jobs.

**Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, I merely wish to add to what has already been said. There is no doubt that one of the barriers for the Japanese is the extremely high technical barriers that exist and have always existed in Japanese society. Europe should

make a strong appeal to Japan to get out of the bunker and ensure that something is done about these technical barriers.

The background issue of the disaster that Japan is experiencing is, of course, tragic. However, if nothing else, we could say that something positive has come out of it in that they will have the opportunity to think again and realise that there really is a need now for outside help. There is a considerable need for enterprises from other regions to come in and help. That might cause Japan to look forward, to see the situation with fresh eyes, and to remove these numerous technical barriers.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI).** – (FR) Mr President, I would like to remind our fellow Member on the left, Mr Murphy, that Karl Marx was in favour of free trade with India. I would also like to remind our liberal fellow Members, and, in particular, Mr Rohde, that the reason he was in favour of free trade was because of its devastating effects, since he maintained that the fact that the British bourgeoisie was driven by dishonourable interests was of little consequence: Indian society needed to be destroyed in order to precipitate the dawn of the global revolution.

As far as I am concerned, I do not think we should be dogmatic on this matter. Systematic free trade is not necessarily beneficial. It can be a good thing when there is a level playing field. That is pretty much the case in many areas with Japan, but I recognise Japan's right, for instance, to protect its rice market, to protect its rice farmers, to pay its farmers higher prices than those on world markets and to say no to massive imports which would obliterate its peasant farmer population, in the same way that I recognise our economies' rights to protect certain sectors of their activity.

That is why I did not vote for the majority resolution. I would have preferred other resolutions that, in my opinion, seemed more appropriate. There must be a level playing field, but only in clearly defined sectors.

#### **Report: Kriton Arsenis (A7-0113/2011)**

**Jens Rohde (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, I would actually have been surprised if I had not heard the French Members intimate that protectionism is a good thing. Well, enough of dogmatics. We must move on to the forests and, in this regard, we are today debating our report on the Commission Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU. European forests have many social, economic and environmental functions, and they are, without a doubt, making an important contribution to solving the climate crisis – it is actually a very effective way of solving this crisis – and to the attainment of the EU's 2020 target. We in the Danish Liberal Party are therefore very pleased that today's vote has ensured that the forests will receive more consistent and long-term protection while, at the same time, we have retained our ambitions with regard to ensuring the global competitiveness of European forest-based industries. However, we were a little surprised that the proposal for a 30-year ban on building on land where there has been a forest fire was successfully voted through. This is a typical leftist method of solving crime problems – by banning everything and everyone and, what is more, for 30 years. We obviously do not support this.

**Giommaria Uggias (ALDE).** – (IT) Mr President, as shadow rapporteur of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, I am completely satisfied with the outcome of today's vote. The report by Mr Arsenis on the protection of forests is a policy report; it is a basis for confirming how the European Parliament intends to tackle the

protection of our forest heritage and the adaptation of forests to climate change. Today, the European Parliament clearly expressed its point of view, in the light of which we expect the Commission to make the necessary proposals and so enable even more detailed policies to be drafted for the sector.

I would particularly like to thank Mr Arsenis for his expert and professional work, which involved a long and difficult debate, because – as we are well aware – the forest situation is not the same in all the Member States. Despite this, we found common ground and also achieved some specific objectives, for example, the protection of certain parts from land speculation, greater protection of forests which are prized for their biodiversity, such as the northern Boreal and Mediterranean forests, and a ban on building on land cleared by arson.

Mr President, as I have said, this is very important for many Mediterranean countries, including your own country, Greece.

**Christa Kläß (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, the forests are our future and our cultural landscape. They are carefully managed to provide services for us and for the environment, including producing oxygen, storing carbon and offering a habitat for plants and animals. The people who manage our woodlands are paid little or nothing for providing these hidden functions which many people take for granted. This makes it all the more important for us to take into consideration the economic aspects of our forests. These include the timber industry and, increasingly, the production of biomass, not only for heating, but also for electricity generation. In future, we must strengthen and make greater use of the economic aspects of woodlands and we must take national and personal responsibility for this.

We are expecting the Commission to produce a White Paper which reflects this comprehensive approach and puts the focus on it to ensure that our forests have a future and that we are all prepared to invest in this future. If I plant a grain of corn, I am thinking only of today, but if I plant a tree, I am looking to the future.

**Lena Ek (ALDE).** – (SV) Mr President, the requirements for forests are very different in different parts of Europe. Forest legislation is therefore best dealt with at national level. Moreover, the Treaty of Lisbon does not provide support for a common European forestry policy. The biggest problem with the proposed regulations relating to climate and forests is that forests are key to the EU being able to achieve the climate targets that have been set. Forests are necessary for conversion to a green economy, for example, through production of biofuels from forestry by-products.

Therefore, forestry must not be subjected to unnecessary, complicated regulations that make its products less competitive compared with fossil fuels. For example, it is very strange to propose binding sustainability criteria for a renewable resource like forests, but to not have similar criteria for fossil fuels like coal.

I will continue to oppose a European common forestry policy in future, too. I would instead like to put resources into research, education, information and innovation with regard to how to prevent the effects that climate change will have on our forests. Thank you.

*(The sitting was suspended for a few minutes)*

**Report: Gabriele Albertini (A7-0168/2011)**

**Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL).** – Mr President, I voted against the report on the EU's common foreign and security policy. I am in complete disagreement with the views and ideas it expresses about Europe's current and future role in the world.

In a nutshell, this report stands for a militarised and imperialist Europe. It defends an aggressive raw materials strategy and asks for, and I quote, 'a less rigid distinction between military and civilian crisis management operations'. This is disguised language for a further militarisation of foreign policy. It welcomes the trade agreement with Colombia, despite the fact that hundreds of trade unionists have been killed in recent years, guilty simply of being trade unionists.

This report hypocritically names social unrest as one element of a new generation of security challenges and risks. What hypocrisy! The capitalist system has created poverty and misery across the world and is incapable of dealing with the consequences. It is the right of people to defend their legitimate interests and struggle for a better future without any interference from the mighty political, economic and military powers.

**Antonello Antinoro (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, first of all, I would like to say – and I hope this will not be deducted from my speaking time – that, on the subject of hypocrisy, there are very few of us who believe in certain things. We each take the floor to explain our vote after we have cast it. There are around five or six of us, and we listen to each other and are sometimes filmed for television. However, the whole thing is rather depressing.

Therefore, I would like to make a suggestion, and I will certainly do so at the next meeting of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats). I suggest that from now on, the explanations of vote should precede the vote itself, so that perhaps by talking and listening to each another, we may even convince each other about which way to vote, rather than playing a sort of team game that has all been decided beforehand.

Having said this, I stated in my explanation of vote that I voted in favour. I continue to believe in Europe, just as I continue to believe in the effectiveness of the presence of a High Commissioner. However, I continue to believe that the Member States believe in it much less than we ourselves do. Therefore perhaps it should be pointed out – as was reiterated to Baroness Ashton this morning and on other occasions, too – that, unless Europe stops being partly economic and becomes more political instead, our role probably cannot be carried out as well as it could be, either.

**Adam Bielan (ECR).** – (PL) Mr President, I agree that European foreign policy must take account of the external dimension of the European area of freedom, security and justice. That is why I welcome any action which contributes to the promotion of peace, stability and the rule of law in countries and regions in crisis. I support commitment to the transatlantic partnership as one of the main pillars of the EU's foreign policy, aiming to create a free market with the United States.

Eastern European politics are especially important from Poland's point of view. The report acknowledges that there should be political and economic integration with the EU's neighbours and also calls for a cohesive approach in negotiations on a new agreement with Russia, paying attention to the rule of law and protection of human rights there. It also acknowledges that negotiations for the accession of Turkey should be intensified and that there should be a continuous commitment to the accession process for the Balkan countries.

**Pino Arlacchi (S&D).** – Mr President, I voted in favour of this report for its moderate approach to the most pressing issues in the common foreign and security policy.

Thanks to the Socialist Group's amendments, a more constructive language for the dialogue on Russia and Iran has been achieved.

The amendments on the EU strategy on Afghanistan also contributed to improving the structure of the report.

The Albertini report is a step forward towards a better EU security policy. While I support the efforts and the commitment of the rapporteur, I should also stress that the EU is still far from having a coherent long-term strategy in this area. The EU contribution to global peace and stability is still quite small and still depends too much on the USA's vision of international security and on the 'needle approach' to the same issue.

Let us work for a more autonomous, EU-centred foreign and security strategy, because that is what European citizens expect from us and that is what we should deliver to them.

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** – (GA) Mr President, I found the number of Members who spoke in support of Lady Ashton and her ongoing work in the foreign services, and also the number of Members who proposed that we speak with one voice, interesting and satisfying this morning. If we speak with one voice, we will be effective and listened to; if we do not, we will not be listened to or effective.

I was also reminded of the words of the great Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, who said 'peace comes dropping slow'. That was certainly the case in Northern Ireland, where the European Union played a crucial part through its support for the International Fund for Ireland, and that peace was copper-fastened last weekend with successful elections.

(GA) The work which the European Union did in Northern Ireland can be repeated on the world stage for the benefit of peace and of the poor provided we speak with one voice and if Lady Ashton does her work diligently.

#### **Report: Roberto Gualtieri (A7-0166/2011)**

**Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D).** – (PL) Mr President, I supported the report on the European common security and defence policy. However, I would like to point out that the report not only evaluates the policy, but focuses principally on the future, on development. In my view, this requires not only the various justified and accurate assessments and clever words, of which there are many in the report; the common security and defence policy needs to be looked at seriously and from a different angle.

I think that three things are needed. Firstly, the EU should define its common strategic interests, for example, concerning energy security and Neighbourhood Policy. Secondly, the EU should increase its own capability regarding the planning and coordination of civil and military operations and crisis management. Finally, thirdly, within the EU budget, there should be a joint budget for joint action.

**Adam Bielan (ECR).** – (PL) Mr President, the increasingly significant interdependency of international organisations in the face of economic, environmental and energy problems requires constant adjustments to the foreign relations of individual states. Security issues form an element of policy requiring particular care by every country, and they need constant readjustment in a changing world. The report's main theme is a call to protect the strategic autonomy of the EU in the field of security and defence. However, it does not take the EU's

lack of military experience into account, but, at the same time, calls for further efforts to expand the EU's operational options. For countries such as Poland, the basis of its defence policy remains the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Tightening the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO and the proposal to strengthen mutual support for action could considerably slow down the procedures involved in taking operational decisions. In my view, the report seems too radical, and this is why I voted to reject it.

**Pino Arlacchi (S&D).** – Mr President, the most significant document on the EU security strategy was delivered by Xavier Solana. It is entitled 'A secure Europe in a better world' and was adopted by the European Council on 12 December 2003.

Since then, little progress has been made in this field. The Union still lacks an effective strategy for its foreign security and, on most relevant issues, still follows the lead of the United States. This report tries to introduce some positive changes on tactical topics like crisis management, the fragmentation of the EU defence technological industrial base, and the ineffectiveness of the 24 EU security and defence missions around the world.

I voted in favour of it, and I hope this Parliament will continue to make a contribution towards the goal of enhancing EU strategic autonomy in security affairs. In particular, what we need is a redefinition of the major threats to our security after the collapse of the so-called Islamic terrorist threat and the emergence of new dangers like the financial crisis.

**Mitro Repo (S&D).** – *(FI)* Mr President, I supported the report, but I wonder if the European Union has the ability to work to promote peace and stability in our neighbouring countries, by which I now mainly mean Syria, Libya and Egypt.

Our actions in Libya will show the actual state of our security and defence policy. The EU's main objective in Libya is to protect the civilian population and to support the attempts by the Libyan people to establish a democratic society. Memories of the Balkan countries in the 1990s are still fresh in our minds. Then, Europe had to rely on help from the United States of America. Libya has, in any case, shown that the EU is not a military power: our actions have been dependent on the independent initiatives of the Member States.

The examples in North Africa make us realise now that the EU's need for military preparedness and capability at the gates of Europe remains a fact. The External Action Service has been in operation for more than a year: we can now expect some results from it.

**Julie Girling (ECR).** – Mr President, there are two words that spring to mind to describe where we find ourselves today with regard to the common foreign and security policy. Unfortunately, they are not very nice words. The ones I think of are 'mess' and 'a bit of a joke'. Unfortunately, it is rather a sick joke.

In the last 15 months – a period that has presented ample opportunities throughout the world to prove its credentials – our so-called common policy has failed to make any positive impact. I say that not as a great aficionado of foreign affairs, but I have to answer my constituents as to what does Europe add in value to us? It is of real concern to them that the cost of delivering this common policy is not being carefully allocated and not being carefully accounted for.

I have to answer my citizens about what service this is giving them, and I still, after the lengthy debates on these reports, struggle to come up with an answer.

**Report: María Muñiz De Urquiza (A7-0181/2011)**

**Anna Záborská (PPE).** – (SK) Mr President, the submitted report talks about human rights as a priority agenda of the EU in international organisations, while particularly emphasising the rights of women and children, and freedom of expression. At the same time, the report calls on Member States to support the position of the EU in these organisations.

However, so-called reproductive rights, which is just another name for the right to abortion, are a priority component of the European human rights agenda. On the other hand, European diplomacy is still not consistent in promoting religious freedom in all of its aspects, with an emphasis on respecting the rights of Christians worldwide. I would therefore prefer to see myself and my constituents represented by Slovak diplomats. I believe they will promote a fundamentally different viewpoint to that of the EU in these matters, many of which fall within the competence of nation states.

**Pino Arlacchi (S&D).** – The EU is still a very limited global actor; its role in the UN system and in all multilateral organisations does not match its democratic, economic and cultural weight. This report addressed this deficit and calls for removing some obstacles to the full participation of our Union to the global context. This is the reason why I voted in favour of it. The EU can make a powerful contribution to the peace and prosperity of our planet. Let us allow its civilian power to expand its influence everywhere.

**Daniel Hannan (ECR).** – Mr President, as I may be the last speaker, let me take this opportunity to thank your staff and the interpreters for your patience. Please do not think it goes unnoticed or unappreciated.

The European Union is hungry and eager in its acquisition of all of the attributes and trappings of statehood. It has its own Parliament, its own currency, its own president, its own foreign minister, its own external borders, its own flag, anthem, passport and driving licence. It was only a matter of time before it would apply for formal recognition as a state in the United Nations, which, of course, is what has now happened, with – rather disgracefully and to me bafflingly – the support of my own government.

This is a legal regularisation of something that has been happening *de facto* for some time: the pushing of the powers that we regard as definitive of statehood from national to Brussels level.

But the other Member States of the European Union should be wary of what they agree. One of the consequences of giving the EU full recognition of statehood is that they now can be addressed at length by Baroness Ashton and by Mr Van Rompuy as, respectively, the foreign minister and the head of state of the new entity.

And, as Members of this House I am sure will privately be able to let them know, that is not an unmixed blessing.

**Written explanations of vote****Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0095/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D),** *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 89/396/EEC of 14 June 1989 on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because



various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. Therefore, bearing in mind the importance of trade in foodstuffs, I am voting for this proposal for a directive on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs. This system will contribute to better information on the identity of the products, and will also help to develop international trade.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I totally agree that the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission should be taken into consideration as I think that the proposal in question is simply limited to a straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This proposal concerns the straightforward codification of the rules already in force on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs, without making changes to their substance on which Parliament might need to give an opinion. Nonetheless, I would highlight the increasing importance, in my opinion, of providing consumers with factual and complete information, especially on the lots, dates of manufacture and other information enabling them to trace the movement of a product from its source.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report relates to the proposal for a directive of Parliament and of the Council on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs, in a codified text. Simplifying the lives of European citizens is one of the EU's concerns. Many legislative changes have been carried out by the Commission and by Parliament in order to achieve this objective. One of the things which really complicates the life of the ordinary EU citizen is reading and interpreting information about the indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs. The proliferation of such information makes this more difficult and contributes to decreasing the public's quality of life. To address this issue, since 1994, there has been an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council on an accelerated working method for the adoption of codified acts. I am happy to finally be able to adopt a directive that, in consolidating Directive 89/396/EEC, makes the public's lives easier by simplifying and clarifying EU law.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Trade in foodstuffs occupies a very important place in the internal market. Indication of the lot to which a foodstuff belongs meets the need for better information on the identity of products. It is therefore a useful source of information when foodstuffs are the subject of dispute or constitute a health hazard for consumers.

In view of the variety of identification methods used, it should be up to the trader to determine the lot and to affix the corresponding indication or mark. At international level, there is a general obligation to provide a reference to the manufacturing or packaging lot of pre-packaged foodstuffs. It should be the duty of the Union to contribute to the development of international trade by also applying those rules.

**Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PL) Taking into consideration the good of society and consumers in the European market, we try to simplify as many rules and regulations as possible so that they are transparent and able to be understood by every citizen. A case in point is the common agricultural policy. The overriding principle in work on its future form is simplification of a policy whose main aim is to ensure food security for Europe. Codification of the directive on marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs aims to achieve this approach and to simplify consumers' understanding of the legislation. At the same time, by retaining the wording of the original texts, the codification is being carried out in full compliance with the procedures involved in adopting acts in the EU.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I voted for this report on a proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The aim of this proposal is the codification of existing legislative texts on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs. Increasing importance should, however, be given to ensuring that consumers are given accurate and comprehensive information, especially with regard to lots, dates of manufacture and other information which enables them to track the progress of the product from its point of origin.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing.* – The report of MEP Sajjad Karim contains a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs (codified text). The purpose of this proposal is to undertake the codification of Council Directive 89/396/EEC of 14 June 1989 on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs. I totally support the new directive because it will supersede the various acts incorporated in it; this proposal fully preserves the content of the acts being codified and hence does no more than bring them together with only such formal amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself. I voted 'in favour'.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament's proposal, which takes over the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) We are in favour of this directive on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs, not least because criminals all too often falsify codes for illegal purposes. Grouping together and simplifying all the existing legislation on indications or marks will facilitate controls and the identification of any illegal practice.

**Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0089/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 80/181/EEC of 20 December 1979 on the approximation of the laws

of the Member States relating to units of measurement and the repeal of Directive 71/354/EEC. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. In view of this, and taking into account the importance of measuring instruments for most areas of human activity, I am voting for this proposal for a directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement. This system will contribute to better performance in the areas of public health and safety, as well as administrative operations.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) With due regard for the opinions of the legal services of Parliament, the Council and the Commission, which have concluded that the Commission proposal was confined to straightforward codification of the existing texts, without any change in their substance, I welcome the adoption of this proposal at the first reading.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report relates to the proposal for a directive of Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurements, as a codified text. Simplifying the lives of Europeans is one of the EU's concerns.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Units of measurement are essential in the use of all measuring instruments to express measurements or any indication of quantity. They are used in almost all fields of human activity and it is therefore necessary to ensure the greatest possible clarity in their use and set rules for their use within the European Union for economic, public health, public safety or administrative purposes. Member States should be able to require that measuring devices on their territory bear indications of quantity in a single legal unit of measurement.

This directive supports the smooth functioning of the internal market through the degree of harmonisation of units of measurement. In this context, it is appropriate for the Commission to monitor market developments relating to this directive and its implementation, particularly with regard to possible barriers to the internal market and further harmonisation needed to overcome these obstacles.

**David Martín (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I voted for this report on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This proposal is confined to codification of the existing texts relating to units of measurement, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing.* – As I understand, the report contains a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement. The purpose of this proposal is to undertake a codification of Council Directive 80/181/EEC of 20 December 1979 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to

units of measurement and on the repeal of Directive 71/354/EEC. It is very good that the new directive will supersede the various acts incorporated in it; this proposal fully preserves the content of the acts being codified and hence does no more than bring them together with only such formal amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself. I voted 'in favour'.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament's proposal, which takes over the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

#### **Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0093/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 70/157/EEC of 6 February 1970 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. I am therefore voting for this proposal for a directive on the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles, as I believe that the proposed system of codification drafted using a data processing system is more efficient.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This proposal relates to the straightforward codification of the existing laws on the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles. No changes have been made to their substance on which Parliament, in particular, would be required to express an opinion.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report relates to the proposal for a directive of Parliament and of the Council on the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles, in a codified text. Simplifying the lives of Europeans is one of the EU's concerns. Many legislative changes have been undertaken by the Commission and Parliament in order to achieve this objective. One of the areas that make the lives of the EU public difficult is the constant amendments to legislation. These sometimes arise due to a need to update them, but this hinders and diminishes the quality of life of the individual. In 1987, the Commission recommended that all acts that had up to 10 amendments be codified, so that Community legislation would be easier to understand. To address this issue, since 1994, there has been an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council on an accelerated working method for the adoption of codified acts. I am pleased, therefore, that we can finally adopt a directive codifying Council

Directive 70/157/EEC of 6 February 1970, which approximates the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Directive 70/157/EEC is one of the separate directives of the EC type-approval system provided for in Directive 2007/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 September 2007 establishing a framework for the approval of motor vehicles and their trailers, and of systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles, and lays down technical prescriptions concerning the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles. Those technical prescriptions concern the approximation of the laws of the Member States to enable the EC type-approval procedure provided for in Directive 2007/46/EC to be applied in respect of each type of vehicle. Consequently, the provisions laid down in Directive 2007/46/EC relating to systems, components and separate technical units for vehicles apply to this directive.

It is desirable to take into account the technical requirements adopted by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) in its corresponding regulations annexed to the Agreement of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe concerning the adoption of uniform technical prescriptions for wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted and/or be used on wheeled vehicles and the conditions for reciprocal recognition of approvals granted on the basis of these prescriptions.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement (codified text).

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This proposal is confined to the codification of the existing texts relating to the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The European Parliament legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles will help to achieve the main purpose of the proposal – to undertake a codification of Council Directive 70/157/EEC of 6 February 1970 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles. I agree with the initiative of Mr Sajjad Karim and I voted ‘in favour’.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament’s proposal, which takes over the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The importance of the transport sector to the European economy is reflected in the employment that it directly provides for more than 10 million people and in the 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) that it represents. Its development is vital for the EU’s economic growth, and in order to bridge physical and psychological gaps. Moreover, as outlined in the White Paper entitled ‘Roadmap to a Single

European Transport Area', it is essential that the goal of a 60% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 be met.

This report is thus intended to simplify and clarify EU law, which is spread over numerous pieces of legislation that have already been amended several times, making them difficult to understand. One of the EU's objectives is the transparency of the Community *acquis* as a way of bringing Europe closer to its citizens, so that they can benefit from the specific rights that are given to them.

The codification of the existing legislative texts is the result of approximating the legislation of the Member States to the establishment of technical rules on the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles, which promote environmental sustainability at European level.

**Artur Zasada (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) I voted for document 2010/0261 on the codification of the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles. This is another example of the European Commission attempting to simplify and regulate the *acquis communautaire* so that it becomes more transparent and accessible to EU citizens. The legislative proposal codifies the existing texts and creates a legislative act which is easier to understand and more accessible. In standardising technical norms, the regulation brings together Member States and establishes a procedure for official EU certification, defined in Directive 2007/46/EC with regard to every type of vehicle.

#### **Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0098/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 87/402/EEC of 25 June 1987 on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. I am therefore voting for this proposal for a directive on protection structures for narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors. I believe that the proposed system of codification drafted using a data processing system is more efficient.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report concerns the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors, as a codified text. Simplifying the lives of EU citizens is one of the EU's concerns. One of the areas that make the lives of the EU public difficult is the constant amendments to legislation. These sometimes arise due to a need to update them, but this hinders and diminishes the quality of life of the individual. In 1987, the Commission recommended that all acts that had up to 10 amendments be codified, so that Community legislation would be easier to understand. To address this issue, since 1994, there has been an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council on an accelerated working method for the adoption of codified acts. I am pleased, therefore, that

we can finally adopt a directive codifying Council Directive 87/402/EEC of 25 June 1987 on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Council Directive 87/402/EEC of 25 June 1987 on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors has been substantially amended several times. In the interests of clarity and rationality, the said directive should be codified. The directive mentioned above is one of the separate directives of the EC type-approval system provided for in Council Directive 74/150/EEC, as replaced by Directive 2003/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on type-approval of agricultural or forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units, and repealing Directive 74/150/EEC, and lays down technical prescriptions concerning the design and construction of agricultural or forestry tractors as regards the roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat.

Those technical prescriptions concern the approximation of the laws of the Member States to enable the EC type-approval procedure provided for in Directive 2003/37/EC to be applied in respect of each type of tractor. Consequently, the provisions laid down in Directive 2003/37/EC relating to agricultural and forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units, apply to this directive.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors (codified text).

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This proposal is confined to the codification of the existing texts relating to narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The European Parliament legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors is very timely. The purpose of this proposal is to undertake a codification of Council Directive 87/402/EEC of 25 June 1987 on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors. I supported this initiative by voting 'in favour'.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament's proposal, which adopts the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) We are in favour of this directive on roll-over protection structures on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors. Grouping together and simplifying all the existing legislation on the subject is an important step and will help protect those who use agricultural machinery on a daily basis.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report, which I voted for today, relates to specific Union legislation on the EU approval system for narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors, establishing technical rules on roll-over protection structures mounted in front of the driver's seat on tractors.

The codification of Community legal texts is an essential procedure in order to simplify and facilitate the European public's understanding of them, thus contributing to the actual implementation of EU directives. In this particular case, the technical rules imposed on the Member States allow the EU approval system, established in Directive 2003/37/EC, to be applied to every model of tractor.

There are two important issues in this report: the simplification and the transparency of EU law. We are living in times when the European public feels excluded from the Union project. I therefore believe that it is essential to find solutions in order to narrow this gap, thereby demonstrating that the main purpose of the EU is the well-being of its people.

#### **Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0090/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 86/415/EEC of 24 July 1986 on the installation, location, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. I am therefore voting for this proposal for a directive on the installation, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. I believe that the proposed system of codification drafted using a data processing system is more efficient.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report relates to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the installation, location, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors, in a codified text. Simplifying the lives of European citizens is one of the EU's concerns. One of the areas that make the lives of the EU public difficult is the constant amendments to legislation. These sometimes arise due to a need to update them, but this hinders and diminishes the quality of life of the individual. On 1 April 1987, the Commission recommended that all acts that had up to 10 amendments be codified, so that Community legislation would be easier to understand. To address this issue, since 1994, there has been an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council on an accelerated working method for the adoption of codified acts. I am pleased, therefore, that we can finally adopt a directive codifying Council Directive 86/415/EEC of 24 July 1986 on the approximation of the legislation of the Member States on the installation, location, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors.



**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Council Directive 86/415/EEC of 24 July 1986 on the installation, location, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors has been substantially amended several times. In the interests of clarity and rationality, the said directive should be codified. Directive 86/415/EEC is one of the separate directives of the EC type-approval system provided for in Council Directive 74/150/EEC, as replaced by Directive 2003/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on type-approval of agricultural or forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units, and repealing Directive 74/150/EEC, and lays down technical prescriptions concerning the installation, location, operation and identification of controls.

Those technical prescriptions concern the approximation of the laws of the Member States to enable the EC type-approval procedure provided for in Directive 2003/37/EC to be applied in respect of each type of tractor. Consequently, the provisions laid down in Directive 2003/37/EC relating to agricultural and forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units, apply to this directive.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the installation, location, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors (codified text).

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This proposal is confined to the codification of the existing texts relating to the controls on wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The report considers the European Parliament resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the installation, location, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. The purpose of this proposal is to undertake a codification of Council Directive 86/415/EEC of 24 July 1986 on the installation, location, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. I voted ‘in favour’.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the installation, location, operation and identification of the controls of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament’s proposal, which takes over the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I am in favour of the report because it aims to protect operators of agricultural machinery, as the controls must be easily accessible and not represent a hazard. They must be designed and located, or protected, so as to prevent any involuntary movement or other manoeuvre that could endanger the machinery operator.

**Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0092/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 76/432/EEC of 6 April 1976 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the braking devices of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. I am therefore voting for this proposal for a directive on the braking devices of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. I believe that the proposed system of codification drafted using a data processing system is more efficient.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Council Directive 76/432/EEC of 6 April 1976 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the braking devices of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors has been substantially amended several times. In the interests of clarity and rationality, the said directive should be codified. Directive 76/432/EEC is one of the separate directives of the EC type-approval system provided for in Council Directive 74/150/EEC, as replaced by Directive 2003/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on type-approval of agricultural or forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units, and repealing Directive 74/150/EEC, and lays down technical prescriptions concerning braking devices.

Those technical prescriptions concern the approximation of the laws of the Member States to enable the EC type-approval procedure provided for in Directive 2003/37/EC to be applied in respect of each type of tractor. Consequently, the provisions laid down in Directive 2003/37/EC relating to agricultural and forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units, apply to this directive.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I voted for this report endorsing the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on braking devices of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors (codified text).

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This proposal is confined to the codification of the existing texts relating to braking devices on wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on braking devices of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament's proposal, which takes over the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations

of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I am in favour of the report as it aims to regulate and simplify legislation on braking devices of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. In order to safeguard and protect agricultural or forestry tractor operators, machinery should have EC type-approval.

**Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0096/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 80/720/EEC of 24 June 1980 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the operating space, access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. I am therefore voting for this proposal for a directive on the operating space, access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. I believe that the proposed system of codification drafted using a data processing system is more efficient.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report relates to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the operating space, access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors, in a codified text. One of the areas that make the lives of the EU public difficult is the constant amendments to legislation. On 1 April 1987, the Commission recommended that all acts that had up to 10 amendments be codified, so that Community legislation would be easier to understand. This would go on to form part of the conclusions of the Presidency of the Edinburgh European Council, which took place in December 1992. To address this issue, since 1994, there has been an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council on an accelerated working method for the adoption of codified acts. I am pleased, therefore, that we can finally adopt a directive codifying Council Directive 80/720/EEC of 24 June 1980, and which approximates the legislation of the Member States on the operating space, access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Council Directive 80/720/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the States relating to the operating space, access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors has been substantially amended. In the interests of clarity, the directive should be codified. Directive 80/720/EEC is one of the separate directives on the EC type-approval system provided for in Directive 74/150/EEC, as replaced by Directive 2003/37/EC and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on type-approval of agricultural or forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units, and repealing Directive 74/150/EEC, and lays down technical prescriptions

concerning the design and construction of agricultural or forestry tractors as regards the operating space, access to the driving position as well as the doors and windows.

Those technical prescriptions concern the approximation of the laws of the States to enable the EC type-approval procedure provided for in Directive 2003/37/EC to be applied in respect of each type of tractor. Consequently, the provisions laid down in Directive 2003/37/EC relating to agricultural or forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units, apply to this directive.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the operating space, access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors (codified text).

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This proposal is confined to the codification of the existing texts relating to access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the operating space, access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament's proposal, which adopts the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) In the interests of safety, it is essential for the rules on the operating space, driving position and door and window sizes of agricultural tractors to be codified in a manner that is comprehensible and accessible to citizens. I therefore voted in favour.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report, like those concerning the rules applied to tractors, is aimed at undertaking the codification of Directive 80/720/EEC of 24 June 1980, which concerns the harmonisation of Member State legislation on the operating space, access to the driving position and the doors and windows of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. The amendments tabled do not affect the content itself, merely making the changes to the form required by the codification process, presented in the 22 official languages.

Once again, I would like to reiterate the importance of this legal process in order to allow easier comprehension and greater clarity of EU legal texts, whose main beneficiaries are the European public and its bodies. A Europe that is clear and simple for the entire public is the key factor in developing a sense of belonging, which is vital to the European project.

#### **Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0101/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 86/298/EEC of 26 May 1986 on rear-mounted roll-over protection structures of narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative

act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. I am therefore voting for this proposal for a directive on roll-over protection structures for narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors. I believe that the proposed system of codification drafted using a data processing system is more efficient.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This proposal confines itself to merely codifying the existing texts, without any change in their substance. Therefore, there is no reason for me to vote against.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report relates to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on rear-mounted roll-over protection structures of narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors, in a codified text. Simplifying the lives of Europeans is one of the EU's concerns. One of the areas that make the lives of the EU public difficult is the constant amendments to legislation. On 1 April 1987, the Commission recommended that all acts that had up to 10 amendments be codified, so that Community legislation would be easier to understand. This would go on to form part of the conclusions of the Presidency of the Edinburgh European Council, which took place in December 1992. To address this issue, since 1994, there has been an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council on an accelerated working method for the adoption of codified acts. I am pleased, therefore, that we can finally adopt a directive codifying Council Directive 86/298/EEC of 26 May 1986, and which approximates the legislation of the Member States on rear-mounted roll-over protection structures of narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I voted for this report on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on rear-mounted roll-over protection structures of narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors (codified text).

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This proposal is confined to the codification of the existing texts relating to rear-mounted roll-over protection structures of narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on rear-mounted roll-over protection structures of narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament's proposal, which takes over the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report is aimed at clarifying and simplifying Council Directive 86/298/EEC of 1986, along with various amendments already made to

it, on the subject of rear-mounted roll-over protection structures on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors.

The clear purpose of this process of codification is to make EU law more accessible and comprehensible for the European public. This directive and the corresponding changes set out technical rules on the design and manufacture of agricultural and forestry tractors, and on their respective approval system, which requires EU-level harmonisation with a view to creating the conditions necessary for road safety.

This European harmonisation also ensures that if the protection of workers is at risk when they are using tractors, the Member States can implement the necessary and required measures, bearing in mind compliance with the Treaty and technical regulations on the protection structures specified in this directive.

**Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0100/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D),** *in writing.* – (PT) I am voting for the amended Commission proposal having regard to the interinstitutional agreement of 20 December 1994 on an accelerated working method for the official codification of legislative texts and, in particular, to point 4 thereof. The Consultative Working Party, consisting of the respective legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, met on 23 November 2010 for the purpose of examining the aforementioned proposal submitted by the Commission. An examination of the proposal for a Council directive codifying Council Directive 92/79/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of taxes on cigarettes, Council Directive 92/80/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco other than cigarettes, and Council Directive 95/59/EC of 27 November 1995 on taxes other than turnover taxes which affect the consumption of manufactured tobacco, resulted in the Consultative Working Party's concluding, without dissent, that the proposal is a straightforward codification of existing texts, without any change in their substance.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D),** *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Directive 92/79/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of taxes on cigarettes, Council Directive 92/80/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco other than cigarettes and Council Directive 95/59/EC of 27 November 1995 on taxes other than turnover taxes which affect the consumption of manufactured tobacco. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. I am therefore voting for this proposal for a directive on the structure and rates of excise duty applied to manufactured tobacco. I believe that the proposed system of codification drafted using a data processing system is more efficient.

**Diogo Feio (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) With due regard for the opinions of the legal services of Parliament, the Council and the Commission, which have concluded that the Commission

proposal was confined to a straightforward codification of the existing texts, without any change in their substance, I welcome the adoption of this proposal.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report concerns an amended proposal for a Council directive on the structure and specific rates of excise duty applied to the consumption of manufactured tobacco, in a codified text. Simplifying the lives of Europeans is one of the EU's concerns. One of the areas that make the lives of the EU public difficult is the constant amendments to legislation. On 1 April 1987, the Commission recommended that all acts that had up to 10 amendments be codified, so that Community legislation would be easier to understand. This would go on to form part of the conclusions of the Presidency of the Edinburgh European Council, which took place in December 1992. To address this issue, since 1994, there has been an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council on an accelerated working method for the adoption of the codification, which should be carried out in complete compliance with the EU legislative process. I therefore voted in favour of this proposal, codifying Council Directive 92/79/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the structure and specific rates of excise duty applied to the consumption of manufactured tobacco.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The Treaty aims to maintain an economic union with healthy competition and properties that are similar to those on the domestic market. As regards manufactured tobacco, the achievement of this aim presupposes that the application in the Member States of taxes affecting the consumption of products in this sector does not distort conditions of competition and does not impede their free movement within the European Union. As far as excise duties are concerned, the harmonisation of structures must, in particular, result in competition in the different categories of manufactured tobacco belonging to the same group not being distorted by the effects of charging the tax and, consequently, in the opening of the Member States' national markets. The imperative needs of competition imply a system of freely formed prices for all groups of manufactured tobacco and implementation of this policy needs to guarantee a high level of human health.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report on the amended proposal for a Council directive on the structure and rates of excise duty applied to manufactured tobacco (codified text).

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This proposal is confined to the codification of the existing texts relating to the structure and rates of excise duty applied to the consumption of manufactured tobacco, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The report of Sajjad Karim contains the European Parliament legislative resolution on the amended proposal for a Council directive on the structure and rates of excise duty applied to manufactured tobacco. It is known that the purpose of this proposal is to undertake a codification of Council Directive 92/79/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of taxes on cigarettes, Council Directive 92/80/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco other than cigarettes and Council Directive 95/59/EC of 27 November 1995 on taxes other than turnover taxes which affect the consumption of manufactured tobacco. This initiative is very important and timely. I voted 'in favour'.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The Consultative Working Party with authority on this issue has considered the proposal for a Council directive codifying Council Directive 92/79/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of taxes on

cigarettes, Council Directive 92/80/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco other than cigarettes, and Council Directive 95/59/EC of 27 November 1995 on taxes other than turnover taxes which affect the consumption of manufactured tobacco. The Consultative Working Party concluded that the proposal is a straightforward codification of existing texts, without any change in their substance. I therefore voted in favour.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) This report – like the many others we have examined up to now – promotes the simplification and clear formulation of European legislation, not least because, as in the case of excise, there are many different provisions that have been amended several times. Unifying them and making them comprehensible can only help operators and users alike. We voted in favour.

**Report: Sajjad Karim (A7-0102/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this document, codifying Council Regulation (EC) No 975/98 of 3 May 1998 on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation. Codification is an effective means of consolidating the rules governing a certain area in a single legislative act. It provides more clarity, because various provisions regulating the same issue are often spread over different legal texts. As they are amended, it becomes difficult to understand which provision is currently in force. Codification is also a suitable means of developing European Union law which is simpler, clearer and more understandable to citizens.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I welcome the efforts that have been made towards clarifying Union law in order to make it more accessible to all EU citizens. I am therefore voting for this proposal for a regulation on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation. I believe that the proposed system of codification drafted using a data processing system is more efficient.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) With due regard for the opinions of the legal services of Parliament, the Council and the Commission, which have concluded that the Commission proposal was confined to a straightforward codification of the existing texts, without any change in their substance, I welcome the adoption of this proposal.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report concerns a proposal for a Council regulation on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation, in a codified text. Simplifying the lives of Europeans is one of the EU's concerns. One of the areas that make the lives of the EU public difficult is the constant amendments to legislation. On 1 April 1987, the Commission recommended that all acts that had up to 10 amendments be codified, so that Community legislation would be easier to understand. This would go on to form part of the conclusions of the Presidency of the Edinburgh European Council, which took place in December 1992. To address this issue, since 1994, there has been an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council on an accelerated working method for the adoption of codification, which should be carried out in complete compliance with the EU legislative process. I am therefore voting in favour of this report, codifying Council Regulation (EC) No 975/98 of 3 May 1998 on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The European single coinage system should inspire public confidence and include technological innovations to ensure that it



is secure, reliable and effective. Public confidence in the system depends on the physical properties of coins, which should be as user-friendly as possible. After consultations with consumer associations, European Blind Union representatives and the vending machines industry, research was carried out to take into account the specific requirements of important categories of coin users. In order to ensure a smooth changeover to the euro and to facilitate acceptance of the coinage systems by users, easy distinction between coins through visual and tactile characteristics needed to be guaranteed.

The coins need to be covered with some special security features to limit the scope for fraud. The fact that they have one European and one national side is an appropriate expression of the idea of European Monetary Union between the Member States.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report on the proposal for a Council regulation on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation (codified text).

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This proposal is confined to the codification of the existing texts relating to denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation, without any change in their substance, so I am voting in favour.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The report of Sajjad Karim contains a legislative resolution of the European Parliament on the proposal for a Council regulation on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation. Taking into account the likelihood of the accession of new states to the euro area, this initiative provides a new opportunity to prevent the activity of money counterfeiters. I voted 'in favour'.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Based on the opinion of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, this report on the proposal for a Council regulation on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation concludes that the proposal in question is restricted to the straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance. For this reason, I voted in favour of Parliament's proposal, which adopts the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Reports: Sajjad Karim (A7-0089/2011), (A7-0090/2011), (A7-0092/2011), (A7-0093/2011), (A7-0095/2011), (A7-0096/2011), (A7-0098/2011), (A7-0101/2011), (A7-0102/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Since, according to the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, the proposal in question contains a straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance, I am adopting its position at first reading, taking over the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

**Reports: Sajjad Karim (A7-0089/2011), (A7-0090/2011), (A7-0092/2011), (A7-0093/2011), (A7-0095/2011), (A7-0096/2011), (A7-0098/2011), (A7-0100/2011), (A7-0101/2011), (A7-0102/2011)**

**Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE),** *in writing.* – (ES) I support this report because this proposal involves no more than a straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE),** *in writing.* – With this ‘whereas, according to the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, the proposal in question contains a straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance, the EP adopts its position at first reading, taking over the Commission proposal as adapted to the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the legal services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission’.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI),** *in writing.* – (DE) I voted in favour of Mr Karim’s reports. The 10 reports from the Committee on Legal Affairs focus solely on the codification of various acts, as established by common accord by the Legal Service. As a result, there will be no changes to the content.

**Reports: Sajjad Karim (A7-0090/2011), (A7-0092/2011), (A7-0093/2011), (A7-0095/2011), (A7-0096/2011), (A7-0098/2011), (A7-0101/2011), (A7-0102/2011)**

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE),** *in writing.* – (IT) The resolution adopted today fully supports the Commission’s position, which is in line with the recommendations of the Consultative Working Party of the Legal Services of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. According to the Consultative Working Party, the proposal in question is a straightforward codification of existing texts, without any change in their substance.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) Given that the purpose of this directive is the codification of previously disparate pieces of legislation, with benefits in terms of the accessibility and comprehensibility of the legislation, without any changes in their substance, I voted in favour of this report.

**Recommendation for second reading: Toine Manders (A7-0086/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D),** *in writing.* – (PT) I support this proposal for the committee to continue its work on this important document on the basis of the amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading, and I hope that the Council will also take a favourable approach towards promoting access to information about textile products.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE),** *in writing.* – I voted in favour of this important resolution on textile fibre names and related labelling and marking of fibre composition of textile products. With the adoption of this resolution, Europe has achieved a unanimous commitment to protect consumers through the indication of the country of origin and the adoption of a new mechanism for traceability of textile products. We, Members of the European Parliament, today adopted a joint declaration, which aims to protect European consumers from false or misleading claims on the origin of the products. I strongly believe that the resolution and declaration will give a major impetus towards the creation of a mechanism of providing accurate information to consumers, particularly with regard to the exact origin of the products purchased. EU citizens must have the right to know the place of origin and quality level of products and textiles that they purchase.

**Liam Aylward (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (GA) I voted in favour of this report because it is important that consumers be fully informed when buying textiles. Thanks to the report, clear labelling of textiles that have any animal content will be mandatory in future. This will help people with allergies as well. New fibres and innovative products could be brought to market without delay because of the changes proposed in the report, and consumers will have better choice as a result. I particularly welcome what the report says about doing two studies: on the possibility of a link between allergies and the chemicals used in textiles, and on the feasibility of implementing a scheme of labelling by place of origin to ensure full traceability of textile products. I am in agreement with the rapporteur in that a balance should be struck between implementing a high level of protection for consumers and the need to simplify the regulatory framework for textile products.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this report. It aims to simplify and improve the existing regulatory framework for the labelling of textile products, encourage innovation in the clothing and textile sector, and the development and uptake of new fibres. I agree that the right balance should be struck between a high level of consumer protection and the simplification of the regulatory framework for textile products. Extending compulsory labelling should not impose a disproportionate burden on enterprises without bringing real added-value for consumers, who may even be confused by an excess of information on the label of textile products. I believe that it would be useful for the Commission to submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council regarding possible new labelling requirements to be introduced at Union level. This should examine, in particular, consumer views with regard to the amount of information that should be supplied on the label of textile products, and investigate which means other than labelling may be used to provide additional information to consumers.

**Regina Bastos (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The proposal for a regulation adopted by the Commission on 30 January 2010 is aimed at simplifying the existing regulatory framework, bringing the three existing directives on naming and labelling textile products together in a single regulation.

At first reading, on 18 May 2010, Parliament approved 63 amendments with a large majority. Most of these were technical amendments aimed at aligning the text with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It also adopted a number of substantive amendments, including rules on origin marking, indication of animal-derived materials, multi-fibre textile products, and so on. In its assessment, the Council rejected all substantive amendments proposed by Parliament.

I voted for this report, the recommendation for second reading, because it restores the vast majority of Parliament's amendments at first reading, including those relating to origin marking, indication of animal-derived materials and multi-fibre textile products. These changes will contribute to the promotion and innovation of European industry, and will increase the level of information provided to consumers.

Equally important will be the study that the Commission will have to submit by September 2013 to determine whether there is a causal link between allergic reactions and the chemicals or mixtures used in textile products.

**Sergio Berlato (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) In January 2009, the Commission adopted the proposal for a new regulation on textile names and related labelling of textile products. The aim of the proposal is to simplify and improve the existing regulatory framework for the labelling of textile products with a view to encouraging the development and uptake

of new fibres. By transforming the three existing directives into a single regulation, the proposal facilitates the process to adapt legislation to technical progress whilst allowing fibre users to benefit more readily from innovative products on the market.

I welcome this proposal, and I consider it particularly significant that the new regulation contains a specific reference to 'Made in' labelling. It is crucial, in fact, to continue along this path in order to furnish the European Union with the tools to compete with and face its main trade partners, such as the United States, Canada, China and Japan, on the globalised market.

Furthermore I wish to emphasise here what is, in my view, the most important aspect of the agreement reached with the Council, namely, the commitment by the European Commission to present, by 30 September 2013, after it has carried out a suitable impact assessment, a report accompanied by legislative proposals regarding indication of origin labelling, traceability and the use of new technologies.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because it aims to simplify and improve the existing regulatory framework for the labelling of textile products and thus encourage the development and uptake of new fibres and better consumer protection. As the final text is still being negotiated with the Council, the European Parliament's report proposes to identify issues such as the origin marking of textile products imported to the EU, according to which it would be compulsory for the label to indicate not only the manufacturer of the end product, but the country of origin of the imported textile products used to manufacture it, as is already done in Canada, the US, China and Japan. In general, the report proposes that labels should show as much information as possible about the composition of the product and that we should call on the Commission to investigate whether imported products are damaging to human health due to their composition, in order to improve consumer protection. However, at the same time, the report proposes rejecting any unnecessary administrative burden for goods manufacturers. For example, it proposes replacing markings on labels with language-independent symbols to avoid translation of fibre names into several EU languages. It is also proposed that self-employed tailors should be exempt from this future regulation.

**Vito Bonsignore (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of this resolution, which has the merit of simplifying the existing system concerning the labelling of textile products, as well as encouraging the development and uptake of new fibres and shortening the time between the submission of an application and the adoption of a new fibre name. These new rules would allow consumers to benefit more readily from innovative products. Furthermore, the document we approved today also encourages the introduction of origin marking, which would facilitate consumer choice and contribute to reducing fraudulent or misleading claims of origin. In this regard, I support the amendment laying down the requirement for manufacturers to indicate the presence of non-textile parts of animal origin on the labelling. This will protect consumers from the risk of inadvertently purchasing real fur products, for example, and will provide greater protection for those suffering from allergies.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I believe in the positive impact of simplifying and improving the existing regulatory framework for the labelling of textile products, particularly encouraging the development and uptake of new fibres. In view of this, I am voting for the adoption of the regulation tabled by Parliament and the

Commission. However, I believe that the amendments tabled by the rapporteur are important.

**Anne Delvaux (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) In order to prevent consumers from inadvertently purchasing products made from animal-derived materials (fur and leather), I supported this report, which provides for mandatory labelling containing the phrase ‘non-textile parts of animal origin’. The label will also guard against certain problems that might affect some consumers who suffer from allergies.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This regulation is aimed at establishing rules on the use of textile fibre names and related labelling of textile products, as well as rules on the quantitative analysis of binary and ternary textile fibres mixtures. This entails transforming Directive 96/74/EC into a regulation and repealing Directives 96/73/EC and 73/44/EEC.

The aim is to make the process of adding new fibres to the harmonised list of textile fibre names more transparent, and to adapt the legislation to technological developments in the textile industry. The amendments reintroduced by the rapporteur cover the issues of identifying the origin of the textile, non-textile parts of animal origin, a review clause, a request for a study on hazardous substances, language-independent symbols or codes for fibres, requirements for the technical file to be attached to the application for the authorisation of a new textile fibre name, multi-fibre textile products, self-employed tailors, laboratories testing textile mixtures, and the mandatory indication of the fibre composition for felts and felt hats.

I voted in favour.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This recommendation for second reading concerns the Council position on the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on textile fibre names and related labelling and marking of fibre composition of textile products. The textile sector is very complex and represents a significant share of economic activity in the Member States. The rapporteur has managed to reach an agreement on issues as controversial as origin marking, non-textile parts of animal origin, hazardous substances and others. Furthermore, he has managed to include a review clause which allows obstacles to the proper functioning of the Internal Market to be eliminated. Despite some initial difficulties, it was possible for the three European institutions to come to an understanding, which amounts to a very satisfactory result. The Council can therefore quickly adopt this legislation with a view to its entry into force in January 2012, which would greatly benefit consumers. I am therefore pleased with the consensus that has been reached, and I am voting in favour of this regulation repealing Council Directive 73/44/EEC, Parliament Directive 96/73/EC and Directive 2008/121/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The aim of this proposal for a regulation is to simplify and improve the existing regulatory framework for the labelling of textile products, with a view to protecting and encouraging the development and uptake of new fibres. The proposal facilitates the process of adapting legislation to technical progress by transforming the three existing directives into a single regulation, thereby avoiding the transposition of merely technical updates and shortening the time between the submission of an application and the adoption of a new fibre name. The long-standing wishes of producers are focused on naming and labelling. The simplification of the existing regulatory framework has the potential to encourage innovation in the textile and clothing sector, whilst allowing consumers to benefit more quickly from innovative products.

At first reading, in 2010, Parliament approved amendments to rules on origin marking, indication of animal-derived materials, use of language-independent symbols and a review clause, but the Council did not accept everything. It is vital that it now accept the different proposals, especially those on origin marking.

For these reasons, we voted for most of the positions adopted here.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL),** *in writing.* – (PT) The initial aim of this proposal was to simplify and improve the existing regulatory framework for the labelling of textile products.

During its negotiations with the EU Council of Ministers, Parliament included new provisions in the regulation, such as those requiring the indication of animal-derived materials in textile products and conducting a study to determine whether there is a causal link between allergic reactions and the chemicals used in textile products.

The presence of animal-derived materials should be clearly indicated, so as to prevent consumers or individuals who suffer allergies from running the risk of inadvertently purchasing real fur products when they would prefer not to do so.

The Commission will have to prepare a study by 30 September 2013 to determine whether there is a causal link between allergic reactions, and the chemicals or mixtures used in textile products. On the basis of this study, the Commission will table legislative proposals, where appropriate.

This regulation should soon be adopted by the EU Council of Ministers and enter into force on the 20th day following its publication. There will be a transitional period of two and a half years for the rules on labelling requirements, and for those on the indication of 'non-textile parts of animal origin'.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D),** *in writing.* – The current absence of harmonised rules on origin marking puts the EU at a disadvantage and also deprives European producers of origin-sensitive consumer goods of the opportunity to reap the benefits associated with producing within the Union, while consumers miss the opportunity to have access to information on the origin of products. Origin marking would facilitate consumer choice and contribute to reducing fraudulent, inaccurate or misleading claims of origin. This amendment introduces a requirement to indicate the presence of non-textile parts of animal origin in textile products. It should be highlighted that fur is often used as trimming in relatively inexpensive garments, which are often imported from Asia.

In order to eliminate potential obstacles to the proper functioning of the internal market caused by diverging provisions or practices by Member States, and in order to keep pace with the development of electronic commerce and future challenges in the market for textile products, it is necessary to examine the harmonisation and standardisation of other aspects of textile labelling with a view to facilitating the free movement of textile products in the internal market and achieving a uniform and high level of consumer protection throughout the EU.

**Lorenzo Fontana (EFD),** *in writing.* – (IT) The process within the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection was a turning point for Mr Manders's proposal, as that was where it was decided that it should be made compulsory to include the full composition of a product rather than just some of its parts. Subsequently, however, our group mentioned the need to safeguard the textile industry and the 'Made in' label, but no response to this position was given in the negotiations with the Council. Nevertheless,

there are elements which are worthy of support, such as streamlining the registration of materials. As I consider safeguarding the 'Made in' label to be a priority issue, I cannot vote in favour, and have therefore chosen to abstain.

**Sylvie Guillaume (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted for the Manders report on regulations covering the labelling of textile products. I am very happy that Parliament, on the occasion of this vote at second reading, has reintroduced a series of amendments, despite opposition from the Council. It is important for consumers to be able to make their purchases in full knowledge of the facts, and for them not to purchase leather or fur inadvertently as is the case, in particular, when fur is used as trimming on cheap clothing. Furthermore, the text highlights the need for traceability of textile products and a study will be commissioned by the Commission on the potential health hazards of products such as synthetic fibres or dyes.

**Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PL) The resolution on textile fibre names and related labelling and marking of textile products which has been adopted by the European Parliament is particularly important for the textile sector in the European Union. It will enable the more rapid introduction to the market of new fibres which will help innovative textile firms in particular in the practical application of their research and development. The resolution was the subject of a long debate between the European Parliament and the Council. Parliament called for new elements to extend the regulation, in particular: indication of the country of origin, indication of fibres of animal origin, and more rigorous requirements concerning the use of harmful substances in the production of textiles. Parliament managed to convince the Council that it was essential to clearly label fibres of animal origin.

This provision is very useful, in particular, for those consumers who have an allergy to leather goods, and to consumers who, for ideological reasons, do not want to buy textiles containing elements of animal origin. I hope that in the near future, we will also be successful in achieving an understanding on indicating the origin of goods. This issue has remained unresolved for too long. I think that European firms and consumers will benefit from clearly formulated principles.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I endorsed this document because it proposes laying down rules on the presence of non-textile parts of animal origin in certain products, as well as indicating products' origins precisely. Above all, this regulation should provide for requirements to indicate non-textile parts of animal origin when labelling or marking textile products, so that consumers can make a choice on the basis of the information in their possession. Labelling or marking should not be misleading and should be provided in such a way that the consumer can easily understand to which part of the product the particulars refer.

**Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FI) I am pleased that, at last, we in Parliament have reached a decision on an act relating to textile labelling involving some very substantial proposals for improvements, which the Council is also prepared to endorse and implement. Working on the regulation in committee sometimes involved some very ambitious notions, which, luckily, we abandoned. It is an obvious improvement that products must henceforth be clearly marked if they contain matter of animal origin, for reasons of public health, since fur, for example, is a health risk for many people who suffer from allergies. Although some of the manufacturers of products opposed this initiative, referring to existing laws on the requirements for labelling parts of animal origin, an improvement has now been made,

and it is a very real indication of the EU's consumer oriented thinking. However, the compulsory marking of the origin of products from third countries would have been ineffective and expensive in itself to accomplish. It is difficult to make an impromptu estimate of the added value to the consumer that such a requirement might bring, especially as, in the global world, products are rarely manufactured or originate in just one country.

For that reason, it is important that the Commission should now investigate the matter and that the practical aspects of going ahead should be weighed carefully. In the same connection, it is natural that the reform and harmonisation of product labelling should be assessed overall, as has now been agreed.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I welcome the Commission's proposal, as it simplifies the existing regulatory framework and has the potential to encourage innovation in the textile and clothing sector, whilst allowing fibre users and consumers to benefit more readily from innovative products.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The new rules on labelling of textile products are crucial for preventing the problems that arise if consumers are poorly informed. The presence of animal-derived materials must be clearly indicated, so as to prevent consumers or individuals who suffer allergies from running the risk of inadvertently purchasing real fur products when they would prefer not to do so. The initial aim of this proposal is to simplify and improve the existing regulatory framework for the labelling of textile products. During the negotiations with the EU Council of Ministers, the inclusion of new provisions in the regulation was very important, such as those requiring the indication of animal-derived materials in textile products and conducting a study to determine whether there is a causal link between allergic reactions and chemicals or mixtures used in textile products.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The report of Toine Manders is aimed at helping the buyers of textile products. New rules on textile labelling are proposed which will help customers avoid the risk of buying textile products which contain natural fur or leather. I voted 'in favour'.

**Andreas Mølzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) Consumers' awareness of the goods they buy is constantly growing. For the majority of people, the origin of the products plays a very important role in their decisions about what they want to spend their money on. In the textile sector, there is a need for a great deal more information in this area so that consumers know where the jumpers, jackets and trousers, etc. that they are buying come from and which materials they are made of. As things currently stand, the labelling requirements are highly inadequate. We need clearer labels to indicate where animal products are used to make a garment, in particular, in the case of fur and fur trim. I voted in favour of the report because it deals with providing detailed information that is urgently needed by citizens, who have the right to know where their textiles come from and what materials they are made of.

**Claudio Morganti (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The text being examined today is, unfortunately, very different from the one approved by this House at first reading. The substantive difference lies in the fact that this report makes no reference to the origin marking to be included on textile product labels. The Council has strongly opposed the idea, and it is difficult to understand why. Is it not right for consumers to know where the clothes they wear come from? The presence of origin marking would surely have provided a guarantee of product quality and protection.



I am really puzzled by the fact that only two Member States, Italy and Lithuania, insisted in the Council on including origin marking, and I wonder what interest the other European countries have in not protecting their own businesses in this way, since they are thus left more exposed to problems of unfair competition and counterfeiting. Parliament has unfortunately bowed to the Council's short-sighted decision not to endorse the much-needed origin marking, and I therefore feel I must vote against today's report.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report is a recommendation for second reading on the Council position at first reading on the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on textile fibre names and related labelling and marking of fibre composition of textile products. The Council rejected all substantive amendments proposed by Parliament at first reading, as it believes that these would not be compatible with the intended simplification. The main amendments proposed by Parliament and reintroduced in the report, which I voted for, relate to issues that I believe to be of the utmost importance for the European market. Of these, I would like to highlight origin marking and the inclusion of a requirement to indicate the country of origin of textile products imported from third countries. The current absence of harmonised rules on origin marking puts the EU at a disadvantage as regards its main trade partners, such as Canada, China, Japan and the US, which require origin marking for imported goods. Origin marking would facilitate consumer choice and contribute to reducing fraudulent, inaccurate or misleading claims of origin.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) At first reading, Parliament approved 63 amendments to the Commission proposal on a regulation on textile fibre names and related labelling of textile products. Some of these amendments were of a technical nature while others were related to the substance, including rules on origin marking, indication of animal-derived materials, the use of language-independent symbols and a review clause. The technical amendments were largely accepted by the Council, but it rejected all substantive amendments proposed by Parliament. Most of these amendments have now been restored, as it is considered important that the Council recognise their expediency and give them due consideration.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – In its position at first reading, adopted on 18 May 2010, the European Parliament approved, by a very large majority, 63 amendments. The vast majority were technical amendments aimed at aligning the text with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and with the new legislative framework for the marketing of goods. Parliament also adopted a number of substantive amendments, including rules on origin marking, the indication of animal-derived materials, the use of language-independent symbols and a review clause.

**Olga Sehnalová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (CS) I supported the report because it is a step towards better consumer protection and stresses the quality of textiles products. It is nonetheless a pity that we have failed to push through the demands for country of origin labelling, as this is one item of information which adds to the possibilities for consumer choice and can help to reduce the occurrence of various inaccurate and misleading statements regarding origin. The absence of harmonised rules in this area also deprives European producers of advantages relating to production in the EU. I believe the Commission will continue its efforts to find an acceptable solution in this matter.

**Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)**, *in writing*. – (NL) The Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) is voting against this recommendation of the European Parliament. The original Commission

proposal envisaged a simplification of formalities in order to make it easier to introduce new textile fibres. The European Parliament has added a requirement that, in future, businesses will be obliged to state where a textile product comes from via what is known as country of origin labelling. We do not support Parliament's position in this regard.

Consumers benefit where labels contain information about materials that pose a health hazard or that cause allergic reactions. Stating the country of origin on the label is pointless European nitpicking. Obviously, the origin of a product tells us nothing about the production process or the quality of the product, nor does it increase consumer protection. Even if the so-called country of origin is specified, other parts of the production process can take place elsewhere.

All the 'made in x' label does is create a false sense of clarity for the consumer, while in reality bringing about extra costs and bureaucracy. Businesses have to face additional administrative hassle, the checking of labels requires additional customs formalities and, ultimately, it becomes more expensive to import products. The PVV will thus also be voting against this recommendation.

**Catherine Stihler (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of labelling country of origin and fur and welcome this piece of legislation.

**Marc Tarabella (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I welcome the agreement that has been concluded between the European Parliament and the Council on the extremely complex issue of textile names and related labelling of textile products. Consumers must be provided with accurate information on the presence of non-textile animal-derived products, such as fur, so that they can make informed choices.

I would also insist on the need for the Commission to examine, with the greatest attention, the issue of social labelling. I believe that consumers should be informed about the social conditions under which a textile product has been manufactured in order to give them greater responsibility for the working conditions of workers in the textile industry.

We must obviously not overload the labels with information, but social labelling could enable working conditions in the European Union and worldwide to undergo lasting change thanks to a citizen-based approach by consumers when they make purchases.

**Marianne Thyssen (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (NL) The agreement that was approved today after two years of intensive negotiations will simplify the placing on the market of new fibres and improve consumer protection on the internal market thanks to clear, visible and legible textile labels. In addition, the European Parliament was able to put its clear stamp on this regulation. Textile products which comprise non-textile parts of animal origin, such as fur or leather, should, in future, state this clearly on the label. It also proved possible to honour Parliament's explicit requests for further investigation into the use of language-independent symbols on clothing labels and into possible links between allergic reactions and chemical substances used in textiles.

The commitment that Parliament sought and obtained from the Commission that it would, where necessary, and after having a thorough study carried out, bring forward legislative proposals in 2013 in relation to the traceability of textile products, is an important step forwards. For these reasons, I voted in favour of the agreement that Parliament was able to reach with the Council at second reading.

**Niki Tzavela (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (EL) As regards the Manders recommendation on textile names and related labelling of textile products, I voted in favour of the compromise proposal by the political groups because I am in favour of a compulsory system of labelling of the country of origin of third-country textile products. I also consider that this may promote fair competition in the EU and on the international stage.

**Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (LT) The Lithuanian textile and clothing sector is one of the most specialised in Europe, with 1 000 enterprises involved in this sector employing 40 000 people. For me, and the majority of Lithuanians, it is therefore important for the new rules on the labelling of textile products mentioned in this report to help protect the reputation of our textile sector. Hopefully, the new legislation will simplify the current labelling rules. Furthermore, we need reliable chemical tests to confirm that textiles created meet hygiene and environmental criteria. European consumers have the right to know what they are buying. The use of any products of animal origin must be clearly shown on the label of the textile product. The new textile labelling rules should help stop consumers from unwittingly buying textile products made from real fur or leather. The fate of the Lithuanian textile and clothing sector is closely linked to the EU, as 84% of Lithuanian textiles are exported to the EU. Not many people are aware that Lithuanian textile manufacturers sew uniforms for various military and police forces throughout Europe, including NATO. Therefore, both Lithuania and Europe should be interested in increasing efforts to improve quality control and transparency.

**Derek Vaughan (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Following today's vote on labelling, consumers will no longer face the risk of mistakenly buying textiles containing real leather or fur. I believe that consumers have the right to know what the products they buy are made from, and this report ensures that any animal-derived materials will be indicated on textile product labels. This is good news not only for people who do not want to buy products that contain real fur or leather, but also for those who suffer from allergies. I am disappointed that this report did not make origin labelling compulsory for textile products, but I am encouraged that the Commission will come forward with an assessment report to address such issues in the future.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) I have voted in favour of the report on naming and labelling textile products. The proposed revision of EU legislation primarily concerns technical issues which do not have a major political impact. However, the resulting simplification of the processes will help to promote innovation within the industry. The compromise reached by several groups in the European Parliament also takes into consideration existing problems involving counterfeit products in the European textile sector and calls for transparent and coherent trade regulations to ensure protection for consumers.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the report by Mr Manders. The text on which we have voted not only proposes to combine the three directives on the labelling of textile composition into a single European regulation applicable to all the Member States, but it is also designed to simplify the procedure for recognising new fibres.

Mr Manders's report would probably have been more complete if it had included a rule on compulsory origin labelling for products originating in non-EU countries but, given the difficulties that occur when certain subjects are tackled, I believe that in the end, a good compromise was reached in the final text that was put to the vote.

**Report: Vital Moreira (A7-0243/2010)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this proposal as it amends certain aspects of Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009, so as to extend its validity to 31 December 2015 and make certain adjustments resulting from the entry into force of bilateral agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. Given that the interim agreements/stabilisation and association agreements (SAAs) grant trade concessions to Bosnia and Herzegovina on the products identified in the autonomous trade preferences, these concessions have to be withdrawn from Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009. These concern the preferential tariff quotas for baby beef, sugar and sugar products, certain wines, as well as for certain fishery products. The termination of the trade preferences would take from the beneficiaries an objective economic advantage in their trade with the EU. This could have extremely negative consequences on the overall economic performance of the whole Western Balkans region, with subsequent negative repercussions on their domestic reform and transition processes. Moreover, their economic recovery could be seriously jeopardised.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report. The European Union has granted the countries of the Western Balkans exceptional unlimited duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products. The key aim of these measures is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through privileged access to the EU market. In turn, economic development is to foster political stability in the entire region. These trade preferences were granted for a period ending on 31 December 2010. I agree that the validity of the exemption provisions should be extended to 31 December 2015. The termination of the trade preferences would take from the beneficiaries an objective economic advantage in their trade with the EU. This could have negative consequences on the overall economic performance of the Western Balkans, with subsequent negative repercussions on their domestic reform and transition processes.

**Slavi Binev (NI)**, *in writing*. – (BG) I support the introduction of exceptional trade measures for countries and territories benefiting from the Stabilisation and Association process. Everyone is aware that trade is a driver of economic development and these trade measures will revitalise the economies of the Western Balkans. In addition, granting the Western Balkan countries privileged access to the European Union market will also enable us to encourage more rapid integration of their economies with that of the European Union.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) We are voting today on the extension of exceptional trade preferences such as tariff exemptions and trade preferences for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kosovo until 2015. Under the terms of Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009, the preferential tariff quotas apply to baby beef, sugar and sugar products, certain wines, as well as certain fishery products. This extension is aimed at addressing the widespread economic crisis, given that terminating trade preferences would compromise these countries' economic recovery, and would have consequences for the whole stabilisation and transition process of the Western Balkans.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report focuses on a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009, which introduces exceptional trade measures for countries and territories participating in or linked to the EU's stabilisation and association process. The countries of the Western Balkans are in this situation, and products originating from them enjoy duty-free status and exceptional unlimited access to the EU market. These measures

are aimed at mitigating the crisis and revitalising the economy of these countries. These exceptional measures came to an end on 31 December 2010 and if they are not extended, there will be severe consequences for wealth creation, jeopardising economic recovery and the internal reform and transition processes. I therefore agree with the amendments proposed by the rapporteur, as well as the extension of these measures until 31 December 2015, subject to the necessary adjustments resulting from the new bilateral agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report is aimed at extending exceptional, unlimited, duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the stabilisation and association process. The pretext of this is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through privileged access to the EU market, in the belief that any economic growth resulting from this will foster political stability throughout the region.

These measures cannot, however, be considered in isolation from the situation of severe economic and social crisis that exists today in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. The current crisis in this region is obviously part of the wider crisis of capitalism and is being aggravated by its impact: however, it is deeply rooted in a long history of interference, aggression and military occupation, promoted by the EU and its main powers, and the US, seeking to impose their economic and political dominance on the region. The secession of Kosovo and the role of the EU in this are indicative of that, and the internal process dubbed 'reform and transition' represents the current stage of this process of the imposition of imperial rule over the region.

The proposals made here today should be viewed, analysed and understood in this light.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report is aimed at extending exceptional, unlimited, duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the so-called stabilisation and association process. The pretext of this is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through privileged access to the EU market, in the belief that any economic growth resulting from this will foster political stability throughout the region.

These measures cannot, however, be considered in isolation from the situation of severe economic and social crisis that exists today in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo.

The current crisis in this region is part of the wider crisis of capitalism and is being aggravated by its impact: however, it is deeply rooted in a long history of interference, aggression and military occupation, promoted by the EU and its main powers, and the US, seeking to impose their economic and political dominance. The secession of Kosovo and the role of the EU in this are indicative of that, and the internal process dubbed 'reform and transition' represents the current stage of this process of the imposition of imperial rule over the region.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing.* – In Council Regulation (EC) 2007/2000, the European Union granted exceptional unlimited duty-free access to EU markets for almost all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the stabilisation and association process. The main objective of these measures is to revitalise the economies of the Western Balkans through privileged access to the EU market. In addition, economic development has promoted political stability throughout the region.

These trade preferences were granted for the period that ended on 31 December 2010 and which currently apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo.

The abolition of trade preferences could, however, have very negative consequences on the overall economic performance of the Western Balkans and, consequently, a negative effect on their domestic reforms and the transformation process. Moreover, it could seriously jeopardise the economic recovery. In order not to disrupt trade, it is therefore desirable to extend the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 to 31 December 2015.

**Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The purpose of these measures is to help countries in the process of stabilisation, such as the countries of the Western Balkans, through preferential trade measures with the EU compared to third countries. In view of the proper decision to extend the regulation until 2015, giving particular attention to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Serbia, I confirm that I voted in favour.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I welcomed this important document because, through Regulation (EC) No 2007/2000, the European Union has granted exceptional unlimited duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the Stabilisation and Association process. The key aim of these measures is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through privileged access to the EU market. In turn, economic development is to foster political stability in the entire region. The trade preferences were granted for a period ending on 31 December 2010 and currently apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo, as defined by UNSCR 1244/99 for all the products under the scope of Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009. Products originating in Albania, the Republic of Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or Montenegro continue to benefit from the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 when so indicated or from any measures provided in the same regulation which are more favourable than the trade concessions provided for in the framework of bilateral agreements between the European Union and these countries. This proposal amends certain elements of Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 in order to permit the extension of its validity to 31 December 2015 and make certain adjustments consequent to the entry into force of bilateral agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I strongly support the amendment of certain elements of Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 in order to permit the extension of its validity to 31 December 2015 and make certain adjustments consequent to the entry into force of bilateral agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) This report endorses the pressures exercised by the European Union on the Balkan States to serve the interests of the former. It even charges Parliament to take, in cooperation with the Council, 'appropriate measures' if the governments of these States do not show sufficient desire to liberalise their economies. This is overweening imperialism! I shall vote against.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Under Regulation (EC) No 2007/2000, the EU granted exceptional, unlimited, duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the Stabilisation and Association process. The key aim of this measure is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through privileged access to the EU market. The economic development that comes about as a result will foster political stability throughout the region. The benefits from this regulation came to an end on 31 December 2010. Given the economic and financial crisis that we are currently

experiencing, it is necessary to extend these conditions to 31 December 2015 so that the cessation of these special conditions does not lead to stagnation in the economies of these regions, as good economic conditions are needed to maintain stability and peace in this troubled Balkan region.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – When the European Union adopted Regulation No 2007/2000, it granted exceptional unlimited duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the Stabilisation and Association process. The key aim of these measures is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through privileged access to the EU market. In turn, economic development is to foster political stability in the entire region. The validity of the trade preferences should not be terminated because this could have negative consequences on the overall economic performances of the Western Balkans, with consequent negative repercussions on their domestic reform and transition processes. Moreover, their economic recovery could be seriously jeopardised. Therefore, I agree with the rapporteur who strongly supports the amendment of certain elements of Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 in order to permit the extension of its validity to 31 December 2015 and I voted ‘in favour’.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) In order to stimulate the economies of the countries in the Western Balkans, they have been given privileged access to the European market. This applies to almost all goods produced in countries participating in or linked to the EU’s Stabilisation and Association process. The trade preferences were granted for a period ending on 31 December 2010 and cover the following countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo.

The preferences remain in place for goods from Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro. If these trade preferences were to come to an end now, this would jeopardise further economic growth in these countries. I have not voted in favour of the report because, as has already been explained, some points in the new regulation are not clearly worded.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report aims to extend the validity of Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009, which adopts exceptional trade measures for countries and territories participating in or linked to the EU’s Stabilisation and Association Process. The EU has granted exceptional, unlimited, duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the Stabilisation and Association process. The key aim of this measure is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through privileged access to the EU market. I argue that there should have been provision for a study of the impact on the Internal Market with such exceptional access. These trade preferences were granted for a period ending on 31 December 2010. The termination of the trade preferences would withdraw from the beneficiaries any objective economic advantage in their trade with the EU. This could have serious consequences on the overall economic performance of the Western Balkans, with subsequent negative repercussions on their domestic reform and transition processes, and it could jeopardise their economic recovery. I voted in favour of this proposal, which is aimed at extending the validity of these measures until 31 December 2015.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Under Regulation (EC) No 2007/2000, the EU granted exceptional, unlimited, duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the Stabilisation and Association process. The key aim of this measure is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through privileged access to the EU market. These trade preferences, which currently apply to Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo, were granted for a period ending on 31 December 2010, but their validity should now be extended to 31 December 2015 so as not to jeopardise these countries' economic recovery.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – Although the final vote was postponed, we voted on several amendments. These 'exceptional trade measures' with the partners in the Western Balkans, under the EU Stabilisation and Association process, are indeed preferential tariff measures which guarantee easier access to the EU market for the partner countries' exports. They need to be notified to the World Trade Organisation. The programme ran out at the end of 2010, and what we have now is simply the extension to it. It has been blocked because of the delayed comitology decision. Early in January 2011, the International Trade Committee made a proposal to the Council to ensure that the procedure was speeded up, but received no answer. Thus, Parliament had to await the adoption of the Szájer report on comitology in March in order to proceed further. An informal dialogue resolved the issue to permit adoption at first reading. The delay has created hardship in some receiving countries, and particularly in Kosovo, and Parliament has been wrongly blamed for this.

#### **Report: Gunnar Hökmark (A7-0151/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this proposal as I agree with the guiding principle that runs through it. The EU is indeed the world's largest economy. Neither the US nor China is larger, contrary to what is usually stated in discussions on what is and what will be the number one global economy. The difference is that the US and China have the bigger markets, as they offer better preconditions for competition, competitiveness, new services, products and innovations. The need for a single Internal Market is critical if Europe is to become a leading player in the global economy, with a focus on the service sector and the knowledge economy, but, at the same time, the Digital Agenda and the digital economy can serve as a spearhead for realising the Internal Market for all parts of our economy. This requires the ability to become a leader in terms of broadband and Internet use. Opening Europe up to new services and increased mobile traffic lays the ground for new opportunities for culture and content, broadcasters and public services within the framework of broadband while, at the same time, ensuring the same opportunities for broadcasting.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this resolution on a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the first radio spectrum policy programme. I agree with the rapporteur's opinion that the need for one single internal market is crucial for Europe to take a leadership in the global economy, with a focus on the service sector and the knowledge economy. The Digital Agenda and the digital economy can serve as a spearhead for making the Internal Market real for all parts of our economy. This requires an ability to take the lead regarding broadband and the use of the Internet. We must aim to make Europe the best and do what is best for Europe: free up spectrum for new services and increased mobile traffic, laying the ground for new opportunities for culture and content, broadcasters and public services within the framework of broadband. The first radio spectrum policy programme (RSPP) is a significant step in ensuring the efficient and optimal use of this finite resource. Europe must be in the lead in this process of change, creating the best opportunities for a competitive European knowledge economy characterised by vitality, change and innovations. That requires access to Internet and broadband applications with the greatest capacity and the highest speed.



**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this report. The Digital Agenda and the digital economy represent one of the most important objectives of the EU 2020 strategy, aimed at closing the digital gap, and increasing the productivity, cohesion and competitiveness of European industry, and ensuring better access to the single market for the EU's consumers and companies. Today, Europe is lagging behind the US and China, which are freeing up large parts of the spectrum in order to allow for the rapid development of new services and high speed mobile Internet. Effective spectrum use must be promoted in the EU in order to satisfy the growing need for radio frequencies, and mobile broadband capacity must be increased, ensuring better opportunities for the public and commercial sector. We must overcome the digital divide so that by 2020, all EU citizens have access to broadband services at a speed of at least 30 Mbps. Future spectrum policy must also guarantee a suitable, simple and non-discriminatory authorisation system, which would create a level playing field throughout the EU and would promote competition.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because its aim is to create maximum opportunities for business and individual consumers to take advantage of wireless Internet, radio and television services, freeing up radio spectrum. This would benefit European citizens in two ways – easing access to modern means of communication and telecom networks would reduce the exclusion of EU citizens which still exists, particularly for those living in rural and peripheral areas, and would promote the EU economy more actively, because there would be stronger conditions for developing an innovative services sector and knowledge economy. Europe has set itself the task of ensuring that by 2013, all EU citizens have the opportunity to use broadband, and wireless technology represents the most convenient way of achieving this task and requires the least investment.

**Vito Bonsignore (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I congratulate Mr Hökmark on preparing such a topical report on the radio spectrum policy programme. I voted in favour of it since I firmly endorse all measures aimed at supporting and implementing the internal single market. Europe needs to adopt advanced systems for broadband and Internet use that are accessible to all and are also able to reach rural and outlying areas, as required by the Digital Agenda. At the same time, it is important to ensure security for private individuals, producers, users and public authorities.

Moreover, the high cost of fibre optics and the growing demand by users for high-speed connections mean that the technological framework must be reviewed in both legislative and operational terms. To that end, multiannual radio spectrum legislative programmes need to be prepared in order to establish strategic planning and to meet the growing demand for broadband access, particularly because official estimates suggest that data traffic will double every year until 2013.

**Jan Březina (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (CS) The objectives set in the Digital Agenda in the form of broadband cover for all European citizens by 2013, and high-speed cover of 30 Mbps or more (up to 100 Mbps for half of European households) by 2020, must be regarded as the minimum, and the ambition should be for Europe to have the best capacity and the highest broadband connection speeds in the world. This is connected with the idea that securing a wireless broadband connection is essential in order for all citizens to have access to new and innovative services. I fully agree with the deadline proposed by the Commission as regards making the 800 MHz band available for electronic communications services by 1 January 2013. Any exemptions or exceptions should be granted only for technical reasons, but specific public safety and defence needs must be taken into account. The other

bands should be released by 1 January 2012, as stipulated in the Commission proposal. In my opinion, we should push for the allocation of more frequencies to mobile services, with a minimum target of 1 200 MHz. It is essential to introduce sensible rules that will make it possible to release further spectrum bands in the future. I also consider it appropriate to deal with further thorny questions, including, above all, the costs for releasing bands.

**Cristian Silviu Buşoi (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) We need to allocate radio spectrum more efficiently in the EU to ensure that we do not remain behind other developed countries progressing towards the digital society. The points in this report are also totally consistent with the EU's Digital Agenda. Both consumers and businesses in the EU are increasingly using broadband Internet and mobile Internet via their smartphones or tablets, which requires the provision of fast connections. This requires the 800 MHz band to be freed up as soon as possible for broadband mobile Internet services and even the band below 790 MHz, if it transpires that such a measure is required to cope with the increase in data traffic. The measures advocated in the first radio spectrum policy programme are vital for reducing the digital divide and offering rapid, reliable telecommunications services in rural and isolated areas with a view to revitalising them. Last but not least, these measures support innovation and the wider use of new technologies, which is an absolute must for the European economy's competitiveness, as was also emphasised in the Single Market Act.

**Alain Cadec (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted for Mr Hökmark's draft report, which supports freeing up the 800 MHz band for mobile services between now and January 2013 and sets some very ambitious objectives such as freeing up 1 200 MHz for mobile data traffic by 2015. The rapporteur also insists on spectrum use efficiency, greater flexibility in the promotion of innovation and on investment, as well as the need to improve the inventory of current and future spectrum usage.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Given the importance of the European telecommunications industry and information technologies for higher productivity and competitiveness in our market, I am voting for the radio spectrum policy programme. I believe in the ability of this programme to create the conditions necessary for successful competition with the new technology markets of China and the US, as well as maintaining European leadership in the telecommunications industry.

**Françoise Castex (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted in favour of this report, which will enable the exponential demand for access to high frequency-consuming mobile Internet to be met in the short term, in particular, through the allocation of the entire 800 MHz band, freed up by the changeover to digital television in our various countries, to electronic communications services. In the medium to long term, our aim must be to improve the use of spectrum across the board, by recognising its social, cultural and economic value. At the same time, we are promoting innovative technologies (femtocells, cognitive technologies) in order to respond qualitatively to the demand for use of frequencies. This will contribute to the objectives that the Union has set itself, including that of bridging the digital divide, so as to ensure that all Europeans have broadband access by 2015.

**Nessa Childers (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I voted to reject Amendment 20, second part; Amendment 69, second part, as this had been recommended by both S&D voices on the Culture Committee, on which I sit as a substitute member.

**Ioan Enciu (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I voted in favour of the radio spectrum report today. It will ultimately create employment in this sector, aid the completion of the Digital Agenda and lend itself to achieving wireless frequency targets by 2013. In Romania, we have one

of the fastest Internet speeds in Europe. By enhancing European broadband, this will increase our competitiveness. It is noteworthy that the International Telecommunications Union argues that capacity has to be opened up and preferably harmonised at a global level.

We all use radio spectrum in our daily lives for listening to radio programmes, for using our mobile telephones, for remotely locking our cars and for using satellite navigation systems. This report will aim to coordinate the EU approach for the management of spectrum across the Union. It is important that Member States continue to engage in bilateral communications and negotiations with third countries in order to achieve their Union frequency targets.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of this report as it presents a set of measures that make a significant contribution to universal access to less-favoured or remote areas, such as rural areas or islands.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Access to the radio spectrum is essential to ensure that all European citizens, whether in rural or urban areas, have access to digital technologies and broadband, with the total turnover of this industry representing approximately EUR 200 billion. Therefore, given the value of the radio spectrum, it is imperative to set out the EU's priorities for its allocation and use.

The Digital Agenda, the digital economy and this, the first policy programme for five years, are therefore aimed at stimulating our economy and realising the Internal Market in all its aspects. It is crucial for the European telecommunications industry to regain its global leadership and create an impetus for greater productivity, cohesion, competitiveness and access to a single market.

I would therefore like to congratulate the rapporteur on the result that has just been achieved due to an effort at finding a compromise between all the groups in an ambitious and encouraging report.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report is on a proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the first radio spectrum policy programme. As the EU is the largest global economy, it needs to monitor all its modernisation and technological innovation processes: otherwise, it runs the risk of being overtaken by emerging economies such as China and South Korea. The latter is an example of this development, based on digital communications, as its speed of traffic and the respective broadband coverage make it the world leader. The objectives set out in the Digital Agenda, taking account of the constant downgrading in the speed and volume of data traffic, which is expected to double each year up to 2014, should be seen as minimal or reassessed if the EU is to dethrone South Korea in this area. Given that the Internet is the main instrument for creating better conditions and development and knowledge for citizens in cultural terms, particularly through the broadcasting of audiovisual content, I welcome the adoption of this report and hope that the EU will play a leading role in the radio spectrum and in the creation of development and innovation software.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) We recognise the need to plan and organise the radio spectrum. This should be done on the basis of cooperation between the Member States, mindful of the fact that the spectrum is a public good, which is important in outlining and improving a range of services for the public, including in areas of public services.

We do not agree with planning the radio spectrum based on the Commission imposing guidelines, with the aim of making the spectrum a fulcrum for 'the goals and key actions outlined in the EU2020 strategy and the Digital Agenda', nor do we agree with the view of this as one of the '50 priority actions of the Single Market Act'. These are EU strategies and policies which have contributed to the current crisis that we are experiencing, and persisting with them will inevitably exacerbate this crisis.

Although it mentions that the radio spectrum is 'a key public resource for essential sectors and services', the report points the way towards the 'possibility to trade spectrum rights' and invites the Commission to adopt measures 'to ensure that Member States allow trading within the Union of spectrum usage rights'; once again, we do not agree with these guidelines and we would distance ourselves from them.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) We agree with the need to plan and organise the radio spectrum on the basis of the necessary cooperation between Member States, as it is a public good, which is important in improving services, particularly public services.

We do not agree with the imposition of guidelines by the Commission with the aim of making the spectrum a fulcrum of 'the goals and key actions outlined in the EU2020 strategy and the Digital Agenda and [...] included among the 50 priority actions of the Single Market Act'. We believe that these strategies are EU policies that have contributed to capitalism's current state of systemic crisis.

While mentioning that the radio spectrum is 'a key public resource for essential sectors and services', the report points the way towards the 'possibility to trade spectrum rights' and invites the Commission to adopt measures 'to ensure that Member States allow trading within the Union of spectrum usage rights'. We still do not know about these proposals, and thus far, we have not voted in favour of this report.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The European Union is the world's biggest economy. The need for one single internal market is crucial for Europe to take leadership in the global economy, with a focus on the service sector and the knowledge economy. The Digital Agenda and the digital economy can serve as a spearhead for making the internal market a reality for all parts of our economy. This requires an ability to take the lead on broadband and use of the Internet. It is crucial for the European telecom industry to regain global leadership, but also in order to take the lead in the development of information technologies as such and in the emergence of new services and applications. Even more importantly, it is also crucial in order to create a momentum for higher productivity, cohesion, competitiveness, and access to one single market for the European industry as a whole.

We must aim to make Europe the best and make what is best for Europe: opening up new services and increased mobile traffic, laying the ground for new opportunities for culture and content, broadcasters and public services in the framework of broadband and, at the same time, securing the same opportunities for broadcasting as of today.

**Louis Grech (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this report for the reason that a renewed economic and social approach with regard to the management, allocation and utilisation of the spectrum should be adopted. Particular focus should be directed towards the formulation of regulation which ensures greater spectrum efficiency, better frequency planning and safeguards against anti-competitive behaviour and the taking of anti-social measures with regards to the usage of the spectrum. As highlighted in the Single Market

Act, the establishment of a radio spectrum programme is key for the enhancement of the digital society and the development of technology.

I believe that the Commission should take a holistic approach towards the proper coordination of the management of the spectrum across the EU in view of the fact that this public good is a scarce and finite resource and is crucial to the furtherance of consumers, citizens and businesses within the single market.

**Mathieu Grosch (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (DE) The modern information society and the scarcity of frequency bands make strategic planning and harmonisation of the use of the spectrum essential. Of course, this relates to mobile and wireless broadband communications, radio and television broadcasting and also radio communications at concerts or in theatres. In addition to the issue of the frequencies, this concerns cultural diversity and also involves taking into consideration which technical options are and are not available and affordable. Affordability is a concern, for example, for cultural organisations without a great deal of money which do not always have the funding to buy new equipment. The goals of introducing complete broadband coverage of the EU by 2013 and universal high-speed Internet access by 2020 are praiseworthy, but perhaps not entirely realistic. In addition, the proposal gives no consideration to the specific problems in border areas where greater coordination is needed.

**Roberto Gualtieri (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (IT) By approving the Hökmark report, Parliament is opting for innovation: the broadband and mobile telephony sector is not only of great interest to Europeans, but it makes it possible to develop new prospects in terms of research and development, areas in which the European Union can and must aspire to play a leading role.

In this respect, it is important to ensure that the first European radio spectrum policy programme is in line with the objectives already outlined in the EU 2020 strategy and the Digital Agenda and comes within the priority actions of the Single Market Act.

The EU must endeavour to overcome the digital divide that results in huge disparities within Europe – between urban and rural areas in particular – so as to ensure all citizens have equal access to services, especially those involving new technologies. I therefore welcome the ambitious targets proposed, to provide broadband access throughout Europe by 2020, with particular emphasis on wireless networks.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I welcomed this document because Europe needs to set free more spectrum for wireless broadband. This can and must be done with respect for present broadcasting, ensuring the same opportunities for broadcasters as they have today, and compensating for eventual migration costs where necessary. Broadcasting and culture must be a natural part of the development of wireless services. Today, Europe is lagging behind, while the US and China are freeing up large parts of the spectrum in order to allow for the rapid development of new services and high speed mobile Internet. We must aim to do what is best for Europe: free up the spectrum for new services and increased mobile traffic, open up new opportunities for culture and content, broadcasters and public services in the framework of broadband and, at the same time, secure the same opportunities for broadcasters as they enjoy today. Wireless broadband is essential for ensuring that new and innovative services are available to all citizens. It seems obvious that this objective cannot be achieved through the use of optical fibre, the installation of which requires considerable investment, but through the use of a mix of wireless technologies available to extend the coverage of broadband (terrestrial radio, cable, fibre

or satellite systems) to cover the whole territory of the Community, rural and peripheral areas included, enabling the market to choose the most efficient technology from the point of view of cost for operators and citizens.

**Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FI) Today, telecommunications are as important as ordinary communications, both for people and companies. Furthermore, that is true in both rural and urban areas. The wireless Internet is a requirement for receiving fast broadband connections for all Europeans. This requires separately allocated radio spectrum in order to guarantee troublefree connections. It is good that new radio spectrum is to be made available as the Member States are switching from analogue to digital television. It should now be taken advantage of.

Europe needs the greatest broadband capacity and the fastest speeds to keep up with rising economic powers, like China and India, in the modern economy. Let us work to ensure that the next generation's Googles and Facebooks originate in Europe.

**Krišjānis Kariņš (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (LV) I supported the report on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the first radio spectrum policy programme. I believe that a common radio frequency spectrum policy will provide European Union Member States with new possibilities for developing information and communications technology industries. For their part, entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to offer new quality services, which will stimulate the development of the common European economy. Nevertheless, in making changes to frequency spectrum policy, we must also bear in mind international agreements on the freeing up of different frequencies at an international level.

Countries that border the European Union's eastern neighbours will have difficulty freeing up frequencies if the neighbouring countries do not do likewise. This situation must be borne in mind, and we must anticipate that the freeing up of frequencies will only be possible when countries such as Russia and Belarus also do so. Member States must not be placed in the forefront of the European Union's ambitions without regard to the facts on the ground.

**Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FI) I was responsible for the opinion on the radio spectrum policy programme in the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, and I am very pleased with the text that has now been voted on. I have been strongly advocating a forward looking and ambitious spectrum policy that would promote new innovations and global competitiveness. This is essential while we are searching for new channels for economic growth in Europe.

Wireless Internet services, and the mobile sector in particular, desperately need new spectrum, because in recent years, there has been a dramatic growth in the sale and use of equipment using a wireless network for smart phones and other such devices. The lack of spectrum must not be allowed to hinder innovation while we are developing new technology and services. Radio spectrum is a scarce natural resource and a public good, of which we also have to try to make far more effective use. The main aims of the radio spectrum policy programme are broadband access for the entire EU by 2013 and fast Internet connections by 2020.

In addition to considerations about the 'digital dividend' to be shared among Internet services (that is to say, the 800 MHz band), we have to look to the future and survey the opportunities afforded by the next potential radio bands, such as the 700 MHz band. The

best capacity and the fastest speed would offer the best basis for competition and innovation. The growing need in Asia and the United States of America has already been taken into account. It is therefore especially important that we in the EU understand the importance of setting sufficiently ambitious targets in order to remain competitive in this sector.

**Agnès Le Brun (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) One of the strategy's major lines of action aims to guarantee Internet access throughout Europe by 2013 and high-speed broadband coverage of at least 30 Mbps by 2020. Many relatively isolated rural and island areas depend on wireless connections from mobile Internet for access to high-speed broadband. If they are to enjoy uninterrupted connection, they must have radio frequencies dedicated entirely to them. Frequency allocation comes under national jurisdiction but the regulations governing the sharing of the spectrum between users and operators is under the control of the European Union. Universal access to high-speed access is largely dependent on this sharing of frequencies. I voted for the report on radio spectrum policy as it lays the foundations for universal coverage for mobile Internet. On 1 January 2013, the 800 MHz frequency will be used for mobile Internet, and will provide wireless users with high quality access and thus reduce the digital divide. This project goes even further still, by providing a new frequency band in the 1.5 to 2.3 GHz range by 2015.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I voted for this report. Radio frequencies serve the public interest in a wide range of areas in the Member States. In that connection, due account has to be taken of a host of specific national and regional characteristics. It is doubtful whether the EU can reconcile these matters of public interest and these characteristics as well and as efficiently as its Member States. For that reason (and in the light of the allocation of competences laid down in Article 9(1) of the Framework Directive), I oppose the establishment of an overarching spectrum planning and management system at European level.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) In this day and age, when new technologies have an increasingly important role, it is vital that all European citizens have the same conditions of access to digital technologies and broadband, regardless of whether they live in rural or urban areas. Thus, the Digital Agenda, the digital economy and this, the first policy programme for five years, which have just been adopted, are vital for the development of the Internal Market. The aim is for the European telecommunications industry to regain its global leadership and increase productivity, cohesion, competitiveness and access to a single market.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) The European Union has the largest economy in the world and yet it is lagging behind other international players in digital strategy and digital economy. Europe must take initiatives on broadband and Internet use in order to become a leader in the development of this area. Wireless broadband is essential if we are to ensure that all citizens have access to new, innovative services. We must bridge the digital divide and ensure that all European citizens are connected to high-speed broadband by 2020. Mobile broadband alongside, amongst other things, smartphones, PC tablets and smart keys, plays an increasingly important role in service supply and innovation in other areas, such as healthcare, education, culture and public administration. We must also ensure that new technologies and equipment for consumption are accessible. As far as the radio spectrum is concerned, our policy must have realistic yet ambitious objectives so that European companies are able to compete in the world market on a sounder footing.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The rapporteur, Gunnar Hökmark, believes that it is crucial to defend the dates as set out by the Commission (for example, the 800 MHz band should be available for electronic communication services by 1 Jan 2013). Any exceptions or derogations should only be given for purely technical reasons while specific needs for security and defence must be taken into account. Bands already designated by the Commission should be freed up by 1 January 2012, according to the Commission's proposal. The Union has to work to get more frequencies allocated for mobile services, with a target of a minimum amount of 1 200 MHz. It is necessary to get the right principles in place that can enable additional spectrum releases in the future. I support the rapporteur and therefore voted 'in favour'.

**Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (EL) The economic recovery is based, among other things, on the utilisation of new technologies and the digital economy. Although the EU has set ambitious targets in its emblematic initiative entitled 'Digital Agenda', such as broadband cover for all EU citizens by 2013, with speeds of 30 Mbps or more by 2020, it is still lagging behind the USA and Japan in terms of competitiveness. Therefore, releasing large sections of the radio spectrum to allow for the fast development of new services and high Internet speeds, via mobile connections offering citizens high capacities, is a first practical step. It is a technical, but necessary, parameter if we are to create a clear trend towards greater productivity, cohesion, competitiveness and access to a single market for European industry as a whole, and that is why I voted for this particular report.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report concerns the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the first radio spectrum policy programme. This programme is a significant step in ensuring the efficient and optimal use of this finite resource. Spectrum policy has a prominent place in the Digital Agenda for Europe and is crucial for the realisation of the policy objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This programme is aimed not only at creating a competitive and vibrant European industry for the provision of broadband services and equipment, but also at establishing an environment that is conducive to the development of pan-European services. Mobile broadband is playing an increasingly important role in the delivery and innovation of services in other fields such as healthcare, education, culture and public administration. The harmonisation of frequencies will lower the costs of deploying mobile networks and the cost of mobile devices for consumers, and boost competition and consumer choice. Furthermore, it will reduce harmful cross-border interference and disturbance. I voted in favour of the establishment of the radio spectrum policy programme for all of these reasons.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In the context of the knowledge economy, communications networks can boost the development of the Internal Market. To this end, broadband coverage for the whole EU, including the outermost regions, will make a clear contribution to establishing the EU as an integrated area for information sharing, furthering its claim to be a cutting-edge digital economy. I therefore voted in favour of this report.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) We are told – and quite rightly – that radio spectrum is a scarce resource. I should like to point out that it is also a shared resource, that is to say, a resource over which no one can claim exclusive ownership or an 'entitlement'. If it is both a shared resource and a scarce resource, we need to understand how it is utilised today; in other words, we must carry out an in-depth study of all the stakeholders in the spectrum, including the civil security and military services.



The way in which it is used today is far from optimal. We should encourage the use of technologies that allow different services to cohabit. Let us not forget either that not all uses are necessarily commercial in nature and therefore do not necessarily yield a profit – I am thinking of the use of the spectrum for cultural or public service purposes, for instance.

**Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (LT) This is a very relevant issue for Lithuania. We have the densest network of public Internet access points – my country has a population of 3.2 million, 2.1 million of whom use the Internet. We also have one of the highest mobile penetration rates. There is no doubt that these are positive changes. The connection with Europe could potentially help convince international companies to establish shops and invest in Lithuania. Other possible advantages include long distance medical diagnosis, smart energy grids and greater political accountability at local level. However, let us not get carried away, let us get our priorities right. On the basis of this report, the main objective of the radio spectrum policy programme is broadband coverage by 2013 for all citizens of Europe, and high speed Internet by 2020. But what about the million Europeans who live at risk of poverty? Twenty per cent of Lithuanians live in poverty. This is too high a figure for our nation. In my country and throughout Europe, there are families who struggle to feed and educate their children and do not even consider having a computer, never mind high speed broadband. The promotion of the EU radio spectrum should not overshadow the needs of the poorest people in Europe.

**Derek Vaughan (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I backed the Commission's radio spectrum policy programme (RSPP) because I believe that all EU citizens should have access to a faster broadband connection by 2020. The RSPP will ensure that the digital divide is reduced by introducing measures to bring faster web access to all citizens and businesses. This will be especially beneficial to those living in rural or remote parts of the EU that currently have little or no Internet connection. This improved network will also contribute to making Europe's digital economy more competitive, in the hope of developing an innovative and creative environment that can foster future advances in digital technology.

**Anna Záborská (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (SK) Transmission frequencies are a national asset. European legislation must therefore respect Member State sovereignty when looking for a common European interest in the use of these frequencies. On the other hand, the interests of Slovakia are in harmony with those of other Member States here. Citizens and businesses will both profit from the use of the bands released for high quality and rapid data transmission. European coordination is important here, because Internet technologies are not restricted by borders, and their benefits increase with the number of users. The aim of this proposal was to make a start on solving the issue of released frequencies as soon as possible, in order to give Europe an advantage over the other strong economies. This will bring new jobs, create new services and attract new investment to Europe.

#### **Report: Carlo Casini (A7-0173/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of the report. Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament's powers have been strengthened and it is now colegislator in almost all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. As a result, it is the focus of attention of an even larger number of varied lobbyists. In the light of these developments, and against this constitutional background, and in keeping with their commitment to transparency, Parliament and the Commission have agreed to establish and maintain a common register in order to keep a list of the names of and exercise scrutiny over the organisations and individuals who take part in the drafting and implementation

of EU policies. The amendments mentioned require the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure to be amended accordingly, which will be done with this report.

**Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) There has been much discussion in recent weeks about the role of lobbyists within the European Parliament. Ever since four MEPs were accused of having accepted money from 'bogus' lobbyists in return for tabling amendments, the institution has been seeking to clarify and reform the rules governing the activity of lobbyists in Parliament. A kind of permanent suspicion has long surrounded MEPs' relationships with interest representatives, hence the creation of a first register of lobbyists in 1996. Today, this register, in which lobbyists will have to register themselves, is being reformed. The 'voluntary' registration process is actually mandatory, as only registered lobbyists will be granted access to Parliament. I also welcome the adoption of the 'legislative footprint': the idea of publishing the names of the people one has met when drafting reports is, to my mind, a perfectly normal transparency measure. It is regrettable, however, that the Council, unlike the Commission, has not joined in the initiative.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because it is necessary to amend Parliament's Rules of Procedure following the establishment by the European Parliament and the Commission of a common transparency register. I would like to underline that following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament's powers have been strengthened and it is now colegislator in almost all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. As a result, it is the focus of attention of an even larger number of lobbyists, who, moreover, play a key role in the open, pluralist dialogue, and act as an important source of information for Members in the context of the performance of their duties. In the light of these developments, and in keeping with their commitment to transparency, Parliament and the Commission have agreed to establish and maintain a common register in order to keep a list of the names of, and exercise scrutiny over, the organisations and individuals who take part in the drafting and implementation of EU policies. This register must be kept in a manner consistent with the right of Members to perform their parliamentary duties without restriction and must not be used as a pretext to deny their voters access to Parliament's premises.

**Vito Bonsignore (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I voted in favour because I believe all measures aimed at fostering and increasing the transparency of Parliament's work are to be welcomed. Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament's powers have been strengthened and it is now colegislator in many areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. As a result, Parliament's work has become the focus of attention of a growing number of lobbyists, who act as an important source of information for Members. I therefore welcome the proposal to establish and maintain a common register in order to exercise scrutiny over the organisations and individuals who take part in the drafting and implementation of EU policies.

**Zuzana Brzobohatá (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (CS) The submitted change to the Rules of Procedure comes in response to the corruption revealed in recent months, with three MEPs accepting a corrupt proposal from investigative journalists. It is impossible to accept that MEPs will not be subject to public scrutiny regarding the interests they defend in their role, or the pressure they are subject to or who is putting them under pressure. I therefore very much welcome the introduction of the common register of lobbyists and lobbying organisations. The European Commission has already introduced such a register, and the European Parliament is therefore only extending its application to MEPs, officials and other

staff of the European Parliament. The register will include information on contacts between these people and lobbyists, and will be publicly accessible. A similar system already operates in the US Congress, and experience there shows that it is a sensible anti-corruption measure. I firmly believe that the expansion of the register will also prove an inspiration for the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The introduction of a register in the Czech Republic would make a decisive contribution to the development of Czech politics.

**Cristian Silviu Buşoi (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Creating a common transparency register is certainly an important step forward, much awaited by European citizens. EU institutions, whether elected or not, make decisions which affect citizens' everyday lives. In a democratic system, which the EU aspires to, it is completely natural for there to be a high level of transparency in the decision-making process.

This common transparency register also simplifies matters for lobbyists as this will provide a single means of registration instead of two, which is currently the case. On the other hand, this register will not, admittedly, be an adequate instrument for resolving the problem of corruption. However, I do not believe that the register's primary aim is solely to combat corruption as the instances of corruption have, however, been very few and far between.

**Derek Roland Clark (EFD)**, *in writing*. – UKIP MEPs abstained on this vote, not because we do not want transparency, but because these proposals are inadequate, and to vote in favour would have been to endorse inadequate provisions.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I support this decision because it makes a significant contribution towards strengthening transparency by approving the conclusion of an agreement between Parliament and the Commission on the establishment of a common transparency register. In a representative democracy, it is important that Union institutions be able to establish and maintain open, transparent and regular dialogue with the public, their representative associations and civil society.

Following the increase in Parliament's powers under the Treaty of Lisbon, it has become essential, in the interests of transparency, to establish a common register between Parliament and the Commission for the registration and monitoring of organisations and individuals participating in the development and implementation of EU policy. It is therefore necessary to modify Parliament's Rules of Procedure in order to institute the mandatory registration of any lobbyists in contact with Members of Parliament, the European institutions and their staff. This information should be accessible to the general public.

**Anne Delvaux (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of this report proposing that the register of interest groups should cover all the different European institutions. To date, more than 1 700 organisations have been accredited as interest groups in the European Parliament, and 3 900 in the Commission. If you want to be able to make valid comments on a subject of a technical nature, you normally seek information from those people who are most knowledgeable about these issues. It has always been thus and will continue to be so in the future. Lobbies play a useful and essential role in legislative work, providing that there is transparency. In order to achieve this, the report adopted establishes new rules and creates a 'transparency register' which is common to both the Commission and Parliament. Citizens will find a comprehensive compilation of information about the different contact people in the EU institutions. This 'one-stop shop' system will make it easier to register representatives of special interests, whether from commercial or non-commercial organisations. Parliament also particularly wants all meetings between

MEPs and interest groups on a particular issue to be mentioned at the end of the reports. I regret that registration is not mandatory, but as the saying goes: 'Chi va piano va sano'.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the report on the amendment to Parliament's Rules of Procedure following the establishment of a common transparency register because the principle of transparency should govern all those involved in decision making and in implementing EU policy.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The common transparency register following the conclusion of an interinstitutional agreement on transparency between Parliament and the Commission entails the amendment of the Rules of Procedure so as to incorporate the new situation, and so that it can be workable in Parliament's main legal instrument. Having voted in favour of the conclusion of this agreement, I would also like to give my support to the procedural changes.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Transparency is a right for citizens, and it helps to maintain the credibility of the European institutions: Parliament, the Commission and the Council. This report, which has been drawn up by Mr Casini, is on the need to amend Parliament's Rules of Procedure following the establishment of a common transparency register between Parliament and the Commission. Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament is a colegislator in almost all areas. Thus, in conjunction with the Commission, it has decided to establish a common register to list and monitor the individuals and organisations that have any kind of influence over the preparation and/or implementation of EU policy. Indeed, transparency is vital to the functioning of the European institutions and it has often been seen as lacking. The European public demands a high level of transparency from its representatives, not only in theory, but in practice, above all. The EU must set an example in terms of the transparency of its institutions, so I welcome the amendments proposed by the rapporteur to modify Parliament's Rules of Procedure in line with the decision made by the Conference of Presidents at its 18 November 2010 meeting.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The amendment being proposed to Parliament's Rules of Procedure is aimed at establishing and maintaining a common register for the registration and monitoring of organisations and individuals who participate in any way in the drafting and implementation of EU policy.

The existing system, on which the proposal is based, was created and launched by Parliament in 1996. At the time, it was the first EU institution to do this, with the Commission subsequently adopting one with similar objectives in 2008. It will be modified in a process that cannot be dissociated from recent problems involving alleged lobbying, which have affected Parliament. The arguments put forward this time are, however, different, focusing on the new powers of Parliament following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

The transparency of the institutions, their functioning and the decisions made by their representatives should be an intrinsic part of democracy. Measures helping to increase this transparency are therefore welcome and necessary. It is not, however, clear that this will be the result of all the changes proposed here. Although we support some of the measures proposed, we will follow their implementation with a view to evaluating their future results.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This concerns the establishment and maintenance of a common register for the registration and monitoring of organisations and individuals participating in the drafting and implementation of EU policy.

Based on existing systems which were created and launched by Parliament in 1996 and by the Commission in 2008, it seeks to address certain recent problems, although the argument for it in the report is the new powers entrusted to the European Parliament following the Treaty of Lisbon's entry into force.

Some aspects of it are positive, but we have serious doubts about other amendments. We support greater transparency, but it is not always clear that this is the aim of all the adopted amendments. We will see how it is implemented in the future.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, Parliament's powers have been strengthened and it is now colegislator in almost all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. As a result, it is the focus of attention of an even larger number of lobbyists, who, moreover, play a key role in the open, pluralist dialogue on which a democratic system is based, and act as an important source of information for Members in the context of the performance of their duties.

In the light of these developments, against this constitutional background, and in keeping with their commitment to transparency, Parliament and the Commission have agreed to establish and maintain a joint register in order to keep a list of the names of, and exercise scrutiny over, the organisations and individuals who take part in the drafting and implementation of EU policies.

One of the important corrective measures necessary is to improve the rules on lobbying firms' reporting of expenditure incurred for lobbying activities. The current legislation allows lobbyists to report much less than is actually incurred. Equally important is transparency with regard to the financial resources from which a lobbying and consulting company draws its revenue.

**Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I would like to congratulate Mr Casini on the excellent work he has done. I will vote in favour of his proposal to create a register of lobbyists so as to increase transparency in the European institutions. I hope, however, that representatives of the regions, for instance, will be given due recognition.

**Sylvie Guillaume (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Given the fact that pressure groups, whether they represent private or public interests, play an undeniable role in European affairs, there must be greater transparency regarding the relations they have with our institution. In my view, it should be mandatory for them to be listed on the transparency register. I support, in particular, the idea of a 'legislative fingerprint', which enables those lobbyists met by parliamentarians during the legislative process to be registered. It is indeed vital that we do all we can to regain or strengthen the confidence of the citizens in the functioning of the European institutions, and that is the direction in which this register quite rightly takes us.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I endorsed this document because the Treaty on European Union and, in particular, Article 11(1) and (2) thereof, provides a framework for, and seeks to foster relations between, the European institutions and European political leaders, on the one hand, and civil society, EU citizens and representative associations, on the other: 1. The institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action. 2. The institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament's powers have been strengthened and it is now colegislator in almost

all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. As a result, it is the focus of attention of an even larger number of lobbyists, who, moreover, play a key role in the open, pluralist dialogue on which a democratic system is based and act as an important source of information for Members in the context of the performance of their duties. In the light of these developments, and against this constitutional background, Parliament and the Commission have agreed to establish and maintain a common register in order to keep a list of the names of, and exercise scrutiny over, the organisations and individuals who take part in the drafting and implementation of EU policies. It is noted that the register must be kept in a manner consistent with the right of Members to perform their parliamentary duties without restriction and must not be used as a pretext to deny their voters access to Parliament's premises. In addition, it will not encroach upon the powers or prerogatives of the parties concerned and will have no bearing on their powers to organise their own activities.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I welcome this report. Following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, Parliament's powers have been strengthened and it is now colegislator in almost all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. As a result, it is the focus of attention of an even larger number of lobbyists, who, moreover, play a key role in the open, pluralist dialogue on which a democratic system is based and act as an important source of information for Members in the context of the performance of their duties. In the light of these developments, and against this constitutional background, and in keeping with their commitment to transparency, Parliament and the Commission have agreed to establish and maintain a joint register in order to keep a list of the names of, and exercise scrutiny over, the organisations and individuals who take part in the drafting and implementation of EU policies.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Parliament and the Commission are setting a good example by establishing a common transparency register to provide accreditation for lobbyists and other interest groups. It is just as important that the Council join this initiative. The requirement for Members to list their meetings with lobbyists on legislative matters annexed to their reports is also an important step towards greater transparency, which is needed in this type of relationship in order to avoid the kind of situations that have arisen in the past.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I did not vote for the Casini report on the establishment of a common transparency register. I consider that the establishment of such a register is a breach of the freedom that all politicians should enjoy. All parliamentarians take responsibility politically for their decisions and standpoints. They are sanctioned by the electorate.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The scope of the register covers all activities carried out with the objective of directly or indirectly influencing the policy formulation or implementation and decision-making processes of the European institutions. All organisations, irrespective of their legal status, engaged in activities falling under the scope of the register are expected to register. In the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, many across the party lines stressed the importance of the Council becoming part of the system. The vote by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs is an important step forward but our work on transparency continues. I support the report of Carlo Casini and voted 'in favour'.

**Andreas Mølzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) Not only the European Parliament but also the European Union as a whole is suffering from a huge credibility problem. Although

Parliament has finally reached an agreement on the transparency register, no doubt bowing to the pressure of the recent lobbying scandal, this register will be powerless. It will be necessary to record not only all work undertaken for businesses or for international companies, but also all paid lobbying for interest groups, such as professional organisations and trade unions.

Citizens have a right to transparency because it is their mandatory contributions which keep the statutory lobby groups in existence. Complete disclosure should include not only salaries, but also fees, invitations to dinner, etc. As these measures are a step in the right direction, I have voted for the report.

**Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) Setting up a common transparency register and improving all the rules on transparency in the European Parliament are required to increase citizens' confidence in Parliament's activities and ensure the necessary transparency for these activities. I voted for both Casini reports and I look forward to the strongest possible proposals from the European Parliament's working group on the transparency and regulation of lobbying activities.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The Treaty on European Union provides a framework for, and encourages relations between, the European institutions and European political leaders, on the one hand, and civil society, EU citizens and representative associations, on the other. Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament's powers have been strengthened and it is now colegislator in almost all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. As a result, it is the focus for the attention of an even larger number of lobbyists, who, moreover, play a key role in the open, pluralist dialogue on which a democratic system is based and act as an important source of information for Members in the performance of their duties. It is, however, essential to establish mechanisms for recording and monitoring. In view of this, I voted in favour of this report on the amendment to Parliament's Rules of Procedure following the establishment of a common register for the registration and monitoring of organisations and individuals who participate in any way in the drafting and implementation of EU policies.

**Phil Prendergast (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I support this report on the conclusion of an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament and the Commission on a common transparency register. Any actors seeking to influence decision making and policy implementation at a European level are expected to join the common register, which will make both registration and access to information about lobbyists easier. Those who do not register shall be refused a long-term access pass to the European Parliament. This is but a first step forward towards transparent relations between European institutions and lobbyists. Registration should be made mandatory and the Council should also join this agreement as soon as possible.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Following the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament has taken on the status of colegislator in almost all areas, thus making it the focus of much attention from lobbyists. In view of this, and in the interests of transparency, which should guide the dialogue between these stakeholders and Union institutions, Parliament and the Commission have agreed to establish a common register to list and monitor individuals and organisations involved in drafting and implementing EU policy. To this end, it is necessary to make amendments to the Rules of Procedure, and I voted in favour of these.

**Frédérique Ries (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) We must fight for transparency within the European institutions and, in that respect, I welcome the agreement with the Commission which seeks to set up at last a common register of interest groups of the European institutions.

I should just like to make one remark to say that I regret the Council's reluctance to sign up to this common register. Is it necessary to be backward-looking and keep on defending a lack of transparency rather than openness? It is, however, the duty also of the representatives of the Member States to provide information and transparency in their dealings with European citizens. I also have a wish for the future. I think that it is essential to move gradually towards an American-style system, which has 65 years' experience behind it, and which is based on the publication of key documents by lobbying groups (for example, of all contracts for more than USD 10 000).

I would like to say a final word about the legislative fingerprint, which is a good idea in theory but not in practice. Not because it would undermine the principle of parliamentarians' independence, but rather because it would lead to endless discussions in parliamentary committees on the whys and wherefores of the choice and frequency of the meetings with one lobbyist rather than another. To conclude, what is important is to come up with an effective and robust system. We are still far from achieving that.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) It is useful to listen to the points of view of different stakeholders when the European legislator is drafting and adopting a piece of legislation. However, in order to quantify these influences, we must have mandatory listing of all lobbyists in a register that is common to all the institutions.

The text that has just been adopted constitutes an interesting first step towards identifying the different types of lobbyists and the sums they use to try to influence the decisions to be made. It must develop further. The Council should also participate in the common register, which should be made mandatory and serve as a dynamic instrument in guaranteeing the transparency of the decision-making process. That is in the interests of European democracy.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The Treaty on European Union seeks to recognise and foster relations between the institutions and European politicians, on the one hand, and civil society, EU citizens and representative associations, on the other. The institutions shall give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action. In particular, the institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society.

The adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon has strengthened Parliament's powers and it is now colegislator in almost all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. In the light of these developments, Parliament and the Commission have agreed to establish a common register in order to keep a list of and exercise scrutiny over the organisations and individuals who take part in the drafting and implementation of EU policies. In order to take account of changes to existing rights and obligations and the establishment of new rights and obligations for Members, the resolution adopted today advocates the need to amend Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) We were initially opposed to the report since it applied the same rules to lobbyists as to public bodies, including the regions' representatives



to the EU; following our requests, however, the report was amended. We think it is right to establish a code of conduct for those who have access to Parliament on behalf of private associations or companies, and we also believe it is right not to apply the same rules to churches, political parties, trade unions and public bodies. We have therefore voted in favour.

**Niki Tzavela (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (EL) The Casini report emphasises the importance of amending the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure following the establishment of a common transparency register. I voted in favour of this report, which confirms the importance attached to transparency by the European institutions, because I share the view that the establishment of this register will help in controlling all the organisations and persons involved in making and applying the EU policies.

**Derek Vaughan (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I supported today's report calling for a joint register of lobbyists and interest groups to be set up. This is a first step towards greater transparency in both the European Parliament and Commission. A 'transparency register' will improve ease of access for citizens wishing to find specific information regarding which organisations and individuals have contact with both MEPs and Commission officials. The Parliament has made clear that registration for lobbyists who want to meet with MEPs will be mandatory from now on. I am encouraged by the Council's signal that it will also consider arrangements to put in place such a register and urge them to do so without delay.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of Mr Casini's report. Transparency in the activities that involve the European institutions, even though it has recently ended up tarnished, is a prerequisite for legitimacy and a basic factor in the establishment of proper, open relations with representative associations. I therefore believe that creating a common register for Parliament and the Commission in order to bring together all information on the organisations and individuals who have contact with the institutions will not only streamline bureaucratic procedures by providing for a single registration, but will also be a clear improvement leading towards an increasingly open and transparent dialogue with said lobbyists.

#### **Report: Carlo Casini (A7-0174/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report. It is a first step towards providing more transparency in the institutions' work and ensuring compliance with the Union's public administration rules. The transparency register, as it will be called from now on, is not obligatory, but lobbying individuals or organisations will be forced to register if they want permission to gain access to the European Parliament. Registered entities will also have to declare their sources of income and interests, as well as legislative proposals submitted. This will increase transparency and provide more comprehensive information on individuals or organisations who contact Members of the European Parliament about certain issues or with certain proposals. I believe that we should continue talks with the Council, so that it joins the transparency register and this register becomes a common register for all three institutions.

**Regina Bastos (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Between Parliament and the Commission, there are approximately 4 600 organisations accredited as interest groups. Following the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament's powers have been strengthened, making it colegislator in almost all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. This has attracted the attention of an even larger number of representatives of interest groups.

This report, which I voted for, follows the institutional agreement on the creation of a joint space for registering and exercising scrutiny over lobbyists and other interest groups in the Commission and Parliament. A common register between the various institutions will be created with the aim of contributing to greater transparency, and which will differentiate between interest groups representing civil society and public authorities.

In the interests of transparency, the creation of a system for the compulsory declaration of all meetings between registered organisations and the Members responsible for related legislation is equally important, and should be recorded in an annex to the respective reports or recommendations. It is just as important that the Council join this register.

**Gerard Batten, John Bufton, David Campbell Bannerman and Derek Roland Clark (EFD)**, *in writing*. – UKIP MEPs abstained on this vote, not because we do not want transparency, but because these proposals are inadequate, and to vote in favour would have been to endorse inadequate provisions.

**Sergio Berlato (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The establishment of a common register by Parliament and the Commission to bring together in a ‘one-stop shop’ all information on the actors in contact with the institutions is a step forward on the way to greater transparency. Transparency in the political institutions is, in my view, crucial for an open dialogue with civil society. In fact, ensuring that opinions and information can be made known and exchanged publicly in the various sectors in which the Union acts and, at the same time, guaranteeing that the organisations and individuals who play an active part in EU policy making and policy implementation are monitored, are important factors in the democratic lives of the institutions.

I would, however, like to express some reservations. I do not agree with excluding a series of actors from the scope of the register, such as the social partners and local, regional and municipal authorities. Their exclusion is unjustified, because these actors have specific interests and play just as active a part in decision making as many other representative associations. I also think the information required needs to be specified more clearly so that it cannot give rise to different interpretations, as happens in the current situation.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because transparency of political institutions is a prerequisite for legitimacy. We must scrutinise how decisions are made, what the influences behind them are and, finally, how resources, i.e. taxpayer’s money, are allocated. Therefore, rules for lobbying are ultimately a question of legitimacy. The European Parliament was the first European institution to address the phenomenon of an increasing number of interest groups at European level, and it is therefore necessary to examine the consequences of this evolution. Following the European Parliament elections, a new working group was formed between the Parliament and the Commission which was able to adopt in November 2010 a draft agreement on the establishment of a transparency register. According to the new draft, registration is not obligatory, but currently, only the representatives of registered interest groups are allowed access to the premises of the European Parliament. The common register ensures the widest participation of all categories of operators and makes it easier for non-commercial organisations to carry out their work. I believe that this common register is another step forward towards greater transparency in the European institutions, and will also increase citizens’ faith in the work of the institutions.

**Françoise Castex (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of this report as it is important to clarify matters at a time when the role of lobbies is still giving rise to much debate and,

at times, conjecture among European citizens. We regret, however, that the registration of organisations has not been made compulsory, especially as it is a *de facto* obligation to register in order to receive a card to enter our premises. On the other hand, we have fought to ensure that the offices representing local, regional and municipal authorities in the European institutions are not affected by this measure, contrary to what was planned in the initial text. We consider these structures to be the direct product of democratically elected bodies. They represent the general interest, and should therefore be distinguished from lobbyists, who defend individual interests. Nevertheless, this register is an important step forward because, in many areas, the lack of transparency surrounding the role of lobbies can present a real democratic problem.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This agreement is a first step, although undoubtedly an important one, towards greater transparency, by making the registering of all lobbyists who wish to enjoy permanent access to Parliament and the Commission *de facto* obligatory, including all information that identifies the legal structure and financial interests of the organisation in question.

The existence of a register of organisations and employees involved in decision making and the implementation of EU policy thereby strengthens transparency in the dialogue between these representatives of civil society and Union institutions while, at the same time, establishing binding measures in the event of an infringement of the code of conduct in the annex to the agreement.

I hope that a second step will soon be made towards the creation of more stringent standards that ensure consistency in the public administration of the EU and the strengthening of its institutional rules.

I regret that the Council has not yet participated in the agreement and joined the transparency register, as this affects the likelihood of achieving the necessary level of transparency at all stages of the EU legislative process. I would like to remind you that the level of transparency of political institutions is increasingly linked to its legitimacy.

**Proinsias De Rossa (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Transparency of political institutions is a prerequisite for legitimacy. It should be easy to scrutinise how decisions are made, what are the influences behind them and finally, how resources, i.e. taxpayers' money, are allocated. Therefore, rules for lobbying are ultimately a question of legitimacy. I supported this report which establishes a common register for lobbyists (transparency register) between the European Parliament and Commission. The scope of the register covers many activities carried out with the objective of directly or indirectly influencing the policy formulation or implementation and decision-making processes of the European institutions. All organisations, irrespective of their legal status, engaged in activities falling under the scope of the register are expected to register. This agreement with the European Commission provides only for voluntary registration, even though lobbyists not included in the joint register will no longer be able to obtain a long-term access badge to the European Parliament. The next step will be to extend the joint register to all the EU institutions and to convince the Commission and Council to make it mandatory. We need clear rules to prevent people and organisations from influencing EU decision making in a non-transparent manner.

**Christine De Veyrac (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I welcome the adoption of the Casini report on the introduction of a transparency register common to both Parliament and the Commission. The introduction of a public register to which lobbies must sign up if they

are to have access to these two institutions constitutes genuine democratic progress to the benefit of citizens. In this respect, the future obligation for rapporteurs to make public the names of the lobbies they have met is a further step in the direction of the full independence of the European Parliament, and will ensure that there is a balanced representation of the interests of all European citizens.

**Anne Delvaux (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted in favour of this report proposing that the list of interest groups should be common to all the different European institutions. To date, more than 1 700 organisations have been accredited as interest groups in the European Parliament, and 3 900 in the Commission. If you want to be able to make valid comments on a subject of a technical nature, you normally seek information from those people who are most knowledgeable about these issues. It has always been thus and will continue to be so in the future. Lobbies play a useful and essential role in legislative work, providing that there is transparency. In order to achieve this, the report adopted establishes new rules and creates a ‘transparency register’ which is common to both the Commission and Parliament. Citizens will find a comprehensive compilation of information about the different contact people in the EU institutions. This ‘one-stop shop’ system will make it easier to register representatives of special interests, whether from commercial or non-commercial organisations. Parliament also particularly wants all meetings between MEPs and interest groups on a particular issue to be mentioned at the end of the reports. I regret that registration is not mandatory, but as the saying goes: ‘Chi va piano va sano’.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of the report on the amendment to Parliament’s Rules of Procedure following the establishment of a common transparency register because the principle of transparency should govern all those involved in decision making and in implementing EU policy. I believe, however, that this register should be mandatory and extended to all the European institutions.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) In 2006, the Commission proposed a ‘one-stop shop’ to register lobbyists of the Commission and Parliament. In a resolution adopted in the plenary of 8 May 2008, Parliament welcomed the proposal and called for an interinstitutional agreement on the establishment of a common register between Parliament, the Commission and the Council. Moreover, at that time, Parliament proposed negotiations on a common code of conduct for the lobbyists and discussion of the sanctions that should apply in the event of an infringement.

Under this agreement, permanent access to the Parliament premises is allowed only to the registered interest representatives. Nevertheless, the common register seeks to ensure the widest participation of all categories of operators while respecting their different or specific duties. The scope of the register excludes social partners, churches, political parties and local, regional and municipal authorities, taking into account their particular characteristics.

Such an agreement would benefit from being joined by the Council. I believe that Parliament and its Members should lead by example as regards the transparency of their activities and the clarity of their aims.

I voted in favour.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Transparency is the basis of democracy. The public has a right to it and it helps maintain the credibility of the European institutions: Parliament, the Commission and the Council. This report, drafted by Mr Casini, concerns the conclusion of an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament and the Commission

on a common transparency register. I would like to highlight that Parliament was the first institution to analyse the phenomenon of pressure groups, having launched the register for lobbyists in 1996. In 2006, the Commission proposed the creation of a 'one-stop shop' register for lobbyists in the Commission and the European Parliament, through the 'European Transparency Initiative'. Indeed, transparency is essential to the functioning of the European institutions, which are often accused of a lack thereof. The European public demands a high level of transparency from its representatives, not only in theory, but most importantly in practice. As such, I welcome the adoption of the draft agreement on the creation of a 'transparency register', and I am certain that it will constitute a significant step forward in the European institutions' transparency and will contribute to consolidating the European project among the public.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** Let us begin with the assumption, as stated in the report, that the 'transparency of political institutions is a prerequisite for legitimacy. It should be easy to scrutinise how decisions are made, what are the influences behind them and finally, how resources [...] are allocated'. The institutions' transparency and the clarity of their representatives' actions should be an intrinsic element of real and genuine democracy.

Unfortunately, we know that there is sometimes a great difference between the nice-sounding words that are said and what is done. Parliament was the first European institution to broach the subject of the increasing number of lobbies at European level, having launched the register for representatives of interest groups in 1996.

The Commission later also began initiatives in this area, and a working group was established in 2008 between Parliament and the Commission. In 2009, the group approved a joint declaration and a proposal for a common code of conduct.

In 2010, a new working group approved a draft agreement for the establishment of a 'transparency register' which ensures the widest possible participation of all categories of operator, while respecting their different or specific identities. It is important to monitor the practical results of this.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** The report states that the 'transparency of political institutions is a prerequisite for legitimacy. It should be easy to scrutinise how decisions are made, what are the influences behind them and finally, how resources [...] are allocated'.

However, there is often a big gap between theory and reality, despite Parliament having been the first EU institution to deal with the phenomenon of the growing number of interest groups at European level and, in particular, with the consequences of this development for the legislative process. Following various reports and in-depth debates, Parliament launched its register for representatives of interest groups in 1996.

In the meantime, the Commission also launched initiatives, creating a high-level joint working group in 2008 between Parliament and the Commission. In 2009, the group approved a joint declaration and a proposal for a common code of conduct. After the European elections, a new working group was established between Parliament and the Commission.

In November 2010, the working group was able to approve a draft agreement for the establishment of a 'transparency register' which ensures the widest possible participation of all categories of operator, while respecting their different or specific identities.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Transparency of political institutions is a prerequisite for legitimacy. It should be easy to scrutinise how decisions are made, what the influences are behind them and how resources, i.e. taxpayer's money, are allocated. Therefore, rules for lobbying are ultimately a question of legitimacy.

Parliament was the first European institution to address the phenomenon of an increasing number of interest groups at European level and, in particular, the consequences of this evolution for the legislative process. While registration is not obligatory, it can be considered as such 'de facto' because permanent access to Parliament's premises is granted only to registered representatives. However, it is desirable for the future to achieve a system of registration that is obligatory 'de jure'.

The common register ensures the widest participation of all categories of operators while respecting their different or specific identities. The new name – transparency register – makes it easier for non-commercial organisations to join the register. This will be a step forward towards greater transparency in the European institutions, and I hope it will contribute to giving the European project greater legitimacy among Europe's citizens.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI)**, *in writing*. – (FR) It is a well-known fact that there are more than 15 000 lobbyists active in Brussels trying to influence the legislative texts that are adopted there, and that they intervene at all stages of the legislative process. Despite the fact that this activity is viewed in very negative terms in France, it is not entirely illegitimate for interest groups, whether commercial, social, trade unions, etc. to make their points of view and expertise known, especially to the less knowledgeable civil servants and elected representatives. It therefore makes sense for these lobbies and their representatives to be listed in a register, and that their principal sources of funding should also be mentioned in this register, particularly if they come from the European budget.

Registration should be mandatory not only for these organisations, but also for all groups outside Parliament, including those which are meant to fulfil a role provided for by the Treaties (trade unions, churches, philosophical organisations, local authorities, etc.), including groups composed, in part or in whole, of Members of Parliament, such as the European Friends of Israel, because in that instance, they are acting as interest groups and not as parliamentarians. In that respect, the agreement we are voting on today does not go far enough in terms of transparency.

**Estelle Grelier (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Following recent events which have highlighted the potential abuses of lobbying, it has appeared all the more necessary to increase transparency regarding the work of interest groups at the European institutions. The merging of the lists of lobbyists registered at the Parliament and the Commission represents a first step towards compiling an exhaustive register of the lobbies active in Brussels and, subsequently, towards greater citizen access to democratic checks and balances in the decision-making process. I have, however, fought to prevent the offices representing local authorities at the European institutions from being affected by this measure. Indeed, I consider these structures to be the direct product of democratically-elected bodies (town, departmental, regional councils, etc.). They represent the general interest, and should therefore be distinguished from lobbyists who defend individual interests. Furthermore, I hope that this register will develop to become mandatory one day, and include all lobbyists who are active at the European institutions. The notion of transparency is crucial to European Union policy and it must be extended to cover all interest groups that participate in its operation.

**Roberto Gualtieri (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The approval of a common transparency register, following a broad majority vote in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, is another step towards greater transparency in parliamentary activity. A common register between the European Parliament and the Commission that is public and accessible online will make it easier for citizens to check the various stakeholders with whom MEPs interact.

However, the agreement still needs to be improved as registration by actors is still on a voluntary basis, although a pre-requisite for obtaining access to the institutions. The next objective will therefore be to make registration mandatory for all lobbyists. We also expect that, like the other European institutions, the Council will adhere to the indications of Parliament and the Commission and participate in the register.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I welcomed this report because transparency of political institutions is a prerequisite for legitimacy. It should be easy to scrutinise how decisions are made, what the influences behind them are and, finally, how resources, i.e. taxpayer's money, are allocated. Therefore, rules for lobbying are ultimately a question of legitimacy. The result achieved corresponds to the objectives laid out by the Parliament in the most essential points. Firstly, although registration is not obligatory – which was the aim of Parliament – it can be considered obligatory *de facto*, because only registered interest group representatives are allowed permanent access to Parliament premises. Secondly, the common register ensures the widest participation of all categories of operators while respecting their different or specific identities. The new name – transparency register – makes it easier for non-commercial organisations to join the register. Thirdly, the new mechanism provides additional information such as the number of individuals involved in all the activities relating to the register, and the level of EU resources received by the registrant. It will also provide clarifications regarding the eligible activities falling under the scope of the register, and the processes by which complaints will be handled. I believe that it was essential to adopt the draft agreement on the establishment of a transparency register. The common register will be a step forward towards greater transparency in the European institutions, which hopefully will help give the European project greater legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens.

**Agnès Le Brun (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) More than 1 700 organisations have been accredited as interest groups at the European Parliament, and 3 900 at the Commission. These organisations have been listed to date in two different registers, one for each institution. In 2008, Parliament had called for these records to be merged so as to facilitate record-keeping. An institutional agreement was reached between Parliament and the Commission with the aim of setting up a common register. This agreement was awaiting validation and was put to the vote in the European legislative assembly. I voted in favour of this text because it will enable greater transparency in respect of the actions of interest groups. It is true that under this text, it is not mandatory to be listed on this register but Parliament will require such registration for any organisation that wishes to use its premises. The text also proposes introducing a 'legislative fingerprint' for lobbying, by recording in an annex to all legislative acts those interest groups that have played a role in drafting them. The common register is due to become available online in June.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Transparency of political institutions is a prerequisite for legitimacy. It should be easy to scrutinise how decisions are made, what are the influences behind them and finally, how resources, i.e. taxpayer's money, are allocated. Therefore, rules for lobbying are ultimately a question of legitimacy. The Parliament was the first European institution to address the phenomenon of an increasing number of interest

groups at European level and, especially, the consequences of this evolution for the legislative process. After several reports and thorough discussions, the Parliament launched its register of interest representatives in 1996. The joint register will be a step forward towards greater transparency in the European institutions, which hopefully will contribute to greater legitimacy of the European project among its citizens.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) No pressure group representing commercial interests should obtain a permanent pass to the European institutions. Their access to the European Parliament must be strictly limited to meetings granted to them by parliamentarians and political groups.

The proposed 'transparency register' is nothing other than administrative legitimisation. It serves to maintain the current situation. The lobbyists have a bright future ahead of them. I shall vote against this hypocritical report, which I condemn. It would be better to make these people declare their personal links with the media, as well as their parliamentary and administrative links to the European Parliament.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Parliament and the Commission are setting a good example by establishing a common transparency register to provide accreditation for lobbyists and other interest groups. Moreover, the compulsory nature of the register for all lobbyists who want permanent access to Parliament and to the Commission is an important step in increasing the transparency of relations between those organisations and the European institutions. Once again, we regret that the Council has not signed up to these measures.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) A voluntary register is complete nonsense and will not result in increased transparency. In addition, the Council of Ministers is not yet involved, which means that we do not even have all the key legislative bodies on board. Even if the Council were to become involved, there would still be enough loopholes left. There are allegedly 1 350 expert groups working on official papers published by the Commission. However, the identity of the members of these advisory bodies, which meet behind closed doors, remains a closely guarded secret.

The Commission is now paying more attention to the activities of former Commissioners in the period immediately after they have left Brussels. However, are there also controls in place in the other direction? We only need to think of the latest move from the music industry association to the copyright department. As these measures are a step in the right direction, I have voted for the report.

**Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PL) I fully support the decision we have made today on the conclusion of an interinstitutional agreement between the European Parliament and the Commission on a common transparency register.

Parliament has kept a register of interest groups since 1996 and should be an example for other institutions in this regard. The European Commission did not create its register of lobbyists until 2008, and the Council of the European Union still does not have one. The decision taken in the European Parliament will combine the registers of lobbyists and interest groups currently kept separately by the two abovementioned institutions. The process will lead to greater transparency and will, above all, simplify access to information, which will be kept in one place. Creating a common register is useful for lobbyists too, as they only need to register once. The decision also excludes social partners, churches, political parties and local and regional governments from the transparency register. In



addition, interest groups will be recorded in the explanatory memorandum to the report or recommendation if they have obtained a meeting with a Member about a legislative dossier. In my opinion, this decision is an important step in increasing transparency and I am waiting impatiently for the EU Council to join the common register.

**Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (EL) Institutions earn their credentials by operating in a transparent manner. This particular report, which I voted for, puts the question of accountability on a proper footing. Citizens must have easy and unimpeded access in the decision-making process to the influence and activity of interest representatives. It is a fact that, at European level, the European Parliament was the first institution to deal with the emergence of a large number of interest groups. It is also a fact that there is still a strong upward trend here, as a result of Parliament's constantly expanding legislative competences. Consequently, the common register is a first and important step in controlling and safeguarding transparent action by interest groups.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The transparency of political institutions is a prerequisite for legitimacy, and it is an ethical imperative. Parliament was the first EU institution to tackle the phenomenon of the growing number of interest groups at European level and, in particular, with the consequences of this development for the legislative process. After several reports and thorough discussions, the Parliament launched its register for interest representatives in 1996. In 2006, the Commission issued a 'European Transparency Initiative' where it proposed a common 'one-stop shop' register for lobbyists in the Commission and Parliament. Parliament's answer to this Commission initiative was the report by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs on the development of the framework for the activities of interest representatives in the European institutions. The resolution was adopted in plenary on 8 May 2008. Subsequently, in November 2010, the working group was able to adopt a draft agreement on the establishment of a transparency register, as Parliament had reached its main objectives. I believe that the common register is a step towards greater transparency in the European institutions, so I voted in favour of this report.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The activity of interest representatives from a variety of areas in relation to Union institutions – in this instance, Parliament and the Commission – has undeniable advantages. It increases the range of relevant information for decision making and provides knowledge of legitimate interests which are worthy of consideration. However, it is essential to safeguard the transparency of the EU institutions' actions so as to ultimately ensure their legitimacy and the thorough consideration of their scope, without misuse of power. I therefore welcome the conclusion of this agreement, which, by making the registration of all lobbyists wishing to enjoy permanent access to Parliament and the Commission *de facto* mandatory, marks a decisive step in strengthening transparency in the dialogue between the EU institutions and these representatives of civil society

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Transparency of political institutions' activities is a prerequisite for legitimacy. It must always and, in all circumstances, be easy to scrutinise how any decision was made, what factors influenced it and, above all, how resources – which means taxpayers' money – were used. Parliament was the first European institution to set up a register of lobbyists in 1996. The resolution adopted today highlights the fact that the establishment of a common register ensures the widest participation of the various categories of operators while respecting their differences and specific identities. This mechanism provides important information such as the number of individuals and

organisations involved in all the activities relating to the register and the level of EU resources received by registrants.

**Bogusław Sonik (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PL) Brussels, which is considered by some to be second only to Washington as a mecca for lobbyists, needs proper regulations and clearly-defined principles of cooperation between decision makers and representatives of various interest groups. We should remember that lobbying, interpreted as advocacy by various social groups, is an indivisible part of contemporary democratic systems.

Once again, Members have expressed their support for the introduction of transparency. A common register of lobbyists will increase transparency in EU institutions. It will also distinguish between representatives of pressure groups and representatives of non-governmental organisations and government organisations. There is no doubt that interest groups present a platform for the exchange of information and are an important channel of communication between citizens and the European Union. To make this cooperation as effective as possible so that it achieves the expected results, it should be regulated and transparent.

**Eva-Britt Svensson (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (SV) The decision concerning the so-called transparency register is not ambitious enough. The Commission's register, which is now being put together with Parliament's register, is voluntary and covers a small proportion of the estimated 15 000 lobbyists in Brussels. The register lacks relevant information.

I view the report as representing a certain, albeit limited, amount of progress. It would have been better to have waited to see what the group led by President Buzek came up with before taking the decision.

The scandals that have been brought to light over recent months highlight the fact that Parliament's rules are also inadequate. We need a code of conduct which makes it impermissible for MEPs to be paid for supporting the proposals of lobbyist groups. The only people that MEPs should represent should be their electorates; they should not represent particular economic or religious interests.

I believe that all lobbyists should be registered. Making exceptions for certain lobbyists will create loopholes in the control system. During the election campaign, my party demanded mandatory registration of lobbyists on a register that is common to all EU institutions. We also called for information to be provided on the particular issues that the lobbyists were concerned with. The register should contain financial information, including the expenditure for their lobbying activities and who finances these activities. A code of conduct for lobbying activities is necessary. Lobbyists who behave unethically must be publicly exposed and it must be possible for them to be barred. We must have double counting of gifts, travel and lunches for officials and politicians; in other words, both the giver and the recipient must declare the gifts. Officials within the EU must not be able to go directly into a lobbyist job with links to their previous work for a period of two years. In addition, all in- and out-going post between EU institutions and lobbyists must be made public. Lobbyists must not be able to request confidentiality.

Mr Casini's report does not meet these requirements.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing.* – (DE) Transparency is an important component of democracy and a requirement for the participation of citizens, which makes it an essential means of gaining their trust. In addition, the accountability which results from transparency requirements is an important instrument for preventing all kinds of abuse. This draft

agreement concerning the establishment of a transparency register takes all the essential requirements into consideration, which means that I was able to give the agreement as a whole my support. The next step must be to follow up the objectives of this new register and to combat any new difficulties which arise immediately and effectively in the spirit of the original agreement.

**Anna Záborská (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (SK) Lobbying is a legitimate activity. It is a basic element of democracy. Representative democracy can function only when citizens communicate with their elected representatives and ask them to promote their interests. From this perspective, it is not important whether citizens approach politicians as individuals, associations, trading companies or manufacturing firms. No regulation should therefore restrict one of the basic rights of citizens. However, the reasons for which an elected representative decides to prefer one interest ahead of another must be based on his convictions, and not on personal gain. The transparency of an MEP's work in contact with people who are promoting their own interests is the instrument that will perhaps best prevent corruption in the making of laws. I therefore support the proposed common register, which takes account of the varying nature of interest groups, and distinguishes between those that lobby with the aim of boosting their profits and those that address elected representatives with the aim of achieving the greater good of society as a whole.

**Reports: Carlo Casini (A7-0173/2011), (A7-0174/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament's powers have been strengthened and it is now colegislator in almost all areas under the ordinary legislative procedure. As a result, it is the focus of attention of an even larger number of lobbyists, who, moreover, play a key role in the open, pluralist dialogue on which a democratic system is based, and act as an important source of information for Members in the context of the performance of their duties. In the light of these developments, and against this constitutional background, and in keeping with their commitment to transparency, Parliament and the Commission have agreed to establish and maintain a common register in order to keep a list of the names of, and exercise scrutiny over, the organisations and individuals taking part in the drafting and implementation of EU policies. The register will be established and kept on the basis of the existing arrangements introduced by Parliament in 1996 and by the Commission in June 2008, as developed by the joint Parliament-Commission working party and on the basis of the experience gained and the suggestions made by the parties concerned. The work towards transparency must continue.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Political institutions are only credible if they are transparent, thus giving them the legitimacy that they need to preserve the democracy that characterises them. In view of this, and considering the importance of the issue of legitimacy and informing citizens for the effectiveness and proper functioning of European policies, I voted for the draft agreement on the establishment of a common transparency register.

**Report: Ashley Fox (A7-0074/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The smooth functioning of the Internal Market depends on the stability of the financial system and on the trust placed in financial institutions and transactions by the European public and consumers. In the wake of the financial crisis, it has become clear that the quality of consumer protection and safeguards

in the financial services sector requires tangible and significant improvement, particularly as regards monitoring and supervision. There is a need for an effective and adequate governance system in terms of risk management, compliance with regulations, the internal audit function, strategies, policies, and processes and procedures. This challenge, which is as important as it is complex, can be met by a package of measures with either immediate or medium-term effects. How the accountability of members of boards of directors is organised must be clearly defined, and must be put into practice in a reasonable way, so as not to jeopardise financial institutions' willingness to seize business opportunities, which is a desirable aspect of their work, or the quality of the human resources at their disposal. The report identifies solutions to this, so I am voting in favour.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report. The proper functioning of the Internal Market depends on the stability of the financial system and on the trust put by European citizens and consumers in financial institutions and transactions. During the recent financial crisis, many financial institutions around the world failed at great cost to the taxpayer. I support the Commission's initiative to take a critical look at the soundness of financial institutions and of the financial system as a whole, and at the regulation and supervision of the system, in order to prevent any repeat of the crisis in the future and to ensure that the financial sector meets the needs of the real economy and displays the greatest possible degree of social responsibility.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for Mr Fox's report. As shadow rapporteur for the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), I should point out that the excellent outcome achieved at the final vote highlights once again the close cooperation between the political groups. We therefore successfully prevented the European Parliament adopting a position geared too much towards mandatory regulations on corporate governance. It is of paramount importance that our group promotes a balanced approach to resolving the global financial crisis. This is why we must avoid introducing barriers in financial institutions. The final report attaches greater importance and gives more power to the role of the European Supervisory Authorities. The most important compromise involves putting the 'comply or explain' principle and the mandatory regulations on an equal footing. I think that regulations should be introduced only when the codes of good practice fail. The approach based on the 'comply or explain' principle is proportionate and can be applied to a large number of financial institutions. At the same time, however, this must be supplemented by regular external evaluation and appropriate regulatory supervision.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted for this report because it represents Parliament's contribution to the discussions on means of ensuring more effective governance in financial institutions in Europe. This discussion is particularly important for finding ways of avoiding a repeat of the financial and, ultimately, economic crisis that hit the whole world in 2008. The collapse of a series of financial institutions cost and is still costing taxpayers dear. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the cause of the problems that arose. In response to the Green Paper on improving the governance of financial institutions published by the Commission, the European Parliament's report devotes significant attention to the need to regulate more strictly the procedures for appointing managers, to laying down the competences of board members and aptitude test criteria, and to ways of guaranteeing their independence. The report calls for the establishment of mandatory risk committees at board level, for financial institutions to be required to disclose recovery planning and supervisory reports, for an annual report to be drafted on the adequacy and

effectiveness of their internal control systems, and for a similar assessment to be included in the annual report drawn up by external auditors.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Bearing in mind the importance of the trust that European citizens and consumers put in financial institutions and transactions for the stability of our financial system and, consequently, for the smooth functioning of the Internal Market, I welcome the Commission's Green Paper and the opportunity to improve corporate governance structures throughout the EU. Several things will need to be done in order to ensure the smooth and sustainable functioning of the European financial market, the most important of which, in my opinion, are a targeted approach responding to the needs of the real economy and the implementation of a policy of increased social responsibility and risk assessment by boards in order to avoid a financial crisis in the future.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of the alternative motion for a resolution on corporate governance in financial institutions as it tables proposals which would ensure improvements in corporate governance structures throughout the EU, taking into account the fact that the financial sector must respond to the needs of the real economy, contribute to sustainable growth and demonstrate greater social responsibility.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The smooth functioning of the Internal Market depends on the stability of the financial system and, consequently, on the trust put by the European public and consumers in financial institutions and transactions. As such, there is a need to strengthen and review the current systems, which have been shown to be inadequate, with particular emphasis on mechanisms of control and supervision.

To this end, I welcome the conclusions and observations of the Green Paper and the opportunity to improve the governance of financial institutions through the Union. I also join the rapporteur in calling for a cost-benefit impact assessment of the Commission's proposals, with a focus on the need to preserve competitiveness and contribute to economic growth. As such, there is an urgent need to find mechanisms and solutions that enable risk reduction and create a permanent dialogue between the supervisory authorities, auditors and the institutions.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The global financial crisis triggered by the bankruptcy of the Lehman Brothers bank in 2008 and 'subprime credit' – the inappropriate securitisation of mortgage debt – sparked very serious doubts concerning the strength of financial institutions. This forced the governments of both the Member States and the United States to inject public funds amounting to roughly 25% of gross domestic product (GDP) into the financial sector. This situation led the Commission, through its Communication of 4 March 2009, to introduce a genuine programme of reforms of the financial markets' regulatory frameworks and supervisory regimes. Bearing in mind the economic and financial crisis we are currently experiencing, it is never too much to redouble one's efforts with regard to the financial sector, beginning with corporate governance which, most of the time, does not take customers into account, whether they are savers, depositors, etc. I therefore welcome the Commission's Green Paper, and welcome its proposals, which can and should accompany and complement the regulations adopted to strengthen the financial system in the context of the new European supervisory system. I am therefore voting in favour of the report on corporate governance in financial institutions, and I hope that this will contribute decisively to their strength.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report recognises some important issues and evidence, like the fact that the financial sector should respond to the needs of the

economy, contribute to sustainable growth and demonstrate greater social responsibility, as well as that ‘during the recent financial crisis, many financial institutions around the world failed at great cost to the taxpayer’.

However, having made these statements, the report does not draw out all the consequences of the facts presented, simply making a few inconsequential observations. According to the rapporteur, everything, or almost everything, boils down to tired arguments about creating an effective and adequate governance system in terms of risk management, enforcement of rules, ethics in the behaviour of some of those involved in the financial markets and institutions, and so on.

We are aware of the contribution that some of these guidelines may make towards appreciably and temporarily improving the workings of the financial system. Nonetheless, it is obvious that they cannot alter the system’s most essential aspect: its unsustainability, predatory nature and emphasis on speculation, with the principal aim of increasing profits.

The report completely fails to address the central issue: the state recovering its role in this area; taking back the financial sector and returning it to its social role, under public and democratic control.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The only important points that the report makes are the acknowledgements that ‘the financial sector should meet the needs of the real economy, help to promote sustainable growth and display the greatest possible degree of social responsibility’, and that ‘during the recent financial crisis, many financial institutions around the world failed at great cost to the taxpayer’. It even claims that some financial institutions and authorities did not understand the nature, amplitude and complexity of the risks they incurred.

However, the report does not then make the correct inferences, limiting itself to questions of ethics in the behaviour of some people involved in the financial institutions and markets, as well as to creating a governance system which is effective and adequate in terms of risk management, compliance with regulations, and so on.

Of course, these proposals could slightly improve the working of the banks over time, but they do not change the exploitative nature of the system, or its principal objective of increasing profit and speculative endeavours. The report does not, therefore, touch on the central issue: public and democratic control of the entire financial sector.

That is why we voted against.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Financial risk is essential to the existence of the financial sector, and is equally essential in terms of both the business success of that sector and security functions for the economy in general. However, it is in the public interest that risks should be restricted to prevent systemic crisis. This challenge, as important as it is complex, can be met by means of a package of measures which will have either direct or indirect impact.

Financial institutions should be obliged to prepare annual reports on the adequacy and effectiveness of their internal control systems, and boards should have these reports adopted. Financial institutions should give greater attention to the implementation of measures to raise awareness about the risks, as better information about risk at all levels of society – and among employees – is often crucial in improving risk management.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI)**, *in writing.* – (FR) Having noted, and I quote and now utter the following euphemism – ‘a lack of values and ethics in the behaviour of certain actors in the financial markets and institutions’ – this Parliament has set off on a pathetic crusade to inject some ethics into the sector. To use the word crusade is perhaps to overstate the case. It might be better to say that some pious hopes are expressed that finally, the interests of customers and workers should be taken into account. There is some pitiful bleating about social, cultural and ‘gender’ diversity on boards of directors (quotas for the Roma, no doubt?). There are some proposals, which have already largely been adopted at European level, on the indecent remunerations in the sector, where we could do considerably better. There are some risk controls here and there. In short, the point that escapes you is the fact that companies are merely playing by the rules that you set.

Now these rules, rules that you are basically refusing to question, are the free international movement of capital, the financialisation of the economy, an over-emphasis on the short term, securitisation, complex financial products that are not based on any concrete wealth creation and the constitution of large multinational groups which are more powerful than States and are not subject to control. Until you deal with the foundations of this system, you will change nothing.

**Louis Grech (S&D)**, *in writing.* – The worst impact of the recent financial crisis has been on ordinary consumers. Various EU governments have used taxpayers’ money to bail out some banks that had managed their affairs in an irresponsible way. Were it not for the support of taxpayers, such banks would have collapsed with disastrous effect on different sectors of the economy in various Member States. Now that the worst phase of this financial crisis is over, banks are still not acting, or conducting their business, in the best interest of consumers. Instances of mis-selling of financial services products, and lack of sufficient support by banks for personal customers and small businesses that find themselves facing temporary liquidity problems, show that more tangible action should be taken by regulators to ensure that operators in the financial services industry support their clients and generally offer better protection to consumers. Therefore, I voted in favour of this report.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I welcomed this document because the financial sector should meet the needs of the real economy, help to promote sustainable growth and display the greatest possible degree of social responsibility. It is noted that there is a lack of values and ethics in the behaviour of some actors in financial markets and institutions. Financial markets and institutions have to take into account, as part of their corporate social responsibility, the interests of all parties involved, including clients, shareholders and employees. Effective risk governance is one of the most important factors for preventing future crises. Therefore, an effective governance system needs to be established in all financial institutions, with adequate risk management, compliance, internal audit functions (and, in the case of insurers, actuarial functions), strategies, policies, processes and procedures. I believe that it is necessary to establish mandatory risk committees or equivalent arrangements. We should not take disproportionate risks.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) The financial crisis has highlighted the lack of effectiveness of the current corporate governance principles. It is now vital for the lessons to be learnt from what has happened to avoid a similar situation recurring in the future. The area of corporate governance is evolving all the time and it is the financial sector which has particular responsibility for serious, sustainable economic strategies. We must maintain the sound, stable and competitive nature of financial institutions so that they can make a contribution to economic growth. In this regard, I think that effective

corporate governance must take into account equally the interests of all the stakeholders and, at the same time, the stability of the financial system. This will allow the market to operate at its optimum and consumers will show increased confidence in financial institutions and transactions.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I welcome this report. The aim of the Green Paper under consideration here is to draw conclusions from the global financial crisis triggered by the bankruptcy of the Lehman Brothers bank in autumn 2008 following the inappropriate securitisation of US subprime mortgages. In the light of the development of new financial instruments in a globalised world, the Green Paper takes a critical look at the soundness of financial institutions and of the financial system as a whole, and at the regulation and supervision of the system, with a view to preventing any repeat of the crisis in the future. The Commission regards the strengthening of corporate governance as central to its financial market reform and crisis prevention programme. In that connection, the Commission notes, in particular, that in the financial services sector, corporate governance must take account of the interests of other stakeholders (depositors, savers, life insurance policy holders, etc.) and of the stability of the financial system, owing to the systemic nature of many of the players involved

**Arlene McCarthy (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Poor corporate governance in financial institutions – and particularly banks' murky pay culture – was a key factor in creating the conditions for the financial crisis. Labour Euro MPs backed this report which, thanks to amendments adopted at the committee stage, calls for Commission action to raise financial firms' corporate governance standards. These demands include stronger oversight of risks that a firm takes on, high standards of independence and diversity for members of firms' boards, including better gender balance and, crucially, transparency around pay, so shareholders and the public can hold banks to account. As the Conservative-led government in the United Kingdom has shelved legislation on transparency introduced by the previous Labour Government, I welcome the inclusion of my proposal to introduce such a requirement at the EU level.

Labour Euro MPs opposed the rapporteur's amendments to weaken the committee report, including a lower requirement for representation of women, a slower timetable for action on pay reform and less information on staff pay. The Commission must now complete its consultation and swiftly bring forward ambitious proposals to ensure that governance of financial firms will help prevent, not facilitate, future crises.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The recent financial crisis reinforced the need for us to look at the moral issues relating to managing financial institutions in a more responsible way. Issues relating to remuneration policies, and governance of the remuneration of directors and managers of financial institutions, must be governed by ethical and moral principles that do not allow situations such as those experienced in the recent past, with the awarding of management prizes in companies that immediately afterwards filed for bankruptcy or were found to be in serious difficulties. The EU must have a productive, social and environmental model with a long-term outlook that respects everyone's interests: companies, shareholders and workers.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The aim of the resolution is to strengthen corporate governance, which is considered by the Commission to be the major element of the programme of financial market reform and crisis prevention. I disagree with that because it may lead to an increase in corruption and violations. I voted 'against'.



**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) The introduction of corporate governance may increase European citizens' confidence in the stability of the financial system, but the markets are reacting by bringing in their own mechanisms and the role played by the rating agencies must not be underestimated. It is completely incomprehensible that citizens are having to tighten their belts to pay for the rescue package for the banks, while the very same managers at the banks who were calling desperately for help are now paying themselves bonuses amounting to millions of euro. Far too little was done during the process of rescuing the banks to respond to this predictable development. At the same time, many small and medium-sized businesses, which the EU always praises on paper as being the engine of the economy, were dealt a fatal blow, because, on the basis of the Basel agreements, the banks preferred to hold onto their money, rather than lending it to companies. The banking crisis has also highlighted the collapse of the myth of the self-regulating market.

It emerged during the crisis in Asia that regulation is a sensible precaution. It remains to be seen to what extent the new monitoring and supervisory measures will take effect. A whole range of mistakes have been made and there has been a breathtaking lack of ethics, morals and decency, combined with conflicts of interest. The report is a move in the right direction, but in some areas, it is not specific enough, which is why I have abstained.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report on corporate governance in financial institutions sets out a range of measures to be implemented in the companies governing financial institutions. In short, its aim is to draw conclusions from the global financial crisis triggered by the bankruptcy of the Lehman Brothers bank in autumn 2008, related to the inappropriate securitisation of US subprime mortgages. In order to prevent this situation from repeating itself, Parliament proposes that corporate governance must, particularly in the financial services sector, take account of the interests of other stakeholders – depositors, savers, life insurance policy holders, etc. – and of the stability of the financial system, owing to the systemic nature of many of the players involved. The most important of the measures proposed is the development of objective competence criteria to assess the suitability of candidates for controlled roles, taking into account the nature, complexity and size of the financial institution. I would like to align myself with this package of measures by voting for it, in the hope that the measures tabled by the Commission, and now by Parliament, will be sufficient to prevent the recurrence of situations like the one which we experienced in autumn 2008, and which is still being seen in the daily lives of the Portuguese people.

**Miguel Portas (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted against for the following reasons. The report does not accept that the financial crisis of 2007-2008 was systemic in nature: in other words, that it stemmed from the way the financial system is organised. This would mean acknowledging that the way the system is organised strongly influences the decisions of the financial companies' directors, whatever the levels of transparency required of them. For example, the report fails to recognise that the commercial banks' ability to make money from speculative financial investments was a very important factor in the crisis. The report does not touch on this organisational issue, and no amount of risk boards or competence criteria for directors can avoid the harmful consequences of speculating on families' savings for profit. The 'herd behaviour' of the financial markets is an inescapable phenomenon, leading to speculative bubbles which later burst.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) No market in which financial institutions have a pivotal role is able to operate without confidence that the various economic operators

work properly. As such, there is a need to strike a balance between these institutions' freedom to conduct their business, in what is an essentially private matter, and the economic impact that another crisis in the financial system could have on the real economy, and for the lives of everyone as members of a community. If we analyse the causes of the recent financial crisis, we can see that it is necessary to find mechanisms for control of investment risk, of the composition of boards, and of directors' pay, thereby enabling enhanced cooperation between public and private supervisory bodies, while ensuring their independence. Since this resolution puts forward proposals in these different areas, I voted in favour.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – We had to abstain at the end. Our AMR, co-signed by S&D and aimed at giving the resolution a stronger regulatory flavour, was rejected. Amendments by the rapporteur to weaken the resolution were, however, adopted, as was the report containing very mixed messages. The key player on this in the EPP (Karas) was on our line, and as rapporteur for CRD IV (the Capital Requirements Directive), he will be given the task of dealing with corporate governance rules for financial institutions (the follow-up to this INI). His group, in particular Vice-President Wortman-Kool, let him down (again). Let us hope the actual legislation (proposal expected in July) will be treated with more care and determination.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) The most important revelation to emerge from the financial and economic crisis was that we have an extremely greedy system. The financial sector was not only focusing on short-term profits, but was also undermining efforts to introduce sustainable growth. The report contains important lessons for us to learn from the financial crisis with regard to risk, boards of directors, supervisory bodies, shareholders and remuneration. I have therefore voted in favour of this report.

### **Motion for a resolution B7-0291/2011**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this motion for a resolution, given that the multilateral trade system continues to be by far the most effective framework for achieving equitable and fair trade at international level. Achieving a balanced result in the negotiations of the World Trade Organisation's Doha Development Agenda (DDA) must therefore be a priority for the Union's negotiators. The importance of this agreement is due to the fact that India is the seventh largest economy in the world. However, I must also mention that, in spite of sustained economic growth, enormous inequalities persist. I would like to highlight the need to ensure the free trade agreement (FTA) does not limit the powers that the Indian Government needs to resolve problems of poverty and inequality. The final FTA should include a binding state-to-state dispute settlement mechanism, provisions on mediation regarding non-tariff barriers to trade (NTBs), on anti-dumping measures and on compensation rights, and a general safeguard clause based on Articles XX and XXI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). However, it also highlights the need for the Commission to include robust and effective safeguard clauses in the FTA and to insist, during negotiations, that India ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

**Laima Liucija Andrikiene (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this important resolution on the state of play of the EU-India free trade agreement negotiations. India is an important EU trading partner: in 2000, India was the European Union's 17th most important trading partner, and by 2010 its eighth. Furthermore, India is the largest beneficiary in the generalised system of preferences (GSP), and European Union imports

from India by means of preferential tariffs or a zero rate of duty were valued at EUR 19.9 billion and constituted 83% of all EU imports from India. Both parties expect to reap significant benefits from the removal of tariffs, and the liberalisation of trade in services and company start-ups, but I share the disappointment expressed in the resolution as regards the slow rate of progress of negotiations on the free trade agreement (FTA). Both parties must make every effort to ensure that a comprehensive, ambitious and coordinated FTA has been concluded by 2011, because this agreement would be the basis for establishing opportunities to increase EU and Indian trade and investment, and develop business, and the FTA would increase overall exports and imports for both the European Union and India. I agree with the position set out in the resolution that if economic cooperation between the EU and India is based on common universal values, it may become an example for cooperation with other countries.

**Antonello Antinoro (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) We supported this resolution and tabled a question to the Commission because we believe it is fundamental at this moment in time, when oil prices have been at an all-time high for some months. It has become unsustainable for many fishing boats, and especially for small-scale fleets, to see their outgoings constantly increasing because of the rise in oil prices, to the extent that they often make no profit from any of the fishing seasons. By calling for a rise in *de minimis* aid from EUR 30 000 to EUR 60 000 for the next three years, we want to send out a strong signal to the sector, which, in recent years, particularly because of the entry into force of the common fisheries policy and new restrictive measures, has seen some small- and medium-scale modes of fishing cut back, if not killed off completely. It should also be noted that measures have already been adopted in other sectors, such as agriculture, to help them cope with this price rise. Therefore, this aid – which we should remember is granted at national, not European, level, and is therefore dependent on each individual Member State's economic resources – could be seen by many people as causing an imbalance in competition, but in reality, it would provide a little relief to a sector that is increasingly on its knees.

**Kader Arif (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted against the resolution tabled by the European right, as it promotes an ultraliberal vision of the EU's trade relations with India. The right systematically opposed the amendments that I tabled on behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament in order to rule out any liberalisation of public services, strongly condemn child labour, request legally binding clauses on corporate social responsibility and demand respect for the principle of equal pay for equal work with regard to Indians who will come and work in Europe in the future. The compromise was impossible, the differences of opinion obvious and irreconcilable. Only the resolution tabled by my group, together with those by the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance and the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left, offered a progressive vision of EU-India trade relations. Unsurprisingly, it could not hold out against the right-wing majority in Parliament, which is a shame.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this resolution. After more than three years of talks on the free trade agreement, the EU and India are at a crucial stage, completing negotiations on the most important sectors. However, during further negotiations, it is crucial to address some important issues. I believe that significant attention must be paid to Europe's most sensitive sectors, such as industry, agriculture and the services sector. India is one of the world's largest economies, with a rapidly growing services sector. It is very keen to access the EU's services market and therefore, it is necessary to carry out

a comprehensive evaluation of how the free trade agreement might affect the EU's services sectors (and other important sectors) and employment. At all stages of the negotiations, we must also ensure that future trade policy is conducted in the context of the European Union's objectives, including binding commitments on social and environmental standards.

**Slavi Binev (NI)**, *in writing.* – (BG) I would like to remind you that the eighth global Millennium Development Goal states that a global partnership for development should be established which includes creating an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trade and finance system. The key factor to achieving this goal is for developed countries to want to open their markets to developing countries, which also includes India. This will allow the EU to make a contribution in such areas as sustainable development, eradication of poverty and protection for human rights. Adopting the resolution on the free trade agreement between the EU and India will help us take a step forward to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals.

**Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I consider regrettable the European Commission's decision not to wait until Parliament has adopted its report on Europe's future international investment policy and that it has decided to go ahead and offer India a mandate to negotiate for an investment chapter. It would be usual for the European legislative to be consulted when an international negotiation mandate is involved, in a situation where the European Parliament has a relevant role to play in terms of shaping EU-level investment policies. The Commission must respond as soon as possible to the request submitted by Parliament to define clearly the period of investment so that the provisions on investment protection do not undermine the parties' ability to issue compulsory licences. Furthermore, the binding state-to-state dispute settlement mechanism only serves to empower foreign investors to initiate legal proceedings at an international level against the governments of the EU and India, while domestic investors only have recourse to national courts. This situation could undermine the national policy initiatives on environmental, social or fiscal legislation. The free trade agreement should be the most important of all the agreements negotiated so far. This is why focusing more attention on it would not do any harm.

**Françoise Castex (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted against this report. We want a free trade agreement between the EU and India that helps to promote sustainable development, and that is accompanied by clear clauses concerning respect for ILO standards, environmental rules and corporate social responsibility obligations. The right's rejection of these requests is particularly regrettable. We also deplore the fact that the right-wing in Parliament rejected the amendment designed to ensure equal treatment of European and Indian workers. This is not only harmful to Indian workers; it is also very dangerous for European workers. We must not accept the liberalisation of services and social dumping aimed at bringing down European wages. Moreover, the European Union must not forget its founding principles. The Treaty of Lisbon stipulates that trade policy must contribute to sustainable development, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights.

**George Sabin Cutaş (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) As far as the EU-India Free Trade Agreement is concerned, I chose to vote for the resolution proposed by my political group as I felt that it is more balanced than the resolutions proposed by other political groups. The resolution from the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament highlighted the importance of a free trade agreement with India, while mentioning the continuing inequalities in this country and the need to include in the agreement some clauses on human, social and environmental rights.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The largest democracy in the world today demonstrates paradoxes and asymmetries that have apparently slotted relatively easily into its many thousands of years of history. Although the most extreme poverty has not disappeared, it is no less true that surges and flows of prosperity have raised India to a more prominent international role, and have revealed that its economy and society are prospering and innovating quickly and efficiently.

A free trade agreement (FTA) between the European Union and India could be a successful conclusion to the process of commercial interaction which has been deepening in recent times. I hope that, as well as sharing values, the EU and India will continue trying to understand each other better and benefiting from this deeper understanding, as well as from any profits that may result from this contact.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This motion for a resolution of the European Parliament concerns a free trade agreement (FTA) between the European Union and India. Trade relations between the EU and India are significant, since the EU is India's principal trade partner and its biggest foreign investor. For its part, the EU is the principal recipient of Indian foreign investment and, as such, it must continue to prioritise a multilateral trade system which favours developing countries. Indeed, India is the largest beneficiary of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). If we take into account the importance of strategic relations between the EU and India, as well as the safeguarding of matters relating to agriculture, respect for human rights and the issue of child labour in particular, environmental preservation and compliance with the International Labour Organisation's recommendations on social and copyright issues, all the conditions for voting in favour of this motion for a resolution are in place.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This free trade agreement (FTA) is the widest-ranging negotiated by the EU to date. Beyond its specific content, it also provokes a wider discussion on free trade, its role, its objectives and its consequences.

Free trade is one of the pillars of neoliberalism which emerged in the 1970s under the so-called Washington Consensus, as one of the key elements of the capitalist system's response to the structural crisis that was making itself known at that time, just like today. It represented a way for world powers with imperialist ambitions to expand their control of the markets and force new and more intensive ways of exploiting workers, playing work forces from different countries and regions off against each other. This entailed a levelling-down of working and living conditions. Its aim was to achieve new conditions for continuing the process of capitalist accumulation. That remains the case.

The consequences are plain to see: on top of the pressure on workers and their rights, the competition between productive systems with very different levels of development tends to accentuate differences, strengthening the strong and weakening the weak.

It will be no different with this agreement.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The liberalisation and deregulation of world trade has greatly weakened the productive sectors of the weakest EU economies, such as Portugal, which have been run according to the interests of big business in the European powers.

Faced with the disastrous consequences of this path, instead of retracing its steps, the EU continues to show signs of wanting to rush blindly ahead.

It is in this context that we must analyse this agreement, which is the widest-ranging negotiated by the European Union to date.

What is needed are urgent and profound changes to current trade policy in order to take into account the specificities of each EU Member State, with international trade aiming for complementarity rather than competition. This is necessary for the establishment of fair and equitable economic relationships that are mutually beneficial, are at the service of the development of peoples and countries, and are not solely beneficial for a small number of financial institutions and companies.

The multifaceted crisis that we are facing requires a new economic, social, energy and environmental rationale, as well as the defence of each country's right to produce sustainably: free trade, one of the pillars of neoliberalism, clearly makes this unviable.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI)**, *in writing*. – (FR) As you frequently remind us, common foreign policy must fulfil the global objectives of the European Union which are defined, in particular, in Article 3 of the Treaty, and where the elimination of poverty features prominently. Now, for all those years that you have been signing free trade agreements with every country in the world, and especially those that systematically practise social, monetary or environmental dumping, all you have done is to create poverty for all those victims of relocations and closures of companies directly linked to unfair competition. This agreement with India means that you are going even further. Out with the Polish plumber, in with the Indian computer programmer or accountant!

You are, in fact, intending to open the European market to numerous services of the General Agreement on Trade in Services Mode 4, a barbaric term used to refer to the world version of the Bolkestein Directive. As the French winner of the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, Maurice Allais, pointed out, free trade is only mutually beneficial if it is between countries with comparable levels of development, and further to that, I would add, if it is in targeted areas with the strategic sectors of each country remaining protected. Otherwise, it is never a win-win game. And there has been, for a long time now, one single loser: Europe.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I endorsed the document because the EU is India's largest source of Foreign Direct Investment. Both parties expect to secure significant benefits from the elimination of tariffs and the liberalisation of trade in services and company formation, and reaffirm their commitment to tariff reductions and further liberalisation of company formation and trade in services. Market access is being hampered by non-tariff barriers to trade, such as health and safety requirements or technical barriers, quantitative restrictions, conformity procedures, trade defence mechanisms, customs procedures, internal taxation, and a failure to adopt international norms and standards. The EU and India must pledge to speed up FTA talks and to make substantive and efficient progress towards the early conclusion of an ambitious and balanced, broad-based trade and investment agreement. Both parties must make every effort to conclude a comprehensive, ambitious and balanced FTA by the end of 2011. The agreement should respect sensitivities linked to agricultural trade, but this should not prevent market opening in areas of complementarity. The Commission must take due account of any negative impact on European agriculture, particularly in the areas of the opening up of markets, GMOs, milk, beef, intellectual property protection and origin labelling. The Commission should also negotiate effective and transparent procurement systems and India should apply transparent and fair procedures when awarding public contracts and grant European businesses access to public procurement systems.

**Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (DE) Good progress is being made in the negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EU and India. By adopting the motion for a resolution, the European Parliament has today made its priorities clear. With regard to agriculture, Parliament has focused on the sensitive areas, highlighted the sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS) and expressed its support for effective safeguard clauses. However, there is still a great deal to be done in the area of intellectual property.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I voted for this resolution. Any free trade agreement the EU signs with India must in no way limit India's ability to produce generic medicines. If it did, it would not only damage India but harm the poor in Africa and elsewhere who depend on cheap medicine from India.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (FR) One merit of this text is that it takes account of the potentially negative effects of GMOs. However, it promotes the liberalisation of the trade in services between the European Union and India. Furthermore, it leaves States just one right, that of 'regulating' public services, an action that a liberalisation of this nature nonetheless condemns. It also calls for the liberalisation of legal and accounting services, the opening up of the market in banks and insurance, and the relaxation of investment rules. The interests of the oligarchy are served in Europe as they are in India. I am voting against this report.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The EU is India's largest trade partner, with trade in goods and services worth approximately EUR 84 billion in 2009-2010. The EU accounts for 20.15% of India's total exports and 13.32% of India's total imports. Conversely, India accounts for 2.6% of the EU's total exports and 2.2% of the EU's total imports. In view of this, we cannot fail to take into consideration the fact that the objectives of the common commercial policy must be fully coordinated with the overall objectives of the European Union. According to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the common commercial policy must be conducted 'in the context of the principles and objectives of the Union's external action' and must contribute 'inter alia, to sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights'. As such, it is very important that the following not be forgotten in these negotiations: the use of child labour, and the failure to comply with international social and environmental standards, which constitutes a form of dumping, detrimental to European companies and workers. It is therefore essential that the Commission clarify these points before concluding a trade agreement.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Given the size of India's market (more than 1 billion inhabitants) and its impressive growth rates (averaging over 7% a year since 2000), coupled with high levels of protection, India is one of the EU's obvious partners for concluding one of the new generation of EU FTAs launched as part of the Global Europe strategy in 2006. The EU-India Summit on 10 December in Brussels instructed both sides to speed up the negotiating process to pave the way for the conclusion of negotiations in 2011. It is necessary to take into account the dumping aspect of the relationship with India; if there were no point related to this, I would vote 'against'.

**Claudio Morganti (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I think this resolution on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement should be rejected. There is no denunciation of any kind in it of the problems that this agreement will cause to the textile industry in Europe, and northern Italy in particular; other industries are mentioned and are given their own clauses, but the textile industry is completely ignored.

To show the validity of the agreement, the resolution highlights the fact that the Indian and European economies are complementary: the reality is somewhat different, because there are several industries, including precisely the textile industry, in which there is no complementarity at all but rather competition, and often unfair competition, carried out by our Asian counterparts. For these reasons, I have decided to vote against the resolution.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of this resolution on the state of play in the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations. The negotiations between the EU and India for the conclusion of an FTA have developed significantly. India is achieving a new status in the international geopolitical context, going from being a beneficiary of development aid to a donor. This agreement is of particular importance; in fact, if the cooperation between the EU and India currently being negotiated is based on a system of shared universal values, it may serve as a model for cooperation with other countries. I would like to highlight the emphasis in these negotiations on the protection of the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector in India, with the suggestions that all development cooperation programmes between the EU and India should be aimed at strengthening SMEs through measures to help finance market-driven local projects. In India, as in the EU countries, SMEs drive economic growth and thus, job creation.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Given the significant profits that both parties will be able to make, I hope that the negotiations between the EU and India will be able to continue, with a view to quickly establishing a free trade agreement (FTA) which is ambitious, balanced and comprehensive.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing.* – We voted in favour. The EP is very much divided on the free trade agreement with India. The first compromise (by EPP, ECR and ALDE) was adopted with 390 in favour, 276 against, and 10 abstentions. The hope of sending a strong message to the negotiators to conclude the FTA with India failed. The EPP, ECR and ALDE resolution recommending rushing into a complete opening of the Indian market at all levels, without binding language on human and labour rights, CSR, environmental dumping, etc. did not get the overwhelming majority it needed if it wanted to be a recommendation for the negotiators. The ‘counter-resolution’ by the Greens/S&D and GUE, which did not come to a vote, had solid support and will certainly be read by the negotiators. The very worst in the EPP, ECR and ALDE compromise was avoided.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) We are strongly against the EU-India Free Trade Agreement because, even though that country is making progress in worker protection and health and in the fight against counterfeiting, we have to bear in mind that it is still an unfair competitor towards our businesses. For example, when India received a complaint from the World Trade Organisation about the 500% tariffs that it was applying to European wines, it got round it unfairly by having the individual Indian states impose the same tariffs. We must also bear in mind the negative economic impact that further liberalisation of trade with India would have, since the EU exports 1.9% of its services to India, whereas India exports 11.6% of its services to us. That clearly means it would help India 10 times more than it would Europe.

**Marc Tarabella (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted, together with my colleagues from the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, against the resolution that deals with the negotiations for a free trade agreement between the European Union and India because it



does not take sufficient account of the social standards with which all trade agreements must comply.

According to 'Save the Children', the Indian non-governmental organisation, an estimated 60 million children still work today in fields, restaurants or factories in India. I deplore the fact that the conservative majority in the European Parliament has refused to face up to this state of affairs by rejecting an amendment which highlighted the European Parliament's concerns over the use of children for work, children who are frequently exploited in dangerous and unhealthy conditions. We also asked the Commission to tackle this problem at the time of the negotiations on the free trade agreement and we invited the Indian Government to do its utmost to eradicate the deep causes of this phenomenon and to put an end to it.

By rejecting this position, the majority of the right in the European Parliament has placed European and Indian commercial interests above the protection of children's rights, and I am unable to endorse this unacceptable position.

**Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted against the European Parliament resolution on the negotiations for the free trade agreement between the EU and India. This report is entirely consistent with policies of increased liberalisation, especially in the public service sector, and with standards which have deleterious effects not only on the supply of medicinal products, but also on the development of research.

This is another instance of the ultra-liberalism that the EU is seeking to impose on all its partners. This is the broadest agreement ever concluded by the EU in this area, and it seeks more to protect the interests of big multinational corporations than to engage in a balanced partnership between all parties and to contribute to India's economic and social development.

This agreement is certainly not a 'win-win' initiative as this resolution would have us believe.

#### **Motion for a resolution B7-0287/2011**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I am voting for this motion for a resolution, as it is essential to strike a balance between multilateral, bilateral and plurilateral agreements. In particular, Japan is the third largest economy in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). As such, it is essential to raise questions of investment and trade in services in all trade discussions with Japan, ensuring that market opening does not compromise either European or Japanese rules on the protection of public services and cultural diversity. I recognise that the multilateral trading system, embodied by the World Trade Organisation, remains by far the most effective framework for achieving open and fair trade worldwide. I would reiterate my firm belief that the European Union and Japan should contribute towards a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations, and I am concerned that bilateral negotiations may disturb this objective. Lastly, I would insist that effective safeguard measures be available to prevent any surge in imports resulting from the possible liberalisation of trade between the EU and Japan that may cause, or threaten to cause, serious injury to EU industry.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this important resolution on EU-Japan Trade relations. The EU and Japan are significant partners and investors in each other's economies with a combined volume of Foreign Direct Investment worth EUR 200 billion in 2009. Japan is the EU's sixth largest trading partner, while the EU is Japan's third biggest trading partner. I agree with the provision that the time has come

to conclude an EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement (FTA), but before beginning negotiations, Japan must make significant commitments on removing non-tariff barriers, which limit market access opportunities for European businesses, in other words, public procurement obstacles, insufficient recognition of international standards with respect to medical devices, and preferential treatment for national champions in financial services. Bilateral trade volumes between the EU and Japan lag behind the bulk of the EU's trade exchanges with its other main trading partners because of the negative effects of Japanese non-tariff barriers (NTBs). I supported the resolution's provision that the EU-Japan FTA has the potential to lead to a win-win situation, beneficial for both economies.

**Kader Arif (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FR) In anticipation of the EU-Japan Summit at the end of the month, Parliament has adopted this resolution stating its views on trade relations between the two partners. Unlike the European right, which spoke out very strongly in favour of opening negotiations on the conclusion of a free trade agreement, I defended a more cautious approach. Japan is a trade power that needs to be approached with caution when it comes to trade liberalisation. That is why my group opposed the present text presented by the European right and stressed the need to launch specific impact studies assessing the consequences of stronger trade relations for all the sectors concerned (in particular, the automotive sector) and for employment in Europe, before we open any negotiations. At the same time, we emphasised the problem of non-tariff barriers, which prevent European businesses from accessing Japanese public contracts. Indeed, it is wrong that the European Union, the region in the world that is most open to foreign investment, cannot operate on the markets of its industrialised partners under fair conditions.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because I entirely agree that following the natural catastrophe that recently struck Japan, and which was the greatest in the country's history, the EU can and must help this country's economy to recover quickly. The report calls on the Commission to set up a special system, according to which the EU, through various aspects of international trade, would, in future, be able to help countries that have suffered natural disasters. Specifically in the case of Japan, the European Parliament resolution proposes exploiting the opportunities offered by international public procurement and services markets, particularly as it is observed that EU and Member State interest in these areas has increased. There are still many obstacles to public procurement and trade services, due to legitimate national regulation, and the report proposes removing such obstacles by making efforts to understand the methods of mutual adjustment systems. The report nevertheless draws attention to the fact that questions of investment and trade in services need to be raised in trade discussions with Japan in order to ensure that the further opening up of the market does not compromise either European or Japanese rules on the protection of public services, the environment and cultural diversity.

**Vito Bonsignore (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the joint motion for a resolution on EU-Japan trade relations. In 2009, the European Union and Japan accounted for approximately 20% of the world economy and in 2010, bilateral trade was worth EUR 120 billion. In light of these figures, I feel there is an urgent need to start negotiations on the free trade agreements in order to encourage closer cooperation between these two trading partners and enable them to face common challenges together, such as the global economic crisis and the relentless political and economic rise of China.

The precondition for commencing negotiations and strengthening trade relations remains the obligation on Japan to remove non-tariff barriers and barriers preventing access to

Japanese public procurement contracts. During this preliminary phase, moreover, the Commission should concentrate on removing the barriers hindering European small and medium-sized enterprises.

**George Sabin Cutaj (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) During the vote on trade relations between the EU and Japan, I decided to vote for the resolution tabled by the political group which I belong to. This resolution highlighted the need to remove the non-tariff barriers which the Japanese market is subject to and to deregulate access to the Japanese public procurement market before signing a free trade agreement with this country.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Trade relations between European countries and Japan go back several centuries and have been growing closer since the end of the Second World War.

Japan has been one of the most notable success stories of economic and social recovery in world history, today being a respected country, worthy of admiration. The tragic events that have befallen the country call for our solidarity with our partners. The tenacity and courage that its people have been demonstrating in the face of these difficulties should be inspiring for a Europe which often seems too self-absorbed and is not always sufficiently aware of what is going on beyond its borders.

I believe that both parties would have much to gain from a free trade agreement (FTA) that would strengthen their trade relations and remove barriers which have unjustifiably hindered relations. I regret that such an objective still seems far from becoming reality and I hope Europe and Japan will persevere in their efforts to attain it.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This motion for a resolution of the European Parliament concerns a free trade agreement (FTA) between the European Union and Japan, the third largest economy in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). Trade relations between the EU and Japan are not just important to their respective economies, they are fundamental: in 2009, they represented more than a quarter of global GDP and more than 20% of world trade. Moreover, the EU is Japan's third largest trading partner. For these reasons, I am voting for this report. However, I agree with the rapporteur that the EU needs to demand that Japan, *inter alia*, remove tariff barriers and obstacles to public tenders before negotiations can begin. I also believe Parliament must send a positive signal in the wake of the tsunami which devastated part of the Japanese coast with enormous loss of life and property, not to mention the Fukushima nuclear plant.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The vision shaping this motion for a resolution is made very clear in its preamble. It takes the view that the multilateral trade system put in place by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) represents the most suitable framework for regulating and promoting open and fair trade and, at the same time, it is working towards the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda.

It is a vision of so-called 'free' trade as a class weapon in the service of big financial institutions and companies, promoting increased exploitation of workers and peoples. It involves both social dumping, the destruction of productive strength, and environmental dumping, the degradation of the environment.

This trade policy and the agreements giving it concrete expression are increasingly lacking in democratic legitimacy. They are almost always negotiated in secret, behind the public's backs, seeking to cover up their economic, social and environmental impact, and avoiding clear, informed debate.

This approach, which is for the profit of big business, is damaging to the needs of the peoples and workers, as well as being disadvantageous for the industries of the EU countries with the weakest economies. As such, our only option is to condemn and stridently oppose it.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** The negotiations with Japan, aimed at strengthening trade relations, cannot be used as a class weapon in the service of big financial institutions and companies, promoting the increased exploitation of workers and peoples, the destruction of their productive strength, and the destruction of the environment.

The EU increasingly lacks democratic legitimacy as it is dragged rightwards; as it negotiates trade agreements in secret, paying absolutely no mind to the sovereignty of the peoples of the Member States; as it seeks to hide the enormous economic and social impacts that its policies will have, while failing to inform, clarify, discuss or take into account the opinion of the people.

This approach, which is for the profit of big business, is damaging to the needs of the peoples and workers, as well as being disadvantageous for the industries of the EU countries with the weakest economies. It continues to mean a loss of rights, unemployment and poverty, with an impact on small and medium-sized farmers, fishermen and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), all of which end up as victims.

Blinded by profit, this approach limits democracy and sovereignty, and creates greater dependency in countries such as Portugal that need to create employment, and produce and create wealth in order to raise the standard of living; that do not need more deindustrialisation, less agricultural production and less fishing.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT)** I endorsed this document because, in 2009, the EU and Japan represented together more than a quarter of world GDP and more than 20% of world trade, and Japan and the EU are significant investors in each other's economies. The Council and Commission have noted that Japan's capacity to remove regulatory barriers to trade is a precondition for launching negotiations on the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement (FTA), thus fostering closer economic integration between the two strategic trading partners. The multilateral trading system, embodied by the World Trade Organisation, remains by far the most effective framework for achieving open and fair trade worldwide. I believe that the European Union and Japan should contribute towards the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations. The EU-Japan FTA would not only yield benefits in terms of an increase in the bilateral trade in goods and services, but also foster cooperation on the EU's horizontal priorities, such as cooperation in the field of innovation, regulatory cooperation and the fight against market abuse, and cooperation on tackling broad environmental challenges, etc.

**David Martin (S&D), in writing. –** If Japan demonstrates a real willingness to eliminate non-tariff barriers, I believe the EU should enter into negotiations with Japan with a view to signing a free trade agreement.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (FR)** A few short weeks after the natural and nuclear catastrophe in Japan, the European right has had the cranky notion of threatening the Japanese Government. Their aim is to force Japan to remove all obstacles to European companies' access to its public contracts. Not a word about the nuclear catastrophe. Not a single proposal for cooperation to help it out of this situation. Scarcely

a single line of solidarity after Japan's only nuclear catastrophe. Shame on the European right!

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) In 2010, the total amount of bilateral trade between the EU and Japan, the third largest economy in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), reached EUR 120 billion. Japan is the EU's sixth largest trading partner and the EU is Japan's third largest trading partner. There is, however, significant untapped trade potential. As such, it is necessary to strengthen trade relations between the EU and Japan by focusing on the removal of non-tariff barriers to trade and investment, including numerous restrictive rules and regulatory measures for EU companies in accessing the Japanese market. In this way, the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement has great potential for benefiting both economies.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Since the EU and Japan are close economic partners, they represent more than 20% of world trade but bilateral trade volumes are not as large as they could be. EU exports to Japan, as a ratio of Japan's GDP, are less than 2%, considerably below the ratio in the EU's other main markets (the US, China, Korea and India). There is therefore a considerable unrealised economic potential that could be explored by reinforcing trade ties between the two blocs. Negotiations should implement bilateral movement. It is unacceptable to have unequal commodity turnover between the EU and Japan. I voted 'in favour'.

**Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PL) Today, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on EU-Japan trade relations. This document highlights the fact that the European Union and Japan are very important to each other as trade partners. The resolution takes into account the WTO system and the fact that in 2009, for example, the EU and Japan represented together a quarter of world GDP, and that in 2010, bilateral trade between the two regions was worth EUR 120 billion.

The resolution also emphasises that the EU is very much in favour of the conclusion of a free trade agreement with Japan, but that in order for this to happen, Japan must abolish non-tariff barriers and remove all obstacles to the development of cooperation. It also emphasises – and this is something that I regard as a very important feature of EU-Japan cooperation – that attention should be paid to environmental protection during the trading process, and that measures to counteract climate change and uphold environmental and social standards should be promoted. Furthermore, attention is drawn to the recent nuclear disaster, which is still not fully under control. As a result, it is not yet possible to estimate fully the extent of the crisis that has hit Japan, and there is no justification for accelerating negotiations on a free trade agreement. At present, Japan needs real aid.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The rules-based multilateral trade system put in place by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) represents the most suitable framework for regulating and promoting open and fair trade, and the EU is in favour of incorporating developing countries into the international trade system. At the same time, bilateral agreements such as the one being analysed at present are specific mechanisms that can help achieve the mentioned objectives. I voted in favour of this resolution on trade relations between the EU and Japan as I am convinced that the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has the potential to benefit both economies. Indeed, the existence of open and fair trade is a powerful tool for generating more growth and social welfare, building on the comparative advantages of each respective economy and potential synergies flowing from greater economic integration and new inputs to a knowledge-driven economy

This means boosting the EU-Japan market, which, together, already represents more than a quarter of world gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 20% of world trade.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – Our group did not sign or support this resolution, and we presented our own where we stated, among other things, the following: ‘1. Expresses its utmost sympathy for the courage and determination with which the Japanese people are confronting the catastrophes of 11 March and their terrible aftermath and calls on the Commission and Member States to help Japan with all means to rebuild its social and economic life; 2. Believes that the continuation and deepening of current trade relations between the EU and Japan can play an important role in this regard and calls on the Commission to concentrate all efforts on assuring this; 3. Regards the multilateral trading system, embodied in the WTO, as by far the most effective framework for achieving fair and equitable trade rules on a global basis’.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) We support the text on EU-Japan trade relations because Japan ensures protection and respect for workers and the global economy, despite being a third country. Reducing and simplifying the rules and making fair, open trade simpler can only improve its relations with Europe. Reciprocal investment in the two economies is worth EUR 200 billion a year: the EU is Japan’s third largest trading partner and, in turn, Japan is the sixth largest trading partner for the EU. The report also calls for an assessment of any negative impact that such decisions might entail, but we certainly think that the removal of barriers to trade and investment can only be positive. We therefore voted in favour of the report.

**Niki Tzavela (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (EL) I voted in favour of the oral question on trade relations between the EU and Japan, given that Japan is one of the main investors in the European Union. Apart from that, Japan is the seventh destination for European exports. Continuing our dialogue with Japan is an entirely positive move. Ironing out our differences will make an important contribution to both economies. In addition, we must focus on reducing tariffs and the regulatory measures which accompany them.

**Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) I wholeheartedly support the development of trade cooperation between the European Union and Japan, which should result in the conclusion of a bilateral free trade agreement. The fact that in 2010, the total amount of bilateral trade between the EU and Japan was EUR 120 billion demonstrates that both sides are extremely important to each other as partners. Japan is the EU’s sixth biggest trade partner, and the EU is Japan’s third biggest. Both sides are also significant investors in each other’s economy, with a combined volume of Foreign Direct Investment worth EUR 200 billion in 2009. It is also worth highlighting the fact that the rapid economic growth of developing countries (BRIC), the economic slow-down resulting from the global financial crisis, and the pressing need to gain access to raw materials and renewable sources of energy, are absolutely key challenges which are common to both parties, making negotiations an even more urgent necessity.

In documents relating to the subject of the resolution, both the Council and the Commission have stated that a precondition for launching negotiations is that Japan should remove regulatory barriers to trade, in particular, non-tariff barriers, which place a significant restriction on access to the Japanese market for European entrepreneurs. I believe that we should speed up the process at the highest decision-making levels, which would result in closer trade relations between these two strategic partners.

**Artur Zasada (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PL) Japan's willingness to open bilateral talks on a free trade area with the European Union provides us with an opportunity to build closer political relations and to increase economic benefits, both for the EU and for Japan. In view of the fact that Japan is only the sixth largest of the European Union's trade partners, Japan's potential for cooperation with the EU in the field of trade and investment is still unexploited. The main obstacle making it significantly more difficult for European businesses to gain access to the Japanese market is non-tariff barriers. As a member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, I am sure that the aviation industry is one of the sectors where cooperation on trade and research and development would have mutual benefits for both the European and Japanese economies. I believe that the aeronautics sector could become one of the models for cooperation between the EU and Japan.

**Report: Kriton Arsenis (A7-0113/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I am voting for this proposal. Given the scope of the threats and total EU forest area, common agricultural policy (CAP) financing through pillar 2 for forests should increase, subject to the existence of national forest programmes (NFPs) and operational management plans, which incorporate the EU biodiversity strategy and long timeframes for forestry projects in sustainable forest management (SFM). Eligibility should be extended to public actors and producer groups, shifting to area-based remuneration and including *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation measures. Active SFM should be clearly mainstreamed and prioritised in research and practice, and should also take into account public ownership of 40% of EU forests. Species conservation and nursery practices should extend to associated microbial and fungal species. *In situ* research into mycorrhizal symbiosis should be actively encouraged. Payments for ecosystem services (PES) should be formalised in view of the next financial perspectives, building on the success of forest and water projects. Forest adaptation and resilience should be given special consideration in the creation of an EU-adaptation fund.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiene (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this resolution on the Commission Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change. The European Parliament approved the provisions set out in this Green Paper, but the EU's strategy on forests should be strengthened, the objective being to improve the management and conservation of forests. This strategy should be directed towards both forest protection and the sustainable use of timber resources, as forests provide solutions to the problems associated with climate change. It should be pointed out that, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, forest strategy should continue to be primarily a matter for the Member States, but the European Union should take action to support, coordinate and supplement forestry policy initiatives by the Member States, taking into account differing regional conditions. The objective of this policy is to ensure the sustainable development of forests while helping to enhance quality of life for European citizens and to promote the development of rural areas.

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) Forests are the main repository of carbon and have a vital role to play in the fight against climate change. Forests and wooded land cover 42% of the European Union's surface. Forests make up biospheres which store carbon and are particularly important to environmental conservation and protection against natural disasters. All these aspects are vital not only to the quality of life enjoyed by European citizens, but also to agriculture and rural development. I would like to stress that sustainable forest management is of pivotal importance to the European Union's achievement of its climate goals and to carbon dioxide capture from the atmosphere.

Furthermore, forest-based industries provide more than 2 million jobs, contributing to economic growth and employment. I voted for this report as I think that the European Union must strengthen its strategy for improving the sustainable management and conservation of forests.

**Liam Aylward (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (GA) The forestry sector provides a livelihood for millions of people in the EU, among them, entrepreneurs, farmers and 16 million forest owners. Currently, there are 2 million people employed by the forestry sector in the EU, mostly in small and medium-sized enterprises, and the sector earns € 300 billion per year. It is estimated that there are 16 000 people employed by the forestry sector in Ireland alone. The forestry industries contribute to economic growth, they create opportunities for growth and employment in rural areas, and they encourage rural development through local industries and tourism opportunities. Forests are a valuable resource for the agricultural sector, the environment and biodiversity, especially in terms of the ecosystems they contain and in terms of soil fertility and protection against soil erosion. There are significant development opportunities associated with the European forestry sector in terms of carbon capture and CO<sub>2</sub> pools. I welcome what the report says about recognising the importance of forestry in socio-economic and environmental terms and the request to the Commission to adopt a coherent approach to help the sector achieve its full potential.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this report. Forests and wooded land cover more than 42% of the EU's surface. Forest-based industries, with a turnover of more than EUR 300 billion, provide more than 2 million, mostly rural, jobs, contributing to economic growth, jobs and prosperity through the provision of timber and opportunities for tourism. EU forests face major threats due to climate change, new pests, increasing risk of fire (particularly in the Mediterranean region), and human activity (growing energy sector demand for woody biomass), which is causing deforestation. I agree that the Commission and the Member States must intensify efforts to achieve the environment and quality-of-life goals of the Forest Action Plan, the implementation of which is currently lagging behind. The EU forestry strategy and forest action plan also need to be updated to include the climate-change dimension and wider forest protection issues.

**Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) The challenge of successfully reconciling the forest policies of southern and northern Europe so as to have a consistent EU-wide approach is by no means easy. By adopting this report, however, we have stressed the need for a stronger commitment to environmental protection in forest policy. We have also highlighted the challenge that climate change presents to our forests. While I am not sure that we need a legislative initiative prohibiting building on land cleared by fires, I am in favour of discussing robust, long-term solutions to help curb this terrible phenomenon of forest fires caused by arsonists wanting to clear land for building.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted on this report because it presents the European Parliament's reaction to the Green Paper published by the Commission, intended to begin public consultation on forest protection and preparing forests for climate change throughout the European Union. In the report, Parliament welcomes the Commission's Green Paper and calls for the EU forestry strategy to be updated, while properly taking into account the application of the subsidiarity and proportionality principles and including the climate-change dimension and broader forest protection issues. Parliament also reaffirms its view on the need for increased levels of funding for forest protection measures through the rural development pillar of the common agricultural policy, particularly given the new challenges entailed in climate change. Among other



possible sources of financing, the report also proposes considering the possibility of paying companies for ecosystem services, through which they contribute to biodiversity conservation and forest protection. Among many other measures, such as strengthening coordination at EU level and information exchange between Member States, the Commission is also urged to consider submitting a legislative proposal prohibiting building on land cleared by fires proven to have resulted from arson.

**Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE),** *in writing.* – (RO) The Forest Action Plan adopted in 2006 set four important objectives. However, not enough attention has been given to them equally, as indicated by mid-term evaluations of its implementation. The major shortcomings concern enhancing protection and biodiversity conservation and indicate that 66% of forest habitats have an unfavourable status. In practical terms, the conclusions show that, while attention has been focused on improving long-term competitiveness, the objectives of improving the environment, enhancing quality of life and promoting coordination and communication have not been implemented strongly enough. Forests provide livelihoods for millions of workers, entrepreneurs and 16 million forest owners. The forest-based industries in the EU provide more than 2 million jobs, mostly in SMEs, and have a EUR 300 billion turnover. There are also more than 350 000 people employed in forest management.

From this perspective, it is important to pursue the objectives set out in the forestry strategies. This fact, combined with climate change, provides sufficient grounds for mobilising all EU Member States and making equal, consistent efforts to manage the Union's forests. This action must be backed up with adaptations to the energy, industry, commercial, research and cohesion policies, including regional policy and the Solidarity Fund.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) Europe's large wooded areas create considerable business and employment within the EU. Taking this into account, and not forgetting the importance of these green spaces for the environment, I consider it essential that measures be taken to combat the negative effects of climate change recorded at global level in recent years. This is crucial in order to safeguard European forests, with all the benefits that will bring. As such, I welcome the Commission's initiative in the form of a Green Paper on forest protection. In order to act effectively, it is necessary to have an understanding of the harm that our forests have suffered lately due to the new global climate situation, principally with regard to storms, increased fire-risk levels, pests and fungal diseases.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) Forests and wooded land cover more than 42% of the EU's area. Despite the fact that approximately 500 000 hectares of EU forest are lost every year as a result of forest fires and illegal logging, the long-term trend of increasing forest coverage in the EU appears stable.

Even though forestry policy is primarily a matter for the Member States, it is nevertheless up to the EU to coordinate and complement the Member States' initiatives and forest programmes, giving them added value, and defining a common EU strategy and action plan. Stepping up forest protection should form part of the EU's and the Member States' strategies, especially in the face of climate-related extreme phenomena such as fires and floods, landslides and desertification.

I therefore support the creation of new instruments and increased funding for measures designed to protect the EU's forests, particularly in order to address the new challenges brought about by climate change. Information on forest resources, the state of the forests

and the impact of climate change is equally essential in order to ensure that any decisions made relating to the forests bring about the greatest possible socio-economic and environmental benefits.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D),** *in writing.* – (RO) The economic, social and environmental importance of forests at an international, European, regional and national level is generally well known and legitimised, to some extent, in international agreements and relevant cooperation and financing programmes. Climate change has a huge impact on forests in every region of Europe, but with varying intensity. Any reform made to the approach of European Union policies to forests must not simply be reduced to the challenges posed by climate change, but take into account all the aspects relating to forests' contribution to sustainable development at regional, European and global level. Another aspect concerns the instruments and schemes at EU level supporting the forestry sector, which are very lightweight compared with those applied in other business sectors and given the current and future contribution made by forests to achieving the sustainable development targets. However, any reform made to the approach of European Union policies to forests must not simply be reduced to the challenges posed by climate change, but take into account all the aspects relating to forests' contribution to the sustainable development of the environment, the rural economy, etc. at regional, European and global level.

**Christine De Veyrac (PPE),** *in writing.* – (FR) The Arsenis report demonstrates the European Parliament's concern for forestry policy. Its content stresses the need to plan, for the future, sufficient and ambitious financial resources for the forest and the timber industry. I therefore support the adoption of this text and, at the same time, renew my support for the adoption of a specific financial instrument to protect the Union's forests.

**Anne Delvaux (PPE),** *in writing.* – (FR) More than 42% of the territory of the Union is covered by forest. The timber industry provides a total of 2 million jobs, mainly in SMEs, and creates revenue of EUR 300 billion. Forest management employs 350 000 people. The ratio of felling to increment is stable throughout the Union, and is in the region of 60%, but this ratio is projected to increase to more than 100% in some countries, with, as a result, a reduction in standing timber after 2010.

I am convinced that the sustainable management of forests is essential if we are to maintain the capacity of the Union's forests to fulfil their economic, ecological and social functions. That is why I have called on the Commission to put forward proposals aimed at supplementing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 on timber in order to ensure that timber and products derived from such timber placed on the European market all come from sustainably managed forests. The Commission and the Member States must make the introduction of sustainable forest management mandatory within the European Union

**Edite Estrela (S&D),** *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of the report on 'preparing forests for climate change'. In view of forests' potential for climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as their economic, social and environmental value, there is a need to strengthen EU policy in the area of sustainable development and forest conservation, in particular, legislation on forest fire-risk prevention and management.

**Diogo Feio (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) Forests and wooded land currently cover more than 42% of the EU's area. Forests provide 2 million jobs, many in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and a turnover of EUR 300 billion. These figures reflect a fundamental

need for effective European policy on forests, and on their use and sustainability, not only in environmental terms, but also as a key economic resource.

When discussing the protection of forests as an economic and environmental resource, I cannot forget, being Portuguese, that combating forest fires – something from which my country has greatly suffered – must be an absolute priority for any European policy in this area.

As far as national forest programmes (NFPs) are concerned, while I fully support their establishment, I would draw attention to their shortcomings. NFPs must become a reality and actually reach the forests so that they can be truly as effective as we intend for them to be.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report deals with the Commission Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change. Forests and wooded land currently cover more than 42% of the EU's area and constitute an important source of revenue, generating more than EUR 300 billion a year and providing more than 2 million jobs. On top of this, forests are essential for all of us and are part of our identity. In recent times, we have witnessed disasters and storms threatening forests. Without forests, the consequences of climate change would be even more serious. However, despite their importance, they have not been granted the financial investment that they merit.

I welcome the adoption of this report, which draws attention to the neglect the sector has suffered and calls for recognition and appreciation of the diversity of species existing in the EU, as well as of the need to implement a modern and active forestry policy that is able to take advantage of the area of biomass and of carbon credits, as well as of traditional activities.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Forests and wooded land currently cover more than 42% of the EU's area, providing a means of subsistence for millions of workers. The conservation of forest heritage represents an important contribution to the welfare of populations, as well as contributing to job creation in rural areas. It is inseparable from preventing forest fires: disasters which decimate extensive areas of forest annually in southern Europe, particularly in Portugal. It is crucial to follow up on the recommendations on natural disaster prevention recently adopted here.

The report takes a wide-ranging approach to the forestry issue, focusing on certain aspects which we believe to be important. However, it is essential to put theory into practice, especially when it comes to mobilising enough financial resources through Union support programmes and measures to enable the monitoring of forests' ecological and phytosanitary state and, wherever necessary, their reclassification, including reforestation.

It is also essential to provide Natura 2000 with the financial means for its management and the effective pursuit of its objectives, bearing in mind that many forest areas are covered by it. It is also essential to recognise the diversity of forest ecosystems in Europe and the multifunctionality of many of them, such as, for example, the Mediterranean's *montado* agro-forestry pastures.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report takes a wide-ranging approach to the forestry issue, focusing on certain aspects which we believe to be important. However, it is essential to put theory into practice, especially when it comes to mobilising enough financial resources through Union support programmes and measures to enable the

monitoring of forests' ecological and phytosanitary state and, wherever necessary, their reclassification, including reforestation. It is also essential to provide Natura 2000 with the financial means for its management and the effective pursuit of its objectives.

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It is also essential to recognise the diversity of forest ecosystems in Europe and the multifunctionality of many of them, such as, for example, the Mediterranean's *montado* agro-forestry pastures.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Forests and other wooded land account for more than 42% of EU territory, providing a livelihood to millions of workers and entrepreneurs and 16 million forest owners. Forest sector industries provide more than 2 million jobs, and forestry employs 350 000 people. Among the common policies with an impact on forest protection are environmental policy, energy, industry and trade policies, as well as policy coherence, including regional policy and the Solidarity Fund. Given the scale of the threats and the total area of forests in the EU, the financing should increase, eligibility to receive assistance should be extended to public bodies and producer groups, and contributions should be paid on an area basis and should cover protective measures.

**Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (GA) Last week in Ireland, forest fires – on a scale not seen for a long time – caused severe destruction on lands in Donegal, Sligo and other regions of the country.

It is for local authorities, with support from the national government, to take responsibility for such events. This is a question of subsidiarity. In relation to the fires which occurred in Ireland recently, the Irish Government must make a full estimate of the damage done with a view to assisting those affected. An emergency plan, like the one already in place for road accidents and flooding, must be put in place for forest fires with a view to ensuring a better response to such situations in future.

In conclusion, more funding must be given to Donegal County Council to pay the exceptional costs that will be involved.

**Elisabetta Gardini (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Forty-two per cent of the entire area of the European Union is covered in forests and woodland. Forestry industries generate revenues in excess of EUR 300 billion, and provide work for approximately two million people. These are the figures that we must bear in mind in order to understand the importance of a European strategy for sustainable forestry management and in order to protect this significant European heritage more effectively. We must remember the important role that forests play in terms of socio-economic services as well as their crucial role in the fight against climate change. It is therefore urgent that we improve our ability to prevent forest fires, as these continue to destroy more than 400 000 hectares of forest every year. In order to do this, it is important to improve the collection of information about forests, increase research, and especially to encourage Member States to exchange knowledge and experience, starting from a cross-border perspective. At this point, I would like to underline the importance of the work carried out by the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS)

and, in particular, the importance of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme which allows the necessary charting and surveillance of forests.

**Françoise Grossetête (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) The European Parliament has sent out a strong political message to stress the importance of managing forests sustainably. There is an urgent need to introduce the recommendations relating to the prevention of disasters. Indeed, forest fires are one of the greatest threats to European forests and their ecosystems.

The protection of the forest against climate also helps maintain the forest industry and its competitiveness. With revenue of more than EUR 300 billion, the timber industry in Europe provides more than 2 million jobs and is an important pool for growth.

Finally, it is vital for debates on the future of the common agricultural policy after 2013 to take account of the role played by forests. Rural producers and public bodies must qualify for forestry measures under the second pillar of the CAP: the EU must support forest planting within the framework of national programmes for rural development.

**Roberto Gualtieri (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The specification of a European forest protection strategy is part of the EU's overall commitment to the fight against climate change. Particularly positive points in the report that has been approved are the proposal for a specific regulation on the prohibiting of building on land cleared by fires proven to have resulted from arson, and the request for suitable funding for forestry strategies, which is currently at a very low level. Finally, the request for appropriate sustainability criteria for biomass produced for the use of energy is also important. We therefore urge the European Commission to continue along this route, by presenting a White Paper on forest protection to deal with these issues.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I endorsed this document because EU forests and other wooded land account for more than 42% of the EU's surface. Forests provide livelihoods for millions of workers, entrepreneurs and 16 million forest owners. The forest-based industries (FBIs) provide more than 2 million jobs, mostly in SMEs. 350 000 people are employed in forest management. The EU ratio of felling to increment is stable at around 60%. This ratio is projected to increase in several countries to over 100%, causing a decline in growing stock after 2020. European forests and forestry are governed by a variety of regional and national models, grouped according to their productive or protective orientation. Forests provide both resources and ecosystem functions. There are proposals to draft obligatory programmes. Assistance must also be allocated in a targeted manner, i.e. linked to climate change. The proposals include increasing competitiveness in the long-term, improving and preserving the environment, improving quality of life, and promoting coordination and communications. We must make every possible effort to ensure that we safeguard and use this resource sustainably so that our future generations can also exploit it, and we should also contribute to reducing environmental pollution.

**Peter Jahr (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (DE) The forests and the forestry industry are already making a significant contribution to the production of local raw materials. The forests are also a recreational area for many of the citizens of Europe and play an important role in preventing climate change. Hardly any other area has such closely interlinked environmental, economic and social functions. However, there are some enormous challenges facing our forests. One of the most important of these is climate change. It is the job of the Member States, with the support of the European Commission, to protect and develop our forests for future generations so that they can continue making a contribution in future to our natural habitats, our society and our economy. This includes ensuring that the forests play a

permanent and growing role in combating climate change and safeguarding the economic basis of the forestry and timber industries, so that we have an adequate future supply of wood.

**Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)**, *in writing*. – Today, it was an easy task to vote for the report on forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change. The EU forests are now facing more pressure than ever before, not necessarily because of climate change, but rather because of some of the decisions made in the EU to combat it. The fact that we now have requested within this report legally binding sustainability criteria on energy-creating biomass is an important initiative. The EU biofuel legislation, along with legislation for renewables, has driven our forest use in an unsustainable direction. If we consider forests solely as a source of renewable energy, we totally have missed the point of combining sustainable industry and environment protection. Forests are an important source of livelihood and well-being within our borders. Therefore, this valuable natural source should be used for production rather than short-sighted energy. One should also remember that the wood products themselves tie carbon during their whole life cycle. Therefore, we should avoid any corner-cutting in trying to reach our renewable goals.

**Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (DE) The European forestry industry is more sustainable than almost any other sector of the economy. For generations, the owners of European forests have complied with the strictest legislation on forests and nature conservation. However, the report submitted by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety relating to the Green Paper on forest protection and information introduces a rising tide of regulation, without acknowledging the importance of the forests as a job creator and an economic engine. The report calls for excessive sustainability criteria to be applied to forest management within the EU, without taking into consideration regional factors and the powers of the individual countries. The main points which exceed the authority of national forestry policy and weaken the forests in economic terms are the provisions concerning timber supplies within Europe. Also, the concept of ‘sustainability’ has still not been defined. Another point which I am opposed to is the implication that woody biomass is not sustainable. I believe that we should highlight the variety of protective and useful functions provided by the forests and not take a one-sided approach. The EU should make a greater effort to ensure that sustainable forest management is put into practice in Europe and that we act as a model for other countries.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Due to the significant contribution forests make in tackling the climate crisis, sustainable forestry management is of major importance to ensuring that the EU achieves its climate objectives. The EU must enhance its strategy for combating the factors causing deterioration of the forests, such as uncontrolled deforestation, fires and air pollution. At the same time, biodiversity conservation, protection against natural disasters and CO<sub>2</sub> capture from the atmosphere are crucial to improving our citizens’ quality of life and to preserving the environment. I therefore think that protection of the forests in the EU must be aimed at providing a guarantee that forests will fulfil their productive, socio-economic and ecological functions in the future, too.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this important report. EU forests and other wooded land cover more than 42% of the EU’s surface area. Forests provide livelihoods for millions of workers, entrepreneurs and 16 million forest owners. The forest-based industries (FBIs) provide more than 2 million jobs, mostly in SMEs, and have a EUR 300 billion turnover. 350 000 people are employed in forest management. In addition, 40%

of EU forests are state-owned. The EU ratio of felling to increment is stable at around 60%. This ratio is projected to increase in several countries to over 100%, causing a decline in growing stock after 2020. Measures to protect forests are vital. European forests can be grouped in five bioclimatic zones: the Boreal, Temperate Oceanic, Temperate Continental, Mediterranean and Mountain zones (5), compatible with the EEA's forest typology, developed to guide policy decisions (6).

**Véronique Mathieu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of the report on the Commission's Green Paper entitled 'On forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change'. Forests should be thought of as fundamental to combating climate change. Crucially, the European Union must step up its strategy to combat those phenomena which harm the forest, such as forest fires and atmospheric pollution. The capacity of the forest to recover from these threats and resume its normal development in the face of the impact of climate change depends on biodiversity, not just of trees, but also of all the other organisms that live in the forest, particularly wild animals. Consequently, those wild species that naturally colonise these special habitats that the forest provides merit particular attention from forest owners as they contribute to preserving biodiversity.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The preservation of the forest is crucial to the interests of the whole of humankind. It is indeed a pity that it once more serves as a pretext for promoting the carbon market. European green capitalism is at a dead end. Capitalism and ecology are mutually incompatible.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Forests and wooded land currently cover more than 42% of the EU's surface and are an industry which provides approximately 2 million jobs, with an annual turnover of EUR 300 billion. These numbers reflect a need for European policy on forests to make them sustainable, both in environmental and economic terms. Only in this way is it possible to protect them from the dangers they face, namely fires, which are the principle reason for their destruction. This is especially the case in southern European countries and, in particular, my country, Portugal, which loses thousands of hectares of forests every year to fires.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Climate change and forests are inextricably bound up with each other. In the fight against climate change, it is crucial to protect the forest. Better use can be made of the forest in this fight, not only through preventing felling, but also through afforestation and reforestation programmes.

Climate change means that every type of forest and the forestry sector as a whole are exposed to specific and unforeseeable threats such as storms, drought and forest fires. It is therefore vital that the European Union steps up its strategy for combating these phenomena. Sustainable forest management must aim to reconcile aspects relating to production and those relating to forest protection. We must manage forests sustainably if we are to maintain their capacity to fulfil their economic, ecological and social functions.

Crucially, we must pay greater attention to the maintenance, balance and enhancement of the services rendered by the forest. The preservation of biodiversity must be a priority for our political action.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – It is known that the report stresses the fact that forests should be seen as a major contributor to climate change mitigation and adaptation, rendering necessary the reinforcement of the EU strategy for combating the factors causing

their deterioration, e.g. pests, forest fires, etc. Moreover, the report focused on establishing a general context concerning forest protection, namely subsidiarity, diversity of threats according to different forest types, the central role of Sustainable Forest Management and the importance of forests for competitiveness and employment. I voted 'in favour'.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) Dying forests throughout Europe represent both an environmental problem, in terms of natural habitats and climate change, and an economic problem. The 5 million people who work in the forests and the 16 million forest owners produce an annual turnover of EUR 300 billion. Current environmental conditions are responsible for bringing about changes in European forests. We have to expect that in the long term beech trees will disappear completely in the Mediterranean region and that coniferous forests will decrease in area throughout continental Europe. Other factors include new forms of pest attacks whose impact cannot yet be assessed and a significant increase in the risk of forest fires.

ICP Forests and the EU operate one of the world's largest biomonitoring networks with the aim of quantifying these changes and helping to understand the cause and effect relationships. I have abstained from voting because in my opinion, the measures proposed in the report relating to the extent to which the individual Member States will be held responsible and will be involved do not go far enough.

**Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted against a part of paragraph 36 because the provision it contains is, to say the least, unrealistic. I do not think that we should ban construction on forest land which has been affected by fire because it is actually impossible for this land to be used for other purposes. I do not think that we should present cases of abuse as the general rule and harm the property rights of the forests' owners who have already been affected by a forest fire. However, I find acceptable the idea expressed in paragraph 37, which proposes imposing a ban where a fire is proven to have been started deliberately. However, in this situation, I think that we may be faced with the adverse consequences which would result from this: the arsonist is not necessarily the property owner and I do not understand why the latter ought to be punished.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The Commission Green Paper report entitled 'Forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change' presents European Parliament's concerns on the matter.

Forests and wooded land currently cover more than 42% of the EU's surface and there are more than 16 million forest owners. Forests provide 2 million jobs, many in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and represent an annual turnover of EUR 300 billion. On top of this, they have an essential role in combating climate change due to their capacity to absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen.

These figures reveal the importance of forests for all EU Member States, but particularly for Portugal, which has forests with very specific characteristics and plays an important role in regional planning and combating forest fires.

I voted in favour of this report since it advocates measures that I think contribute to combating forest destruction, especially fires, pests, forest fragmentation, changes in species composition and an increased demand for woody biomass.

**Phil Prendergast (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I welcome the Commission's Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU. Since forests are the main absorber of carbon, sustainable forest management is key to achieving the EU's climate change goals. We need



to bring protection and production together in the management of our forests in order to ensure the viability of their environmental, social and economic functions. The EU has a role to play in promoting best management practice that suits the needs of local actors and communities, and in incentivising forestation efforts compatible with local conditions and native species.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of this report since I consider it absolutely essential to strengthen European policies on the conservation and sustainable management of forests, whose incalculable economic, social and environmental value it is important to preserve.

**Britta Reimers (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (DE) I have voted against paragraph 36 (split 2) and against paragraph 37, because issues of environmental planning come under regional or national authority, which means that decisions in these areas must be made by regional or national parliaments. In my opinion, any intervention on an EU level would be an intervention in subsidiarity and would therefore go too far.

**Frédérique Ries (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) It goes without saying that forest protection is a key environmental issue. Forests, when they are well maintained, provide the main carbon sink and play a vital role in combating climate change. If they are not, and are subjected to intensive deforestation, they would produce 25% of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, a greenhouse gas caused by human activity. In other words, the European Union, including Sweden and Finland, which together account for 33% of Europe's forest, and also the Mediterranean countries, have every interest in stepping up their strategy to combat threats to the forest, such as atmospheric pollution and forest fires.

In this respect, I am delighted that, as part of the vote on the Green Paper entitled 'Preparing forests for climate change', paragraph 38 of the Arsenis report has been adopted, which 'urgently calls on the Commission to present a legislative proposal on forest fire prevention' and plans, in particular, 'a 30-year ban on building on land where there has been a forest fire'. This is a good way of countering the widespread practice of using forest fires to promote the interests of property developers.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – This is a good report with good proposals, which include recognising the generally positive trend in terms of carbon storage in forests in Europe, but also the fact that carbon storage still remains far below natural capacity, and that the forest sector could reverse to a source, due to pressures; calling for Commission proposals to complement the Timber Regulation, in order to ensure that all timber or timber products placed on the European market are sourced from sustainably managed forests; urging the Commission to study options for payment for ecosystem services; and calling for a legislative proposal on forest fire prevention, including consideration of a 30-year ban on building on land where there has been a forest fire.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I am in favour of the report because forests, which cover more than 42% of the EU's surface area, provide a livelihood for many workers and businesses in the forestry sector. A framework of Commission guidelines should be established; binding sustainability criteria should be introduced, including mandatory national forestry programmes; payment for ecosystem services should be formalised; and forest protection policies should be strengthened by reintroducing the fire prevention regulation. It is particularly worthwhile and striking that the amendment to prevent speculative building on land cleared illegally by fire was adopted. There is already such a rule in Italy, prohibiting building on land destroyed by arson.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Forests provide us with many essential eco-services, ranging from regulating the water cycle to preventing soil erosion and sequestering carbon. The environmental and economic benefits of forests require that they be afforded urgent, continuing and long-term protection, and this is especially important in the context of climate change, in terms of both mitigation and adaptation. This report covers a wide range of issues and is the result of much hard work and fruitful negotiation involving all the main political groups. I sincerely hope the Commission and the Member States will act on its constructive suggestions.

**Dominique Vlasto (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I welcome the adoption of this report on the Green Paper on forests presented by the Commission. Forests are part of our countryside and our heritage and are crucial to our well-being. At a time when threats are becoming increasingly serious, it is vital for us to protect these exceptional natural resources better. We are, indeed, all aware of the consequences of climate change on forests, yet our inertia in finding solutions to them is putting their preservation in serious danger. It is our duty to preserve these fragile ecosystems, this inestimable biodiversity and this strategic sector of the economy. I am therefore pleased at the strong political message that Parliament has sent in this, the International Year of Forests. We cannot adopt a wait-and-see approach to the measures that have to be taken to adapt to climate change. We also need to strengthen the European Forest Fire Tactical Reserve, given that in this area, prevention is just as important as reaction. If we are to preserve our forests as we know and love them, we must be at the forefront of the fight to ensure sustainable management of forest areas and to protect them from the threats that hang over them.

**Report: Gabriele Albertini (A7-0168/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this proposal, given that the report has achieved a balanced approach between the most important issues for the organisation and the activities of the European External Action Service, and for the key areas of security and defence policy. This balance has been achieved through military and civilian cooperation on the resolution of collaborations between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). I believe that the proposed amendments, tabled by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, and adopted in committee, contribute to a more inclusive definition, encompassing freedom of religion and an extension of the list of minorities in need of international protection.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of the resolution on the EP's annual report on the CFSP. It gives an overview of the strategic role that the EU should play outside its borders, in particular, as regards the contribution to the development of democracy and respect for human rights. With this resolution, the European Parliament reaffirms its prerogatives: key player and holder of the function of management and budgetary control of European civilian and military missions. We, Members of the European Parliament, once again stressed our main objective of a strong and decisive Parliament in foreign policy, particularly now having in mind the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. Also important is the EU multilateralism issue and the need to be always well represented in the different strategic contexts, taking advantage, in particular, of the new EEAS, the European diplomatic corps that has finally become a reality.

**Charalampos Angourakis (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (EL) The reports on the CFSP of the EU and its role on the international stage, which was supported by the main coalition of

the political representatives of capital in the European Parliament, namely the conservatives, social democrats and liberals, illustrate its acutely reactionary character and anti-grassroots role. Moreover, we must not forget that the European Parliament passed a resolution putting it at the vanguard of and seeking to legalise the war being waged against Libya by the EU, the USA and NATO, in order to plunder the wealth-producing sources of that country and control developments in the area as a whole, in the midst of serious imperialist infighting. The political staff of the bourgeois classes in the European Parliament are demanding the strengthening of the imperialist character of the EU, its further militarisation and the development of its military capabilities and those of the Euro Army, especially 'flexible' battlegroups and rapid reaction forces, such as those being prepared with EUFOR Libya for land operations in Libya, in which Greece is heavily involved as leader of the Balkan battlegroup. They are promoting the strategic alliance between the EU and NATO and laying plans for imperialist interventions and wars by the EU in all corners of the planet on the pretext of 'crisis management', 'humanitarian aid' and 'the fight against terrorism', with priority being given to securing positions in the infighting between the imperialists raging in North Africa and the Middle East in general.

**Liam Aylward (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – I voted to oppose the measures in this report relating to the Mercosur Trade deal. The Mercosur Trade deal has the potential to seriously undermine European agriculture and the work of European farmers in delivering public goods and high quality, safe food. A quota of the size demanded by Mercosur would completely undermine Ireland's beef production. It is estimated that an EU/Mercosur deal could reduce Irish beef prices by 30% which would inflict losses of up to EUR 500 million in Ireland alone. The Irish agri-food sector accounts for 60% of exports from Irish-owned companies, valued at EUR 8 billion per year, and provides up to 250 000 jobs. This deal would result in major job losses at farm and industry level across rural areas in Ireland and the EU as a whole.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report. The Treaty of Lisbon gave the EU great powers, with which the EU should further develop its foreign policy objectives and defend its interests worldwide with the overall aim of contributing to peace, security, solidarity, conflict prevention, the promotion of democracy, the protection of human rights, respect for international law, etc. The EU must also act more strategically in order to bring its weight to bear internationally. The EU's ability to influence the international order depends not only on coherence between its policies, actors and institutions, but also on a strategic concept of EU foreign policy which must unite all Member States behind the same set of priorities and goals, so that they speak with one strong voice in the international arena.

**Slavi Binev (NI)**, *in writing*. – (BG) While supporting the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP), which is one of the European Union's key policies, I wish to express my endorsement of the policy which the European Union is conducting at a global level. Our adoption of this annual report reflects the strong position and role of the European Union in the field of international relations.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The Albertini report contains ideas that I agree with, but there is an underlying problem. The basic assumption is that the EU should gradually take a predominant position in foreign and defence policy over the individual national governments. That means that the Member States would have to give up further large portions of sovereignty over foreign policy to EU bodies, which would be charged

with reaching a common position to be presented in the international community and in all multilateral forums. I cannot agree with this prospect: the Member States would no longer be able to establish their own foreign policies on the basis of what they deem to be national priorities.

We agree that in certain contexts, the EU must strive to speak with a single voice in order to be stronger on the global stage and to represent the desires that are common to all its Member States, but that cannot come about at the cost of the Member States' freedom to draw up their own foreign policies. Moreover, the report calls on the EU to renew the momentum in Turkey's EU accession process, a point on which I have never been in agreement at all. Turkey must stay out of our organisation, because it is not and never will be Europe. I voted against the report.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because the Council's annual report provides a consistent overview of the direction and actions of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP). It is very important for the Council to continue to focus, above all, on regional conflicts and react to them swiftly. However, the Council's report does not contain any possible approaches to resolving those conflicts and issues. The Council should seek to ensure that the report is more than just a catalogue of country-based events and developments. Thus, this document should also address the issue of the implementation and safeguarding of EU foreign policy and instruments. In addition, the Council should also include in the report evaluations of coordination and coherence between the CFSP and other external policies of the Union, as well as strategic and organisational recommendations for the future on the basis of the assessment of CFSP actions. I would like to draw attention to the fact that the annual report on the CFSP should serve as an instrument for enhanced interinstitutional dialogue in order to evaluate its effectiveness and outline the future direction of this policy.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I welcome the Council's annual report and the efforts made to develop a European foreign policy. I consider it of the utmost importance to adopt a position which is harmonious with the Member States' foreign policies, since such cohesion will lead to peace, security, solidarity and conflict prevention at international level. It will also lead to sustainable development and increase the EU's capacity to influence the international order. I therefore urge the continuation of the work already under way to form a united front which will improve relations between Europe and other world powers, promote a more effective response in situations of international crisis, and improve Europe's standing on the world stage.

**Christine De Veyrac (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I did not vote in favour of paragraph 85 of the Albertini report which welcomes the resumption of the negotiations on an association agreement with Mercosur. Such an agreement, which is intended to promote free trade, should be entered into with great caution so as not to destabilise agriculture in the Community still further. Mercosur products are not required to meet the same environmental and social standards as their European counterparts – conditions under which there is a real risk of unfair competition. We must ensure that we avoid such a situation.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of this report as the Council's annual report provides a clear view of the policies and actions of the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and contributes to strengthening interinstitutional dialogue.

**Diogo Feio (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) This year's report is similar in structure to the 2009 common foreign and security policy (CFSP) report. A special section is dedicated to the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon. As before, there is a demand for further dialogue with the Council on the principal objectives of the CFSP.

I endorse the rapporteur's emphasis on the need to move from a mere description of CFSP activities towards a dialogue with a strategic approach. The rapporteur also urges the Council to consider the positions of Parliament when reaching decisions.

I believe further discussion of the strategic framework of the Union's foreign policy is necessary, as well as a deeper knowledge of the scope of the CFSP and the mechanisms for its establishment, which should be made available to the various political players. The high number of amendments tabled is representative of Members' increasing interest in these matters.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) This report is on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in 2009, presented to the European Parliament in application of Part II, Section G, paragraph 43 of the interinstitutional agreement of 17 May 2006 (2010/2124(INI)). It is a report based on the new institutional framework established by the Treaty of Lisbon and, in accordance with its restructuring, presents more transparently the EU's CFSP. It addresses the situation in various parts of the world where regions and countries are in crisis, like the Western Balkans, countries neighbouring Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Russia, Turkey, the Middle East, the Mediterranean region, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Whilst I acknowledge that it could be improved, particularly by detailing events by country, describing the necessary means for achieving EU foreign policy objectives and by making a more qualitative assessment of this policy, which includes strategic and organisational recommendations for the future, I welcome the drafting of this report and hope that the EU continues to develop an effective multilateralism that is one of the hallmarks of the geostrategic concerns of the EU.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL),** *in writing.* – (PT) This is yet another report supporting the development of the European Union's common foreign, security and defence policy. The arguments are repeated here fastidiously. As such, we would like to reiterate our opposition to it, with the arguments to back this up: we are talking about the defence, through various means including soldiers and diplomats, of the European powers' economic and geostrategic interests, in collaboration with the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). We must remember the track record of these institutions and their tragic consequences: Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and Libya, and other countries that are also on the list.

Development cooperation and aid policy, which, in the current international context, should constitute one of the principal pillars, if not the principal pillar, of a foreign and security policy, is relegated to an extremely secondary role.

There is also the typical and tedious hypocritical stance protecting the economic interests of European arms manufacturers, who have made millions by selling arms to dictators who have used them to massacre both their own people and those of neighbouring states. These and other matters are still not being met with the response that they need: the necessary rectification of the policies backing them up.

The support given to Israel's policies of aggression and occupation and to the policy of non-compliance with United Nations resolutions, as practised by Israel and other countries like Morocco, are other factors that we also denounce here.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This is yet another report which essentially reaffirms support for the development of the European Union's common foreign, security and defence policies. These are principally policies in defence of the economic and geostrategic interests of the European powers. They are increasingly aligned with the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), putting development cooperation and aid in second place. The results of this are largely catastrophic, as is clear from the cases of Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Libya and other countries.

We are also aware that there is a double standard protecting the economic interests of European arms manufacturers, which have made millions by selling arms to dictators who have subsequently used them to massacre their own people and those of neighbouring states.

Therefore, some of the principal questions arising from this debate are left without the required response: arms deals, the expansionist and warmongering policies of Israel and the systematic non-compliance with United Nations resolutions on the Western Sahara and Palestine.

That is why we voted against.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The report was adopted in the Committee on Foreign Affairs by an overwhelming majority. It has achieved a balanced approach to the most pressing issues concerning the organisation and activities of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and to key issues for the common foreign and security policy (CFSP), such as promotion of the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, promotion of gender equality and energy security, the situation in Iran and in Afghanistan, the EU response to the democratic changes in the Southern Mediterranean region, and relations with major players such as Russia, China, Japan and India. The report strikes a balance on civilian-military cooperation in crisis resolution and on EU-NATO interaction: on the one hand, it avoids relegating the EU exclusively to trade, development and humanitarian issues, the course pursued by the ECR Group, and, on the other, it rejects the GUE/NGL Group's insistence on excluding any military component from the CFSP.

**Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Mr Albertini's proposal cannot have my vote because there are too many points on which we cannot agree. One of these is the proposal for a uniform EU foreign policy. The idea is impeccable but, in view of the North African crisis this year and the ongoing Libyan crisis, it is obviously not feasible. There are two many fine distinctions made by different countries in the EU. Another point on which we cannot agree is the call to increase our efforts for Turkey to join Europe. That is why I will vote against the report.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI)**, *in writing*. – (FR) In 2009, the really crucial common foreign and security policy (CFSP) decision was the appointment of the High Representative. One has to admit that it was not the best decision. It is quite clear that Lady Ashton is more gifted at issuing moralising press releases and playing Lady Bountiful than she is cut out for dealing with the diplomatic issues that you want her to tackle on behalf of the 27 Member States. Thanks to the Baroness, the European Union was absent, out of synch or swimming against the tide for all key events. However, as usually happens in times of crisis, a handful

of States took the initiative – for better or for worse – got organised and took action. The remainder either tagged along or complained when they were forced to give an opinion.

In reality, the Union's foreign policy essentially involves distributing funding and engaging in trade, often in ways that are at variance with its professed political principles. This is only logical: diplomacy is a matter of State sovereignty. It is the product of each State's history, resources and economic or geopolitical interests. The Union's interests are neither an amalgamation nor an extension of those of the Member States. They are specific to the Union and often at odds with national interests. It is wholly unreasonable that these interests should take precedence over national interests.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I endorsed this document because it is aimed at ensuring that national defence systems are consistent with EU defence systems, as well as coordinating strategies with the most important global actors, such as the United States, Russia, China, Turkey and the Arab countries. It stresses and aims to promote a moratorium on executions. It also indicates orientations and objectives in cooperation with other countries. Effective multilateralism should be the overriding strategic concern of the Union and, in this context, the EU should take a leading role in international cooperation, support international institutions, facilitate international consensus and advance global action. There is an urgent need to address global issues of common concern for EU citizens, such as fighting terrorism, organised crime, pandemics and climate change, cyber security, ensuring the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the eradication of poverty, ensuring energy security, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, peaceful conflict resolution and disarmament, migration management and the promotion of human rights and civil liberties, and attention is drawn to the need for improved monitoring of EU funds in line with the European Court of Auditors Special Report No 15/2009. It takes the view that the EU should seize the opportunity of the adoption of NATO's new Strategic Concept in order to substantially strengthen its partnership with NATO while, at the same time, developing the EU's foreign, security and defence policies. I believe that an organisation-to-organisation relationship must be adopted.

**Krzysztof Lisek (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) I voted in favour of adopting the annual report on the main aspects of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in 2009. It is a well-written and crucially important report, which discusses aspects of the common foreign and security policy in detail. I am particularly glad to see that the report includes the amendment I tabled regarding Georgia. My aim was to stress the significance of exerting constant and consistent political pressure on Russia to put into effect all of the provisions of the 2008 agreement, including, in particular, allowing the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) to enter the occupied territories. I hope that Mrs Ashton, the High Representative, will take our recommendations into account.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report and take the view that, in order to be consistent with the EU's own values, EU foreign policy and external action must give priority to promoting democracy and the rule of law, good governance and fair societies, given that a rule-based democratic society is the basis for upholding human rights as well as for enhancing stability. Reiterating the position that human rights need to be firmly mainstreamed into EU foreign policy, I believe that the new institutional structure of the EU, with particular reference to the EEAS and its dedicated department, offers an opportunity to enhance the EU's coherence and effectiveness in this area; urge the VP/HR to proactively pursue, through bilateral relations with third countries and active participation in international fora, the engagement of third countries in respecting human

rights as well as to speak up against human rights abuses and not to refrain from taking adequate measures if they are violated; considering the growing grave violations of freedom of belief, call upon the Commission to conduct a thorough evaluation and to mainstream freedom of belief into the EU human rights policy.

**Mario Mauro (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The Albertini report on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in 2009 represents an important crossroads for the future of the Union's foreign policy. It is really important that Parliament should unanimously call on the Council not to limit the scope of the CFSP annual report to a mere description of policy activities but, as the report rightly points out, to 'make it a policy- and solution-focused tool'. We must also stress that 'the report should provide more than a catalogue of country-based events and developments and should also address the question of the effectiveness of the EU foreign policy as well as of the means necessary to pursue the objectives of European external action'.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The EU should continue to develop its foreign policy objectives and promote its values and interests at international level, with the general aim of contributing to peace, to security, to solidarity, to conflict prevention, to the promotion of democracy, to the protection of human rights, to gender equality, to respect for international law, to support for international institutions, to effective multilateralism, to mutual respect between nations, to sustainable development, to free and fair trade, and to the eradication of poverty. These objectives will only materialise with an effective common foreign and security policy (CFSP) shared by all the EU Member States.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) As you know, I am a keen advocate of Turkey joining the EU. I am also convinced that Europe would benefit at least as much as Turkey from its accession. Turkey is fortunate in being located at the meeting of two worlds: it has one foot in the European West and one in Asia. Jacques Chirac said that the European Union and Turkey have a 'shared destiny'. Turkey's accession would prove that constructive, conciliatory, innovative and creative dialogue is possible between East and West. After all, Europe is already home to between 15 and 20 million Muslims. Turkey is a founding member of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and of the Western European Union (WEU). It has just been elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Finally, the fact that it is part of the G20 goes to show how significant the country is and the geostrategic role that it could play in the alliance of nations. We need to rebuild trust between our governments and put flesh on the bones of the hopes expressed by the population and young people. In the coming years, we need to work to bring Turkey into the European family.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing.* – The report was adopted in the Committee on Foreign Affairs by an overwhelming majority where I voted 'in favour' too. It has achieved a balanced approach to the most pressing issues of the organisation and activities of the European External Action Service and key issues of common foreign and security policy, such as the promotion of the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, promotion of gender equality, energy security, the situation in Iran and Afghanistan, the EU's response to the democratic changes in the Southern Mediterranean, and relations with major players, such as Russia, China, Japan and India.



**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing.* – (DE) I am a supporter of the common European foreign and defence policy, where the word ‘European’ is of the greatest importance. Europe must free itself from the USA with regard not only to its economy, but also its foreign policy. It must become more autonomous in order to be seen throughout the world as a strong and independent player. However, we have not yet identified any signs of movements in this direction. On the contrary, this report supports and safeguards the links with the USA, in particular, via NATO. Some people even believe that these links should be strengthened. This would have a highly counterproductive impact on the future of the EU and would make it difficult to agree on a common European approach or attitude to important issues, as the crisis in Libya has demonstrated. For this reason, I have voted against this report.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) EU foreign policy has seen a significant development following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. The EU needs a coherent foreign policy strategy based on the objectives and principles established in Article 21 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU). EU action on the international stage is based on the principles that guided its creation, development and enlargement, with the objective of promoting the following values all over the world: ‘democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law’.

I voted in favour of this report on the annual report from the Council to Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in 2009, as I agree with the majority of the observations made by Parliament. I would stress the fact that the report does not propose possible approaches for resolving the conflicts and issues that it presents in such a transparent way. In view of this, I support the rapporteur’s request that the Council not limit the scope of this report to a mere description of the activities of this policy, but rather transform it into a political tool that is focused on solutions.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of this resolution on the grounds that the Council’s 2009 annual report on the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) – whose transparency I commend – stresses the importance of the European Union continuing to develop its foreign policy objectives, and to promote its values and interests at international level, with the general aim of contributing to peace, to security, to solidarity, to conflict prevention, to the promotion of democracy, to the protection of human rights, to gender equality, to respect for international law, to support for international institutions, to effective multilateralism, to mutual respect between nations, to sustainable development, to free and fair trade, and to the eradication of poverty.

**Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (ES) We are now faced with the annual report on the common foreign and security policy (CFSP), this time relating to 2009. My vote in favour is based on the wisdom of this report, which not only embraces the innovations of the Treaty of Lisbon in matters of foreign policy and security, but also calls for greater coordination between the recently created European External Action Service, the Member States and the Commission. The EU must be consolidated as a strong and credible player on the international stage, and to do this, we have to move towards an unequivocal message to promote our values, such as democracy and human rights, in our foreign relations, but also in the pursuit of our interests, such as those connected with energy security.

The terms values and interests must be compatible, not exclusive in our external action. Seen from a socialist point of view, the thematic and geographical recommendations of the report satisfy our principal demands. I believe that it is right in its concept of transatlantic relations, particularly the EU and NATO, and in underlining the need for civil and military cooperation in crisis management.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – Three of our six amendments were adopted: the one calling for separate budget lines on common security and defence policy missions, the one calling on the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to overcome the imbalance between civilian and military planning capabilities, and the one on the urgency of addressing water management issues in Central Asia. As for Syria, the S&D Group amendment was adopted, causing our amendment calling for the resignation of Assad to fall. In the end, the report was adopted with an overwhelming majority. Our group abstained.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The report emphasises the guiding role of the European Union as an effective global actor on the international stage. Performing that role requires a more strategic external action and a single foreign policy uniting all the Member States. That seems utopian to me in view of the ongoing events in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean countries. I voted against the report because it seeks to limit national powers while creating new agencies and tackling new military operations, which would entail increased spending, and it also wants to give added momentum to Turkey's accession negotiations.

**Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (LT) This month, Lithuania is marking the seventh anniversary of EU accession. When we joined the EU, most Lithuanians dreamt of democracy and what Europe could give. Unfortunately, after seven years, few of those expectations have been met, either in Lithuania or at European level. Foreign policy is one of them. Recently a few European leaders were quick to celebrate the triumph of democracy and the death of the dictators of the Arab world – a victory of European values. Sadly, this is far from the truth. The EU's efforts to consolidate its foreign policy have not been very successful.

The Treaty of Lisbon was supposed to help Europe find a single voice on foreign policy, but last week we saw more proof of the lack of cohesion in EU foreign policy: after Osama bin Laden was killed last Monday, the Heads of State of the EU issued no less than five different statements within 24 hours. If Europe wants to remain a serious player on the world stage, we must speak with one voice. The EU must also get its foreign policy priorities right: focusing attention on the south while neglecting our eastern borders is not a sustainable policy.

**Dominique Vlasto (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The EU must define the broad thrust of its common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in the light of growing global instability. I am pleased to see that the report emphasises the need to involve Parliament in the process. As representatives of the interests of European citizens, we need to contribute to defining a European defence policy. The European Union's fundamental aims include defending peace, human rights and democracy. The promotion of our values must be based on an ambitious external action and diplomacy strategy. The Treaty of Lisbon has given the Union a voice through the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission. Our CFSP cannot tolerate division. This vote is

therefore a call for improved coordination between all institutions: the European External Action Service, the European Commission, the Member States and, of course, the European Parliament. In a changing world, our Union needs to be more than a purely economic Union. We have a historical obligation to make it a political Union. The CFSP should be one of the vehicles used to achieve that. This is the message that Parliament wanted to convey and I support this position.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) I voted in favour of this report. In order to strengthen the EU's influence at a global level and, therefore, indirectly, the influence of the individual Member States, we need the insight and the determination to ensure increased cooperation and coordination between the different levels. We must not put unnecessary obstacles in the path of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to enable it to live up to its founding principles. I have also voted in favour of the amendment, which, at the same time, calls on Baroness Ashton to make full use of her powers. We need the active involvement of both sides to ensure that the EEAS is a success. As a member of the Committee on Budgets and an advocate of the greatest possible transparency, I have, of course, also voted in favour of the amendment calling for separate budget lines for each mission.

#### **Report: Roberto Gualtieri (A7-0166/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I support this proposal and recommend that measures be taken to remedy the difficulty of finding professionals for civilian missions, the most utilised form of intervention. As regards gender mainstreaming in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, and to make civilian and military missions more effective, I recommend that female personnel be involved as appropriate at every level of crisis management. I would stress the need for women to be included in senior-level decision-making positions, regular consultations with civil society, and that capacity to work on gender issues within missions be enhanced. I call for the establishment of adequate public complaint procedures in the context of common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions, and call on Lady Ashton to include a detailed report on women, peace and security in the six-monthly evaluation of CSDP missions. I believe this would enable the experience acquired to be turned to account from a political, strategic, technical, legal and operational point of view and, in the long term, could provide a starting point for improving interventions under way and for criteria to be applied to emerging crises so as to make for the best possible balance between strategic interests and available resources.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of the resolution on the development of the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. It is important to stress that the new CSDP introduced by the Lisbon Treaty provides a firm political statement about the Union's intention to act as a force for stability in the world. I support the position that current economic austerity and the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty may help Member States towards smarter spending on defence by pooling and sharing a larger proportion of their defence capabilities, budget and requirements, while achieving more security for their citizens, although the reality is that the economic and financial crisis affects EU national defence budgets, programmes and force structures and, therefore, more than one year after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, there are not yet clear signs of a post-Lisbon EU holistic approach enabling traditional procedural and institutional barriers to be overcome. Therefore, it is important that Member States find appropriate means for the implementation of the CSDP as the Lisbon Treaty provides a framework for upgrading cooperation on defence whilst achieving

economies of scale, maintaining strategic relevance and providing security for the Union's citizens.

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) At a time of economic and financial crisis, the European Union is being called upon to enhance its strategic autonomy in order to uphold its values, and protect its citizens by developing a shared vision of the main challenges and threats and by aligning its resources and capabilities to adequately respond to them. I think that the new provisions on the common security and defence policy introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon offer a strong political statement of the Union's intention to act as a force for stability in the world. They provide a clear legal framework for reinforcing its capacities to pursue its foreign and security policy through a comprehensive approach drawing upon all the instruments available to the Union and its Member States, to prevent and manage crises and conflicts, as well as to build lasting peace. I voted in favour of this report.

I think that the European Union needs a strong and effective security and defence policy to prevent conflicts, protect its citizens' security and reaffirm its basic values, by making its contribution to supporting international law, the promotion of respect for human rights and democratic values throughout the whole world.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) The international system is undergoing rapid and profound change. This is driven by the shift of power towards emerging international actors and deepening interdependence, encompassing economic and financial problems, environmental deterioration and climate change, energy and resource scarcity, and interconnected security challenges. I endorsed this important report. In a turbulent global context, and at a time of economic and financial crisis, the EU must enhance its strategic autonomy to uphold its values, pursue its interests and protect its citizens by developing a shared vision of the main challenges and threats and by aligning its capabilities and resources to adequately respond to them, thereby contributing to the preservation of international peace and global security.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I voted for this report as it marks an important step towards implementing the Treaty of Lisbon. The amendments proposed in this document will improve the flexibility of Europe's military capabilities. I should mention here that the diversification of threats at a global level requires the common security and defence policy to be adapted. Cyber attacks, illegal migration flows and terrorism are just a few of them. Indeed, the Union has become a preferred target of international crime. I should also emphasise the size of the financial resources which support this policy. I think that the review of the ATHENA mechanism by the Polish Presidency will solve the budget problem. This will help establish a simpler contribution from Member States to the shared costs of European military operations. The disbanding of the Western European Union and introduction of a reciprocal defence clause in the Treaty marks a step towards a common defence policy.

**Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) When we talk about a political Europe, a hotline to Europe, or even of Europe speaking with one voice, we often forget to specify that this can only happen if we have a European defence policy in place. Recent events in Libya have shown just how much work remains to be done on this front. Given the current financial difficulties, pooling our resources is not only politically desirable, it is essential.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) Defence policy is one of the areas most jealously guarded by the Member States. The impression one gets from this report, or indeed from

others on the same subject or on foreign policy, is that the intention is to push the European Union into ensuring that it gradually gains the upper hand over the Member States in drawing up foreign and defence policy. Apart from the objections that can be made to this approach on principle, I cannot understand how anyone can think that the EU can ever speak with one voice on such sensitive subjects, in which the interests of the individual Member States are very often different, if not quite openly conflicting. One need only look at what has happened in the case of Libya and humanitarian intervention.

It is virtually impossible for the Member States to reach agreement and put forward a single, agreed position on events of this magnitude. Even if it did happen, it would necessarily be at the cost of governments' decision-making freedom and of what national politicians regard as priorities. I voted against the report.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because the European Union must continue to enhance its security strategy, uphold its values, pursue its interests, and protect its citizens, thereby contributing to the preservation of international peace and global security. The new provisions of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon provide a clearer legal framework for reinforcing the implementation of foreign and security policy, drawing upon all the instruments available to the EU and its Member States, to prevent and manage crises and conflicts, and to build lasting peace. When conducting foreign and security policy, the EU must ensure consistency and coherence between the different areas of its external action and between external and internal policies. I would like to stress that a credible external security policy requires closer cooperation between the Member States, mutual trust and solidarity.

**Jan Březina (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (CS) I am concerned that, more than a year after the Treaty of Lisbon entered into effect, there are still no clear signs of a comprehensive EU approach to foreign and security policy, within the framework of which it would be possible to overcome the traditional procedural and institutional barriers restricting the EU's ability to act. I am concerned about the unwillingness of EU Member States to define a common position on the crisis in Libya, or on UN Security Council Resolution 1973 and how to implement it. Ideas about creating ad hoc coalitions of countries as possible substitutes for a common security and defence policy are dangerous, in my opinion, as no European state in the 21st century has a real chance of being a significant player in the area of security and defence. I would like to point out in this context that the Treaty of Lisbon provides the possibility of entrusting the implementation of crisis-resolution operations to a group of Member States, although only within the framework of a Council decision defining the objectives, scope and terms of their implementation. A common response to the developments in Libya is essential to the creation of a new and credible approach to the Neighbourhood Policy with southern countries. It is similarly necessary to emphasise the development and deepening of the Eastern Partnership, within the framework of which a parliamentary assembly made up of MEPs and members of the parliaments of participating states has recently begun operating. In this context, we should insist on a tough and principled position towards the regime of President Lukashenko in Belarus.

**Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing.* – (DE) For a variety of reasons, I have voted in favour of the Gualtieri report. The rapporteur has worked very well together with my group. Many of our amendments have been turned into compromise texts. Out of 29 amendments tabled by the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, 21 have been included in the report. Finally, many of the positions which we have supported and called for form part of the report. I am very critical of the call for the incorporation of arms

research into the common strategic framework for research and innovation. The proposal for the use of so-called Battlegroups in the case of natural disasters is also inappropriate. The extensive reference to the US Department for Homeland Security as an example of a suitable anti-terrorism policy is at best irritating.

I take a very positive view of the extremely open and realistic assessment of the individual common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions, of the statements on women and security, on disarmament and on the human rights clause in anti-terrorism measures, and of the clear reference to the decision not to mix civilian and military operations. Finally, the rapporteur also covered one fundamental issue: opposition to absolute strategic autonomy as the final outcome of the CSDP.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT)** I consider it of the utmost importance to adopt a position in harmony with the Member States' foreign policies, since such cohesion will lead to peace, security, solidarity and conflict prevention at international level. It will also lead to sustainable development and increase the EU's capacity to influence the international order. I therefore urge the continuation of the work already under way to form a united front which will improve relations between Europe and other world powers, promote a more effective response in situations of international crisis and improve Europe's standing on the world stage.

**Giovanni Collino (PPE), in writing. – (IT)** The Treaty of Lisbon should represent a new political model in Europe, both in terms of the need to pool the resources of Member States in order to achieve optimum results, and of working on shared strategies and operations that will also make Europe into the political union its founding fathers dreamed of years ago. This week, we are celebrating Europe Day, when we remember the Schuman Declaration, which spoke of a Europe which 'will be built through concrete achievements which first create a *de facto* solidarity'. At the moment, it is this solidarity that is missing, especially in the expression of a strong shared political will by all the Member States, which would not only give greater protection to our borders, but also make our economy more credible. The Gualtieri report clearly underlines the fact that the European armed forces are not adequate to build a common European defence system or to reach the targets for the Union's internal and external security set out in the Treaty of Lisbon. Without a credible military capacity, the common European security and defence policy will remain on paper and in the words of those who do not have the necessary tools to effectively implement it.

**Mário David (PPE), in writing. – (PT)** The Treaty of Lisbon was a step forward for the EU. It has brought greater political and institutional involvement in relations between Member States, bringing them even closer on key foreign and domestic policies and strategies.

I voted in favour of this report as I understand that the analysis therein is extremely relevant to the development of a common security and defence policy (CSDP). The tabled document maximises the EU's role, strengthening the synergies between Member States, and between them and the EU institutions. The development of the CSDP is even more relevant given the current economic/financial crisis, which makes it advisable to share resources between Member States in order to effectively ensure public safety, crisis/conflict management and the establishment of lasting peace. It is more of an asset because of the observation of the legal structure presented, looking to clarify the institutional barriers verified in the post-Treaty of Lisbon period and trying to specify legislative solutions for any problems that are identified: 'Lisbon' requires a CSDP. I feel that the European public wants it. The new reality will be more rational, more synergistic and more European.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The idea behind this resolution is that the common security and defence policy (CSDP), following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, envisages the Union's firm political intention to act as a force of stability in the world, with a clear legal framework for making it more able to pursue its objectives.

Nonetheless, there are still no clear signs of a post-Lisbon approach which is holistic enough, allowing traditional procedural and institutional obstacles to be overcome, as well as allowing for the security and defence of the public and the European states. I hope that the current economic austerity will encourage states to spend their resources more intelligently and that they will be capable of cooperating more effectively.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The current report evaluates the development of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) in the wake of the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. It is a report based on the new institutional framework created by the Treaty of Lisbon, according to which the European Union must speak with a single voice and, based on its restructuring, present common foreign and security policy in a more transparent way. However, it is necessary to recognise that the EU has still not achieved a comprehensive post-Lisbon approach, able to overcome traditional procedural and institutional obstacles. As such, a realistic foreign policy assessment becomes crucial, including more muscular intervention by EU forces, rather than leaving military intervention solely in the hands of France and the United Kingdom. Whilst I recognise the need for public debate on foreign and defence policy towards setting out Parliament's future policies on this matter, I welcome the drafting of this report and hope that the EU continues to develop an effective multilateralism, which is one of the hallmarks of its geostrategic concerns.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Some of the contents of this report are, from certain perspectives, worrying. In essence, it confirms many of the warnings and alerts that we made as the Treaty of Lisbon was being debated and then brought into force: an irrefutable course of EU militarisation is under way, and it is now being accelerated and intensified. The militarisation of the EU does not serve peace or the interests of the people. The transformation of the EU into a European pillar of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), as advocated by the Treaty of Lisbon, entails involvement in conflict zones at international level. This is within a framework of collaboration with the United States, which assumes leadership in the process of affirming an imperial hegemony and guaranteeing the control of markets and resources, some of which are becoming increasingly scarce.

As affirmed by the proposed amendments made by the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left, the military interventions, supposedly undertaken in order to stabilise certain countries or regions, are on the wrong track. Instead of stabilising these countries and regions, they destabilise them. Instead of resolving problems, they exacerbate them. The situation in Libya is another example of this, to add to those of Afghanistan and Iraq. The development of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) serves the interests of the EU's industrial-military complex, but not the interests of the people or of peace.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) As we have been warning, with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the militarisation of the European Union will be accelerated even more. This report consolidates this approach.

As pointed out by the amendments tabled by our group, military intervention or any sort of military approach to conflict resolution, with the alleged aim of stabilising certain regions or countries, is the wrong track. Instead of resolving problems, this worsens them, as we can see in the cases of Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The militarisation of the EU is not in the interest of any of its peoples. The transformation, already under way, of the EU into a European pillar of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is part of a process of dividing up the international sphere into spheres of influence, under the leadership of the United States. This serves to ensure greater exploitation of labour forces and control over ever scarcer natural resources, particularly hydrocarbons, as well as control of the markets.

The development of the common security and defence policy is a threat to peace. It is an element which deepens political intervention, contributes to the arms race, including nuclear weapons, and promotes vast profits for the EU's industrial-military complex.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – This report, which is in five parts – headed respectively Security and foreign policy, Security and defence, External and internal security, Security through operations and Security in partnership – provides a clear vision of how the EU should pursue its common security and defence policy in order to become an autonomous strategic player and to act as a force for security and stability in Europe and the world.

**Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The Libyan crisis has revealed the limitations of the European Union's external action in both diplomatic and military terms. At the moment, the unity of intent of which so much has been said seems to have been thwarted by the rightful aspirations of the Member States to retain their prerogatives in the area of security policy. I do not agree with the idea of calling for a larger budget for this policy without there being real agreement among national governments on the use of these funds. As I think this kind of policy should be on the list of national competences, I feel I must vote against this report.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I endorsed this report because the international system is undergoing rapid and profound change, driven by the shift of power towards emerging international actors and deepening interdependence, encompassing economic and financial problems, environmental deterioration and climate change, energy and resource scarcity, and interconnected security challenges. In a turbulent global context, and at a time of economic and financial crisis, the EU is being called upon to enhance its strategic autonomy to uphold its values, pursue its interests and protect its citizens by developing a shared vision of the main challenges and threats and by aligning its capabilities and resources to adequately respond to them, thereby contributing to the preservation of international peace and global security, also by pursuing effective multilateralism. Enhancing strategic autonomy in security affairs entails, for the EU, the capacity to agree upon common political objectives and strategic guidelines, to establish strategic partnerships with relevant international organisations, including NATO, and with other countries, to collect adequate information and generate joint analyses and assessments, to harness and, where necessary, pool financial, civilian and military resources, to plan and run effective crisis management operations across the extended range of the Petersburg-type missions, and to frame and implement a common defence policy, laying the first tangible foundations on which to build common defence. It is necessary to draw upon all the instruments available to the



EU and its Member States in order to prevent and manage crises and conflicts and to build lasting peace.

**Krišjānis Kariņš (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (LV) I supported the report on the development of the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. Nevertheless, I consider that we still have a long way to go before we arrive at a comprehensive common security and defence policy. It is not permissible that individual Member States should enter into transactions that threaten the security of another Member State. France has entered into a transaction with Russia involving warships; a Russia that, in the recent past, occupied Georgian territories in the course of hostilities. In the same way, Russia has conducted provocative military manoeuvres in the proximity of the Baltic States, which expressed their concern over the transaction to which I referred. Although the Baltic nations have repeatedly expressed their concerns, European Union officials and institutions have not responded in any way to prevent French involvement in a military transaction with Russia.

French politicians' concerns over their economy and jobs in their shipyards are understandable. However, within the European Union, the growth of one nation's economy must not be achieved at the cost of another nation's security. This kind of action is contrary to the existing solidarity principle within the European Union. This principle should brook no exception, and it is applicable to both large and small nations. Only when Member States show true solidarity will there be a comprehensive common security and defence policy.

**Tunne Kelam (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of the Gualtieri report. However, I underline once again the need for enhanced cooperation between the EU and NATO. My original amendment to paragraph 87 aimed to confirm, rather than merely recognise, NATO's role as the bedrock for collective defence – a role which is not just 'still continuing' but should be seen as the only option for the foreseeable future. In addition, NATO's role cannot be deemed to concern only its Member States, as the Gualtieri report states: it creates security for the EU's non-NATO members too.

NATO has been, and is going to be, the foundation of collective defence, so that has to be stated in strong, affirmative language. This morning, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Ashton, declared that the EU and NATO are, for the first time, sharing information and data on Libya. This is an encouraging example for further similar cooperation. It sends a clear signal that, if there is a will, the way to meaningful cooperation will be always open.

**Jacek Olgierd Kurski (ECR)**, *in writing*. – (PL) Recent events in North Africa and Asia show that the European Union needs to strengthen its foreign policy and the alliances in which it participates. The threat of terrorist attacks, which is still very real, points to the need to strengthen European security standards. However, some of the proposals set out in the Gualtieri report are unacceptable. They run counter to the strategy which has been pursued up until now, aimed at building international alliances based, for the most part, on the assumption that the North Atlantic Alliance will play a leading role. The proposed strengthening of the European Defence Agency would not mean a genuine increase in the level of security in the EU, but merely the creation of another bureaucratic monster, incapable of performing the tasks assigned to it. Who would take the decision to mobilise European armed forces? Whose interests would their units be acting in? How much of a say would the new Member States have? Would the EDA's headquarters be relocated? Fears

have also been voiced regarding institutional matters, such as whether growth of the EDA would not result in a reduction in the size of certain Member States' armies, and whether there would be a clash with the remit and objectives of the European External Action Service. As can be seen from previous reports, in spite of substantial financial investment and very good logistics and management, European forces could not cope with simple police missions in Kosovo and Bosnia. We should perhaps give some thought to how to improve their operations before encouraging them to extend their duties to include military actions.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report and particularly welcome calls for increased controls of private security companies through their regulation, licensing and monitoring.

**Mario Mauro (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the report on the development of the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. Our role in the Mediterranean, in the Middle East and, hence, throughout the world, will become increasingly important. The ongoing upheavals, which will increase after the death of Osama Bin Laden, must be tackled in full compliance with the Treaty of Lisbon. The key to the future will lie in strengthening our political ability to define common strategies and objectives in an increasingly coordinated and timely manner.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Taking its lead from the Treaty of Lisbon, this text argues that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) should form the basis for the collective defence of EU Member States. It welcomes both organisations' desire to further strengthen their partnership. It seeks to expand the role of the European Commission and of the extremely Atlanticist Baroness Ashton in the field of defence. Not content with bowing to the leadership of the United States, it advocates the rapid implementation of measures to liberalise the arms industry. I voted against the report.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The Treaty of Lisbon has seen increased responsibilities for Parliament with regard to foreign and security policy. Nevertheless, we must make every effort to ensure that these policies promote the values and interests of the EU at international level, with the general aim of contributing to peace, to security, to solidarity, to conflict prevention, to the promotion of democracy, to the protection of human rights, to gender equality, to respect for international law, to support for international institutions, to effective multilateralism and mutual respect between nations, to sustainable development, to free and fair trade, and to the eradication of poverty. This is the only means by which the objectives that we are proposing will be realised.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The geopolitical situation in the southern Mediterranean region is currently undergoing a sea change. If we ignore these excellent and laudable aspirations, there is a danger that the revolutions could be manipulated for the worse by some when they ought, in reality, to improve things. We need to show the people of these countries that the EU supports their desire for change. Since the conflict in Libya began, I have suggested that the international community should put all its energies into supporting the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime. The duty to protect humans wherever they live and whoever they may be is a sacred universal right and duty. What is self-determination worth when it is based on dictatorial actions or where it serves to justify the unspeakable? Self-determination, and even an absolute majority, do not entitle any government to deny universal values. The delays, wavering and semantics about the scale of intervention have allowed the regime to weaken the citizen's uprising. The EU urgently

needs to establish a credible approach for the Mediterranean element of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I have scrutinised the report very attentively. The report is divided into five parts: security and foreign policy, security and defence, external and internal security, security through operations and security in partnership. The report provides a clear vision of how the EU should implement its general security policy and defence policy in order to become the strongest autonomous strategically acting player, with the aim to provide security and stability in Europe and the world. I voted ‘in favour’.

**Claudio Morganti (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The report being examined today contains some aspects that are welcome and others that are less so, thus representing in the best (or worst) possible way the typical contradictions that the European Union reveals in its external actions. For example, it hopes for greater integration and common management in crisis situations: recent events in Libya have shown that Europe acts dispersedly, with some Member States directly engaged, others that have wriggled out, and practically only one country – Italy – to manage the direct consequences of the Libyan crisis and the North African crises in general, in other words, a flood of migrants. We therefore need to decide how Europe should behave: should it always be ‘united’ whatever the consequences, or should it always leave the Member States free, in which case the European Union itself must adapt?

I am baffled by the emphasis placed on the need to increase the power and resources of common actions and the European Defence Agency: given the precedents, I would not like that, too, to become a useless bureaucratic machine that is an end in itself, and its actions to become totally ineffective. For the reasons given above, I have decided to abstain, while waiting to see what the European Union will do as a really ‘great’ organisation.

**Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (BG) I am voting in favour of Mr Gualtieri’s report. This report helps confirm the EU as a player contributing to global stability and is a necessary step in developing a genuine pan-European approach in foreign and defence policy. I believe that better harmonisation of already existing instruments and reaching consensus on the strategic aims of the common security and defence policy in the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon are of paramount importance. While relying on existing financial, civilian and military resources, Europe can take even more decisive actions in the event of natural and man-made disasters and be even more involved in averting and managing crises and conflicts, and in establishing a lasting peace in third countries. In addition to this, the European common security and defence policy and the European development cooperation policy are two sides of the same coin. I strongly support the report, which calls for better coordination of them. The organisation of regular meetings of a crisis management board, which will cooperate with the EEAS, is of crucial importance to this. The proposals made in the report for a more resourceful, harmonised use of the resources for EU defence programmes and the sharing of military capacity in the EU will help achieve this policy’s objectives.

**Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because it provides a vision of how the EU could become an independent strategic force for security and stability in Europe and throughout the world. The Treaty of Lisbon gave the EU security and defence policy more opportunities. This policy became more integrated into EU foreign policy. The European External Action Service is making a significant contribution to ensuring EU security.

When drafting the report, our Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats received support from most of the other groups, because the EU must become an independent security actor and it is necessary to review the concept and structure of the Battlegroups in the EU's mixed civilian and military missions. There was also general agreement with our group's call for the EU to improve the planning process of humanitarian aid missions as a matter of urgency.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of this report on the development of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. The common security and defence policy is an integral part of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP). Both dimensions have been placed within the legally binding institutional framework of EU principles, namely, democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and principles of international law, including the responsibility to protect. In addition, their objectives have been merged with the general objectives of EU external action.

On this matter, I support the rapporteur's proposal to enhance cooperation with EU national parliaments in exercising democratic scrutiny over the CFSP and the CSDP, with the goal of mutually reinforcing their respective influence on the political choices made by the other European institutions and by the Member States, while fully respecting national parliaments' defence policy prerogatives. Under the framework of EU values and principles, it is crucial that its CSDP be guided by a transparent and democratic process.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The European Union's international status can only be achieved through a concerted effort by the Member States and the EU bodies. In this context, a common security and defence policy (CSDP) capable of responding to the challenges ahead remains of the highest priority. Indeed, it will only be possible to guarantee the Union's active voice at international level if it has sufficient defence instruments of its own. I therefore voted in favour of this report.

**Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (ES) The Treaty of Lisbon lays the foundations for the European Union to establish itself as a credible and influential player on the international scene. From this stems my support for a report that is necessary in order to evaluate advances made in the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and to identify what scope there is for improvement. As a member of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence, I have followed this report closely. Personally, I have stressed the need for cooperation among Member States in the field of research, development and innovation in matters of defence. We find ourselves in the middle of an economic crisis and, as a consequence, we must pull together in order to reduce costs and increase the interoperability of the military capacity of our Member States.

All this will serve not only to reduce defence expenditure but also to increase the autonomy of the European Union on the international scene. I believe that this point of view has been well captured in the report, which constitutes a step in the right direction in terms of promoting a common security and defence policy which is more effective, coordinated and consistent with the rest of the policies of the European Union and its Member States.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – I decided to abstain at the final vote because we lost Amendment 1 on reference to NATO, Amendment 3 against a nuclear dimension in the common security and defence policy, Amendment 4 against flexible use

of Battlegroups, Amendment 5 against using Battlegroups for mixed civilian-military tasks, Amendment 6 deleting a provision on defence research, Amendment 7 deleting a provision on defence research, Amendment 8 deleting reference to the US Department of Homeland Security, Amendment 9 deleting reference to CSDP cooperation with Frontex in the Mediterranean, and despite the fact that we won Amendment 2 on European External Action Service/Commission permanent working structures and Amendment 1 saying no to NATO developing civilian capabilities.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The report outlines the need for the European Union to operate in the global context as a stabilising force, endeavouring to keep the peace, strengthen international security and manage crisis situations. I voted in favour of this report because I join the chorus of disappointment in Parliament at the European Union's lack of a genuinely global and uniform post-Lisbon approach to the common security policy. Credible and reliable military systems and capabilities are an essential condition for the development of an independent security and defence policy. I believe, however, that a common political will needs to be adopted over the long term in order to strengthen the EU's ability to respond to crises, while safeguarding its strategic independence.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The report in question points out the developments in European defence policy since the Treaty of Lisbon came into force. I voted against it because it is clear from the latest events in Libya that the European Union has not acted in a united, consensual manner. There has been a lack of solidarity in the management of the migrant crisis, revealing that when national interests are at stake, the EU forgets about noble concepts, as it has taken no interest in the problem.

**Traian Ungureanu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – I voted in support of our common foreign and security policy report, with the hope that such a policy would take shape at last. Up to now, our common foreign and security policy is a collection of disagreements and misguided initiatives. The recent Euro-row over action in Libya and the subsequent German opt-out made it clear to the rest of the world that the EU is still not able to project a real common foreign and security policy. Moreover, the French initiative aiming at consolidating the financing of the southern neighbourhood at the expense of the eastern neighbourhood sent a disastrous message to our eastern partners. This is even more sensitive at a time when other quintessential European projects are in doubt, if not in crisis. The euro is under constant pressure and the problem is, in part, generated by the same lack of European ambition and coherence. The Schengen Area is rolled back on a daily basis and national barriers re-emerge as the European spirit and legislation are ignored or broken by fellow Member States. A non-existent common foreign and security policy assisted by a huge External Action Service would seriously undermine European credibility in the world.

#### **Report: María Muñoz De Urquiza (A7-0181/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I am voting for this proposal as it suggests a strengthening of the EU's role in the multilateral system. It is entirely fair for the EU to have more effective representation in international organisations and for this representation to be valued, inasmuch as the EU is the organisation that contributes the most to development aid. The EU's principles and values, which promote more effective and preventive multilateral action, make it an important international player in the emerging inter-polar world order. In particular, the EU must initiate efforts to stop being a mere observer in United Nations programmes and conferences. It must also reinforce its position in

international bodies in the area of economics and monetary stability, in accordance with its role as one of the principal economic powers at international level. I also approve of the statements in the report seeking to strengthen the EU's role in multilateral security organisations, in the G8 and the G20, among others.

**Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of María Muñoz De Urquiza's report on the EU as a global actor and its role in multilateral organisations. I would like to stress once again the need to better coordinate actions of the EU Member States in the UN and, in particular, in the UN Human Rights Council. We consider that the new institutional structure of the EU and establishment of the Directorate for Human Rights and Democracy in the EEAS system and Brussels-based COHOM Office offer good opportunities to increase the coherence, visibility and credibility of the EU actions in the UNHRC. Finally, in the EP, we welcomed the recommendation by the UNHRC and subsequent decision by the UN General Assembly to suspend Libya's membership of the UNHRC. Following efforts and actions made by some Member States in the HRC, today Syria has stated that it is withdrawing its candidacy to become a member of the UNHRC. Taking into account these examples and our common experience in the past with the UN Human Rights Commission and, since 2006, with the UN Human Rights Council, we suggest that clear membership criteria should be introduced in the UNHRC, and the EU should stand firmly behind this initiative.

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The Treaty of Lisbon enhances the EU's capacity to join various international organisations, entrusting it with a wider range of competences in its external action and offering it an opportunity to have a clearer and stronger single voice in the world. The Treaty also encourages cooperation with relevant international and regional organisations and groups of states, offering the Union an opportunity to become an effective global player.

The EU's commitment to effective multilateralism is the guiding principle of European external action. I think that, drawing on its internal experience of cooperation among nations and institutions, the European Union has a global responsibility which it should continue to uphold. This is why I voted in favour of this report.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report. The processes of globalisation carry a wide range of opportunities, challenges and threats for global governance. Global challenges, such as financial markets, energy security, combating poverty, climate change and human rights violations require joint and coordinated action. The Treaty of Lisbon, by introducing the Union's legal personality, enhanced the EU's capacity to join various international organisations and provided the opportunity to assume a stronger and more influential position globally. Hitherto, the representation of the EU and its Member States in international organisations has been fragmented, which has prevented the EU from speaking with a single voice in the international arena. The EU must become an influential global actor and be able to defend its position. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to enhance coordination within the EU, and this will require strong political will and flexibility on the part of the Member States concerning their representation.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for the report drafted by María Muñoz De Urquiza because the European Union's presence in multilateral organisations is one of the guiding principles of its foreign policy. At present, the EU has a legal personality, which provides it with a higher global profile. In addition, the Union has become, by means of the Treaty, a fully-fledged participant in international politics.

The Treaty of Lisbon has enhanced the foreign policy instruments, especially within the UN. In this regard, I would like to highlight point 12 of the report – the first step towards coordinated, effective action from Member States in the Security Council. I should emphasise that, at the moment, the UN is right in the midst of reforming its structures, which also allows the EU's representation in this forum to be restructured.

**Dominique Baudis (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I supported this resolution because I am convinced that the European Union's desire to bolster its presence within international organisations is entirely legitimate. European citizens, through our governments, have given a legal personality and specific powers to the Union. European integration has built on a set of fundamental values that are constantly being extended. We have a duty to coordinate our activities and to promote the unity of our Union, as we have already done in the World Trade Organisation. More work remains to be done.

However, there are some encouraging signs. The Union is trying to equip itself with the right foreign policy tools (appointment of a High Representative, creation of the European External Action Service). With its newly improved status, the Union will now be able to express its position within the United Nations General Assembly.

**Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) We are living in a world which has seen a sharp increase in the number and frequency of new crises. In the face of this new reality, political decision makers are charged both with taking preventive action and with responding effectively to new developments. Yet at this level, it is not a case of simply waving a magic wand. When the EU is unable to combine forces, to agree procedures and to speak with one voice, it is often left behind. Within the United Nations, and particularly within the International Monetary Fund, the EU needs to promote its interests. The European Union could stand up for European interests and, consequently, the interests of Member States. That means we need to get organised and get organised now. This is the purpose and aim of this report.

**Slavi Binev (NI)**, *in writing*. – (BG) I consider it extremely important for the European Union to play a key role in international organisations. I believe that the decisions made on international policy should not violate the sovereignty of individual Member States. I am also against weakening the role played by each country in the European Union individually in international organisations. We have seen in the past differences in Member States' foreign policies. If the European Union gains a place on the UN Security Council, such a conflict may have a very adverse impact on the European Union's image. For this reason, I voted against both point 20 and the whole report.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) This report is completely unbalanced in favouring a prospect whereby the EU would, in future, enjoy a status at least equivalent to that of the Member States in global and regional multilateral organisations. In essence, that would mean the end of the Member States' diplomatic freedom of action, since they would have to adjust their positions so as not to clash openly with those of a future Union representation. As a result, the national governments would be unable to adequately assert their own interests in international forums.

While we can agree that in certain areas, such as monetary policy, the EU can represent the prevalent position in the appropriate multilateral organisations, it is difficult to accept the idea that the European External Action Service might take on the role of representing a common position of the Member States on the world stage when very often, the countries of Europe have such different interests that it is impossible to achieve a common position.

By voting against the report, I intend to show my opposition to its proposed future scenario in which national diplomacy would substantially be superseded by Union diplomacy, to the detriment of the Member States' diplomatic autonomy.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because there has been a sharp increase in political and humanitarian crises in the world, which calls for improved and more preventive EU multilateral action. The EU should make better use of its foreign policy instruments so as to ensure better use of its leverage in multilateral organisations and to take the lead in addressing current and future international crises more effectively. In addition, there is a need to involve non-state actors more in multilateral policy making and to promote and facilitate improved consultation with civil society organisations and social partners in the future governance structures of international organisations. The European Union should play an active and leading role in global governance reform, by enhancing cooperation, improving institutions and engaging all stakeholders. This would make international institutions and organisations more legitimate, effective and conducive to shared responsibility. Given that the EU is one of world's foremost economic powers, arrangements for the representation of the EU in international bodies in the area of economic, monetary and financial stability need to be reviewed.

**Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The EU's mechanisms for reaching consensus and taking concerted action make it a model for a rules-based international order. This is why the EU must cooperate with leading regional powers and actively participate in building and improving an international environment which enables it to promote its values and interests. The timing is particularly appropriate with a sharp increase being noticed in the number of political and humanitarian crises in the world, which gives rise to the need for the European Union to deploy its foreign policy instruments more effectively so as to ensure better use of its leverage in international organisations and to take the lead more effectively in resolving current and future international crises.

On the other hand, the globalisation processes also offer a wide range of opportunities, challenges and threats for global governance, while revealing social loopholes and failures, including in areas such as the financial markets, energy security, the fight against poverty, climate change policy and human rights violations. Indeed, the EU must enhance its role as a global actor and act as a global decision maker.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I welcome the efforts made to improve Europe's multilateral action, and would stress the importance of the EU having an active leadership role in global governance reform. This is a good opportunity for the EU to make use of its foreign policy instruments and to assume leadership through a more effective approach to current and future international crises. I therefore commend the attention given to the EU's position in the United Nations system, in the international financial institutions and in other multilateral institutions, and I agree with the reform proposals which strengthen several of the positions that we have taken.

**Mário David (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The oft-used phrase 'an economic giant but a political dwarf' takes on new meaning when we analyse the EU's presence in international organisations and in other regional organisations of which it is part. We urgently need to change this situation. I therefore believe this own-initiative report to be timely, and I support it in general. This report examines the role of the EU as a global player in international bodies. In this respect, like the rapporteur, I believe that there is still a long way to go on the path to credible, consistent and visible EU external action, as there is no European



strategy for every organisation of which the Member States or the EU are part. The increasing complexity that characterises the international system makes it necessary to objectively coordinate the relationships between the Member States, and between the Member States and the EU on the various stages where we interact. That is why we adopted the Treaty of Lisbon. Moreover, there is already an example of good practice: our presence in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). There is, therefore, an urgent need for the EU to be represented with a single voice in the various international bodies. I think that drawing up a White Paper on this subject, as is proposed in the report, could be a good 'beginning of the end' for this bizarre situation.

**Philippe de Villiers (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (FR) In its reports on EU foreign policy, Parliament has once again been utterly blinkered.

Brussels is seeking to impose European diplomacy and security and defence policies, but is failing: not for want of funding, but rather because the rationale and assumptions underpinning the approach are still wrong.

For starters, no one hears the EU's voice on the world stage. Only a handful of champions of a federal Europe would like to hear it speak with one voice, yet diversity and diplomatic cooperation constitute the real value of Europe, whether within the United Nations or elsewhere.

Secondly, no one heeds the muted and incomprehensible mutterings of European leaders who have no mandate and, above all, no legitimacy.

When Europe does speak with one voice, it has nothing to say.

**Anne Delvaux (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I welcome the adoption of this report, which calls for a stronger role for the European Union in the structures of multilateral organisations (United Nations, international financial institutions, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, World Trade Organisation, and so on).

In early May 2011, the EU was awarded 'super-observer' status by United Nations General Assembly, which means that it will now be able to take the floor and exercise a right of reply in the Assembly on the same terms as other UN Member States. This is just the first step: we should continue to press for more.

Another important element is the reform of the Security Council with a view to improving its legitimacy by reviewing regional representation. This report invites the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission to do something that I consider very important, namely, to seek common EU positions on the subjects to be decided in the Security Council in order to implement these positions through joint voting practices and to avoid a repetition of past dissensions.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for this report because it advocates strengthening the EU's role in peace, security and regulation at global level. For the Union's definitive affirmation as regards foreign policy and in the light of the objectives set out in the Treaty of Lisbon, there is a need to continue working towards the EU having a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council one day.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This European Parliament resolution is on the EU's role in the United Nations (UN) system, in international financial institutions, in multilateral

security organisations, in 'summit diplomacy' and in other multilateral organisations, and calls for its role at multilateral level to be strengthened.

There is a clear need to better coordinate the action of the Union, as such, with that of the Member States. I believe the Union should play an active and leading role in the reform of global governance so as to make international institutions and organisations more legitimate, effective and suited to shared responsibility.

I am not unaware of the many problems that a radical revision of the Union's current system of institutional representation in multilateral international bodies would lead to, in particular, as regards potentially strengthening the EU's position in the UN. The House's insistence on the need for a comprehensive review of the UN Security Council and the need to make it more legitimate, representative of regions and effective by assigning the Union a permanent seat therefore remains an objective that will be hard to achieve in the short term.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report by Mrs Muñiz De Urquiza is on the EU's performance as a global player and its role in multilateral organisations. The world is currently experiencing a major growth process in globalisation terms, in particular, with the revolutions and transition to democracy of countries that have traditionally been closed and governed by totalitarian regimes, which constitutes a set of opportunities that the EU should not neglect. Effective multilateralism constitutes the guiding principle of EU foreign policy, in line with the commitment set out in the 2003 European security strategy. The legal personality conferred on the EU by the Treaty of Lisbon, according to which the European Union should speak with one voice, strengthens its capacity for involvement, as an authorised voice, in the various international organisations where questions of foreign security and defence policy are debated. Although she advocates increased EU cooperation and development aid, I agree with the rapporteur's proposals and voted for her report.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The EU does not have the legitimacy that they are attempting to ascribe to it: only the Member States and their peoples do.

This report seeks to legitimise and consolidate a path that has gradually been forged on the backs of the people in an affront to their sovereignty: to national sovereignty and its legitimacy. The goal is to ensure EU representation in multilateral organisations – the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the World Bank – as if it were a (super)state. It is seeking to replace the Member States, thereby corrupting the spirit of bodies like the United Nations General Assembly, where each country and its people still have the same weight, irrespective of their size.

The report also proposes increasing, particularly through the European External Action Service, the resources placed at the disposal of a political and diplomatic agenda whose goals include increasing the EU's weight and influence in various forums and organisations, with a view to exploiting them. This is an attempt to subvert the current international order, replacing it with a new, less democratic one that guarantees better conditions for big business and finance to pursue their ambitions in the endless contest for markets and resources.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The majority in Parliament is seeking to consolidate a path and a policy that goes over the heads of the organs of national sovereignty

and the sovereignty of the peoples, presenting the EU as having a legitimacy that only the Member States and their peoples have, however much it costs them.

They are seeking to legitimise the EU in multilateral organisations – the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the World Bank – and are seeking to replace states with regional integration organisations, for example, in the United Nations General Assembly, where each country and its people still have the same weight, irrespective of their size.

They are proposing to increase, particularly through the European External Action Service, the resources for implementing a political and diplomatic agenda whose principle goal is increasing the EU's weight and influence in these organisations, with a view to exploiting them. The objectives are clear: to establish a new, less democratic international order so as to guarantee better conditions for big business and finance to compete in the endless contest for markets and domination of the world's natural resources; this requires the increased militarisation of the EU, and integrated and permanent cooperation with NATO, under the leadership of the United States and the great powers of the EU.

That is why we voted against.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D),** *in writing.* – The EU is the largest contributor of development aid and the most important trade bloc, but representation of the Union, as such, in multilateral organisations remains fragmented. On the other hand, the EU Member States are over-represented in all multilateral organisations with the exception of the World Trade Organisation. This over-representation – particularly in the Bretton Woods institutions – often results in dissonance among the European voices and is perceived as hugely problematic by the emerging powers, which consider the status quo to be unfair. It would be appropriate that, in areas of exclusive competence, the EU should be the pre-eminent actor, with full membership, while the Member States might also – but not necessarily – be present as members, without, in most cases, an independent role.

**Lorenzo Fontana (EFD),** *in writing.* – (IT) The effects of the Treaty of Lisbon necessarily mean that the role played by the European Union in international organisations must be revised. However, as we have seen all too often recently, the so-called single voice with which Europe should approach multilateral issues is often damaging to the Member States' own prerogatives and autonomy of decision. I must therefore abstain, because the report has some positive aspects, but they are invalidated by the considerations expressed above.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD),** *in writing.* – (LT) I endorsed the report because the added value of EU membership in multilateral organisations lies in the fields where it has exclusive or shared competences: economic and trade matters, environmental policy, development aid, and security and defence policy. The Treaty of Lisbon, by introducing the Union's legal personality, enhances the EU's capacity to join various international organisations, entrusts it with a wider range of competences in its external action, provides, notably by the creation of the post of a Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Union with an opportunity for a clearer and stronger single voice in the world, as well as encouraging all types of mutually beneficial cooperation with relevant international and regional organisations and groups of states, and enables the Union to organise itself in such a way as to be able to become an effective global player. I believe that hitherto, the representation of the EU and its Member States in multilateral

organisations, informal summits and international regimes has been fragmented, often ineffective, and still varies considerably. I also take the view that EU Member States should increasingly consider and rely on the EU as a multiplier of power in achieving the objectives they cannot achieve independently, and that speaking with one EU voice not only increases the chances of success but also improves the legitimacy and credibility of the EU as an important international actor in the emerging interpolar world, without it losing its identity of course.

**Giovanni La Via (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of this report because the EU's role in multilateralism will need to be further reinforced in the years to come. This is also in accordance with the Treaty of Lisbon. By giving the European Union legal personality, the Treaty increased the possibilities for it to join the various international and regional organisations and groups of states. These relations will help resolve economic and commercial issues, as well as those regarding the environment. The contribution of the European Union must also have an added value in multilateral organisations or summits where not all of its members are represented. Unfortunately, recent, and also current, political and humanitarian crises in the world, have called for prompt, decisive action by the EU. It is often not easy, but countries affected by such crises expect rapid action from the EU not only through its foreign policy but also in the form of prompt aid in emergencies.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The European Union's commitment to effective multilateralism is particularly important. The Union must take into account its own consolidated representation and that of Member States in multilateral organisations. The current rapid increase in the number of political and humanitarian crises is worrying, which is an indication of the need to implement such a strategy for the EU. At the moment, the Union is not fulfilling its role properly as a global actor. I think that the enhancement and importance of its role in multilateral organisations mark real progress in terms of establishing its global significance.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted against paragraph 20 because I do not believe that the time is yet ripe for the EU to have a single seat on the United Nations Security Council.

**Barbara Matera (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The external dimension of the European Union needs to be enhanced, since Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union promotes an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation in which the Member States guarantee that the Union can assert their interests and values on the international scene. New permanent structures for the EU's external representation have been established under the Treaty of Lisbon, but this new dimension does not yet allow the Union to participate as a single entity in its own right in the work of many international bodies. This is liable to harm the EU's commitment to effective multilateralism, limiting its decisiveness and undermining its credibility.

Given the increase in political and humanitarian crises in the world, the EU needs to make the best possible use of its foreign policy instruments so as to ensure better use of its leverage in multilateral organisations and its ability to take the lead in addressing current and future international crises. The promotion of democracy and human rights, specifically women's and children's rights, freedom of expression and the rule of law, should be at the heart of all EU external action.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Each Member State is entitled to express its own views within international bodies. Governments are elected, unlike

Baroness Ashton, the European Commission and the European Central Bank, yet this text seeks to make the latter our sole representatives. I voted against this attempt to give the kiss of death to State sovereignty on the international arena.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The EU cannot forget its role as a leading actor on the world stage in every respect. As such, it needs to strengthen its role in all multilateral organisations, in particular, the United Nations (UN), where its role must be increasingly active now that the European External Action Service (EEAS) is operational.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Nations are powerless to act alone in the face of the major challenges of our times. Multilateral action is the only way that States can get to grips with the challenges facing our world. The economic, financial and food crises, climate change and conflicts have made us realise that we urgently need to create a form of global governance, or what Jacques Attali calls a ‘world State’. Naturally, Europe has a role to play in this new global political arena as a soft world power based on standards, rules and leading by example. Under the Treaty of Lisbon, Europe has the foundation it requires in order to assert itself politically as well as economically.

**Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PL) The European Parliament has adopted a resolution on the role that the European Union should play in multilateral organisations. As a general principle, the strengthening of the EU’s role in multilateral frameworks has been approved. Thanks to the agreement which has been reached and the joint measures taken, the European Union is becoming a model for the functioning of a world order based on international law.

This is why emphasis has been placed on the need for the EU to cooperate with leading regions, and to participate actively in creating an international community. Other requirements include cooperation between the Member States and the drafting of a common position, *inter alia*, on the issue of savings and budgetary cuts. The EU and the Member States need to take steps to increase the EU’s role and strengthen its position within the UN (changes to support for the UN, in particular, with regard to humanitarian policies and aid and the issue of conflict resolution).

Within the framework of cooperation with international financial institutions, the EU must find a solution to the problem of external economic and financial representation, which limits the EU’s influence. As far as the EU’s role in multilateral security organisations is concerned, it has been said that the regulations which make it possible for the European Union to benefit from NATO funding should be streamlined. Thought should be given to whether the EU should take on greater responsibility and play a more effective role in achieving joint objectives (engaging in joint dialogue, deciding on and coordinating joint measures, etc.) under the agreement between the EU and the OSCE.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report on ‘The EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations’ presents an overview of the role of the EU. I voted in favour of this report as I agree with its vision and ambition for an EU that has a strong presence on the international stage. Apart from the value of each Member State *per se*, the EU, as an organisation, can contribute its organisational experience to the international community. Indeed, the EU’s mechanisms for building consensus and taking concerted action make it a model for a rules-based international order. In view of this, cooperation with the leading regional powers should be encouraged, so that the EU can actively participate in the building and improvement of an international environment that enables the EU to promote its values and interests, as required by the Treaty. With regard

to the EU's aspiration to be a global player, it is therefore essential to strengthen internal coordination in order to speak with one voice. This is the only way to achieve multilateral cooperation and address international challenges, namely those arising from the responsibility to protect, and the need to enhance human security as a means of achieving global security.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In the current context, it is very important that the EU be able to establish itself as a global player, capable of responding effectively to the demanding challenges that are posed at global level. As such, it will have to commit to increasing internal coordination so that the EU can talk with one voice, thereby increasing not just the prospects for success of its actions, but also its legitimacy and credibility at international level.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – Among other things, this text establishes that Parliament notes that the EU's mechanisms for building consensus and taking concerted action make it a model for a rules-based international order. It therefore stresses the need for the EU to cooperate with leading regional powers and actively participate in the building and improvement of an international environment that enables the EU to promote, as required by the Treaty, its values and interests. In particular in those fields where it has exclusive or shared competences, it considers essential, with regard to the EU's aspiration and need to be an effective global actor and to safeguard its position, a strengthening of the internal coordination necessary to speak with one voice, the ability to shape multilateral cooperation and lead collective action in addressing international challenges, namely those arising from the responsibility to protect, and the need to enhance human security, as a means of achieving global security.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The final text of this report emphasises the strategic role that the European Union must play in international organisations. To achieve this, there is a need, above all, to promote active, concrete participation so as to strengthen both internal and external cooperation. That must be the primary way to increase the legitimacy of the decisions made and also to ensure that responsibilities are fully shared. Lastly, the Member States must coordinate their positions in the United Nations Human Rights Council so as to establish clear and strict membership criteria, especially for countries where human rights violations are commonplace.

**Catherine Stihler (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I support the UK retaining membership of UNSC.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The European Union is today a true actor on the world stage. Its role in international, multilateral organisations is visibly growing, and has been showing itself to be increasingly important. The European Union should therefore play a more active and leading role in the reform of global governance. I am talking, in particular, about the need to reform the United Nations (UN) system to assign the Union a place and, in particular, about its representation on the UN Security Council.

That involves a demanding degree of coordination of the Member States' positions, but it would result in the increased coherence, visibility and credibility of EU actions at international level. The European Union should take inspiration from the model followed in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). For more consistent and better-integrated cooperation, it should have observer status in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), be more closely coordinated with the Council of Europe, and participate fully in the activities of the G7/G8 and G20.

**Niki Tzavela (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (EL) This specific resolution strengthens the roles of the EU in the multilateral system. To be specific, it clarifies the roles of the EU in international credit institutions, in the UN system, in multilateral security organisations and in other multilateral organisations in general, such as the World Trade Organisation, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Finally, the EU's role in summit diplomacy is clarified. Bearing in mind that European cooperation is a necessity, not a choice, I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution by the European Parliament on the EU as a global actor.

**Dominique Vlasto (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Following the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union's diplomatic activities have been beefed up with a view to raising Europe's profile on the international stage. I welcome the adoption of this report, which calls for better representation for the Community institutions in international organisations. The Europe of 27 is stronger now. The new Member States have increased the Union's economic and demographic strength. However, the balance and coordination between Member States has been thrown out of kilter by enlargement. The European message has changed: it has become richer and more complex. As I see it, if we are to improve the European Union's representation in multilateral organisations, we must first find a consensus. I am pleased to see that the Union has supported the United Nations' strategy, particularly in the case of humanitarian policy and conflict resolution. Europe and the UN have a wealth of objectives and interests in common, which, in my view, justifies even closer cooperation and resource synergies. I would therefore like to see Europe accorded a stronger position within the UN, particularly at the annual General Assembly.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) I have voted in favour of this report. The EU must increase its independence and develop its dialogues with third countries. It must speak with a more powerful and more unified voice and respond much more quickly, in order to be able to act as a trustworthy and reliable partner.

**Zbigniew Ziobro (ECR)**, *in writing*. – (PL) The international situation has recently been changing ever more rapidly. The rising economic importance of Asia, the revolutionary movements in Africa, the increased terrorist threat, the need to establish joint and sustainable European raw materials strategies and ever more frequent violations of human rights are just a few of the problems with which EU diplomacy has to contend today. Experience has taught us that it is powerless in many cases. The European Union's foreign policy appears to be poorly thought-out and poorly coordinated. Furthermore, the idea of joint and sustainable European policies has lost out on more than one occasion to the interests of the largest countries of the 'old' EU. A perfect example of this is the lack of a rule ensuring geographical balance when filling posts in the European External Action Service. This system needs to be changed, and it was for this reason that I did not support the Muñiz De Urquiza report. I believe that it identifies key conditions which the EU and the Member States should meet in order to be able to perform better the tasks enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon. However, we should not endeavour to replace NATO with a new EU army, but instead concentrate on the appropriate division of tasks during international crises. The EU's role could lie in the provision of humanitarian aid, while the North Atlantic Alliance would coordinate military aid. This distribution of tasks could also make it possible to strengthen cooperation with the EU's most important trade and military partner, namely the United States.

## 7. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes

(The sitting was suspended at 14:20 and resumed at 15:00)

### IN THE CHAIR: ISABELLE DURANT

*Vice-President*

## 8. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting: see Minutes

## 9. Statement by the President of the European Parliament's delegation to the Conciliation Committee - Novel foods (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the debate on the statement by the President of the European Parliament's delegation to the Conciliation Committee – novel foods.

Conciliation procedure regarding the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1331/2008 and the repeal of Regulation (EC) No 258/97 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1852/2001 on novel foods.

**Gianni Pittella,** *President of the European Parliament's delegation to the Conciliation Committee.*

– (IT) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, we are disappointed that it has not been possible to reach agreement on the Novel Foods Regulation and that therefore, it is not possible to guarantee adequate information for consumers on the foods that we eat or to ensure that Europe has clear, strict rules on foods from cloned animals.

What I have said is not meant to be controversial: it is not Parliament's fault. If we have been unable to regulate cloning – one of the main sticking points in these negotiations – it is because the governments have not shown enough willingness. However – and I address this point to the governments and the Commission – food safety and information on the products that reach our tables are basic principles of the European Union. Everybody says so, but then we have to act accordingly, or else it becomes a slogan that consumers do not believe.

When these issues are being discussed, Parliament is not prepared to look the other way and content itself with the kind of general reassurances that the Council provided during the negotiations. On such a sensitive and serious food safety issue, it is not acceptable just to dab on a touch of face powder to look good to the consumers. Parliament was calling for a credible solution: the labelling of all foodstuffs derived from cloned animals and their offspring. That really would have been a step in the right direction.

I would like to make another remark on a more general level: the governments continue to think that it is their prerogative to make all decisions. It is still not clear to them that there is an institution – the European Parliament – which *codecides*. We are directly elected by the citizens and we are determined to enforce our rights. I invite the governments to read the Treaty of Lisbon carefully, because I am sure they have not paid attention to all parts of it.

I would like now to appeal to the Commission and to Commissioner Dalli, whose conduct during the negotiations was admirable, although perhaps the Commission did not explain his role in conciliating the positions. Commissioner, I invite you to table a proposal on cloning as soon as possible in order to regulate the sector effectively once and for all. That is what the people of Europe are calling for and what Parliament is calling for as well.



I would also like to acknowledge the Hungarian Presidency – which inherited this thorny problem only in the final stage of the procedure – for having made every possible effort to make up for lost time. I thank all the Hungarian Presidency representatives for that. I know they do not deserve any blame at all, which is due instead to the stalemate that occurred within the Council between the different national government positions.

Lastly, I would like to thank the rapporteur, who was magnificent: highly passionate, enthusiastic and competent. She has followed this dossier with a love that really does credit to her, and I believe all of us owe her a huge vote of thanks, as we also do to the whole delegation from Parliament, all our fellow Members, the chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, and everyone else.

We all worked together day and night to achieve a goal. We were not successful, but the questions have been raised and I am sure that, if Commissioner Dalli is true to his word, we will be able to find a way again to provide ourselves with good regulations on cloning and novel foods.

**President.** – Thank you, Mr Pittella, not least for the enthusiasm with which you made your statement.

I will now give the floor to Mrs Győri to respond on behalf of the Council, although I understand that you have lost your voice, so a representative will be speaking on your behalf.

I invite you to take the floor on behalf of the Council.

**Enikő Győri,** *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (HU) Madam President, Commissioner, honourable Members, today's debate is a good occasion for me to present the Presidency's observations on the recently held conciliation on the proposal for a regulation on novel foods. It is also an excellent opportunity for the Presidency to learn Parliament's opinion on this important issue.

Our European institutions have suffered a major collective failure. There is no other course but to learn from this experience in a constructive manner based on professional criteria. It is in this spirit that I turn to you today. I have come not only to speak but also to listen to you.

I would like to begin by emphasising that the Presidency genuinely regrets that your institution and ours, the Council, were unable to reach agreement. This is all the more true because both the Presidency and the Council attributed great importance to this proposal. This was an unrivalled opportunity for us to update the European Union regulation in an area which directly affects us all: food. There was a real chance for the European Union to show how it contributes in a tangible manner to making the lives of European citizens better. The proposed regulation would have been a particularly good means of answering disputed questions on food from cloned animals by tightening the provisions of the 1997 regulation. The 1997 regulation provides that such food products can only be marketed after an authorisation procedure. In contrast, as a result of the recent conciliation procedure, a clear, albeit temporary, agreement was reached. All parties agreed that the marketing of food from cloned animals must be completely prohibited. Furthermore, this ban would have come into effect immediately after the regulation entered into force. If the conciliation had been successful, we could now be jointly welcoming an imminent ban on the marketing of food from cloned animals. This prohibition could have entered into force as early as the end of this month. Unfortunately, this was not to be. In the light of the failed negotiations,

we may be apt to blame each other. At the same time, it is our common interest and duty not to give in to this inclination but to seek a solution together. Although the conciliation procedure has come to an end, the needs and expectations of European consumers have not altered at all, and therefore I am pleased to note that we have another chance to make progress. It is up to us to restart this process as soon and as effectively as possible. We must do our utmost especially to ensure that what we have agreed in the negotiations to date is not lost.

At third reading, we have reached the point where, in principle, we have agreed on an immediate ban on food from cloned animals. We must not allow this agreement in principle to be lost. Likewise, we must protect the major advance made in relation to engineered nanomaterials and traditional food from third countries as well as similar, important issues. I believe that what we eat is important to all of us, and the kind of nourishment our children and grandchildren grow up on is even more important. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Commissioner and his organisational units for the hard work they have done over the last few months. I also welcome the fact that the Commission – as it has unofficially informed us – is working on drafting a new proposal at an accelerated pace, striving to preserve as many elements of the provisional agreement reached during the recent negotiations as possible in the new legislative proposal. The Presidency guarantees its support to both the Commission and Parliament, and hopes that an opportunity to adopt this new proposal will arise as soon as possible.

Madam President, honourable Members, we are aware that the Commission has little room for manoeuvre. After all, it is the task of the Council and Parliament as the two colegislators to find a solution which satisfies the needs and expectations of European citizens through joint efforts. In the light of all this, I look forward to your views with truly great interest.

## 10. Welcome

**President.** – Before I give you the floor, Commissioner, let me first extend a welcome on behalf of this House to the members of a delegation from the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia, who have just taken their seats in the official gallery above.

I would like to extend a very warm and special welcome to all of the delegation headed by His Excellency, Dr Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, the Vice-Chair of the People's Consultative Assembly.

Indonesia is a key EU partner in South-East Asia. Indeed, it is the leading country in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), with whom the European Union signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in November 2009, and currently holds the chair of ASEAN.

Our two parliaments have an excellent relationship. A delegation from Parliament visited Indonesia just a few months ago. It is therefore a great pleasure to be able to welcome our friends and counterparts from the Indonesian Parliament today. We hope that your visit will be fruitful and beneficial.

*(Applause)*

## 11. Statement by the President of the European Parliament's delegation to the Conciliation Committee - Novel foods (continuation of debate)

**President.** – We shall now continue the debate on the Statement by the President of the European Parliament's delegation to the Conciliation Committee - Novel foods.

**John Dalli,** *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, as I have already had the opportunity to state to both the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, I cannot but express my disappointment at the failure of conciliation, notwithstanding our best efforts to find an agreement.

This situation is unfortunate, since we had made a lot of progress over recent months on the issues in the novel foods proposals. Let me recall some of the elements on which there was clear agreement and which, if adopted, would bring many improvements to the legislation currently in place: a centralised procedure for approval of novel foods which streamlines the authorisation process while maintaining food safety; a definition of 'nanomaterials' and the obligation for pre-market approval, and a labelling requirement for all food ingredients containing nanomaterials; a simplified procedure applicable to traditional foods from third countries, to facilitate EU market access for these products; and the need for food business operators to share scientific data, where tests on animals are involved, in order to limit animal testing where possible.

These improvements will contribute to Europe's innovation drive by facilitating the marketing of novel foods without any compromise on safety. This dossier requires our concerted attention in order to put these improvements in place without further delay. They will bring huge benefits in terms of both consumer protection and innovation in the food sector. It is therefore my hope that we can capture the momentum of negotiations by making a proposal on this issue very shortly.

The failure to conclude this dossier came despite a number of positive steps achieved on the issue of cloning during the last months and hours of negotiations. The Commission remains committed to following up the report of October 2010 which, I recall, proposed the following: a temporary suspension for five years of the use of the cloning technique in the EU, of the import and use of clones for food production, and of food from clones, which would be combined with the introduction of traceability systems for imports of semen and embryos from clones. Furthermore, the Commission recognises the progress made during conciliation.

It is also clear to me that, on the issue of cloning in all its facets, we need to find an agreement that can be implemented and one that is justified and proportionate. The Commission is ready to come up with a comprehensive proposal after the necessary impact assessment.

I welcome the conciliatory tone adopted by Mr Pittella and by the Presidency. We need collectively to reflect further on the next steps, and I am ready to discuss with you, and with the Council, possible scenarios to deal with these two important issues and to agree on a process that will guarantee a positive outcome. Such a collective reflection should seek to set a course for success on both dossiers so that consumers can reap the benefits.

**Pilar Ayuso,** *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (ES) Madam President, first of all, I would like to thank Mrs Liotard, the Hungarian Presidency and Commissioner Dalli and his team for their efforts. Unfortunately, however, this regulation, which is so important and so

necessary, has not reached a satisfactory conclusion because of a labelling requirement that went beyond what was possible in practice. This is a subject that inspires passion and attracts media attention, factors that run counter to logic and pragmatism.

I have to say that we have missed the chance to take a step forward, have condemned the agri-food industry to living with obsolete legislation and have put the brakes on European technological advancement, of which we are so supportive in theory.

We cannot demand something that involves a level of cost and bureaucracy that cannot be assumed by the food-producing sector, nor can we demand something that we are not capable of imposing upon third parties. We cannot legislate on something that later we will not be able to implement because we would be deceiving consumers.

I repeat, it is a pity that we have not reached agreement because this regulation dealt not only with cloning and with how many generations and which products must be labelled, but also with many other points on which agreement *has* been reached, such as nanotechnology and foodstuffs coming from third countries, which were very important for consumers and for the agri-food industry, not only from the point of view of the internal market, but also from a health perspective and in terms of innovation.

Since cloning is too complex a matter to relegate to a few paragraphs in another proposal, I urge the Commission once again to prepare a report and present a separate legislative proposal that regulates every aspect of cloning, based on food security and all scientific data.

Given that Commissioner Dalli has committed himself on numerous occasions before this House to presenting this proposal, I trust that the Commission will send it to us as soon as possible.

**Jo Leinen**, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (DE) Madam President, Mrs Győri, Mr Dalli, ladies and gentlemen, I have been involved in many negotiation processes here in Parliament, but the 12 hours of this conciliation procedure, which lasted from 19:00 to 07:00 the next morning, will remain in my memory for a long time. This was a very special event.

Unfortunately, the two sides came from different planets. Parliament's approach was clear, which was to focus on the interests of consumers and of the citizens of the EU. Others were considering the interests of the meat and agriculture industries. Because of these divergent approaches, we were not able to reach an agreement. This is a pity, because we now have a gap in the EU food legislation which we need to close very quickly. We were all relatively clear about this, including Mr Pittella, who acted as chair, and the rapporteur. The entire team was pulling together.

Now we need to take the next step. We must fill this gap. Mr Dalli, you must present two proposals: one on novel foods, because we have almost reached a consensus on this with regard to nanomaterials, the centralised approval process and imports from third countries. The other proposal concerns cloning. You have listened to everything that we have to say on this subject. We do not want these products on the European market. At the very least, we want them to be labelled, because consumers should have freedom of choice. That is your job and Parliament is ready to support you. I hope you will be able to submit a proposal very soon.

**Corinne Lepage**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group.* – (FR) Madam President, I would first like to thank Mrs Liotard, Mr Pittella, Mr Leinen, and the entire negotiating team. Thanks to

them, we have maintained an extremely cohesive position throughout this very lengthy trialogue and I think that the only positive aspect of the dossier is that the European Parliament has been united in defending public health and the interests of consumers. That is what we have been elected for and not for anything else.

While I recognise the need to move forward and not to assign blame, there is no getting away from the facts, and when it came to conducting negotiations in which Parliament had already abandoned a great deal, well, that was too much. As if we should even be asking ourselves whether or not to label products sold on the European market when the consumer's freedom of choice is fundamental in European law!

What has happened is totally unacceptable and we have been fobbed off with spurious pretexts. We have been presented with legal excuses. We were not entering into a commercial war; the rules of the WTO were not being violated. In legal terms, this was all untrue. Not being able to label is an excuse. It is technically incorrect. It is perfectly possible to label and trace. Simply, it was something we were unwilling to do because, as Mr Leinen pointed out just now, we put interests other than those of consumers first.

So, now, we need to move forward, and we need to move forward quickly. The issue of cloning is increasingly being used by all who want to call the European institutions into question. It is an argument put forward by those who mistrust our institutions. It is an argument put forward by those who mistrust the foods placed on the European market. For pity's sake, we urgently need to adopt a clear position on cloning to prevent cloned meat and the offspring of cloned animals being placed on the European market, which is what European consumers and European citizens want!

**Struan Stevenson**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, after two long years of hard work, the Novel Foods Regulation has collapsed in disarray because a suitable agreement on the cloning issue could not be found. Throughout the conciliation proceedings, I had warned that the stubborn refusal to compromise would lead to disaster and eventually it did.

Now we are back to square one, and we have lost a considerable amount of important and beneficial legislation on novel foods. Conciliation proceedings are most certainly a useful mechanism in the legislative process, but they become futile and pointless if participants are not prepared to negotiate and to compromise. If the Parliament had not been so inflexible, then we would have a much needed update of the rules. Now we have to fall back on the 1997 Novel Foods Regulation, which is completely outdated.

If the European Parliament is trying to show that it is a powerful, responsible legislative body which is proud to have achieved the Lisbon Treaty, I think it flunked its first test. The Commission now has to move forward and prepare separate legislation to cover cloning. I only hope that MEPs will learn from their mistakes and realise that it is the people of Europe who suffer if we cannot agree on these key issues.

**Bart Staes**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (NL) Madam President, I think that Mr Leinen put his finger on it. This is a dossier that is finely balanced between the interests of the meat processing industry and the agricultural industry and those of the consumer. I think that is the crux of the problem. I think that we, as Parliament, have done important work here, along with the rapporteur, who I would like to congratulate for all her efforts. We have worked hard and we have also shown ourselves to be flexible. We were prepared, at any given point, to make a number of concessions, but it was never enough.

I do have reservations about the insufficiently flexible approach taken by the Commission to these concessions, but I am also not particularly satisfied with the Commission's stance – not with your position, directly, Mr Dalli, but at one point, one of your fellow Commissioners, the Belgian Commissioner, Mr De Gucht, went behind the backs of the conciliation committee to appear before this Parliament's Committee on International Trade, where he proceeded to present a whole series of sophisms. The grounds cited were connected with the WTO, and we all know – Mrs Lepage was quite right to say this – that such grounds are out of the question here. I think that the rapporteur will be coming back to this issue shortly.

What needs to happen now? Certainly, we have lost some time. I believe that we do now have to ask the Commission to bring forward a new proposal in respect of novel foods quickly – we know that that may be possible, as something approaching an agreement was reached. A proposal also needs to be brought forward about how we are going to deal with cloned food, meat from cloned animals and their offspring, and so on.

I have a warning to give, Commissioner: I want to see this happen on schedule. I do not want to see this dossier kicked into the long grass and for us to then have it put before us at the end of our term or for it to be held over into the next parliamentary term. This is the Parliament that debated this dossier at first and second reading and in conciliation. It must therefore also be this Parliament that concludes it.

**Kartika Tamara Liotard**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (NL) Madam President, I would like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to my fellow Members in this House and in the delegation for the universal support I received in the negotiations, right until the end. I am also full of admiration for the Hungarian ambassador, who really did all she could, as did Mr Dalli, in fact.

It is a real pity that we were unable to reach agreement in relation to clones. Consumers can still find cloned products on their dinner tables, unsolicited and unlabelled, even though 77% of European citizens are opposed to this. I would say to the Council that banning clones alone is the politics of symbolism. The real key here is the banning of offspring. The clones themselves are so expensive that you would not make a hamburger out of them. We were thus unable to reach a compromise on this issue. The Council and the Commission both kept reiterating that a ban on offspring would be in contravention of World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. Mr De Gucht then went further by coming to Parliament and saying that it would lead to a trade war. You can imagine, then, how surprised I was to read, clearly set out in a secret internal Council document that I got hold of – it is a document from the Legal Service of the Council of Ministers – that a ban on cloning offspring is actually perfectly justifiable under WTO rules. The document clearly stated that

'The bans [on] food from cloned animals and [...] food from offspring of clones could be justified on the basis of the consumers' ethical considerations'.

(NL) I would like the Council to tell me whether all the Member States knew about this document. If so, why the constant use of the argument about global trade wars so that no compromise could be reached with Parliament? I am now really curious to know what the real underlying reasons were. If the Member States' negotiators were not aware of this document, that is a scandal as far as I am concerned. If they were aware of it, then disingenuous arguments were used.

Mr Dalli, the citizens await your next move. In my view, regulation must be brought forward very quickly now. You know that I am still prepared to collaborate and I am certain that we can find a solution. I will hand over the document to the Council.

**Corinne Lepage (ALDE).** – (FR) Madam President, what Mrs Liotard has just said is absolutely incredible. I would therefore like to press for an answer to the question she has just asked. I am utterly amazed and would like to ask the Commission if it was also in possession of this note. It is, in fact, unacceptable that, for weeks and weeks, we were being told that we would be engaging in open warfare with the WTO, that Mr De Gucht told us we would no longer be able to sell planes, that we would no longer be able to sell anything if we took that decision, when there was a legal note stating the exact opposite. I think this is a crucial issue from a political standpoint.

**Oreste Rossi,** *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I think the Council has really outdone itself. It should be remembered that the persons who represent Europe's citizens are the ones democratically elected by them. Therefore, if Parliament has continually insisted in committee and in this Chamber that cloned meat is not acceptable to our people, the Council ought to have taken notice. Responsibility for this decision, which is very bad for business, lies wholly with the Council.

Except for the part dealing with cloned meat and a few other foodstuffs, the text would have been adopted by a very large majority. The Council did not want it. It is the same Council that, on the one hand, declares itself in favour of the liberalisation of everything and, on the other, forces the removal of the 'Made in' wording on textiles because it does not want to give consumers the correct information, and is giving us a hard time over labelling because it does not want labels to indicate the place of origin or provenance of the food on our people's tables. That is the Council's position.

Mr Pittella – and I thank him – did well to uphold the honour and the views of almost all Members of this House by rejecting the blackmailing proposal that the Council wanted to force on us. I therefore thank Mr Pittella, the rapporteur and all those Members who had the courage not to give an inch on what we considered truly useful for our people.

**Peter Liese (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, Mrs Győri, Mr Dalli, ladies and gentlemen, we are all disappointed and that is obvious, but I do not think that the responsibility lies with the European Parliament's negotiating delegation. In my opinion, the Commissioner and the Minister who are present are not responsible either. On the contrary, it was other representatives of the Council and the Commission who rushed to do their duty and identify problems in third countries which were not fully discussed.

Mr De Gucht and representatives of the finance ministries, for example, from Germany, which is my home country, painted horrific pictures of trade wars on a larger scale than the banana war and a number of other issues. I do not believe that any of this had a basis in fact.

Yesterday, I had the great pleasure of meeting with representatives of the American embassy from my country, who had come especially to Strasbourg and even spoke German with me, to discuss issues relating to food policy. The arguments of the American diplomats were not sufficiently convincing to prevent us from being able to find a solution. I asked them what their opinion on the subject was and I did not get the impression that it would have been impossible for us to come to an agreement with the Americans if we had wanted to. What particularly surprised me was that the Americans gave me this document

describing origin labelling in the USA. For example, minced meat must be labelled in the USA. It must be clearly stated on a pack of hamburgers where the meat comes from.

How can we talk about a trade war if, at the same time, we want to label cloned meat and the meat from descendants of cloned animals? We should have made more effort in this area and not said immediately, as soon as the Americans expressed their doubts, that we could not do this. I am calling on the Commission to see this as an argument for producing a new proposal. We must be more self-confident if we want to implement this in the face of opposition from third countries.

**Linda McAvan (S&D).** – Madam President, the President-in-Office of the Council spoke about the need not to point a finger of blame, but I think it is time for some intellectual honesty.

We all agree, yes, that we should not eat clones, but we all know that nobody is going to eat clones. Another big sticking point in the negotiations was the Council's failure to act on the import of embryos and semen into the EU, which allows farmers to breed offspring of clones. Those offspring are bred from clones who have suffered to be born.

Commissioner, is it not true that we have, or soon will have, EU laws which prohibit the placing on the market of products from seals, of dog and cat fur, and of cosmetics which are tested on animals? We have those laws, so why can we not have a law which prohibits the placing on the EU market of products which result from the cruel practice of cloning?

I agree with Ms Liotard. This is not a matter for the World Trade Organisation: it is a matter of political will, and we can show that, and that is what will satisfy this Parliament, and that is the basis for agreement.

**Anna Rosbach (ECR).** – (DA) Madam President, a huge amount of work has gone into this regulation, both by Mrs Liotard and by the shadow rapporteurs. Many thanks for that. Unfortunately, it all ended, as we know, in disagreements about food from cloned animals. I come from a country where food from cloned animals is prohibited. However, cloning is nevertheless coming in through the back door. The subject is often brought up in guarded secrecy outside the debate. I find it strange that we want total transparency in everything from socks and television to medicines and banks, but when it comes to food, the situation is completely different.

Colourants, gases to increase shelf life, growth hormones, antibiotics, GMOs and much more besides are used – preferably without consumers being able to read about it on the packaging. Why is no one interested in ensuring that foodstuffs are as natural as possible? Why do we not pay more attention to our own health and welfare and that of our productive livestock? I cannot understand why so little responsibility is shown for the health of children and adults in certain European circles.

**Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE).** – (FI) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, it really is regrettable that this draft law was overturned, and I agree with my fellow Members who say that it was due to the fact that the Commission and the Council decided to give priority to the interests of the foreign meat industry. Their interests are the desire to do business by cloning animals, at the cost of animal suffering. Parliament, meanwhile, listened to European consumers, the overwhelming majority of whom do not want the use of cloning in meat or milk production, the overwhelming majority of whom want to reduce animal suffering, not increase it.



Parliament has not actually been inflexible. It made huge concessions, and was ready to withdraw the ban on labelling. The Council did not even agree to this, and, as we have now heard from Mrs Liotard and Mr Liese, for example, the arguments put forward by the Council and the Commission were completely mendacious and were most likely even knowingly false.

It is quite clear that no lasting solution to this problem will be found unless we take it as given that we should respect the will of European consumers to reduce animal suffering instead of increasing it.

**Françoise Grossetête (PPE).** – (FR) Madam President, I would first like to make a general observation.

When we talk of consumers' lack of confidence in the institutions, I believe that is not the issue. It is often individuals who create such mistrust and who derive a personal interest from doing so.

I will now get back to the substance. It is true that, at the end of a long night of negotiations, which lasted from 19:00 to 07:00, there was huge disappointment. It is true that the European Commission now has a huge task ahead of it, because it must submit new proposals and because developments in technology now make the revision of this legislation essential. When we think, for example, of nanomaterials, that appears very urgent.

It is completely unacceptable that there is no control over cloning techniques or over the food resulting from these techniques, which could be intended for human consumption. There are clear principles and I believe that all of us in this Parliament are entirely in agreement. Consumers must be informed of the origin of food derived from cloned animals and their offspring.

We must demand two things: traceability and labelling. I am in no doubt about the will of Commissioner Dalli to clarify this matter and to find the right solutions to the countless issues that remain unresolved. Traceability is essential. European consumers must be able to make an informed choice.

As European legislators, we cannot afford to say to the public: 'Europe is doing nothing because we have not succeeded in reaching an agreement'.

Commissioner, I know that you are endeavouring to overcome the institutional stalemates we are witnessing in order to give a firmer guarantee not only to consumers but also to food business operators. There is no time to spare and we must act quickly to find a way forward.

**Kriton Arsenis (S&D).** – Madam President, I am afraid I will be less diplomatic. I have to say to the Commissioner and the representative of the Council: you are again proposing a ban on food from cloned animals but nobody can buy food from cloned animals.

Cloned animals are very expensive to use for food. It will be their descendants that are used for food. That is why we want a ban on their descendants, and why we want clear labelling of the descendants. I am afraid that your role in the negotiations was not productive. You were fighting against this labelling on descendants, which was a minimum common denominator with the Council. This was our chance to have an agreement. Please learn the lessons, listen to what this institution has to say on the issue, and come back to us with a decent proposal.

**Horst Schnellhardt (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Dalli, ladies and gentlemen, I also very much regret the fact that the negotiations have failed, in particular, because we will now have to wait for years until we have rules governing, for example, nanotechnology in foods and products from third countries which are currently unknown in Europe. It seems that by including cloned animals in this legislation, we have fallen into a trap. I must say that the way we have debated this issue has not been dignified. The discussions went on all night with each side going to and fro and neither wanting to give in. Then, in the end, the negotiations failed, which is very unfortunate.

I would like to make one point. We are talking here about a number of subjects and about legislation. We used the same strategy for genetic engineering. We did not want genetic engineering and we significantly raised the limits and the requirements. What was the end result? The technology developed to such an extent that it was even able to meet these high standards. We are currently discussing the fact that we do not want cloned animals because the animal welfare requirements are not being fulfilled, which gives rise to risks. I have spoken to the scientists and I predict that the technology will develop to such an extent that it will no longer be possible to apply a general ban on cloning animals. However, I believe that these scientific developments are highly questionable.

We must look more closely at the basic principles that we need to lay down in order to put in place proper regulations. We should not attempt to slow down or even prevent certain developments by means of legislation.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, I would like to begin by saying how disappointed I am in the failure of conciliation. Although whole months, and even years of work have been spent on this, the outcome is disappointing, especially at a time when agreement was possible on many items in this dossier. However, the rapporteur deserves all our appreciation for her efforts.

On the issue of food from cloned animals and their offspring, Parliament was right when it maintained its point of view based on principle. We are aware that we are representing the will of European citizens when we oppose the presence of cloned animals and their offspring in the food chain. During the negotiations, the Council ignored these legitimate concerns, which is extremely regrettable. If we had accepted the Council's final proposal, we could not have claimed that we defended the wishes of ordinary citizens not to have cloned meat on their table. We were not prepared to approve laws which would have allowed food from the offspring of cloned animals to enter the market without it being labelled as such.

As for the future, I would like to remind the Commission of the commitments which it made in October 2010, mainly, to ban cloning techniques for producing food in the European Union. Another commitment was to set up traceability systems for reproductive material originating from cloned animals outside the EU. These commitments were made on several occasions and must feature in the new proposals. I am confident that Member States will focus greater attention on the legitimate concerns of the European Union's citizens.

**Elisabetta Gardini (PPE).** – (IT) Madam President, I agree with everything that the Members who have spoken before me have said. I, too, was a member of the delegation to the Conciliation Committee. As the negotiations went on, there were feelings of hope, disappointment and even rage, if I may say so, because we were there representing over 500 million people, the vast majority of whom – according to all the surveys and research

– keep crying out that they do not want food from cloned animals or their offspring on their tables.

Labelling and traceability were really the minimum on which we had taken a stand. Had we accepted the compromise, we would have found it empty. Mr Pittella is right: a dab of powder, a touch of rouge, perhaps a little wool pulled over the eyes, but nothing more than an empty shell. Let us not fool ourselves: nobody pays EUR 100 000 for a bull only to put it through the mincer and sell it as hamburgers. For all the rest, there was no regulation; we would have been accepting deregulation, and we cannot do that.

Today, however, we are still here defending certain decisions and maintaining that it was a collective failure. It was not a collective failure, though, because there was agreement on practically everything, even though it failed miserably giving people the impression that big business and trade rules prevail over the European citizenry, whom we are here to represent and defend.

I therefore call on absolutely everyone to start again with a fresh mind and a fresh outlook, because I hope and pray that the expectations and the will of the people will be respected next time.

**Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE).** – (LT) Madam President, probably everyone would agree that information is one of the main driving forces in the modern world. This rule also applies when talking about food safety. We are still considering and, hopefully, will adopt new rules on the provision of general information on foods to consumers, as well as different issues, such as fruit juice and derived products.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach a compromise with the Council on novel foods and we have taken a step backwards. The majority of consumers do not want food products from cloned animals, but the reality is that they exist. It is therefore essential to ensure that the public is made aware. However, arguing that it could cause difficulties for business and producers, representatives of the Member States did not endorse the requirement for labelling or traceability, in other words, the minimum requirements for being able to ensure consumer awareness. Thus, consumers still have no way of knowing, whether, for example, the milk they are drinking comes from cloned animals.

However, this is just one side of the coin. Now we have prevented new technologies, research and the use of results in the food industry. With such disagreement, we ourselves have postponed the solution of these problems indefinitely. We all expect emergency proposals from the European Commission that will help us to eliminate this legal impasse.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE).** – Madam President, are we really surprised that we did not reach agreement? Certainly, my view from the outside was that there were too many differences around the table, and I am not sure that starting at 7 p.m. a meeting which was doomed to fail at 7 a.m. was such a great idea, but we still have to resolve this particular problem and perhaps dividing the legislation into two parts might achieve it.

The issue of cloning is a very sensitive issue, and there are animal welfare concerns which others have spoken about, but the issue of reproductive material needs to be addressed. We need clarity as to how this can be addressed within the WTO rules, because farmers in Europe want access to the best technologies available to them to be more productive. So, within that framework, we do have issues to resolve here in this House, and I hope that they can be resolved satisfactorily.

Finally, on the issue of Europe's standards versus the rest of the world, we import meat products into the European Union. Are we as clear about what we are importing as we are demanding about what is produced within the EU itself? This is also an issue which needs to be addressed.

**Karin Kadenbach (S&D).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Dalli, firstly, I would like to thank Mr Dalli for his efforts in the area of prevention. I hoped and expected that we would see this level of commitment from him with regard to cloned materials. We have had several hours of intensive discussions and I see myself as a representative of the people of Europe who clearly support the position that Parliament has taken and want to see progress in this area. Together with 500 million Europeans, we want clear labelling as the minimum solution. In reality, we would like a ban on cloned animals and on products from cloned animals, regardless of which generation they come from.

We hoped for your support, Mr Dalli. We did not understand why the Council was not on our side, because the Council is made up of elected representatives of the Member States. However, they were obviously serving the needs of the market and not those of the people. We hope that in future, you will put the people at the centre of your decision-making processes and not the market.

**Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Madam President, consumer protection policy is a central element of overall European policy. If we do not manage to provide consistent protection for consumers, then we will have totally failed in this respect. It is important to explain that it is not just the majority of consumers who do not want cloning, it is also the majority of farmers.

I believe that some Member States have deliberately sabotaged the negotiations. They have decided to protect the agriculture industry and defend its interests. All the talk of an imminent trade war, which has been mentioned several times today, was simply a pretext. For reasons of European animal welfare policy alone, we should be taking measures against cloning, Mr Dalli, and we hope that you will draw up a regulation as quickly as possible. There is a need for action. We are calling on you not to wait for months, but to come to grips with this issue straight away. The ban on cloning is simply one step in the process. We must insist on a regulation being introduced which covers the descendants of cloned animals, otherwise the whole thing will be fundamentally ineffective.

**Anna Záborská (PPE).** – (SK) Madam President, I do not want to point fingers, but I think that the failure of the conciliation procedure is a setback and we have thrown out the baby with the bathwater.

Cloning is not just a complex, but also a sensitive topic. Dolly the sheep was neither the first nor the last cloned animal. Tens of thousands of other attempts end in failure. Deformed foetuses with excessively large organs die in the wombs of experimental animals, others are born dead and others perish just a few days after birth. Cloning is a worse tyranny for animals than small cages or being transported in lorries without water.

It is therefore right that the regulation on new foodstuffs includes a ban on the sale of cloned animals and their offspring. I do not believe it is highly complex to deal with the cloning issue now. We must now give a clear signal to food producers that products from animals that are suffering have no place on the European market.

**Giancarlo Scottà (EFD).** – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, novel foods are food products or ingredients that undergo production processes and involve a change in nutritional value.

I have a number of doubts about the new Novel Food Regulation. What relation will it bear to the regulation on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), since cloning is an aspect of genetic engineering and, as with GMOs, it involves actual genetic manipulation? How will the movement of these foods between European countries be regulated? How will the scientific tests needed to test the safety of these novel foods be carried out? What will the criteria be for defining these products and, most of all, how will consumers be informed of the characteristics and nutritional properties of the novel foods they purchase?

My central concerns are consumer protection, food safety in the use of these novel products, and correct information. I therefore believe there must be total traceability for consumers, especially for natural products, for which we already find it difficult to guarantee traceability.

**Niki Tzavela (EFD).** – (EL) Madam President, I believe that this entire issue has arisen due to a lack of information for consumers and the public. Where there is no transparency in information for the citizens of Europe and the world as a whole, impassés are created and we get nowhere. What I want to emphasise is that, when there is a strong reaction to such products, we and the decision makers and legislators need to toe the line demanded by public opinion. We therefore need information and transparency in everything we do if we are to finish what we have started.

**John Dalli,** *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, I have taken careful note of the opinions expressed during the course of this debate. I would like to thank honourable Members for their views and assure them once again that the Commission will continue to work with Parliament, Member States and stakeholders from all sectors in pursuit of the common aim of moving forward as fast as possible with both proposals on novel food and cloning.

I must stress that the position taken by the Commission during the conciliation – and we were advancing various proposals in this regard – was that, as I said before, any solution or any compromise that could be reached had to be implementable. It would be possible to implement, and it would be justified and proportionate. Whatever all of us would like to have – and as Commissioner responsible for consumers, I am all for information to consumers – this must, however, be evidence-based and we must have an impact assessment. That was our position.

The Commission has never put forward a position against any type of labelling, but we were saying that every decision we take has to be assessed to ensure the impact it is going to have on our citizens at large, be they producers or be they consumers, and that is the position that I still hold. I can assure you that the Commission services and I will pursue this challenge with all determination and energy, and I also assure you, especially Mr Staes, that I do not put off decisions that need to be taken.

**Enikő Győri,** *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (HU) Madam President, Commissioner, honourable Members, on behalf of the Presidency and the Council, thank you for the debate. I would like to express my special thanks for the speeches which acknowledged the efforts of the Hungarian Presidency and which recognised these efforts.

We also welcome the fact that the arguments put forward during the conciliation procedure have been presented here. At the same time, we wish to repudiate statements or suggestions

alleging that either the Council or the Hungarian Presidency acted dishonestly or in bad faith, or was under the influence of interest groups.

The best aspect of the Treaty of Lisbon is that it increased our joint responsibility. We have tried and are trying to act in this spirit. We have been unable to agree, so now in this respect, any product may be served at our tables without restriction. This is worse than the Council's last offer would have been. Precisely what was that? It was a ban on cloned animals and products derived from them, and the monitoring and labelling of first progeny, naturally within reasonable limits. One only has to think, for example, of the very many ingredients salami has. Reasonableness and pricing will set the limit.

We wish to say specifically to Mrs Liotard that, as regards the internal Council document you quoted, the Member States were aware of it and naturally the Council was aware of it, and even discussed it. It helped in establishing our position. You cited a sentence taken in isolation from this document while failing to mention that the document states in its conclusions precisely that there are risks from the aspect of WTO compatibility, as well as that these conclusions also mention that the most acceptable solution is labelling, which, I repeat, was included in the Council's last offer.

However, I agree with you all that we should move on as soon as possible. We hope that before long, we will know more about aspects of food safety due to scientific research and progress. I am pleased that Commissioner Dalli promised that there will be a new, separate draft on cloning and the subject of cloned products soon.

**Gianni Pittella**, *President of the European Parliament's delegation to the Conciliation Committee.*  
– (IT) Madam President, all the speeches made by the Members who have spoken before me – whom I thank, starting with the rapporteur – as well as the documentation presented by the rapporteur herself, which underlines the fact that our proposals, had they been accepted, would not have unleashed a trade war, have shown that there was no collective failure, and I repeat this to the Hungarian Presidency without wishing to be polemical. There certainly was a failure, but it was in an area for which the governments were clearly responsible.

Let nobody tell me that merely labelling beef from cloned animals or their offspring could be considered an honourable and satisfactory agreement for Parliament, because this was little more than no agreement at all. Let us now draw a veil over all that and look to the future. It is, first of all, the Council's job to get the governments to agree once they know what Parliament's positions are, which are the positions of the people of Europe. Labelling of products from cloned animals and their offspring is the minimum we will settle for. Work is needed within and between governments to accept this minimum.

I therefore call on Commissioner Dalli – who I know is very willing – to table a Commission proposal incorporating our positions as soon as possible, so as to allow this House to approve the regulation on cloning. We must also go ahead on nanomaterials, and now that the cloning part has been removed, we can move quickly on these.

I have one final comment: you have all noticed how united Parliament is. This is substantial, 360 degree unity. You may perhaps have made a mistake during the negotiations, thinking that there was no cohesion in the European Parliament. Please do not make that mistake again, because on sensitive issues relating to people's health, we are and will remain united.

**Bart Staes (Verts/ALE).** – (NL) Madam President, this is actually a point of order. Several times in the debate, the position of Commissioner De Gucht has been mentioned.

Mrs Lepage asked Commissioner Dalli whether he was aware of the Council's legal advice. I heard Mr Dalli give many answers to our questions, but I did not hear an answer to that question, even though it is a crucial one. Is this perhaps a matter of a lack of consensus within the Commission, as Mr Dalli is in the Commission as the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, while Mr De Gucht, by all accounts, came out with false arguments that were invalidated by a Council document. I would like to hear from the Commissioner what his view on this is.

**President.** – The debate is closed.

### IN THE CHAIR: EDWARD McMILLAN-SCOTT

*Vice-President*

#### 12. Small Business Act review (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the debate on

– the oral question to the Council on the Small Business Act (SBA) review by Bendt Bendtsen, on behalf of the PPE Group, Edit Herczog, on behalf of the S&D Group, Fiona Hall, on behalf of the ALDE Group, Reinhard Bütikofer, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group, Giles Chichester, on behalf of the ECR Group, and Niki Tzavela, on behalf of the EFD Group (O-000089/2011 – B7-0301/2011),

– the oral question to the Commission on the Small Business Act (SBA) review by Bendt Bendtsen, on behalf of the PPE Group, Edit Herczog, on behalf of the S&D Group, Fiona Hall, on behalf of the ALDE Group, Reinhard Bütikofer, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group, Giles Chichester, on behalf of the ECR Group, and Niki Tzavela, on behalf of the EFD Group (O-000090/2011 – B7-0302/2011).

**Bendt Bendtsen,** *author.* – (DA) Mr President, the economic crisis has had an effect on Europe's small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, there are the new Basel rules that are now to be implemented in the forthcoming Capital Requirements Directive. This will probably make it even more difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises to obtain capital for the growth that Europe needs. In this resolution, the European Parliament is sending a clear signal to the Commission that it is now that the necessary decisions need to be taken to benefit our small and medium-sized enterprises.

Now it is true that politicians should not be running businesses, but they should be involved in creating the fertile soil in which Europe's businesses can grow. I am pleased that we will now have a revision of the Small Business Act. We must take relevant action instead of merely toasting our European enterprises. There is an urgent need for better access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises. There is also a need for enhanced market access, including the modernisation of the standardisation system within the EU, and for better access for small and medium-sized enterprises to public procurement opportunities.

Finally, I would like to mention that we need to reduce our enterprises' administrative burden, in connection with reporting, for example. Why should small business owners have to submit a report more than once? Once should be enough. The public authorities should deal with the further distribution of the information themselves. We must consider the fact that, when we produce new legislation in the EU and get it implemented in the Member States, we often impose even more burdens on our small and medium-sized enterprises. It is therefore not enough simply to reduce the number. We must also ensure,

every time we produce legislation, that we do not create additional burdens for small and medium-sized enterprises. Overall, we need to make it easier for businesses to operate in Europe and we need to act now.

**Edit Herczog**, *author.* – (HU) Mr President, Commissioner, I beg your pardon. I glanced up at the public gallery for an instant as I have the good fortune that a visiting group from Hungary also happens to be present right now.

The Small Business Act has become incorporated into European thinking in recent times. Based on the practical experience of the last two years, now is the time to review, update and strengthen the Small Business Act. We, the posers of the question, have summarised the most important issues in 34 points in the proposal for a decision. I would like to mention a few of these.

Implementation is very important. The Member States have done their work with different degrees of efficiency and commitment with consequent success. We would like a single database and results table to measure success and excesses.

Commissioner, in our view, the aim is not to infringe employees' rights in any way but to create jobs. Reducing administration is not the same as infringing upon employees' rights, but rather the opportunity must be created for micro and small enterprises to cooperate.

As regards access to financial resources, it is very important that the use of funds available at European Union level be more efficient. We have achieved 75% efficiency until now and roughly 50 000 SMEs have received funds in this way. At the same time, approximately 300 000 SMEs have managed to access funding under the competitiveness and innovation programme. We must definitely strengthen and preserve this.

It is very important that the institutional network helps small and medium-sized enterprises. For this reason, the European Enterprise Network must be strengthened.

We would very much like to find a solution that allows the Erasmus programme for young entrepreneurs to continue. We would like all the 23 million small and medium-sized enterprises to be able to hire at least one more employee. In this way, we could make a significant contribution to improving the labour market situation. However, it is highly important that the labour force working for small and medium-sized enterprises be better qualified than at present. It is especially important that they can take part in the implementation of the Green Economy programme and obtain digital skills. The most important thing for us is that young entrepreneurs with small and medium-sized businesses should not regard different forms of enterprise as losers but as winners.

**Fiona Hall**, *author.* – Mr President, the Small Business Act was given a warm welcome by SMEs, but that was two years ago. It is really important that we now show small businesses that this was not just a piece of paper.

On the issue of administrative burden, the target should not be a once-off which we reach and then abandon. It is something we have to keep working on. I am particularly concerned about the situation that micro-businesses find themselves in. It is all right – or it is relatively all right – for a small business of 249 employees that has specialist administrative staff but, for a micro-business with one or two staff, over-regulation can actually make trading impossible. We should not forget that micro-businesses of less than 10 employees actually make up over 90% of all EU businesses.



Micro-businesses really need to be treated like family units and, in particular, the EU and its Member States need to work together to look at how small businesses can be given upfront support for energy efficiency improvements. Indeed, the broader question of finance for SMEs is vital.

Just before Easter, a number of MEPs from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy went to California to see how investment works in Silicon Valley. What we discovered was that venture capital was much more available than in Europe, and that those who provided it were much more risk-taking in their approach. Californian venture capitalists expect nine out of ten investments to fail. The one in ten which succeeds pays for all the rest, but the motto is 'fail fast'. There is much we can learn about how we could better support our own innovative small businesses in Europe. Perhaps not least, we should not stigmatise failure but rather use it as a step to success.

**Giles Chichester,** *author.* – Mr President, there is a fundamental paradox in EU policy on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). On the one hand, there is almost unanimous support for their importance to the economy, to employment, wealth creation, innovation and flexibility, and their overall sheer size within the economy. If positive rhetoric could be converted into orders and cash in the bank, then the Union's SMEs would be in great shape. However, the big challenge – which is addressed in this resolution – is how to convert warm words into useful deeds without just throwing money at SMEs – money that is not available in today's economy. On the other hand, the EU combines this positive sentiment with plenty of legislation on employment protection and environmental requirements: legislation which is well-intentioned but all of which bears most heavily on SMEs, increasing the administrative burden on small business when we should be reducing it.

There are many constructive suggestions in this resolution. I particularly like the proposal for combating the practice known in my country as 'gold plating', whereby national authorities add layers of regulation to European measures. My personal view, as one who worked in a small business for 25 years, is that actually, while it would be nice to reduce this burden of administration, the best we can do for small businesses is to improve access to information and to finance.

**Reinhard Bütikofer,** *author.* – (DE) Mr President, it does not happen every day in Parliament that Members of six different political groups table a joint question which leads to a debate. Today, we have a case of this kind and it is no coincidence that it concerns the role of small and medium-sized businesses. This is a commonly held and broad-based concern.

One of the questions we are asking is: What is the Commission doing to further strengthen the particularly successful financial instruments in future for small and medium-sized companies? One of these successful instruments is the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). What will happen to CIP when the common strategic framework for research and innovation is developed? What opportunities will there be for small and medium-sized enterprises in this context?

It will definitely not be possible to make the concept of innovation so broad and far-reaching that it covers all the relevant activities and all small and medium-sized businesses. However, we must not make the mistake of only promoting the competitiveness of those small and medium-sized firms which have been identified as being particularly innovative. Therefore, I believe that it is very important for the right decisions to be made in the common strategic framework.

I would also like to mention specifically that this also concerns the issue of the criteria on which simplification and the reduction of red tape are based. CIP is already much less bureaucratic than the Seventh Framework Programme. It would not be sensible to apply the standards of the Seventh Framework Programme in the case of small and medium-sized companies. We need to find a practical way of continuing the measures which have been good for small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular, in programmes such as CIP, so that these activities do not fall by the wayside during the course of a reorganisation.

**Niki Tzavela**, *author*. – Mr President, I would like to congratulate my colleagues on their contribution to this very useful resolution and to state that I agree with all that has been said so far. Nevertheless, I have made some amendments on a couple of issues which I feel could be constructive and useful contributions to the final text.

Firstly, there is no mention in the text of the effects of illegal trade on small businesses. Unfortunately, in this day and age, illegal trade is a reality and a phenomenon which is growing in all Member States. To put it simply, illegal trade is one of the biggest obstacles to the emergence and growth of Europe's small businesses.

My second comment concerns the Commission's 'second chance' initiative for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In these times of economic difficulty especially, it is important to support SMEs and help them to develop.

This leads me to my last point. I think it is regrettable that few of our innovative SMEs grow into larger companies and that there are fewer young, R&D-intensive, innovative firms in the EU than in the USA. Significant shortages in innovation-related skills prevent SMEs from adopting innovative smart business models and new technologies. This is an issue we must address, and we must cultivate in Europe the risk-taking spirit that exists in the USA among the young generation of Americans.

**Enikő Győri**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (HU) Mr President, Commissioner, honourable Members, I am grateful to Parliament for the interest shown in the Small Business Act and the opportunity afforded by this especially to discuss what action we should take with regard to the different initiatives mentioned in relation to the review of the Small Business Act.

The Small Business Act is a very important tool which helps us create a more favourable business environment for small and medium-sized enterprises. Small and medium-sized enterprises make a major contribution to the European economy as the vast majority of companies belong to this category and they provide jobs for over 90 million people throughout Europe. For this reason, the full implementation of the policy for small and medium-sized enterprises and, in particular, the Small Business Act, is a high priority task for the Hungarian Presidency. The success of our competitiveness strategy depends on how our policy initiatives affect small and medium-sized enterprises. One of the keys to future growth is that highly competitive and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises should operate in Europe. Accordingly, the Council welcomes with great pleasure the Commission's communication on the review of the Small Business Act, which was published on 23 February 2011. In the communication, the Commission suggests various new initiatives in several priority areas for further action to be taken. These initiatives were created as the result of wide-ranging consultations with associations of small and medium-sized enterprises and the relevant authorities. Thus, they duly bear in mind the interests of both the enterprises themselves and other stakeholders.

The Commission's communication was discussed at the informal meeting of competitiveness ministers in Gödöllő in Hungary on 13 April 2011. At these talks, the ministers fully supported the Presidency's opinion that the four main issues to be handled as priorities are smart regulation, financing, internationalisation and governance. More work is needed to enable us to make progress in these issues. At the same time, it is the Presidency's firm intention to maintain the impetus of the process at the meeting of the Competitiveness Council to be held on 31 May 2011, which will also consider the mid-term review of the Small Business Act. At the aforementioned meeting, the Presidency would like the Council to adopt conclusions in which the 'think small first' principle is applied in particular, that is to say, the principle which the Commission's communication is based on.

As regards the status of the European private company, the European Commission first made a recommendation on the subject in a Council draft regulation in 2008. The idea behind the proposal was to make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises to do business in the single market, and this must result in reducing costs and increased economic growth. Some concerns arose in the Council about certain aspects and parts of the proposal. Despite the commendable efforts of the Swedish and Belgian presidencies, the Member States have not managed to reach agreement to this day. I can assure the honourable Members that the Hungarian Presidency is striving to find the way to progress with regard to the particularly problematic issues of this proposal and will continue to do all it can to bring the matter to a successful conclusion.

**Olli Rehn**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, many thanks to the honourable Members for this important oral question and your debate. I will respond to the question on behalf of my colleague, Vice-President Antonio Tajani.

In fact, small and medium-sized enterprises account for 99% of all European enterprises and generate most of the value-added of the real economy and create two-thirds of the jobs in the private sector. The EU is relying on SMEs and is creating the conditions under which they can develop and grow in order to create jobs in competitive markets. SMEs need less red tape, easier access to finance green markets and skills that match the needs of the real economy. These are the principles behind our SME policy as presented in the review of the Small Business Act for Europe. I will outline five avenues of work in the frame of your five questions in the oral question in my response on behalf of the Commission.

In the review, the Commission invites the Member States to systematically assess the impact of the legislation on SMEs by using the SME test. The European Parliament and the Commission are working together on a study of the application of the SME test in the Member States and at European level. The Commission will use this test as a basis for planning additional measures to support implementation and the exchange of best practice. We are also currently completing a study on the problems associated with licensing and official authorisation, company transfer and bankruptcy procedures in the Member States. The study will enable the Commission and, in particular, the Member States, to plan appropriate measures for applying the 'think small first' principle to administrative services. This will be made possible in particular by expanding online administration and the one-stop shop in line with the recommendations made in the review.

Secondly, a new system of governance will be introduced. The Commission has invited the Member States to appoint a SME representative – 'Ms or Mr SME' – to monitor the implementation of the SBA at national level. The national representatives will be members

of a consultative group for the SBA which will help to assess and disseminate information concerning the measures taken to support SMEs. They will meet for the first time at the SBA Conference in Budapest on 24 and 25 May this year.

Thirdly, SMEs are intended to be the main beneficiaries of the European programme to reduce the administrative burden. The Commission has submitted to the Council and the EP proposals for reducing administrative costs very substantially – by up to over 30% when they are implemented – while the proposals already adopted will reduce administrative costs by 22%.

The Commission is relying on the Parliament to ensure that our proposals are adopted as soon as possible. Certain proposals, such as the review of the Fourth Accounting Directive, will benefit SMEs in particular. When it has been adopted by the Council and Parliament, the review of the Fourth Accounting Directive will enable Member States to exempt very small enterprises from certain accounting obligations.

Fourthly, the SBA has also created a framework to enable SMEs to take up the challenge of energy efficiency by improving their energy management and seizing the opportunities presented by the environmental market. The action plan to encourage eco-innovation will also be implemented, paying particular attention to SMEs by promoting networking, low carbon technologies and efficient management of the use of resources. We will also continue developing action specifically devoted to environment and energy experts within the Enterprise Europe network.

Finally, as part of the flagship initiative on the Agenda for new skills and jobs, the Commission will assess future skills needs in micro- and craft-type enterprises. An initial study on identification of future skills requirements in micro- and craft-type enterprises up to 2020 has just been published. It identifies the actions which need to be taken to meet future skills requirements, promote them more effectively and include them more systematically in training programmes for both micro-enterprises and craft-type enterprises.

**Pilar del Castillo Vera,** *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (ES) Mr President, Mrs Györi, Commissioner, today, we find ourselves discussing in this House a joint proposal for a resolution on the revision of the Small Business Act, which the Commission submitted in February.

The relationship between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the economy can be defined in many ways, but in a sense, they are the axis around which any economic system revolves, in this case, the European economies. If they are strong, the economy will do well; if they are weak, the economy will do badly. SMEs generate jobs, growth and, accordingly, prosperity for society.

I shall refer to three factors that seem to me to be fundamental to achieving a strong network of enterprises.

First, the adoption of information and communication technology and the development of technologies such as online administration or cloud computing, which save money, reduce costs and effort and, therefore, improve the competitiveness of SMEs.

Second, innovation, which is equally fundamental in this sector. Accordingly, up-and-coming enterprises in the small and medium-sized business sector must be strongly incentivised.

Third, SMEs must be able to participate fully in the internal market, both in terms of cross-border public tendering and as regards all other features of the internal market, which are capable of providing extraordinary benefits to SMEs in terms of their competitiveness but are currently failing to do so.

Finally, after all this comes the value of entrepreneurship, a social value which must be strong since, if it is not, the whole network will be weak. In this area, both governments and the European Union have much to do, principally through education.

**Teresa Riera Madurell**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (ES) Mr President, certainly, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have the advantage of being flexible and agile and close to the customer, which enables them to make decisions much more quickly. These are very important characteristics in times of crisis, when the ability to respond quickly is vital.

Moreover, as we well know, they make up more than 90% of the fabric of our business sector and they are a valuable model that we must maintain, because the effects of a large business failing or relocating are much more devastating, above all, in employment terms.

For that reason, we, and governments in particular, cannot afford to throw a spanner in the works of these businesses. For that reason, we approved the Small Business Act and, for that reason also, exercises such as this one are vital to the continuing progress of Member States in applying the political and legislative measures that we have agreed.

Ladies and gentlemen, European SMEs urgently need the firm political will to improve their access to public tenders that is contained in the Small Business Act to be converted into real, tangible, operative measures.

We applaud the measures that some Member States have taken, such as dividing tenders into lots and improving electronic access to information from centralised websites and interactive web pages, but we do not think that this is sufficient.

From this House, we must insist that those responsible for public procurement within the various administrative bodies incorporate terms into their tender specifications that facilitate positive discrimination in favour of SMEs and remove contractual provisions that hinder their participation.

**Jürgen Creutzmann**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Mr Rehn, the joint question on the review of the Small Business Act shows that there is still a great deal to be done to ensure that medium-sized companies in Europe have freedom to act, particularly on a national level. However, I am pleased that in recent years, we have succeeded in implementing almost all the provisions of the Small Business Act in the European Union. Most recently, a new directive on combating late payment in commercial transactions came into force in March, which will make an important contribution to improving payment practice in Europe. Now the Member States have two years to implement the new directive. I would like to call for this timeframe to be shortened, in particular, in the Member States where this would not present a significant problem. Instead of delaying implementation for two years, it could be completed, where possible, within one year.

The Member States have not yet been able to agree on the statute for a European private company. Therefore, I very much welcome the fact that the Hungarian Presidency is following up this issue and making it one of the focal points of its work. This form of

company in particular could enable small and medium-sized enterprises to save a great deal of money. I am thinking, in particular, of accounting, establishing a company and ongoing legal advice. Therefore, I would like to say again how pleased I am that the Hungarian Presidency is focusing on this area.

The issue just mentioned by Mrs Riera Madurell is also important, and that is public procurement. Here, we can still achieve a great deal for small and medium-sized enterprises. There are many bureaucratic regulations in this area and it is often particularly difficult for small and medium-sized businesses to take part in the public procurement process. We need greater transparency and we must also try to make the most of the opportunities presented by the modern media and, in particular, the Internet.

**Kay Swinburne**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, the Small Business Act is precisely what we, as politicians and legislators, should be focusing on as we look for ways of fostering new growth and re-energising our economies.

SMEs make up more than 98% of the businesses in my rural constituency of Wales. As public sector jobs in the UK as a whole are becoming less certain, and more of my constituents are, I hope, going to be either setting up or working for small businesses, I fully support and endorse the ambitious targets for reducing the administrative burden on SMEs, and goals such as the SME test for all legislation. Coupled with the ‘one in, one out’ policy for regulation that my own government is operating, these measures should begin to achieve our objective.

But now is the time to be bold, to be more ambitious and to achieve more. I have seen so much creativity in Wales, as it develops into a hub of activity for new businesses in the highly profitable global gaming world and a centre for cultural excellence with regard to film and programme production, yet I find myself asking questions about how to foster and encourage this development. Big projects like the European patent and the Digital Agenda need to deliver for these small businesses, providing jobs and a future for people in Wales and the whole of the EU.

**Derek Roland Clark**, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – Mr President, this review’s 10 principles include helping SMEs to benefit from opportunities of the single market, but the eurozone is collapsing, so how can it provide more opportunities? It also wants SMEs to benefit from the growth in markets. What growth? In September 2009, I asked Commissioner Andor what specific measures he would introduce to assist SMEs, following my similar request of him when he spoke to the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on taking up the portfolio. I got no answers then, but now it seems I have some.

The review’s five guidelines to reduce pressure on SMEs include simplifying the rules on VAT and reducing the rates, and a directive on late payments, but that is just tinkering with existing rules and regulations. The first principle of the review – creating a right environment – should not mean proposing new rules such as European private companies and state aids. It should mean ripping rules out by the hundred. After all, Commission President Barroso said in this House in July last year: ‘red tape is strangling SMEs’.

**Tadeusz Zwiefka (PPE)**. – (PL) Mr President, legislation which is too complex or unintelligible, which is too strict, or which does not keep up with the latest changes, is obviously not conducive to development or progress. As coordinator of the Committee on Legal Affairs, I would therefore like to draw particular attention to the importance, during the legislative procedure, of observing the principle of including small and

medium-sized enterprises in *ex ante* and *post ante* impact assessments. This would make it possible, as early as during the law making process, to identify and eliminate obstacles which may be posed by new regulations for a sector which, after all, is the flywheel of the European economy.

Similarly, complying with the principles of 'think small first' and 'only once', and limiting the excessively strict transposition of the requirements of EU directives into national regulations, by bodies in the Member States naturally, will result in a noticeable reduction in the administrative burden on the SME sector. Both the Stoiber working group and the review of the Small Business Act presented by the European Commission have confirmed that administrative obstacles and excessive burdens relating to control measures often cause delays, and sometimes even prevent the further expansion of small companies which have the potential to generate new jobs.

I therefore also regard it as legitimate to ask whether the analysis promised by the European Commission, concerning a reduction of the administrative burden to 25% of its current level, is available yet. I also agree with the proposals to the effect that both the EU institutions and the Member States should be guided by these principles when creating new legislation or revising existing legislation. It is alarming to learn that implementation of the Small Business Act is coming up against many obstacles in the Member States, although the examples of several countries show that following these principles yields good results.

Finally, I should also like to draw your attention to the significance of the ongoing work on European contract law, and the work on the establishment of a European patent protection system which has begun in the Committee on Legal Affairs. There can be no doubt that good regulations in this area will give a direct boost to the development of innovation, particularly as regards the activities and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D).** – (RO) Mr President, at the end of March 2011, the European Union had an unemployment rate of 9.5%, with a rate of 9.9% in the euro area. What is of even greater concern is that the youth unemployment rate is almost double the unemployment rate for the whole population. Improving the business environment and access to funding, as well as facilitating SMEs' access to the Structural Funds, will foster the development of an entrepreneurial spirit. SMEs need legislative and fiscal stability. Repeated amendments to tax legislation or changes to the conditions for accessing the various types of funds make it difficult for them to do business. Another issue, especially during times of crisis, is that SMEs are affected by the delay from public institutions in settling their invoices. All these factors affect SMEs' forecasts for achieving their business plans, as well as their business and, most of all, their innovative capacity.

Between 2006 and 2008, SMEs managed to win just 33% of the total value of public procurement contracts. Given that public procurement contracts account for 17% of the European Union's GDP, we think that SMEs need to increase their involvement in the public procurement market. This is why we call on the Commission and Member States to take the necessary measures by 2015 to ensure that at least 50% of public procurement transactions are carried out electronically, in keeping with the commitment made by Member State governments in Manchester in 2005.

I should point out that the single market is not in operation yet in the services sector, which is having an adverse impact on SMEs' business activities in the European Union. In 2008, the Commission presented, as part of the European Economic Recovery Plan, the

programme which involved the European Investment Bank offering a global package of EUR 30 billion in loans earmarked for SMEs. The EIB intended to supplement the loans for medium-sized businesses with EUR 1 billion a year. I would like to ask the Commission at what stage of implementation this programme is at, whether it intends to top up the funding, and whether these funds are distributed equally to all Member States.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD).** – (IT) Mr President, three million jobs have been lost in comparison with several million euro invested in support policies. That is the disastrous outcome, in terms of impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), first of the triumphal Lisbon project, and then of the ‘photocopy’ Europe 2020 strategy, on which we are even deciding to focus resources from the next multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020.

I therefore cannot but stress what thousands of European citizens and taxpayers are wondering: what use is Europe if it cannot solve the economic problems of the continent, if it cannot speak with a single voice on matters of foreign policy, and if it squanders money? I hope that what Commissioner Tajani has said on several occasions comes true. I hope that the review of the SME code really is able to simplify red tape, ensure access to and recovery of credit, and facilitate internalisation.

With the Late Payments Directive, we have reached a real, concrete goal, but as a result of political will and not Europropaganda. If the costs of the umpteenth strategy will still only finance talk, I call on the European institutions to make amends to the dozens of small entrepreneurs in my region, Veneto, who have taken their lives rather than see their small businesses fail.

**Krišjānis Kariņš (PPE).** – (LV) Mr President, Commissioner, parents very often pay attention to the child that cries the loudest, although in truth, attention ought to be paid to another child entirely. Similarly, politicians and the press pay attention most often to large companies, which have a lot of money, which have a big voice, although attention ought rather to be paid to others, that is to say, small enterprises. For us in Europe, large enterprises are like large trees, but these large trees do not make up the whole enterprise wood. A few figures. Over 90% of enterprises in the whole of Europe are small and medium-sized, not large. Approximately three quarters of all those in employment work in small and medium-sized enterprises, which produce the same proportion of Europe’s gross domestic product. The time has come for us to switch our attention from large enterprises, which are loud, I should not like to say – like children – but they are loud, and pay attention to the quieter ones, most of whom work after all with the small ones. In this context, then, Commissioner, I call upon you to pay greater attention to your own Commission’s commitment to reduce the administrative burden for small and medium-sized enterprises. You can do this by evaluating your legislation, and not by introducing regulations that make the administrative burden more costly. By supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, we shall be acting more swiftly to encourage economic growth throughout the European Union. Thank you for your attention.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D).** – (LT) Mr President, the Small Business Act adopted in 2008 was supposed to give impetus to the development of small business and the improvement of business conditions in Europe. A lot has been done to improve the business environment and simplify administrative requirements, such as the E-Invoicing Directive and the Late Payments Directive. However, this is not enough. Today, we can see that the outcomes are not what small business expected.



The main priorities, such as financing and simplifying regulatory systems for improving the business environment, have not been implemented in a systematic or consistent manner. Meanwhile, the business environment varies greatly across the Member States. The different legal regimes covering the protection of consumer rights, which still remain, reduce consumer confidence in the single market and do not encourage companies to expand their business in other Member States. Essentially, this prevents the creation of an internal market in the European Union that is more geared towards and favourable to small business.

It is precisely small business that has been worst hit by the economic and financial crisis. We see companies going bankrupt or with a huge debt burden. We did provide for measures to help them, but sadly, they have not always been successful. The European Progress Microfinance Facility set up by the Commission really was a very appropriate step for providing small business with opportunities to obtain financing during the crisis. However, as various studies have shown, instead of providing business with loans, the national banks in some Member States have tightened lending conditions even more.

The European Investment Bank, which administered these loans for two years, generally did not have information on the implementation of these instruments. This gives rise to the question: why do we need such an intermediary at all? The clear conclusion is that in future, the Commission must take responsibility for overseeing the implementation of such important initiatives in the Member States.

Hopefully, the revision of the Small Business Act will help us to understand and evaluate where we should increase our efforts so that we can establish an environment that works better for small business.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under*

*Rule 149(8))*

**Paul Rübiger (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, I wanted to ask Mr Balčytis what he thinks of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme, because he has mentioned that the financial situation in this area has become highly precarious as a result of the crisis. I have heard that the Commission intends to limit the scope of this programme. Do you not believe that it would be more sensible in the light of the financial crisis to ensure that the owners of small and medium-sized companies have the opportunity to find out about new areas of business?

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D).** – (LT) Thank you very much for this question. How we plan to restructure our society, and who, in future, will have to deal with the main issues, not just for small business, but big business as well – this really is a priority issue of our future.

The Erasmus programme you mentioned is also very important and I believe that in future, the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament should all increase their efforts to ensure that such programmes do not suffer, and that henceforth we have people, better prepared people, to implement many of the theoretical wishes that we have expressed here today. After all, someone has to put theory into practice. I agree with you entirely that Parliament should not consent to reducing such programmes in the future.

**Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE).** – (PL) Mr President, the work currently being carried out on the review of the Small Business Act should concentrate, in particular, on establishing a European Private Company Statute, thus facilitating the cross-border operations of economic entities in the EU market. Although the time taken to set up a

company has dropped in recent months, an analysis carried out by the European Commission has showed that over half of Member States still do not meet the requirement for it to be possible to do so in three days. Furthermore, the majority of Member States are still not carrying out assessments of the impact of future legislative and administrative initiatives on SMEs, and the 'only once' principle is also not being applied in full.

Over the past two years, the list of countries in which it has been possible to close down a business entirely within a year has remained the same. I would therefore suggest that the European Commission should become even more involved in efforts to ensure that the Member States implement these provisions. In addition, I believe that further measures under the Small Business Act should also cover improved availability of funding, access to risk capital markets and the development of points of single contact in the Member States to facilitate administrative procedures.

It is worth pointing out that in order to achieve our objective of an employment level of 75%, as enshrined in the Europe 2020 strategy, it is imperative to support SMEs. As a result of the economic crisis, these SMEs are feeling the strain of a series of additional expenses, instead of generating jobs.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** – (RO) Mr President, the Small Business Act needs to be brought into line with the Europe 2020 strategy priorities to improve the regulatory environment to meet the needs of SMEs. This means that the measures presented need to be implemented quickly, in their entirety, especially the 'think small first' principle. I think that particular attention must be focused on supporting large-scale funding for innovative companies. According to the Commission's assessment, Romania is a model of good practice in applying the principle of 'promoting entrepreneurship through the Start business programme'. The programme has a budget of EUR 21.2 million and is aimed at developing management skills among young people.

I have also noted progress in the implementation of the principle of 'accessing funding for SMEs'. The government is supporting the set-up and development of at least 1 100 SMEs for young people.

**George Sabin Cutaş (S&D).** – (RO) Mr President, I want to start by welcoming the European Commission's proposals for reviewing the Small Business Act for Europe. In practical terms, the European Commission notes in its communication of 23 February 2011 the quite significant progress which has been made since the Small Business Act was adopted in June 2008, but warns about the challenges remaining. Therefore, SMEs still have problems in expanding their activities, improving their innovative capacity, accessing markets and obtaining funding, and face excessive red tape. In most cases, when it comes to transposing the directives into national legislation, the bureaucratic requirements laid down by the European Union are actually exceeded. In order to ensure greater transparency, each Member State should produce tables comparing national bureaucratic measures with those required by EU directives. An assessment also needs to be made of the impact which the new EU legislative proposals could have on SMEs.

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Mr President, more than two years have passed since the adoption of the Small Business Act initiative, and it is therefore right and proper that in February, the Commission issued a notification of the review of this initiative. It seems that our efforts to promote a more favourable legislative environment for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have so far failed to make a sufficient impression in the business sector itself. On the basis of discussions with representatives of organisations

representing SMEs, the Commission has therefore prepared further measures through which we can help to improve their situation.

In my opinion, we must, above all, focus more on implementing the new rules in national legislation. The experience from my own country shows me that national bureaucracies are unbelievably obstructive, and stubbornly resist all changes that would limit their ability to victimise small businesses. I therefore believe we must persevere with the simplification of rules for SMEs patiently and rigorously, and trust that our efforts will somehow bring the expected result.

**Franz Obermayr (NI).** – (DE) Mr President, one particularly positive feature of the Small Business Act is the provision which makes it easier to establish companies in terms of both time and cost. I also welcome the obligation on the public sector to pay invoices within 30 days.

However, some bureaucratic obstacles remain in place, for example, as far as cash flow is concerned. We need to evaluate to what extent the Basel criteria could cause a serious credit crunch for small and medium-sized enterprises. As far as the cross-border area is concerned, we should finally get the European private company under way. From the perspective of the cost-benefit factor, this form of company could, in future, be more important than the European company. I am thinking in this respect of subsidiaries and transfers of registered offices throughout Europe.

Finally, I would just like to say that we need to follow up on the measures to give small and medium-sized businesses access to China and other markets in Asia.

**Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (PPE).** – (HU) Mr President, I agree with the statement in the review that further measures are needed. I believe it is important for the European Union to have a better overview of how the governments of the Member States implement the Small Business Act. The mid-term review is also important because the problems of small and medium-sized enterprises – the difficulties of obtaining funding, the size of administrative burdens, overregulation and market access problems – appear to be becoming permanent.

I think it is a good idea as well to enable small enterprises to register themselves as European private companies, thereby reducing the administrative burdens and, at the same time, realising smart regulation is an extremely timely issue. A high priority in this is spreading the 'only once' principle across Europe and examining whether the regulatory framework of certain policy areas is as it should be and, if it is not, what changes are required.

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** – Mr President, it is a fact that, if every SME created one extra job, unemployment would finish in Europe. That is not actually an impossible task. Instead, however, many of them are shedding jobs, partly due to the recession, but also due to a preponderance of regulation and red tape. This certainly needs to be tackled urgently.

I am pleased to say that our new government yesterday announced measures to help SMEs which were broadly welcomed by the business community today – measures relating to VAT, PRSI, travel tax and internships. At European level, it is essential that we tackle fraud in particular. The black market economy is thriving and needs to be tackled on a European-wide basis. We also need to encourage businesses to avail themselves of the opportunities in e-commerce and establish a European-wide patent. If we do this, we can actually end unemployment and also help the creation of many new businesses.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Small Business Act review is a great opportunity if it is based on an understanding of how precious our small and medium-sized enterprises are. In the economic fabric of Italy, small and medium-sized enterprises represent a major and essential part of the production market.

They are even more important in southern Italy, where I come from, because the whole productive fabric is organised around small and medium-sized enterprises. In the past, entire industrial areas were teeming with small businesses that guaranteed thousands of jobs. Today, many of those businesses have gone bankrupt or closed, not least because of unfair competition, as the students from Barletta who are here today are well aware.

Europe therefore needs to send out a strong, effective signal to guarantee less red tape, lower costs, greater transparency and shorter delays in payments, and to ensure the stability that small and medium-sized enterprises demand and need so much.

**Olli Rehn,** *Member of the Commission.* – Mr President, many thanks to the honourable Members for a very serious and substantive discussion. The Commission is aware that more needs to be done; this has been underlined by several Members, and I fully agree that the well-being of small and medium-sized enterprises is crucial for Europe's recovery, for growth and for employment.

When our SMEs do well, the European economy does well. I can assure you that the implementation of the 'think small first' principle and the actions proposed in the Small Business Act are a foremost priority for the Commission. I want to thank you for your support in this regard.

The Commission is looking forward to working closely with all relevant players, especially the European Parliament, to ensure effective implementation of the Small Business Act at European level and at national level, in the Member States. The European SME Week in October will be a good opportunity to work together to raise awareness of SME policy and the needs of SMEs everywhere in the European Union. We are organising this event together with the Parliament and the Commission.

**Enikő Győri,** *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (HU) Mr President, 'Action here and now!' Mr Bendtsen said, and I strongly agree with his standpoint. We have heard that small and medium-sized enterprises are also major employers in the European Union and, after the economic crisis, examining and reviewing how we may be able to help them recover is especially important. The Hungarian Presidency believes in a work-based economy and society, and regards small and medium-sized enterprises to be among its key partners in this. The economic environment has changed dramatically since 2008; hence, a review really is needed. For our part, too, we welcome the six-party agreement which Mr Bütikofer mentioned, and we are also grateful that several speakers acknowledged the Hungarian Presidency's endeavours and that the Hungarian Presidency is handling this issue truly as a priority.

Allow me to draw your attention to a few specific matters. After listening attentively to the Members, we are pleased to say that there is indeed complete agreement on the principles. The small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of European economic growth and employment. Therefore, improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises is a priority for the Council as well. To this end, and to reflect this, the Competitiveness Council is preparing to adopt the Council's conclusions at its

previously mentioned meeting on 30-31 May 2011, about which the Presidency is submitting a draft to the Council. The main elements of this intend to give answers to the problems identified as the result of the review of the Small Business Act. What are these? These are better access to loans and market access, both in European and global terms, as well as enhancing the conditions of market access and alleviating administrative burdens.

The Council believes that the transposition as soon as possible of the Late Payments Directive – which, as you are aware, has been adopted – is important, and this we note with pleasure. The Council is striving to achieve this and is encouraging Member States to do so because it would be a great weight off the shoulders of small and medium-sized enterprises and would greatly improve their liquidity. It is also a pleasure for me to announce that the Council is close to reaching an agreement on the Commission's aims to reduce the costs of establishing a business. The essence of this is to be able to start up an enterprise in at most three days, for the cost of at most EUR 100, and for licences to be obtainable in under a month.

There are two other specific matters I wish to mention. One is the issue of the European patent. 23 Member States have already joined the enhanced cooperation and the Council is discussing the basic regulation now. We regard this as a major breakthrough from the aspect of EU competitiveness and, in particular, the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises. Mr Creutzmann wished to know about the matter of the European private limited company and asked it to be handled as a priority. We have made significant progress. Now only a very small group of Member States have not joined the consensus. The adoption of this would truly be a turning point for small and medium-sized enterprises, thus we are working on it very hard and also trust that Members will be able to exercise some sort of political pressure and motivate through their own channels in order to generate the necessary majority. We have talked about this to the eminent representatives of the Committee on Legal Affairs as allies on several occasions.

Lastly, allow me to mention the connection with the Europe 2020 strategy. Here, we believe that it is important to convert the objectives stated in the strategy into laws, actions and measures which improve the position of small and medium-sized enterprises, but, of course, the Member States must also do their own homework. The European framework in itself is not enough; thus, for example, we believe that tax systems need to be simplified and to be made friendlier for small and medium-sized enterprises. Several Member States are acting in this spirit. Among them is Hungary, currently holding the Presidency.

**President.** – The debate is closed <sup>(1)</sup>.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 12 May 2011.

#### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Cristian Silviu Buşoi (ALDE),** *in writing.* – (RO) I welcome the Commission communication on the SBA review as it deals, to a large extent, with the problems which SMEs are faced with and for which European and national policies will have to come up with a solution.

The Single Market Act has placed a strong emphasis on supporting SMEs. A large number of the measures proposed, such as the review of the accounting directives, cutting red tape,

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(1) See Minutes

improving access to the capital and public procurement markets, etc. feature in this communication.

One of the major problems facing SMEs is the lack of access to funding, which not only hampers innovation but also the growth of these businesses. Innovative SMEs in particular need broader access to informal funding and to funding based on venture capital holdings as well, which is the main source of funding for new businesses.

SMEs can also be supported by domestic tax incentive measures, especially during the first few months of business.

Finally, I think that the Late Payments Directive has to be implemented fairly for SMEs. Furthermore, with the aim of helping SMEs expand their cross-border activities, the process of recovering cross-border debts will need to be facilitated and the European Private Company Statute adopted without delay.

**Nessa Childers (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The Irish Government's Jobs Initiative has correctly concentrated on the jobs-rich sector of tourism; while the EU's Small Business Act has the potential to complement this in the area of SMEs over the coming years. The purpose of the SBA has been to reduce the administrative burden of doing business and improve access to finance for SMEs. Commissioner Rehn reported this evening that it has succeeded in reducing the cost of doing business by 22% in some areas and will continue to concentrate on this initiative. The principal message of the Small Business Act is to 'think small first' – to concentrate business legislation across the EU on small and medium-sized enterprises – and the EU has committed tonight to continue the focus on this area. To this end, it is important that entrepreneurs in Ireland are fully informed on how to make best use of the Small Business Act.

**Jan Kozłowski (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises play a central and key role in the growth of the European economy; they are the main source of employment and have a fundamental impact on the development of European competitiveness and innovation. We can therefore say in good faith that we will not succeed in achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy unless we support small and medium-sized enterprises and unless we make it easier for them to make full use of the single market. The solutions provided for in the Small Business Act, including fewer bureaucratic obstacles, improved access to sources of funding, and easier access to the market, are particularly significant and, in my opinion, effective measures aimed at putting in place the best possible conditions for the development of SMEs. However, problems arising from the implementation of these solutions at Member State level may pose a threat to their effectiveness. I am therefore also hoping that the Member States which have not yet fully implemented these measures will make every effort to ensure that this process is completed as soon as possible.

**Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) SMEs encounter difficulties in obtaining access to funding and the market. The future MFF must provide measures for overcoming these difficulties. Increased support is needed for financial programmes and instruments which are already operating successfully, but have turned out to be inadequate, such as the competitiveness and innovation programme. Access to financial support must be improved for new innovative businesses in the form of start-up funds. Setting up a European capital risk fund and expanding the permanent risk-sharing products offered by the European Investment Bank through the Risk Sharing Financial Facility will also benefit SMEs. On the issue of SMEs having access to the market, I call on the Commission to

propose a plan for introducing and selling innovative products on the market. Furthermore, a set of measures is required to support SMEs in implementing the new energy efficiency plan.

**Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (EL) I welcome this initiative by Parliament because the broad consent between the political groups to initiate a debate on small and medium-sized enterprises illustrates their crucial role as a driving force for growth in the EU. The recession is making it even more difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises to raise capital. Their access to the markets, to financing and to information urgently needs to be improved. We need to limit the administrative burden by simplifying the regulatory environment. At European level, it is important to combat the black market economy and to give small and medium-sized enterprises incentives. The Commission recently announced 12 actions for 2012 to stimulate the single market, including measures for funding for SMEs and worker mobility, measures which I believe are a move in the right direction. By making integrated use of the single market and exploiting the advantages which it offers, we can strengthen growth and prosperity at European level and give new momentum to enterprise. Measures such as a European patent and the European professional identity card must be strengthened and applied widely in order to strengthen competitiveness and employment.

**Dominique Vlasto (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the lifeblood of our economic activity. Their development, their modernisation, and their competitiveness must be at the heart of our economic strategy. I therefore welcome the review of the Small Business Act proposed by the Commission, which seeks to unblock the growth potential of SMEs. A great deal still needs to be done to simplify the regulatory environment and bureaucratic procedures, which place heavy constraints on the activity and dynamism of our enterprises.

Furthermore, I support the creation of a European Private Company Statute, which would help our SMEs to take full advantage of the single European market by enabling them to carry on their cross-border activities without having to fulfil often onerous and discouraging obligations. I therefore call on the Council to take a swift decision on this initiative.

Finally, we must support innovative SMEs by giving them better access to diversified financing, involving, in particular, a substantial simplification of the use of European appropriations, which still lack flexibility. These appropriations are already available and they must, in my opinion, be mobilised to provide more effective support to the development of the real economy, innovation and employment.

### **13. Developments in the ongoing debt crisis and the EU response (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the Council and Commission statements on developments in the ongoing debt crisis and the EU response.

**András Kármán**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Mr President, I fully understand the significant interest in this Parliament in the actions being undertaken within the Union and beyond to tackle the challenges which some Member States are facing in relation to their public finances.

The global financial crisis has had a significant impact on both revenues and expenditure in all our countries, even if the extent and nature of that impact is not the same in all cases

and the capacity of individual Member States to handle the consequences is also very different.

The first thing I would like to stress is that it is the Member States themselves which are, first and foremost, responsible for ensuring that their public finances are sustainable and on a sound footing. Similarly, it is for each one of them to ensure that their economies are competitive, flexible and resilient. Of course, that does not mean that public finances and economic performance are not also a matter of collective interest.

We are part of a Union, and our economies are interlinked in a number of ways: through the single market and, in many cases, through the sharing of the common currency and the deeper economic integration which that implies. More generally, we all have a commitment of solidarity towards each other, based on a desire to protect and promote the wider European interest. What that means is that we all want to see a stable and strong economy across the EU as a whole and, within it, of the euro area in particular. Where necessary, this has to involve taking steps to ensure the stability of individual Member States.

We have a number of tools at our disposal to do this. We have the coordination mechanism that seeks to ensure that appropriate economic and budgetary policies are pursued by each and every Member State. These are being updated and reinforced, and I am pleased that negotiations between the Council and Parliament are advancing well. We also have access to the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism, which can offer support at EU level to any Member State, whether inside or outside the eurozone.

In addition, and for the eurozone countries specifically, further instruments have been set up and are continuing to be developed. Greece has received a package of coordinated bilateral loans from Member States as well as a loan from the IMF. Ireland has received a package consisting of bilateral loans, a loan from the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and also a loan from the IMF. The support package for Portugal, which will also draw on both European and IMF support, is also being prepared.

Ministers of the eurozone Member States are also finalising the technical details of the European Stability Mechanism, which is due to take effect from 2013 as a permanent financial support mechanism to replace the European Financial Stability Facility. Non-eurozone Member States are also participating in this process.

I would now like to turn briefly to the situation in the three eurozone countries to which I have already referred. I should, however, mention that, from the outset, many of the issues in relation to these Member States are discussed outside the regular Ecofin format, reflecting their specific characteristics as members of the eurozone. The chair of the Euro Group would be better able than I to give you further details on many of these points.

First, Ireland. Following the agreement last December of an overall EUR 85 billion assistance programme for Ireland, the Irish authorities have undertaken a great deal of work to implement the adjustment programme to which the financial support was attached. This programme has been kept under constant review by the new government. The Ecofin Council will review compliance with the programme for the first quarter at its meeting on 17 May, next Tuesday. I cannot say much in advance about that discussion, but the overall assessment is likely to be that Ireland's performance is in line with expectations.



However, some specific challenges remain. Ireland will, in particular, need to stick to the powerful fiscal adjustment as well as ensure that its financial sector is on a stable footing for the future.

Second, Greece. Greece has come a long way since the very difficult situation last year, and its efforts should be commended. It has been faced with a daunting challenge and has demonstrated unwavering commitment and clarity of purpose. The adjustment programme is broadly on track. The latest implementation report, drafted jointly by the Commission, the IMF and the ECB in March, concluded that the programme has made further progress towards its objectives. Some of the reforms needed to deliver the programme's medium-term objectives are being put in place. The report also identifies further areas where reforms are required in order to build the critical mass necessary to ensure fiscal sustainability and economic recovery. The Commission, the ECB and the IMF continue to monitor progress on the implementation of the adjustment programme closely. The next review is scheduled for this month.

The Member States participating in the bilateral loan agreed in March to reduce the interest rate by 1% and to extend the maturity of the loan. This is also a positive development. The technical details of the implementation of this agreement are currently under discussion.

Finally, Portugal. On 6 April, the Portuguese caretaker government announced its intention to seek financial assistance from the European Union. This followed a period of intense pressure from the financial markets. However, Portugal was also going through a period of political uncertainty which, as we know, led to the resignation of the government on 24 March. The Portuguese Parliament had previously rejected the new fiscal conciliation package proposed by the government. Negotiations between the Troika and the Portuguese authorities have now been finalised and the memorandum of understanding on the policy conditions attached to the financial assistance is being agreed.

The financial envelope will be around EUR 78 billion covering a three-year period. In line with recommendations by the Ecofin Ministers at the informal Ecofin in Budapest in April, the programme covers reform in a number of areas, including public finance, labour and product markets and the financial sector. We consider that such measures are essential for growth potential and increased economic stability. Endorsement of the final financial package is also expected at next week's Ecofin Council.

This is only a brief overview of the measures being taken to address the impact of the global financial crisis on the EU and on three Member States in particular. As I said at the outset, the Hungarian Presidency is not directly involved in all of the detailed negotiations, some of which were more specifically within the remit of the Euro Group.

The Presidency is, however, committed to doing its part to assist in ensuring that all necessary measures are in place in order to address the current problems. We consider that this is essential if we are to boost Europe's competitiveness in the longer term and, in so doing, deliver the strong role which Europe as a whole needs.

**Olli Rehn**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, Europe's economic outlook today is quite dualistic. On the one hand, the recovery in the real economy has taken hold and is becoming more solid and self-sustaining. On the other hand, it is uneven and we still face turbulence in the financial markets, especially in the sovereign debt markets.

Thus, the key task of the EU's economic policy now is to contain the sovereign debt crisis and thus protect the ongoing recovery in the real economy of Europe. Now, with the

EU-IMF programme of Portugal waiting for its adoption next Monday in the Eurogroup Ecofin meeting, we are beginning another chapter in this necessary endeavour.

Last week, the Portuguese Government presented an economic reform programme following our productive negotiations with the government, the opposition, civil society, social partners and the academic world. These talks are reflected in the programme. It is a Portuguese programme that deserves the support of the European Union and of the International Monetary Fund. Our joint assistance of EUR 78 billion shows the strong commitment to help Portugal and safeguard the financial stability of Europe.

It is a demanding but fair and necessary programme of adjustment. It will require major efforts on the part of the Portuguese people. Great attention has been paid in its preparation to social fairness and protecting the vulnerable. Europe stands by Portugal for the sake of the country and for the sake of economic stability in Europe.

Considering recent developments, it would be wrong to say that the debt crisis is no longer a burden for the European economy, yet it would be equally wrong to claim that the EU has not responded to the crisis. Consider this: only a year ago, the euro area Member States agreed on a conditional loan package to Greece in order to prevent a meltdown of our financial system. Within this one year, from last May until today, we have created effective stability mechanisms which were at first temporary and which will then become permanent as of 2013. We are implementing a very systematic programme of fiscal consolidation in all Member States, and they are committed to bold structural reforms to boost growth and job creation.

We are, with your active support, addressing the systemic weaknesses in EU economic governance in order to prepare for a profound change in the policy making landscape of the European Union. We are, again with your support, addressing the shortcomings of our integrated financial market by toughening financial regulation and implementing the new supervisory architecture.

At the present juncture, financial stability is being safeguarded by the EU-IMF stability mechanisms and especially by the actions that the Member States – especially the vulnerable Member States – are themselves taking. Still some people argue that the crisis management strategy, especially with regard to Greece, is failing. I disagree with this view. The first – and the primary – objective of our strategy has been to prevent another cardiac arrest of the kind that followed the failure of Lehman Brothers in September 2008 and subsequently led to the financial crisis and economic recession worldwide. We have done that and thus protected the ongoing recovery in the real economy in Europe.

Secondly, we have been able largely to contain the distress in the sovereign debt markets to the three countries in the programme. As seen in the bond spreads, Spain is decoupling from these countries thanks to its determined action on the fiscal, financial and structural fronts.

Thirdly, the programmes in both Greece and Ireland are still in the relatively early stages. The Greek programme has been running for one year and its counterpart in Ireland for about five months of the three years of the programme. Both countries are pursuing very ambitious programmes of fiscal consolidation, structural reform and financial repair. Our review mission is currently in Athens with the ECB and the IMF to assess the implementation of the programme and to prepare an updated analysis of the debt sustainability of Greece.

The work will be concluded in the coming weeks, which will facilitate well-informed decisions.

In any event, while the fiscal effort of the past year is unprecedented – over 7% of GDP, or EUR 20 billion – it is clear that Greece has to seriously reinforce the implementation of the economic reforms, achieve a breakthrough in the privatisation programme, and then ensure its full implementation.

It is absolutely necessary and urgent that the domestic disputes are put aside and cross-party support achieved for the recovery of Greece. It is an illusion to think that there were any real alternatives to the economic reform programme. This is, therefore, a real test of the credibility of the Greek political forces, both government and opposition, and ultimately, of the will of the Greek people.

The present stage of the crisis is a closely intertwined combination of sovereign debt crisis and banking sector fragilities. We cannot solve one without solving the other; we must resolve both in parallel. Therefore, the banking sector repair must be completed to safeguard the provision of credit to the real economy, to enterprises, households, individual citizens. A new round of bank stress tests is being conducted. The results will guide the necessary restructuring and recapitalisation of the banking sector. Ahead of the publication of the results, the Member States will need to release their strategies for possible restructuring or recapitalisation of their vulnerable institutions. Such plans should be ready as soon as possible and should include a detailed timeline.

In conclusion, the fundamental reforms of financial regulation and economic governance in the European Union are profoundly changing the economic and financial architecture of Europe. In the near future, a whole new set of rules will provide the basis for stable, sustainable growth and job creation.

In the meantime, we must continue our work to safeguard financial stability and thus protect economic recovery in Europe, which is the key for sustainable growth and improving employment. This continues to call for very difficult decisions at European and national levels. I trust we all have the wisdom and courage to take such decisions.

### IN THE CHAIR: STAVROS LAMBRINIDIS

*Vice-President*

**Corien Wortmann-Kool**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (NL) Mr President, I would like to thank the minister, Mr Kármán, and Commissioner Rehn for their explanation, given what we have seen over recent weeks. If confidence in the market is weak, every trace of doubt has direct consequences for those countries that already find themselves in difficult circumstances and thus, for the euro as a whole. Unfortunately, that became apparent last weekend and then it was denied in the press that any secret meeting was taking place, which then has a double whammy effect on the already fragile confidence. I hope that the parties in question learn very quickly from this.

Mr President, easy choices and pain-free solutions have been out of the question for quite some time. The support measures for Greece, Ireland and Portugal need to be robust in order to restore financial and economic stability. The package must pave the way for sustainable public finances and economic growth. I therefore want to call on the Council and the Commission to look deeper than the funding needs of these countries over the coming year in order to avoid us facing the same problems in a year's time.

Mr President, it is important that decisions be taken in June on an ambitious package of legislation aimed at strengthening economic governance in Europe in order to win back the confidence of the markets and also in order to ensure growth and jobs on behalf of all our citizens and to increase the cohesion of our economies. I therefore want to call on the Council to give its backing to Parliament's ambition to provide greater accountability and more public debate in this House, greater involvement of the national parliaments, and to put an end to horse-trading in the Council when the Commission's view is not to its liking. This package must include a strong monetary arm alongside a strong economic arm, including the Europe 2020 strategy to secure the tenability of our social market economy for all 27 Member States. I am thus calling on you to show resolve in the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Ecofin) next week.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Barry Madlener (NI).** – (NL) Mr President, I have a question for Mrs Wortmann-Kool. How can it be that you, as a Dutch parliamentarian, do not even mention the scandal that the Dutch Finance Minister was not invited to the summit last week? How can it be that you, as a Dutch parliamentarian, do not even mention the fact that the Netherlands is paying so much, and how can it be that you completely betray the interests of Dutch taxpayers by pouring billions' worth of taxpayers' money into a bottomless pit?

**Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE).** – (NL) Mr President, I have clearly stated what is necessary to restore confidence. Mr Madlener's simplistic solutions would worsen – rather than improve – the position not only of Dutch citizens, but also of the citizens of all our Member States. I find it quite worrying that Mr Madlener still fails to grasp that fact.

**Anni Podimata,** *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (EL) Mr President, Commissioner, given that it will shortly be one year since the Greek reform programme was agreed, and the fact that the programme for Portugal was announced just yesterday, I think that it is important for us to evaluate where we stand today, what has been done correctly, and where we made mistakes and missed the mark. One year on, therefore, in addition to Greece, another two countries in the euro area, Ireland and Portugal, have taken recourse to the support mechanism, as they are unable to secure the necessary financing on the markets. The peculiarities and different problems of each country are reflected, without doubt, in the different reform programmes which, nonetheless, are underpinned by a basic philosophy: the absolute emphasis on rapid budgetary reform.

However, in the case of Greece, Commissioner, despite what has been achieved, as you have repeatedly emphasised, with the 7-point reduction in the primary deficit and a 5% reduction in the overall deficit, the fact that the recession was deeper than forecast in 2010 has resulted in less revenue for the State. So this is a first data point for evaluation, provided that we agree that the target of the programmes is to overcome the budgetary and economic crisis and not to create a culture of punishment leading to euro-scepticism in Europe. The second data point for evaluation is that, despite the efforts being made, the markets are not responding. However, the decisions by the European Union have not only failed to convince the markets; in some cases, they have exacerbated the situation, such as the famous Deauville decision on the involvement of private individuals in the permanent support mechanism to be created in 2013. The conclusion is that any success the budgetary reform programmes may have risks being wiped out by the fear which the markets and rating agencies are still stirring up, even today. We have reached the point over the past few days, with scenarios about restructuring and even bankruptcy and/or the exit of a

country from the euro area still doing the rounds, that we are debating things which we would have considered inconceivable until just recently.

Commissioner, knowing your attachment to Europe, I believe that you will agree with me that the solutions we are debating today, the way in which we shall manage this crisis, will no doubt be a major chapter in European history. Today, we are creating the conditions in which the epilogue will be written. I believe and hope that we all feel that these are historic times and that the epilogue will not be written in black colours for the future of the European Union and EMU, but will mark a brave and decisive step which will make Europe more cohesive, more united and even stronger.

**Carl Haglund**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (SV) Mr President, my fellow Member just said that a year is a good time to look back over and I can bring news from Finland where it will hopefully be announced this evening that the Finnish Parliament will support the financial rescue package for Portugal. This will hopefully be the case, but we should not start applauding yet. We can hope that it will be the case, and my party certainly supports this move.

I will briefly look at why we in Finland are hesitating right now with regard to whether or not we should support Portugal. One of the reasons is – and I turn here to the Council, and even though I know that the Hungarian Presidency is perhaps not the one to blame, you will have to be the messenger – that difficult decisions are constantly being taken in the form of small partial decisions because we cannot manage to resolve this problem all in one go. It is perhaps not so easy to do this either, and I understand that there is no simple and absolute solution, but the fact that we are constantly forced to take small and difficult partial decisions means that the political patience and the political will in Finland's Parliament, for example, is beginning to wear thin. Unfortunately, this seems to be the case in other national parliaments, too. This is worrying in view of the fact that we probably have several difficult decisions ahead of us, including with regard to the situation in Greece, and there is a risk that at some stage, we will find ourselves up against a wall. Therefore, the Council probably needs to consider a more ambitious strategy than this partial strategy that you are currently applying. If you do not do so, we will not get ourselves out of this situation. You need a new strategy because the current strategy is not working. Thank you.

**Vicky Ford**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, the sovereign debt crisis will not be solved until the banks are sorted out, and you cannot sort out the banks if regulators' stress tests refuse to admit that the sovereign debt crisis exists. There is also a public confidence crisis. Some countries bailed out their own banks at huge cost to the taxpayers, without any handouts from the EU. I understand why the same public is now asking why they should fund bail-outs in other countries.

Last week's proposals for reform in Portugal had some positive recommendations for improving competitiveness, but the situation in Greece seems dire. Eurozone leaders tell us that there is no Greek debt restructuring, but since when is a delay of a repayment date not a restructuring?

If public lenders extend their maturities, that is not just a shuffling of deckchairs on the *Titanic*: it is taking the public lenders below decks to sink in the ship while the private loan holders are helped away to the lifeboats.

**Sven Giegold**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Mr Rehn, first of all, I would like to say that the situation is indeed getting worse, as you have described. In the

euro area, the divide between the countries which are showing signs of recovery and those which are in a more precarious position is widening. Also, the cost of supporting the weaker countries is constantly rising.

Given this situation, I have some questions for you in your role as Commissioner responsible for economic and monetary affairs. Liabilities between the central banks amounting to more than EUR 400 billion have accumulated in the TARGET2 accounts of the European Central Bank system. This is due to the fact that the banks are still not being adequately financed by the capital market. What is your view of these unplanned liabilities within the euro system?

The major problem which is preventing us from making progress with debt restructuring is that the banking system, as Mrs Ford has also said, has not been properly reformed. The proposal for a European restructuring system has been delayed. When will the Commission submit this proposal? As Commissioner responsible for economic and monetary affairs, what is your view of this delay? What are you doing to speed things up?

It has also become clear, as we in the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance have been predicting for a long time, that the measures put in place to support Greece and Portugal will not take effect until the macro-economic conditions in the euro area improve. These countries are still subject to a growing burden of interest. The export and outflow of capital in some of these countries is increasing. There is still a lack of demand among some of the European partners of these countries and among the strong countries in the euro area in particular. Resource and food prices are also rising, at least if you disregard the most recent ups and downs.

In addition to the bail-out of these countries, and in addition to the financial aid, I would like to know which measures are being taken to relieve the burden of taxes, external demand and interest on these countries from a macro-economic perspective. How is this being achieved? I would therefore like to encourage you to put forward a strong package which will improve the macro-economic conditions in these countries in the euro area.

Finally, the measures, which, in my view, run contrary to the spirit of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, have hit the weakest countries, including Greece, Portugal and Spain, while the stronger, wealthier countries have not yet taken on their share of the burden. Which measures will you be taking to encourage the wealthy countries to contribute to the costs of this crisis?

**Ilda Figueiredo**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (PT) Mr President, I should like to express my deep indignation here and give voice to the protests being heard in Portugal against the policies that have led us to the crisis we are experiencing, in particular, the veritable submission and aggression pact imposed on the Portuguese people by what are known as the 'troika': the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Commission. These bodies have been charged with implementing a shameful act of outside intervention that does not even respect the rights and exclusive competences of the Portuguese Parliament, or take into account that we are in the run-up to parliamentary elections.

These are antisocial, regressive policies that abandon development and condemn the Portuguese workers and people to unemployment, poverty, underdevelopment and extreme dependence, turning Portugal into a mere protectorate or colony of the powers of the

European Union. All this is happening, moreover, when it is already known that such measures do not solve the problem, as demonstrated by the Greek example.

Even if the real responsibilities of EU policy – and we are talking about the irrational criteria of the Stability and Growth Pact, of the policy of the strong euro, and of the ECB guidelines and statutes, which do not respect the particularities of the weaker economies – in relation to the current situation are covered up, nothing justifies applying a package to Portugal that punishes the Portuguese people in return for a loan which needs to be paid back at interest rates higher than those normally charged by the ECB. Contrary to all the proclamations of solidarity at election propaganda time, what we have is a policy of social regression and of prolonged economic recession.

They are intending to do all of this just to favour the international banks, along with a handful of big companies and financial institutions in Portugal, and a few of their lackeys. That is why we are saying here that the euro area itself is under threat; that the future of the European Union could be its implosion, and that a change of policy is needed ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**President.** – Mrs Figueiredo, I am afraid I have cut off your microphone. I apologise for this but you went quite over time. You do have a chance, however, for another 30 seconds if you agree to answer a blue card question by Mr van Dalen.

**Peter van Dalen (ECR).** – (NL) Mr President, I wanted to ask Mrs Figueiredo, if what your country has agreed is as bad as all that, and if it is so bad to find yourselves under a real regime whereby you even have to restructure your whole economy, why not leave the euro area? The euro is a strong currency and there have to be prerequisites for that. If that troubles you, you should just leave!

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Mr President, what is unacceptable is that a question like this can be asked when Europe's leaders were unable to admit in time that their policies were responsible for exacerbating the situation of Portugal, which, as is well-known, had a fragile economy and had to be subjected to the policy of the strong euro, which serves the interests of Germany, France and others, but does not serve the interests of Portugal or of other countries with weaker economies.

That is why the Portuguese people are fighting this policy, as are the Greek people and workers across Europe. What we need is another policy here in Europe too.

**Godfrey Bloom,** *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – Mr President, I am a baby boomer. I was born just after the war. From that time, we have probably had the longest period of peace and prosperity globally. I have put a little bit of modest money away so that I can hand something down to my family when I pass on – largely because I have never spent more money than I have earned. I have been prudent and I have worked moderately hard.

It always seems to me to come as a complete surprise to politicians how countries get in debt. Let me explain, because I do not think you really understand. It is because politicians consistently spend more money than they raise in taxation – more money than they can possibly raise in taxation –, most of which, in point of fact, they actually waste. The reason we are talking about countries which are broke – and they are broke – is because their ridiculous, ineffective, ignorant politicians consistently spend more money than they can raise. Then they borrow, and they borrow, and – worse – they then print money, because politicians and their central banks have a machine which prints money. If you do that as

a private citizen, it is a criminal offence. You would go to prison for that, yet politicians and their central banks do it all the time.

Let me explain to you that these countries are broke. They are broke because of their own stupid leadership and politicians. It is immoral – immoral! – to ask ordinary taxpayers of any country to pick up the tab for failed politicians and failed banks. They have defaulted. They are broke. For God's sake, let us all admit it.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Robert Goebbels (S&D).** – (FR) Mr President, I would like to know if Mr Bloom is aware that Spain is less indebted than the United Kingdom, that Ireland was well below 60% before the banking crisis, and that Ireland, by getting into debt to save its banks, essentially saved the money of the British banks.

**Godfrey Bloom (EFD).** – Absolutely right. I was not suggesting my politicians were any less stupid than anybody else. It is an absolute disgrace, and there was not even a debate in our national parliament on actually rescuing these bust banks. If you want to invest in bust banks, do so with your own money, not money from my old age pensioners in Yorkshire on GBP 98 a week, you scoundrels!

**Marine Le Pen (NI).** – (FR) Mr President, on 9 May 2010, the EU-ECB-IMF troika triumphantly announced that it had saved Greece from total bankruptcy by lending it EUR 110 billion. A year later, Greece plunged into recession. Public debt soared to 150% of GDP and two-year interest rates have reached more than 25% per annum.

If, today, Greece is out of breath, it is because the method used to save it is not the right one. While the Greek economy now needs a weak currency to get out of the depression, the troika is going to impose a new, even more drastic, fiscal austerity package.

This remedy will be no more effective tomorrow than it was yesterday. The currently punitive interest rates to which Greece is subject are, in fact, preventing its private economy from undertaking any investments, whether it be in the production process or in real estate. Greece is becoming a third-world country, ruining all hopes of reimbursement.

The new draft rescue package of EUR 60 billion envisaged last Friday demonstrates that the EUR 110 billion loan already granted a year ago must be considered a gift. For how long and to what extent will European taxpayers be pouring money into the Danaides' cistern? Pursuing this path is suicidal and will lead to the fragmentation of Europe.

There are two possible solutions: Greek debt restructuring accompanied by the restructuring of the public debt of failing States leading, ultimately, to the collapse of our banking system, or a concerted, rational and pragmatic exit from the euro area enabling Greece to catch its breath.

Europe is at a crossroads. Is saving the euro worth the sacrifice being made by the people of Europe?

**Diogo Feio (PPE).** – (PT) Mr President, the sovereign debt crisis requires a European response: a response that looks at each specific situation, that defends the euro to make it strong, and that defends the Member States. That is why the series of proposals on economic governance currently being debated in the European Parliament are particularly important.



Parliament has been helping to ensure that positive steps towards intelligent debt management are taken. It has been advocating a reasonable transition period; arguing that the necessary reduction in debt should not be made year on year but using a three-year average; advocating the need for budgetary discipline; arguing for the need for growth and increased transparency in European policy through debates in the European Parliament; and advocating the necessary solidarity. This solidarity is what has just happened with Portugal.

I should like to say something to you as a Portuguese. Portugal has a 900-year history. Portugal is capable. Portugal is capable of putting its public accounts in order with discipline. Portugal is capable of reforming its banking system; it is capable of reforming its labour market; it is capable of making its tax system more competitive; and it is capable of using innovative measures to reform its health and justice systems. Portugal is capable of having a civil service that is more efficient and controlled. Portugal is capable of having a liberalised economy that is successful and more competitive.

Fundamentally, however, Portugal is capable of participating in the European project; of participating and of helping to resolve whatever challenges there will be in the future. For this very reason, we are very happy in the Union and want to help it become progressively stronger.

**Robert Goebbels (S&D).** – (FR) Mr President, in the face of crazy rumours and speculative attacks against a number of Member States, let me remind you of a few facts.

The euro is a strong currency. In 10 years, the euro has established itself as the second most widely used currency in the world. Thirty per cent of international monetary reserves are denominated in euro. More than a third of international private borrowing is carried out in euro. The euro has a purchasing power 40% higher than that of the dollar, which means that euro area Member States pay less for their raw materials, particularly oil.

The euro is here for the long haul in all euro area Member States. With all due respect to Mrs Le Pen, leaving the euro is simply not an option. Any Member State leaving the euro – which is what Mrs Le Pen wants for France – would see its new currency dramatically devalued.

In the wake of the crisis in Iceland, the value of the Icelandic currency has been halved. This 50% devaluation of the Icelandic currency has caused the rate of inflation in Iceland to leap from 5% to 14%. The only way to restore calm in the markets is to allow Greece, Ireland, Portugal and others to restructure their debt through the issue of Eurobonds guaranteed by the Union at reasonable rates. I am talking here about the Tremonti-Juncker initiative.

In fact, Eurobonds already exist. The European Investment Bank (EIB) borrows under the guarantee of the 27 Member States. Last year, the EIB raised EUR 80 billion at average rates of between 3% and 3.5%. It is rates like those that would enable Member States under pressure to overcome the crisis and to return to the path of financial stability.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Roger Helmer (ECR).** – Mr President, the previous speaker said that if Greece were to leave the eurozone, its currency would collapse, but in that case, it would default. However, we know perfectly well that it is going to default anyway, so it has a choice of defaulting within the euro which merely kicks the problem down the road and it will return to bite

us, or it can default outside the euro, in which case it can solve its problem. So his solution will not work.

**Robert Goebbels (S&D).** – (FR) Mr President, I did not get a question but a circular argument from Mr Helmer, and Mr Helmer is simply wrong.

Once again, any Member State leaving the euro would see its new currency dramatically devalued. I repeat my example of Iceland, which is not in the euro but which has been through all that.

**Olle Schmidt (ALDE).** – (SV) Mr President, Mr Rehn, the work you are doing is absolutely excellent. During this year, you have come up with a series of different proposals that have improved the situation, and that is something that we should all acknowledge.

I am surprised listening to this debate. I thought this was a House for Europe, not a House for 27 different Member States. There is a spirit of nationalism here that is frightening and that will not help to solve our problems. It is a question of solidarity.

*(The speaker speaks in English)*

*(Speaking to Mr Helmer, who had expressed his disagreement)* You may laugh, but you are wrong. You are definitely wrong, Mr Helmer, because it is about solidarity. Europe is about solidarity and we all are linked together: even the pound sterling reflects on the euro. I am astonished.

*(SV)* In Sweden, we have experienced what it means to be in serious debt. We were a country in debt, people were in debt, but we succeeded in dealing with it. Why should our friends in Greece, Portugal and Ireland not manage to deal with it? Are we special up in the Nordic countries? Of course we are not. However, right now, these countries need our help and assistance. If we do not give them this help and assistance, it will also be our downfall.

*(The speaker speaks in English)*

Europe is a common destiny for us all, and we have to realise that – even you, Mr Helmer. You are a part of Europe and you can do more.

*(Interjection from Mr Helmer: 'Absolutely no!')*

**Lajos Bokros (ECR).** – Mr President, currently we are celebrating the first anniversary of the Greek bail-out, but there is nothing to celebrate. One year later, we are back at square one. Instead of lengthening the pain and piling even more burdens on the Greek economy, it would be far better to accept the inevitable and the judgment of the markets.

There is no way to avoid default. An orderly default has at least five advantages. It would share the loss more fairly between Greek taxpayers and external creditors; stop the replacement of private debt by an ever-growing proportion of official debt coming from other countries; offer Greece more growth opportunities by alleviating debt service; make it much easier for Mrs Merkel to 'sell' the default to the Bundestag, because it would mean supporting German banks rather than Greece; and, finally, isolate the debt crisis from the competitiveness crisis and save the eurozone from contagion.

Do it! Do not throw good money after bad.

**Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Mr President, Mr Bokros, since you have raised the issue, I am going to continue. I believe, Mr Rehn, that we should listen to what is being

said. I believe that, when the figures are placed alongside each other, the only conclusion is that debt restructuring in Greece, and probably in Ireland, is inevitable. I think that everyone realises that. It seems so obvious that one might well ask how it is possible that the European Central Bank, the Commission and the Council cannot see it. Unless you refuse to see it?

In other words, the first option is that you decide, for ideological reasons, to say that default is out of the question, in which case that would be to deny reality. On the other hand, you could perhaps say that it would be better to play for time, in which case I would really appeal to you because the more that time goes by, the more painful and the more costly restructuring will be. It will, in particular, be more costly for taxpayers because the more that time goes by, the more of a burden the Greek public debt will become on public or quasi-public entities – I am thinking of the European Central Bank, I am thinking of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) – and it is increasingly the taxpayer who is going to be asked to pay up.

You know, Mr Rehn, there has been a great deal of talk about stress tests and resistance tests in recent days. They are mentioned in relation to nuclear power stations; they are mentioned in relation to banks. Yet those whose resistance is being severely tested every day are our citizens, especially the most disadvantaged among them, who perhaps bear a disproportionately high share of the burden of the response to this crisis.

Clearly, one cannot therefore say that the crisis is simply the responsibility of the banks, of enterprises, or of politicians, as some would simplistically have us believe. I believe that this is a collective responsibility and that it would therefore be healthy if everyone contributed their fair share towards tackling the crisis.

I would like to end by stressing that, even though I might often disagree with you, we should honour the work you have been doing lately. I am sure that your nights are not very long and I promise that, on the day you return to a more decent life, I will gladly invite you to dinner.

**Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) Mr President, Commissioner, I would have expected you to reply with honesty that the austerity programme, the memorandum being applied with religious devotion in Greece, has been a total failure. The deficit is bigger than forecast, the debt has increased, unemployment has increased, there is even greater austerity and, in the midst of this, you, Commissioner, see in these facts the recovery of the economy and the avoidance of a heart attack, while your representative sees targets and successes. At the same time, the aim is to apply this recipe to Ireland and Portugal. These recipes have been a total failure.

At the same time, recent data in Europe illustrate that the German economy is growing and that its export figures are higher than at any time since the 1950s. I think that this combination of facts, this inequality and the disparities which are appearing and operating within the European Union are the problem and one of the causes of the problem. This being so, what are you waiting for in order to change policy? Tell us what you talk about at your secret meetings, because a lot of rumours are flying around. Will you eventually change tack in order to address the problems?

**Barry Madlener (NI).** – (NL) Mr President, first of all, I have a question for Commissioner Rehn. How can it be, Mr Rehn, that the Eurogroup, chaired by Mr Juncker, could hold a summit without the Dutch Finance Minister present? How can that be? It is an outright

scandal that the Netherlands, as one of the biggest contributors to all the rescue packages, was not even invited to the meeting I refer to. Mr Rehn, could you give me an assurance at this point that you will ensure that this never happens again?

I have to tell the House that Greece will either have to leave the euro or restructure its debts. That is an inevitable reality – the question is ‘when?’ I believe, and I fear that that will happen when all the guarantees and all the money has been paid out to Greece. This is the swindle of the century! Mr Rehn, can you give me a guarantee now that the scenario whereby Greece first refinances its debts to the maximum degree with Dutch taxpayers’ money and then leaves the euro and cancels its debts is a scenario that will not occur? We cannot trust these Greeks, the Greek politicians who, together with the European Commission, swindled their way into the euro with inaccurate figures and who now seem to be primarily occupied with increasing their own salaries. These are politicians that we can never trust, so, Mr Rehn, how are you going to guarantee that Dutch taxpayers are not going to be terribly swindled once again?

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Robert Goebbels (S&D).** – (FR) Mr President, for the last time, is Mr Madlener aware, when he argues against European solidarity and against Greece, that, after Germany, the Netherlands is the second largest beneficiary of the European internal market and that practically one out of every two jobs in the Netherlands is linked to activities relating to the export of goods and services to the European Union?

Is he not therefore arguing against jobs in the Netherlands?

**Barry Madlener (NI).** – (NL) Mr President, Mr Goebbels, you must know that the Netherlands has hard work and keeping on top of its finances to thank for its strong position. Did you know that the Netherlands has been the biggest net contributor to the European Union for years now and that the Greeks have been the biggest recipients of Dutch money for years? What has been the outcome of that? The outcome was crisis in Greece! This is mismanagement of Dutch taxpayers’ money. It is a disgrace that you have not grasped that fact.

**Danuta Maria Hübner (PPE).** – Mr President, our duty is to look for the best solutions to cope with the crisis, to which end the learning process is of great value. My feeling is that we have learned why things went wrong and how we got ourselves into the difficult situation we are in today, but my feeling is also that now we are less open to drawing lessons from the evolving reality. In this context, I would like to raise two issues.

First, we can see great similarities between Member States with regard to public debts and deficit ratios, while, at the same time, for the same Member States, there are substantial differences between the risk premiums paid on their sovereign debt. In my view, this is clear proof that factors other than sovereign debt enter into the picture and influence markets. Among other things, it is foreign debt or excessive external imbalances on which markets have focused, and this clearly means that in responding to the situation, we must go beyond fiscal adjustment.

The second issue is related to the fact that those economies that are the most strongly affected by the crisis have to cope with a combination of high risk premiums and severe austerity measures. This double challenge makes achieving debt sustainability practically impossible. If we reject debt restructuring, then we need a better balance between

punishment and assistance and the design of response packages which would make it possible to avoid pushing countries further into a debt trap.

**Edite Estrela (S&D).** – (PT) Mr President, Europe is mired in an unprecedented crisis that could threaten the euro area and the European project. It is a crisis of the euro area, of which Greece, Ireland and Portugal are the first victims. The attacks on these countries' sovereign debt aim to weaken the single currency. Those thinking that this is a problem for the Greeks, the Irish and the Portuguese are fooling themselves: it is not. If there is not a robust response from the European Union that calms the markets, this pressure will spread to other Member States.

Portugal does not have a problem regarding the sustainability of its public accounts or the insolvency of its national banks. Portugal needs to continue with the structural reforms already started, to increase productivity, and to promote economic growth. As in the past, the Portuguese people will overcome this challenge, too, and make the necessary sacrifices, but not more than the necessary sacrifices.

We cannot understand why the European Union is going to charge Portugal higher interest rates than the International Monetary Fund. Portugal will pay the European Union around EUR 3 billion in interest per year. There is no need for the Mr Blooms and Mr Madleners in this Chamber, and outside it, to worry: the taxpayer will not suffer. What is at issue is a loan, not a gift. This is a loan that will be paid back in full, and at interest rates similar to the market rates Portugal was paying around a month ago.

In a globalised world, no country can solve all its problems on its own. The financial crisis has already shown that something that happens on the other side of the world can hit all of us at home with devastating force. That is why we need more and better Europe: a more united and ambitious Europe. We are all in the same boat: if the boat sinks, no one will be saved.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D).** – (FI) Mr President, I have good news for the Portuguese. According to information I have just received, an agreement has been reached in Finland and the Commission's proposal concerning loans to Portugal has been accepted, so Finland is no longer an obstacle.

As it is also my role to ask questions, I would like to ask my colleague the following: do you believe that the belt-tightening taking place in Portugal will allow you to achieve the kind of economic growth that will enable the loans to be repaid?

**Edite Estrela (S&D).** – (PT) Mr President, I should like to thank the Finnish people and the Finnish Parliament for making that decision, which is very much in the spirit of community and solidarity that prevailed at the founding of the European Community.

Regarding your question, I was saying to you that these austerity measures will be observed by the Portuguese people and that, although it is a tough, onerous package, we will do everything to increase economic growth, create more employment and escape these difficulties.

**Charles Goerens (ALDE).** – (FR) Mr President, the debt problem is of a magnitude that far exceeds the purely budgetary dimension. In fact, it is policy as a whole that is being

affected by the public debt crisis – the budgetary, economic, social, European, and national dimensions. First and foremost, however, we have a political crisis on our hands.

In Finland, a party for which dissociating itself from Portugal has become a hobbyhorse illustrates the extent to which the debt problem is worrying the public. However, it should be recalled that the rhetoric of the party of the true Finns, which advocated against coming to the rescue of Portugal, could not be more similar to that used by Germany's main political leaders a year ago shortly before aid was granted to Greece.

The populist slogans contributing to significant electoral success, today in Finland, tomorrow in a different country, are, in fact, simply repeating the words previously articulated by very respectable political leaders.

The political centre is where the ideas tearing economic and monetary union apart are generated.

I firmly believe that the difficulties can only be surmounted if senior politicians understand that their role is, first and foremost, to calm tensions rather than fan the flames.

**Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) Mr President, it is a rotten lie that the economic crisis is a crisis caused by debt. It is a crisis caused by the over-accumulation of capital, a crisis of the capitalist system which illustrates that it is an out-dated system that has been overtaken by events. The capitalist crisis in Greece, Ireland and Portugal is getting worse and will continue. The debt and deficit in these countries are not national peculiarities; they are the effect, not the cause. They stem from an extensive reliance on big business: subsidies and tax relief for the monopolies, NATO spending, the destruction of industrial production and the mining, manufacturing, textile and ship-building and repair industries, the severe undermining of agricultural production and the billions of euro for large business groups.

The basic reason for this attack by the European Union, the bourgeois governments and capital on the income and rights of the working classes, the main weapon in which is in the agreement on the euro and the European stability – for which read controlled bankruptcy – mechanism, goes beyond capitalist management of the crisis and the debt. The strategic objective of the European Union, of the bourgeois governments and of capital is not only to shift the burden of the crisis on to the workers, but to pare the workforce down to a minimum, in order to safeguard the profit margins of the monopoly groups.

Today's awe-inspiring general strike in Greece will send a strong fighting message ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Peter van Dalen (ECR).** – (NL) Mr President, you have my sincere thanks for your helpfulness and your tolerance. I have a question for Mr Toussas. He knows precisely how to explain all the things that are wrong, what is not right in this system, and all the things that are utterly wrong in what is happening in Europe and the Member States. My question is, what is the alternative? Do you want a return to the Communist utopia, as in North Korea, in Cuba and other dictatorships? Is that the solution that we need to turn back to? Is that what you want?

**Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) I understand that you are unable to present proposals to resolve the acute problems faced by the workers both in your country and in

the other 26 Member States of the European Union. May I inform you that, before Greece acceded to the European Union, the Greek Communist Party voiced its opposition and informed the Greek people of the consequences. Thirty years after the accession of Greece to the European Union or, if you like, even since 1957, when it was founded and converted from the European Coal and Steel Community to the EEC, what we have seen is this: profits for capital, hardships for the workers. The people will fight to resolve this contradiction.

**Andrew Henry William Brons (NI).** – Mr President, the eurozone imposes a single currency value and standardised interest rates on 17 different economies. If the failing countries had remained outside the eurozone, their currencies would have fallen in value, leading to export-led expansions facilitated by low interest rates that would be set by their central banks. The excessive currency value, and now rising interest rates, have aggravated stagnation, which has brought about falling tax revenues, cuts in services and rising government debts. It would be in their interest to leave the zone, but the fall in the value of their currencies would then increase their debt burden.

Britain, being outside the eurozone, should be unaffected by these debts, but our previous government underwrote GBP 10 billion worth of debts under the exceptional occurrences clause of the Lisbon Treaty and the present government will continue to supply loans directly and indirectly. Greece and Ireland will eventually default on their debts, and we will all be shown to have thrown good money after bad.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE).** – (PT) Mr President, I should like to start by saying that I, naturally, believe that the agreement reached for Portugal is a balanced one. It is a very tough agreement for the people, but it essentially emphasises structural reforms to increase growth and competitiveness. I think that is very positive.

I am not taking the same attitude as others here who believe that countries like Greece, Ireland and Portugal did everything right: that they made no mistakes and did not go too far; that they did everything right and it was only the international crisis that caused problems. No, our governments made mistakes and had the wrong policies, but that does not mean there is not now an opportunity, in the context of the Union, to get back on track and head in the right direction again.

It is therefore important to remember that it is, in fact, necessary to say to those bodies of public opinion against supporting countries in difficulties that they are not giving money to those countries: they are lending money to those countries. Moreover, they are lending it at very high interest rates, so they are actually doing a deal that is positive for their budgets and their people. However, I would also say here that it is perhaps time to have a general European response by accepting Eurobonds and accepting the possibility of selling them on the primary market, to respond to the international markets.

Perhaps it is time for the Commission itself, the European Financial Stability Facility and the International Monetary Fund to review the interest rates so that they can make it possible for there to be sustained growth in these countries that are currently in difficulties, by lowering these rates.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE).** – Mr President, firstly, I would like to say to that I feel ashamed by the amount of nationalism and short-sightedness which has been expressed in this debate. Mr Rangel, I have a question for you. Do you feel that the interest rate which you

will have to pay under the future programme should be lowered? Would lowering these interest rates help your country?

**Paulo Rangel (PPE).** – (PT) Mr President, I believe that the rate should be lower not just for Portugal, but also for Ireland and Greece. I think that it will be extremely difficult to achieve the goals without lower interest rates, as we are seeing at the moment in the Greek case, in fact. However, whatever the case, I think that there is a possibility and a door open here.

If Portugal is able to comply rigorously with the results of the agreement in the first few months, I think that it will be in a position to go to the European Financial Stability Facility and the International Monetary Fund and ask for a review of the rates within six to nine months. I think that would be good news for the Portuguese people and I think it would be good news for the European Union.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE).** – Mr President, just to add an Irish voice to this debate: I, too, share the disillusionment with the extent of nationalism across this floor. I am disappointed that the Chamber is half empty for what is the most important debate for Europe in this session.

On interest rates: let us be very clear that countries should not be charged penal interest rates. They do not help them to recover, and they do not help debt sustainability. In my last 30 seconds, could I ask the Commission to address the issue of debt sustainability, for Ireland and our colleagues who are in difficulty?

Could I also ask a question about the political capacity of the European Union? On Monday in our Parliament in Dublin, I spoke about a sundering of solidarity in the European Union. I do not say that with any delight. I have said it privately to the Commissioner. It is a real and serious problem. I rue the day when we might be ruled by the extreme right or the extreme left. For God's sake, let the centre unite.

**Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D).** – (FI) Mr President, this debate has been useful. This is a very serious situation for those countries in crisis, but it is just as serious for Germany, Austria and Finland, because taxpayers in these countries have suffered budget cuts and been through serious crises.

The questions have been justified, and that is why it is very important that the Portuguese issue should be made a model example of how a crisis can be held in check, dealt with, and prevented from spreading. I think that Portugal must now first ensure that it repays the loans by selling its assets, as has been said. It must also negotiate with its individual lenders to establish concrete proposals and ideas about how this crisis can be beaten.

Voters in Germany, Austria and Finland will not stand for it if, for example, there should be new bailouts for Greece or if this case should fail.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D).** – (SK) Mr President, Portugal is another country in need of financial assistance from the Eurobond, but us be honest and admit that the labelling of this crisis as a 'debt' crisis or a 'euro' crisis is highly misleading.

It gives the impression that the euro is in crisis because certain Member States are incapable of running their affairs sensibly and have taken on too much debt. Ireland and Portugal, however, ran their affairs in a disciplined way, and got into a crisis that was not of their own making. It is the poorly regulated banks that were irresponsible. It was the cost of



protecting these banks that got some euro area states into financial problems. The actual crisis is therefore rather a crisis of the European banking sector.

If we are honest, the Eurobond, or rather the new form it will take after 2013, will surely not be enough. The cost of protecting the euro must be reduced in such a way that we force the commercial banks to acknowledge their losses. The next step should then be effective regulation of the financial sector.

**Peter van Dalen (ECR).** – (NL) Mr President, the current approach to the debt crisis exacerbates the problems. Yes, Greece, Portugal and Ireland are being offered a debt settlement, but their debts are being increased, not reduced. This approach is a disaster – it is solving a debt problem by taking on more debt. Mr President, Europe needs to move on from its taboo on writing off debt. We can move forward by restructuring public debt with a partial writing off of debts in combination with enforcing the requirements of a tightened-up Stability and Growth Pact, including automatic penalties. Obviously, this is a tough approach designed to bring about a ‘shake-out’ amongst the banks, some pensions institutions and bondholders, but we need to get through this. It is a question of no pain, no gain. Writing off public debts in combination with enforcing strict requirements paves the way for a new future. If we do not do that, there is only one future, which is weak countries leaving the euro area.

**Miguel Portas (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner Rehn, last month, the President of the Portuguese Republic asked the Commission to be ‘imaginative’, and your reply to the President of my country, with the arrogance of a colonial governor, was ‘we have been imaginative with Portugal’. That is why I want to reply to you now. The European Commission has been imaginative in imposing a three-year government programme and a preferred government on a country three weeks before an election. The European Commission has been imaginative in demanding an interest rate of 6% from that same country, and in plunging Portugal into recession for the next two years.

The only place the European Commission has not been imaginative is where it needed to be, because we all need to restructure the debt, to renegotiate the debt, and to involve creditors in the solution. Please, Commissioner, search your conscience: resign, and Europe will thank you for it.

**Franz Obermayr (NI).** – (DE) Mr President, in contrast to my fellow Members who have overrun their time, in a similar way to the budget overrun, I will attempt to be brief.

Among the many clever analyses and responses, there is one question which has not been asked. That is the question of what the citizens of the net contributors would say. Tax rates of 50% with a high standard of living and high levels of social services are not a coincidence. This means that the citizens are working hard and earning a great deal.

Solidarity, which has often been referred to today, also involves solidarity with the citizens in our own home countries. The case of Sweden has been mentioned. The EU did not intervene here with financial aid. Instead, restructuring has taken place, cuts have been made in social services and public services have been reduced. In other words, a strict fiscal policy has been introduced. We must explain this to the countries which are obviously the subject of today’s debate. Without a strict fiscal policy and major efforts on their own part, this will not work.

**Olli Rehn, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, I will focus on one issue only because I need my five minutes for that.

In recent weeks, and today in this House, many voices have spoken in favour of debt restructuring in Greece. It sounds very easy and neat. However, I must say that the proponents of sovereign debt restructuring seem to ignore the potentially devastating implications for financial stability in the country itself and in the euro area as a whole, and the consequences and ramifications for economic growth and employment.

Let us think about what the consequences of debt restructuring could be. Of course, we are talking about a counterfactual situation, as are the proponents of debt restructuring, but we have enough understanding of the channels of impact on financial stability and economic activity to make a likely and most possible scenario. This is how it could very likely turn out.

Bondholders would take a big hit – i.e. households through their savings instruments like pension savings, as well as institutional investors such as pension funds and insurance companies. Banks would also bear the cost. From last year's bank stress test exercise, we know that the Greek banks hold EUR 48 billion of government securities, Greek Government bonds. What would happen? A restructuring of sovereign securities would seriously erode their capital base. For instance, even a 30% haircut would mean that a large part of the banking system would end up under-capitalised, while a 50% haircut, which many have advocated, would imply that a large part of the Greek banking system would simply become insolvent.

Thus, a debt restructuring in Greece would have major consequences on the soundness of the banking sector in Greece, as well as on any banks having exposure to Greek securities.

Now, I do not love banks, nor do I do my job in the first place in order to save them, but it is a fact that such a major banking crisis would lead to a massive credit crunch. It is not a kind of theoretical virtuality. It is a very likely result. A massive credit crunch. Moreover, through rating actions, the collateral pool at the disposal of the Greek banks would most likely be wiped out. It would melt down. A massive credit crunch, possible bank runs, a deposit freeze and/or capital controls could well be part of the consequences. What is absolutely sure is that the contraction of the economy would be unprecedented in Greece.

Let me recall that Argentinian GDP collapsed by almost half over five years. Would that help Greece or Europe? I doubt it. Even such a severe haircut as 50% would not reduce the debt ratio below 100% of GDP, assuming that the international creditors, like the euro area Member States or the IMF, were excluded from this haircut.

Greece still has a large fiscal deficit which it has to finance. Who would be ready to lend to Greece the morning after it wiped out 70% or 50% or 30% of previous investors' financial wealth? Who would be ready to lend to Greece the morning after?

Debt restructuring would cut Greece's access to financial markets for a very long time, and the goal of the EU/IMF programme is indeed a relatively rapid return to the markets to finance the Greek sovereign debt so that European taxpayers do not have to guarantee loans to do that. That is the goal of this exercise.

Let us recall that in the final analysis, fiscal solvency requires stabilising and then reducing the government debt ratio – i.e. achieving a primary structural surplus and achieving a debt-stabilising level.

Greece is still living beyond its means, and the key is that Greece has to start earning more than it consumes and also be able to pay the interest rates on its debt burden.

That is the primary structural surplus that Greece needs, and debt restructuring would not solve this very fundamental fact. Therefore, at the end of the day, the main determinants over the solvency of Greece are of a political and social nature – the consistent rigour to keep the primary surplus stable at a high level of around 5% of GDP for a long period of time.

We have examples of this. Belgium successfully did so in the 1990s for almost a decade. Moreover, six EU Member States have been able to maintain a primary surplus of over 4% for at least four years, so it is not impossible. It is certainly very challenging, but it has been done before and it is doable also for Greece if there is the political will and unity in the country. This is the only way for Greece to avoid much worse alternatives.

We really are at a critical juncture concerning the future of Europe. This debate is about the sovereign debt crisis. It has implications for the euro, for the future of Europe. You know this very well. I must say that I am extremely concerned about the divergence in the national political debates we have heard recently, which have also been reflected in this House. There is political fatigue in central and northern Europe about supporting the countries in trouble; there is reform fatigue in southern Europe about carrying out the necessary reforms. We need to find the energy together to beat this fatigue. We need to build bridges over these divergences in order to save Europe, and we need to make the necessary decisions to avoid another, even worse crisis, and to enable the whole of Europe to recover from this extremely serious financial crisis that we have experienced in the last years.

**András Kármán,** *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (HU) Mr President, honourable Members, I would like to reflect briefly on two trains of thought. Although, undoubtedly, the crisis of the banking system contributed considerably to our current economic problems, it would be a mistake to conceal that most of the problems arose prior to the crisis from a lack of fiscal discipline in numerous countries, from economic policy that did not strengthen competitiveness, and from the absence of coordination in European economic policy.

It is therefore clear that a comprehensive European answer is needed and two important elements of this, which are also top priorities for the Hungarian Presidency, are the European semester and implementing the reform of economic governance.

Implementing both priorities has reached an important, critical stage. As regards the European semester, we are committed to successfully concluding this on time. The Member States' stability and convergence programmes, as well as the national reform programmes, are planned to be discussed at the Ecofin meeting in June, and I hope that at last, these programmes will mean a real breakthrough in each Member State's fiscal and economic policy.

Intensive work on the package of six proposals is going on in the trilogue. In connection with this, the Hungarian Presidency will announce the most important points of Parliament's proposals at next week's meeting of finance ministers, and at this discussion we will ask for a mandate from the Council to reach a successful and speediest possible agreement still in June regarding the six legislative proposals.

A responsible and flexible attitude is required of both the Council and Parliament, and I firmly believe that in today's situation, the agreement would send a remarkably positive message to the markets as well. Furthermore, it would reflect the ability of the European

institutions to cooperate responsibly and without delay when Europe is in huge need of this.

Concerning the Portuguese programme and the three adjustment programmes in general, first, I would like to welcome the parliamentary agreement on financial policy. We all know that this is extremely important from the aspect of the functioning of the European Financial Stability Facility. At the same time, I wish to point out that it is also clear in the economic policy programme compiled by the Troika in relation to Portugal that the programmes devised for Greece, Ireland and Portugal alike adapt to the characteristics of each country and are not formulaic in any way.

For Greece, the stress is on putting the budget in order. For Ireland, the consolidation of the banking system can be regarded as the key element. Now for Portugal, the most crucial parts are perhaps structural reforms, and labour market and commodity market reforms. As we are all aware, in the case of Portugal, it is extremely important to put the economy on a higher growth path in the medium term and to strengthen competitiveness.

I believe that, although implementing economic policy programmes related to credit agreements means serious efforts for the Member States, at the same time, this is also an opportunity to face up to long-standing structural problems and to find solutions and answers to these within a short period, which, in the medium term, could lead to sustainable and higher growth in these countries.

**President.** – The debate is closed.

#### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**George Sabin Cutaş (S&D),** *in writing.* – (RO) The euro is experiencing depreciation at a time when there is talk about Greece needing to receive a second loan from the European Union. We must ask ourselves whether the situation in Greece and in other European states in difficulty is not a result of the actions taken by financial speculators, based on the tactics of ‘divide and conquer’. Just recently, Portugal became the third state which needed to ask the European Union for loans. The financial speculators have forgotten the problem of the banks which were difficult to save and are focusing their attention on European states in difficulty. The low public debt credit rating has made it impossible, therefore, to obtain loans to pay back the debt. I think that a European credit rating agency is required, which will move away from financial speculation. On the other hand, it is imperative that Eurobonds are issued to demonstrate the willingness to save the euro.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL),** *in writing.* – (PT) Owing to its scale and the associated constraints, the debt issue is more than just a real problem for countries like Portugal: it constitutes a central element of the violent social, economic, political and ideological offensive under way, the true causes of which are obscured. The most recent expression of this offensive is the unlawful intervention in Portugal by the ‘troika’ of the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank. This is an intolerable extortion of national resources from the Portuguese workers and people into the pockets of financial capital. The EU – thereby revealing its nature and true objectives – mediates this extortion process, whilst creating the institutional conditions for it to be implemented and deepened. The process of foreign intervention under way is very revealing of this. It incorporates the fundamentals of the antisocial measures implemented in other countries, like Greece and Ireland, as well as those included in the ‘Euro Plus Pact’ imposed by the European powers. When it comes into effect, it will exacerbate the national situation,

worsening the economic recession, unemployment, poverty, social inequality and national dependence. When it is implemented, this veritable submission programme will, as demonstrated by the situation in other countries, exacerbate the conditions that supposedly motivated this intervention: in other words, the difficulties in tackling the unbearable and growing costs of the public debt.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The cause of the sovereign debt crisis is speculation on the indebtedness of Member States that have come to the rescue of the banking sector, which is directly responsible for the profound crisis we are experiencing. The banking sector has shirked all its responsibilities, especially its financial responsibilities, and is making record profits, while European taxpayers and workers are being asked to tighten their belts. As for the sacrosanct markets, they are now setting the tone. Commission and governments have just one obsession: to reassure them. The whole of last weekend was filled with misinformation on debt restructuring and Greece's exit from the euro: rumours spread by those who have wagered billions on a default they are trying to create in the first place. Debt restructuring would, it appear, be a catastrophe – for private investors. At the same time, it was announced that the *Banque Nationale de Paris* (BNP), for example, would lose much less than the EUR 6 billion in profits expected this year and that, without the exorbitant rates of interest, Greece's deficit would be 1.5% of GDP and not 8%. The speculators are stuffing themselves on taxpayers' money and are clearly set to bleed them dry. It is time we stopped this unhealthy circus.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) One thing is clear to all of us. The effects of the economic and financial crisis can still be felt everywhere and it involves numerous issues. It goes without saying that the EU must respond to the crisis. I have a few thoughts on the stress tests which were carried out on the banks. A total of 91 major European banks were tested and 7 failed. I have one major criticism in this area, which is that the consequences of a country going bankrupt were not evaluated and this remains a possibility when we look at Greece, Ireland and Portugal. The most recent stress tests focused on the hard capital ratios, but the liquidity criteria should also have been included. It is obvious that these results must be published in order to achieve the required level of transparency.

#### **14. Efficiency of the European agencies linked to employment, working conditions and training (debate)**

**President**. – The next item is the Commission statement on the efficiency of the European agencies linked to employment, working conditions and training.

**László Andor**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I wish to thank this House for putting the issue of European agencies on the agenda.

The Commission attaches great importance to the European Union agencies' efficient functioning. Part of this is related to the governance arrangements which apply to all of them. As you are aware, the agencies' functioning and governance are currently being discussed within the interinstitutional working group involving the Commission, Parliament and the Council, on the basis, *inter alia*, of a multi-agency evaluation carried out for the Commission in 2009. Indeed, the time has come to shape a new overall approach to EU agencies, improving their overall coherence, effectiveness, accountability and transparency.

The ultimate aim of the interinstitutional working group is, through a step-by-step approach, to develop a general agreement between the three EU institutions on the various

issues at hand. We hope this can be achieved by the end of this year or the beginning of next year. Cooperation with Parliament has been very positive so far, and we trust that we can count on Parliament's support for the next steps.

As you know, EU agencies are legally autonomous bodies whose governance rules are laid down in the funding regulations. In general, agencies are overseen by a governing board whose membership may vary according to the nature of the agency. Three of the agencies in the field of employment and education for example – Eurofund, OSHA and Cedefop – have tripartite governing bodies with representatives of both sides of industry, the Member States and also the Commission.

I wish to reassure you that this House has access to a lot of information, either because this information is in the public domain or because Parliament, as part of the budgetary authority, holds hearings with the directors of agencies, on the annual work programmes and on budgetary discharge, in the Employment and Social Affairs Committee.

Each of the agencies – Eurofund, OSHA, the European Training Foundation and Cedefop – has a specific role to play. For example, the European Training Foundation and Cedefop, although both working on vocational education and training, have different geographical scope. The former works outside the EU, the latter inside the EU, and they have different objectives. The European Training Foundation assists essentially the neighbourhood countries with reforms of education and training systems, while Cedefop promotes information gathering and research on the vocational training policies of the Member States. The Commission is keen to ensure synergies between the two agencies, notably through exchanges of information, joint work programmes, the joint organisation of conferences and seminars, and joint projects.

**Ingeborg Gräßle**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Mr Andor, ladies and gentlemen, firstly, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the members of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) group from the Wesel district assembly who are in the gallery. I would like to say to Mr Andor that we are pleased to hear him thanking us for our cooperation on the issue of agencies. However, it is both sad and regrettable that the Council representative has once again left the Chamber, because the fact that we have made so little progress in the interinstitutional working group on agencies is primarily the fault of the Council, which is holding back from working with us to introduce improvements in this area. Therefore, the Commission should be aware that we are on its side.

We must exert greater pressure with regard to the agencies. We are currently looking at four agencies which reflect the fundamental problems of all the agencies, in other words, the overlap of responsibilities, for example, between the European Agency for Safety and Health (OSHA) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and between OSHA and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), the European Railway Agency (ERA) and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). There is also a significant overlap between the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop). Given Europe's financial problems, why is it that we cannot bring ourselves to take some fundamental measures in this area and to combine those agencies whose responsibilities are very similar, such as the agency responsible for vocational training within Europe and the agency for vocational training outside Europe?

There are a number of good arguments for doing so. We have problems with the size of the agencies and, therefore, with their efficiency. We have supervisory bodies with more

members than the agencies have employees. These are all things which damage the reputation of the European Union every day, because everyone who looks at the situation puts their head in their hands and says: 'You cannot seriously mean this'. Most importantly, some agencies have not reached the critical mass to enable them to work efficiently. Also, this House has provided too much money and too many staff members. In some agencies, such as OSHA, we have seen a budget increase of 105% and a staff increase of 69% over 10 years. Eurofound had a budget increase of 39% and a staff increase of 46%. This is why I am calling urgently on my fellow Members to introduce changes during the next budget debate.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Sylvana Rapti (S&D).** – *(EL)* Mr President, the previous speaker spoke about overlaps in the competences and remits of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training in Thessaloniki, in Greece. If I remember correctly, both organisations were founded in 1975. I wonder: is it possible that two organisations were founded at the same time for the same purpose?

**Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE).** – *(DE)* Mr President, Mrs Rapti, yes, that is possible, because, of course, an overlap has emerged in the meantime between the actual areas of work. By the way, I did not make this up myself. It was brought to light in the Commission study, which refers to the overlaps. In addition, surveys of all of those who make use of the agency's work also contain many references to the overlaps. This is where the information comes from. I will be happy to make these documents available to you.

**Alejandro Cercas,** *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – *(ES)* Mr President, Commissioner, in the last few years, I have been following the work of our agencies, particularly that of Bilbao and Dublin, and I believe that they are doing work that is both very worthy and, in terms of cost benefits, also extremely efficient. At the same time, we benefit from enormous transparency, and there is no doubt that they are working closely with Parliament.

Therefore, I am surprised that shadows of doubt have been cast about their existence and about their work and I am shocked that, as always, some of its members, instead of having a political vision, have a vision that is accounts and nothing but accounts. It is true that accounts are very important: it is very important to know what the costs are, but we also need to know the benefits, the cost of preventing accidents at work, but also the costs of failure to prevent accidents at work. We need to know the costs of training, but also the costs of failing to train or failing to anticipate the changes that our workers and industries need to make.

Commissioner, I believe that rather than problems with the agencies, some of your Members have problems with Europe. You, like Ulysses returning to Ithaca, must not listen to the songs of the sirens, because they want to lure the ship on to the rocks and for the ship of Europe to sink.

**Roger Helmer,** *on behalf of the ECR Group.* – Mr President, we in the ECR Group want to see more effective control of the EU budget. On behalf of taxpayers, we demand real added value for money spent at EU level. Especially in these times of economic stringency, we want a tougher attitude towards spending in general: not more spending, but better spending.

Applying this logic in the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, I am questioning the efficiency of the four agencies which we have been discussing: Eurofund, ETF, OSHA and the improbably named Cedefop. I recently myself visited ETF in Turin and also heard a presentation from Cedefop while I was there. There is indeed, as earlier speakers have said, considerable overlap between their programmes, and I believe that their management and administration, at least, could usefully be merged.

I am therefore asking the following questions. Does the Commission apply efficiency and performance criteria to these agencies? If so, may we see the criteria? Secondly, how do the agencies perform against the criteria? Can the Commission show Parliament an analysis of the agencies' performance? Thirdly, given the considerable functional overlap, has the Commission considered merging them? We have heard about synergies; we want to see them. Who sets the objectives and strategy of the agencies? May we see them? More generally, there seems to be considerable overlap between reports on employment matters produced on these agencies by the Commission and by the Policy Department of the European Parliament. We ask: is this duplication worthwhile?

**Franz Obermayr (NI).** – (DE) Mr President, the EU has four agencies in the field of employment, working conditions and vocational training; namely, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the European Agency for Safety and Health (OSHA) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), with an annual budget of around EUR 15 million to EUR 20 million. I have looked at the websites of these four agencies. The focus is on activities such as a photo competition on the subject of risk prevention, a competition for practical solutions, whatever they might be, and the joint organisation of the European Day of Solidarity between Generations. These are all earthshaking activities, none of which seem to have any concrete output.

The areas covered by the agencies overlap. There are overlaps between the agencies and also with the Directorates-General of the Commission, with departments in Parliament and with national bodies. Obviously, this situation cannot continue. We must prevent duplication of effort by merging the agencies. Inefficient agencies must be closed, because the taxpayers will definitely not understand why millions of euro are being wasted on photo competitions within this proliferation of agencies.

**Véronique Mathieu (PPE).** – (FR) Mr President, the synergies existing between these four agencies require us to take a closer look at their objectives. While their objectives have been established on paper, the discharge procedure leaves us less satisfied as to their effectiveness.

The external auditor has pointed the finger at weak budgetary planning, the lack of a clear link between objectives and budgetary resources, as well as carry-overs and cancellations of significant appropriations. To take the example of Eurofound, the Court of Auditors notes in its 2009 report that the Foundation has not established in its budget a specific heading for the different programmes financed by assigned revenue.

For me, the problem is that we are no longer sure how EU contributions are used before the agency's balance sheet is examined two years later. These weaknesses in budgetary planning do not therefore give us the guarantee of specific value for these four agencies.

In response to this situation, we can think about coordinating their work better. For example, why not form a single governing board for these four agencies? The



interinstitutional working group has been working on these problems for a number of years. What response can it give us?

**Sylvana Rapti (S&D).** – (EL) Mr President, the question pleases me, because I like evaluation, I like control. I also like studies that provide data which can help us do our job more efficiently in the European institutions for the benefit of European citizens. Why, when the European institutions call for an impact assessment before saying hello, do we have a problem with these two organisations that have been working since 1975, carrying out research and studies into work, education and training? A good question. Except that its purpose is not economic or financial, it is political. It is a question that comes back time and again in different ways and for different reasons, and the fact that it has come back now, when Europe is in crisis, when the workers are suffering, when education is suffering, shows that it has a different purpose. We have found out how to smack and we are slapping everyone we can. Is Greece suffering? Let us attack the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, because it is in Thessaloniki, even if it was founded in 1975. What I am trying to say is this: overlaps between competences are one thing and cooperation is another thing, especially the cooperation needed to get things right in Europe.

**Anne E. Jensen (ALDE).** – (DA) Mr President, I know these four agencies very well and I have been following their work for many years. I think that we should be very open in the way that we approach this issue. It is not simply a question of overlapping tasks; there would clearly be synergies and the opportunity to produce better quality work if we allowed them to work more closely together. My fellow Member from Greece, Mrs Rapti, mentioned that there were political undertones behind the desire to amalgamate agencies, and she said that we must not interfere with agencies in Greece. However, the fact that our agencies are spread out geographically and located in different places in Europe must not be a barrier to us having an efficient system. What is most important is that the agencies deliver, that the tasks we need them to do are accomplished and that they are accomplished as cheaply and as efficiently as possible. That is what you should work to achieve, Mr Andor. Therefore, be open in your thinking on this matter.

**Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR).** – (PL) Mr President, agencies dealing with employment issues play a particularly important role in view of the economic crisis currently affecting Europe. It is therefore worth examining in more detail the effectiveness of the measures they carry out. There is no doubt that these agencies should help Europeans to acquire skills that they will be able to use on a rapidly changing and ever more competitive labour market. We should therefore implement measures which will, firstly, result in greater flexibility in the European labour market, for example, mutual recognition of workers' qualifications by Member States. Secondly, the agencies should play an active role in creating programmes which take into account the economic and social challenges facing the European Union, including the demographic challenge and the overburdening of the pensions system. Finally, we should carry out research to identify the real problems in the European labour market. To sum up, the measures taken by the agencies dealing with employment issues should be targeted, above all, at helping EU citizens in the face of not only the economic, but also the demographic crisis.

**Jutta Steinruck (S&D).** – (DE) Mr President, it is very significant that the Member who asked the question has left the room during the discussion. The arguments and questions put by some of the previous speakers once again demonstrate a highly revealing populist mindset. We are in the midst of a crisis and, as usual, savings are being made in areas which affect the workers. I think that this is a very one-sided approach.

I would like to look briefly at the European Training Foundation (ETF). It is important because of its cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the EU's partner countries. It enables the European social model to be exported to acceding countries and provides help with developing education, vocational training and further education programmes and with creating secure jobs. Two weeks ago, I was in Belgrade and, in meetings with education and training providers, I was once again assured of the importance of the agency. The same thing happened in meetings in Turkey. The ETF plays a very important role in helping the acceding countries to enter the EU labour market.

If we take a more far-sighted approach, the Arab spring is also very important. We do not want large numbers of refugees to come to Europe, so we must offer people support in their home countries. We must provide education and help the countries to develop training programmes and facilities.

**Jan Kozłowski (PPE).** – (PL) Mr President, as shadow rapporteur for the report on cooperation in the field of vocational education and training, I have followed the activities of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training with particular interest. Matching vocational training to the needs of citizens and the labour market is one of the key factors in increasing employment levels and the competitiveness of the European Union. We cannot therefore underestimate the role played by Cedefop.

The report for 2010 confirmed my beliefs regarding Cedefop's effectiveness. Evidence of this can be seen, *inter alia*, in the steady rise in the number of people using its publications and the Europass portal. However, I believe that it is vital to increase Cedefop's involvement in structural measures aimed at vocational training, including the introduction of a system for assessing the effectiveness of training. I also believe that the agency has superb potential to draft an attractive proposal in this respect.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Mr President, I am not seeking to call into question the work and efforts of the workers, experts and specialists of the four existing European agencies responsible for employment, working conditions and training. Nevertheless, greater coordination and synergy in the work carried out is certainly necessary and possible to make its benefits clearer.

They carry out some important studies giving us greater insight into problems regarding working conditions, training, the actual quality of jobs, and even the lack of democracy in workplaces. However, there is a need for the European Commission to then take specific actions to respond positively to these problems.

That, Commissioner, is the challenge we are setting for the European Commission.

**Sylvana Rapti (S&D).** – (EL) Mr President, I asked for the floor, because I can see that I am not taking up anyone else's speaking time, in order to raise three issues, which I think will help the debate. Firstly, in order to ask if a study has been carried out into the money we would save if these four organisations were closed down. The question is not, of course, addressed to the Commission; it is addressed to the absent member who asked the question, who is no longer here, who would appear not to want an answer. The second is that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) uses the data provided by these organisations to saturation point and the third and final issue is to remind the House that discharge for all four organisations was approved just yesterday. However, no discharge was approved for the Police College based in Britain.

**President.** – Now as it appears, Ms Rapti, the fact that I made this exception made other Members of the House want to take the floor as well. We are already over time. If you really want the floor, I will now have to give it to you but please do not just ask for the floor just to express some kind of disagreement with the process. Ms Gräßle, you want the floor for one minute? If you want to speak to make a point of substance, go ahead.

**Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, if you had explained when Mrs Rapti took the floor what the consequences would be, we could have made more progress.

Mrs Rapti, this approach has brought about exactly the situation that we now find ourselves in and the problem of the agencies working inefficiently, which we urgently need to resolve. If we want to retain the agencies, we need to change them. I can only ask you to join us in our efforts. We cannot simply leave things as they are because the agencies are so inefficient and because they are wasting money rather than making money every day.

I would like to mention once again that the funding for the four agencies we are talking about amounts to EUR 90 million. That is a lot of money. I am not sure whether the services that the agencies provide are really worth EUR 90 million. That is the point I would like to emphasise. We owe this to our citizens and our taxpayers. I have to justify myself every day to German taxpayers and explain that we are getting value for money. I believe that there is plenty of room for improvement.

**Hubert Pirker (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, when we look at the development of agencies in Europe, it gradually becomes clear that we are suffering from ‘agencyitis’. There are no other areas where four agencies are working in parallel. Elsewhere, the job is done by one agency. When we consider the situation as a whole, it seems as if each country essentially wants its own agency. If you will pardon me for saying so, we cannot allow this to happen.

We should not only be discussing whether a merger should take place. We should also be considering which tasks the Commission itself can take responsibility for and whether an agency is needed at all. This means that we should gradually move to thinking about which agencies we can close down. I would like to ask the previous speaker, who took the floor twice: Where are the specific efficiency measurements? How many jobs have the agencies actually created? Where is the turnover which justifies ongoing funding of EUR 90 million per year?

When I have the answers to these questions, I will be able to support the continuing existence of these agencies. Otherwise, I would like to see them closed.

**Piotr Borys (PPE).** – (PL) Mr President, I believe that it is extremely important for us to have agencies carrying out effective measures relating to the labour market and employment and, of course, agencies need to be held accountable for their results.

Let us not forget that every third European Union citizen has no professional qualifications. Matters relating to monitoring of the employment sector, labour market potential and vocational training generate an enormous amount of data, which it is no longer possible for any one Member State to evaluate on its own. We should therefore hold agencies accountable for the effectiveness of their work, but we should remember that the results of this work may now have an incredible impact on the labour market, by linking all vocational training to jobs and professions which are already showing signs of being in short supply in the future European Union. Today, we have to import a large number of workers from other countries for jobs which require a narrow specialisation, such as doctors

and nurses. These are the problems the European Union is facing, and we should therefore appreciate how effective these agencies' measures are.

**László Andor**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I believe that we need to discuss all issues like this without any taboos. If we find weaknesses or waste, we have to address them.

However, it is also very important that we do not misrepresent reality and we do not overstate the weaknesses we find just so as to make a strong point.

I regret that some of the colleagues who spoke have actually left, but I would like to answer them very specifically. For example, I very strongly reject the notion that some of these agencies just do PR and work of a very superficial nature. They actually do very concrete analytical and policy work, including the exchange of experience, and help deliver European policies, in these particular instances, in the area of employment and social issues.

I think these agencies are instrumental in delivering the Europe 2020 strategy and progress towards the headline targets we have agreed. I very much agree that developing skills and vocational training is one of the key challenges we are facing, as was stressed in the discussion. This is one of the key structural causes of unemployment in the European Union, and we need the contribution of these agencies more than ever.

It is true, however, that we have to see whether the costs are justified or not, and we need to approach this on a very concrete basis.

In principle, the efficiency and performance criteria of an agency are set out in its annual work programme, together with an indication of the ways in which such criteria are to be addressed. An agency's annual work programme has to be approved by its governing board, and is presented to the relevant European Parliament committee. The Commission representatives on the governing boards of agencies take the need for quantitative and qualitative performance criteria very seriously and make every effort to ensure that they are applied.

On the question of how the agencies perform against the criteria that are set, I have to say that it is the role of the governing board of each agency to assess its performance against those criteria. As a rule, agencies carry out external evaluations of their work programmes at regular intervals, and these take such performance indicators into account.

Agencies usually report on the results of external evaluations in the director's annual activity report, which is submitted to the budgetary authority. As part of the budgetary authority, Parliament may also request agencies to justify their performance. Agencies are also subject to evaluation by the Court of Auditors in connection with the annual discharge procedure, the results of which are discussed in the Committee on Budgetary Control.

Commission representatives on the governing boards of agencies make every effort to ensure that the recommendations stemming from external evaluations, and those from the Court of Auditors and the Commission's internal audit service, are followed up appropriately.

I addressed the question of the functional overlap between two agencies – the ETF and Cedefop – in my introductory speech, but I would like to stress again that the contribution of these agencies can be crucial, especially in the context of increasing employment in line with the 2020 objectives. The ETF, particularly in the light of the recent changes in the

Mediterranean area, can play a very strong role in bringing prosperity to the regions neighbouring the European Union.

I have one more point to make concerning Parliament's capacity to see the development of strategies. The objectives of the agencies are defined in the Financial Regulation which, as you know, is published in the Official Journal. An agency's strategy is usually set by the director in agreement with the governing board, and these strategies are presented to Parliament each year and are reflected in the annual work programme.

The four agencies concerned presented their annual work programmes to Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs at the end of January this year.

Finally, I would like to say that I also believe it would be useful to involve the Council Presidency in such discussions. I can assure you I will follow this up with them, and I am sure I will find a common language with the Presidency on this issue as well.

**President.** – The debate is closed.

*(The sitting was suspended at 19:25 and resumed at 21:00)*

## IN THE CHAIR: ALEJO VIDAL-QUADRAS

*Vice-President*

### 15. Innovation Union: transforming Europe for a post-crisis world (debate)

**President** – The next item is the report by Mrs Merkies, on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, on Innovation Union: transforming Europe for a post-crisis world (2010/2245(INI)) (A7-0162/2011).

**Judith A. Merkies**, *rapporteur*. – (NL) Mr President, Commissioner, you are an innovator, I am an innovator, we are innovators, we can all be innovators. How can we be? The answer is as researchers, scientists, policy makers, workers on the shop floor, consumers and citizens. It is the citizens who are key to innovation – they make or break it. Yet what can we, as policy makers, as politicians, do to accelerate that innovation? Innovation is the only way out of the financial and economic crisis, as innovation will provide the solution to the problems that affect us all – such as the ageing of the population, climate change and the scarcity of raw materials – and will also put an immediate end to the financial and economic crisis. Through innovation, we hope to be able to link all these things together, give the economy a vigorous boost and, at the same time, move towards a sustainable society. This will not happen on its own, of course. A change of mindset is required – a changing of the concept of society and of how we need to get to work in politics and in business and industry.

So, what are the specific measures that we could take? We need more focus and less fragmentation. We need to do away with our narrow-mindedness when it comes to innovation and in policy. What do we want to achieve? Innovation is not just a question of one building, one ministry, one programme. Innovation needs to be something that runs through every area of policy. That therefore has to be the political mindset, too. Preferably, we need a holistic approach. Why do we have so many programmes already? Bring these together wherever possible and actually start to simplify things, for once. That is the mission for us, as politicians. Cut the red tape. As politicians, we have a constant tendency, if we want to achieve something, to throw a new layer on top, additional

regulation, an additional programme, an additional funding option. Maybe the solution is not the 'additional' in this case; maybe it is just 'less' or 'instead'.

We thus need less control-freakery in funding applications and – something that is very important – to offer service to those who come to us for funding and promotion, to provide a one-stop shop for applicants, new business founders, SME operators and, where appropriate, for regions and research bodies. This means not merely checking funding applications but, where appropriate, also seeking out suitable partners or networks for collaboration.

There needs to be a great deal more venture capital and, in that regard, instead of EUR 1 billion in the next funding period, we really need to aim for EUR 5 billion, as that will provide the banks with just the little bit of support they need in order to grant loans to SMEs. We need a cheap and simple patent and workable rules to protect intellectual property. We need a true European internal market where innovations are better able to succeed through access to a market of 500 million citizens. At the moment, that market is much too compartmentalised. Up to now, innovation has predominantly been seen as a high-tech product. That is not necessarily the case – it can also relate to social innovation.

Europe has been struggling for years against an innovation brain drain – creative people who would rather head to the United States because they believe that it is easier there. If we are honest, the truth is that that is sometimes the case. Inflexible personal liability rules, the lack of financial support and high thresholds in order to enter the European market are all barriers that ensure that innovation has not, hitherto, seen great success in Europe. The EU must dare to reward – not punish – courage, entrepreneurship, curiosity and creativity. We need European versions of Steve Jobs. Let us merge where we are strong; let us in Europe bring together the spirit of research, Einstein and Steve Jobs.

**Máire Geoghegan-Quinn**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I congratulate the rapporteur, Ms Merkies, for this excellent report. I want to thank the shadow rapporteurs on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), as well as the members of the seven committees that delivered their opinions to ITRE. Their support for all the various aspects of Innovation Union will be crucial to its success.

Innovation has been placed at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. I would like to take this opportunity to illustrate in concrete terms what Innovation Union will mean for different people.

We will encourage and support better collaboration between business and academia through the creation of knowledge alliances to develop new curricula that address innovation skills gaps. For Europe's researchers, we will take measures to boost cross-border cooperation and remove obstacles to research and mobility, completing the European Research Area by 2014. Ultimately, as Ms Merkies put it, we have to merge Albert Einstein and Steve Jobs and keep him or her in Europe: we must be seen to be attractive and dynamic, and unfettered by unnecessary red tape.

For our small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs, Innovation Union is working to create conditions on intellectual property rights (IPR), standard setting and access to finance that will be much more conducive to innovation. On 13 April 2011, we presented two legislative proposals on IPR, under enhanced cooperation, which will reduce the cost of patents by up to 80%. A single European patent will be valid in 25 Member States and, if you want to build a start-up or you need access to finance, the Commission

will ensure by 2012 that venture capital funds established in any Member State can function and invest freely elsewhere in the EU.

Innovation Union will also champion the best examples of public sector innovation, and the private and public sectors can learn from each other's best practice.

Public procurement represents 17% of the EU's GDP, an enormous potential market for innovation. So we encourage Member States and regions to set aside budgets for public procurement of innovative products and services.

Finally, what about the average taxpayer? Well, Innovation Union will make the best use of public money. This means prioritising smart fiscal consolidation, despite severe budget constraints. Investment in education, research and innovation has the potential to create more wealth and jobs than it costs, and investment in innovation will help us tackle the great challenges that society faces.

That brings me to the partnerships which will provide a framework for aligning instruments and resources, bringing all the key actors together. They aim to cover the whole innovation chain, from supporting excellent R&D to making sure that we have the conditions in place to bring the results of that R&D to the market successfully. We are delighted that Parliament gave such strong support on 11 November 2010 to the concept of the innovation partnerships. Parliament's President has been invited to nominate four members to the steering board, and we look forward to that.

Last but not least, Ms Merkies mentioned social innovation, which has been discussed by ITRE. The Commission is committed to launching a European social innovation pilot that will provide expertise and a networked virtual hub for social entrepreneurs and for the public and third sectors.

Let me stop there, because I think tonight is all about hearing what the Members of Parliament have to say, so that after the debate, when we go away with the report, we will be able to respond to those comments.

**Inese Vaidere**, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on International Trade*. – (LV) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the financial crisis has particularly emphasised the necessity of innovation in the economy of the European Union and therefore, the Commission's proposals for the 'Innovation Union' are particularly welcome. A successful innovation policy must rest on three pillars: political support, finance and orderly legislation. As we emphasise in the opinion of the Committee on International Trade, the overarching objective of the 'Innovation Union' must be long-term development and competitiveness based on technology, knowledge and the development of education. In increasing investment in research and development to 3% of gross domestic product, we must carry out structural reforms to secure its effective application and accessibility for small and medium-sized enterprises. An important aspect is entrepreneurs' understanding of innovations. These do not only include high technology and discoveries, but also social, business, management, marketing and other innovations, which demand ever more effective application of knowledge, and more active collaboration with universities and research centres. It is important to identify the strong aspects of research, while avoiding excessive prioritisation, where everyone is researching one and the same thing. European patents currently cost 15 times more than US patents, hence the reason why we must develop the European patent more quickly and reduce its cost. Valuable inventions are being made in many of the new Member States but due to lack of funding, the researchers are forced to

sell them to other countries and companies for a few thousands, whereas their real worth can be measured in millions. As regards patents obtained with public funds, it is important that universities and private persons be able to share in intellectual property created in this way. The European Union must reinforce protection of intellectual property in order to safeguard our technology and know-how from piracy and fraud, especially by concluding agreements with third countries. For their part, governments must draw up programmes for developing innovation. We may not be able to overtake China and India in the quantity of research, but we can definitely offer quality and better conditions for implementing ideas. Thank you.

**Sari Essayah**, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*. – (FI) Mr President, we on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs have argued that innovations are absolutely crucial to economic development and improved employment, now that Europe is looking for a way out of the economic crisis.

R&D investment tends to drop in periods of economic crisis, even though it has been proved that those companies and Member States that invest the most during those periods are the ones that gain the greatest comparative market advantage. They are also the ones to recover fastest from recession. That is why it is extremely important for the Member States to meet the Europe 2020 target and invest at least 3% of GDP into research and development.

The Committee on Employment stresses the importance of innovation policy being viewed broadly, not merely in the form of technical innovation, but also – more than has previously been the case – in the form of social and service-related innovation that helps resolve challenges facing society, such as ageing, healthcare, and changes in the environment, climate and energy efficiency. A good example of this is the pilot project known as the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing.

Information and communications technology (ICT) is important in all innovative activity. ICT skills depend on improvements in the quality of training, support for lifelong learning, and the opportunity for those already in employment to update their own knowledge and skills continuously.

Most of the initiatives that will make innovation possible come from the business sector, and so closer cooperation with universities and research centres is essential. On the other hand, the commercial exploitation in the EU of research findings in universities is inadequate or too slow. That is why we need business incubators linking the business world and universities, whose task it would be to promote the commercial exploitation of research findings.

The Committee on Employment considers it absolutely essential that a European research area be created, with obstacles to the mobility of researchers being eliminated, and advanced European research infrastructure being created. We should therefore prevent the brain drain from Europe to other places – if anything, Europe should be an area that attracts researchers from elsewhere.

**João Ferreira**, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*. – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner, the possibility of strongly stimulating the economic and social development that is so necessary in our times is, in fact, integral to innovation. We can go even further and say that innovation constitutes a necessary



means of helping respond to many of the problems and challenges facing humankind today.

As rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, I sought to uphold this idea by drawing attention to some of the main challenges we are facing in the following areas, to cite but a few examples: the scarcity and efficient use of resources, waste recovery and treatment, food quality and security, demographic change, new epidemics, and conservation of nature and biodiversity.

I sought to uphold the fact that innovation should be guided, above all, by the criteria of defending the public interest, improving people's quality of life, promoting social welfare, and preserving the environment and the balance of nature. It should be a key element of public policy in such areas as the environment, water, energy, transport, telecommunications, health and education.

I drew attention to the fact, acknowledged by the 2009 European Innovation Panel, that the economic and financial crisis is having a disproportionate impact on a number of countries and regions, thereby undermining the objective of convergence. The constraints currently imposed on the Member States could result in increased restrictions on investment in science, technology and innovation, particularly in the most vulnerable countries. Instead of the announced 'Innovation Union', the result could be a veritable innovation divide between the countries and regions that innovate most and the rest.

Unfortunately, the first draft opinion that I tabled ended up being diluted by amendments adopted in committee. Where there was – and should be – public interest, development, cohesion, progress and social welfare, what has ended up predominating are so-called business opportunities, competition, and the harnessing of innovation for business purposes.

While that is also the dominant vision in the Commission communication, it is not our vision. This is not the vision of the future that we need.

**Kyriacos Triantaphyllides**, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection.* – (EL) Mr President, the key point, in the opinion of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, is the creation of an Innovation Union with an enhanced social profile predicated on job creation. Innovative goods and services need to be adopted, which will target both the private and the public sector, so as to facilitate the implementation of administrative procedures, strengthen the public administration and reduce bureaucracy and the inflexibility of the public sector. Furthermore, the adoption of innovative solutions is closely bound up with pre-commercial procurement, which resolves issues which the market cannot cover or where the solutions proposed are uneconomic.

In the private sector, we must encourage small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as micro-enterprises, which are having particular difficulty adapting to the market, to increase the use of innovative products, on the one hand, and create innovative solutions, on the other. Special mention also needs to be made of micro-enterprises in regional and rural areas, which are struggling to survive due to the lack of funding, so that we can find ways of encouraging the use of innovative solutions, thereby improving their viability. At the same time, environmental innovation programmes need to be encouraged, so as to plug the gaps which exist in efforts to deal with climate change and promote environmentally-friendly solutions.

In addition to strengthening innovation, we need to look at how it can directly benefit the citizens of the European Union. The use of innovative solutions should result in lower costs for enterprises and should enable consumers to enjoy cheaper and better products.

**Danuta Maria Hübner**, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Regional Development*. – Mr President, I would say to the Commissioner that, in recent years, innovation has become a symbol of a policy instrument that can fix all our problems. This means that there are huge expectations and that we must deliver.

Of course, for a successful implementation of ideas, governance matters very strongly and a governance framework for innovation must be based today on pragmatism and must be delivered with a sense of urgency, and also must be at the service of the policy content.

Europe, we all agree, has to innovate or it will lose out to competitors. Every link in the European innovation chain must be strengthened and innovation policy must be focused towards challenges. That is what I understand the Innovation Union is offering.

Today, we run the risk that, not only companies, but also governments might decrease investment in innovation. That is the logic of the crisis and the logic of national budget cuts. EU policy responses and EU budgetary instruments must move firmly against that logic.

In Europe, innovation is not just a concept that can be limited to specific innovation centres. It needs to be applied across the entire European territory. Europe is simply too small to afford an innovation deficit anywhere on its territory.

Research and innovation are clearly not the same thing and we agree with you very clearly. Governance for innovation should therefore do more than just support research and development policy. Promoting innovation-led growth is not about increasing excellence in R&D infrastructure. Important as they are, it is, first and foremost, about mobilising talents and mobilising new ideas.

Governance for innovation must mean establishing new partnerships enabling efficient innovation systems that mobilise intellectual and entrepreneurial capacities, detecting also sleeping innovators – of which we have many in Europe – through a business environment that is conducive to innovation, and particularly for SMEs, covering all sectors of the economy.

To conclude, let me say that we do not yet have a fully-fledged European model for innovation, but what is clear is that it must be rooted in a well-orchestrated, concrete, strong and joint public/private effort. I trust that the Innovation Union will take us all the way forward towards such a model.

**Amalia Sartori**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (IT) Mr President, the report by Mrs Merkies – whom I thank for the work she has done – is Parliament's first important contribution to the Commission proposal on the Innovation Union initiative. In recent years, major countries around the world have tenaciously pursued the objective of concentrating their competition policies on certain key sectors, which have generated growth and development by aiming at innovation. The high-tech sector is a good example.

Europe, too, recognises the need to pursue projects aiming at economic and industrial growth, by focusing resources and investment on innovative policies, without abandoning the path it has followed in recent decades of playing a leading and guiding role in economic and social development. The main thrust of this report shows the need for a cross-cutting

approach, promoting innovation in all areas of business, the economy and society in general.

Small and medium-sized enterprises – the mainstay of Europe's economic performance even in difficult crisis situations – are picked out as places where innovation occurs every day. Today, these abilities should be recognised, rewarded and put at the service of the growth and development of the whole continent. It is also made clear that innovation and research are two sides of the same coin. Innovation may derive from research, but it can also be a wide-ranging ability to change things for the better in all areas of daily life. Succeeding in this will be a challenge for Europe. We may not manage to create a Silicon Valley straight away, but perhaps we can establish a Stanford University.

**Teresa Riera Madurell**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (ES) Mr President, Commissioner, I would like to congratulate our rapporteur, Mrs Merkies, on her excellent work, because she has unpicked the content of the report and concentrated on the more relevant aspects for our group, such as social innovation – understood as innovation by workers and the public – the incentive provided by the public procurement of innovative and green products and services, and the need to improve the access to finance on the part of SMEs. This allows me to concentrate and comment on a specific aspect of the report: the need to develop indicators.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we understand innovation simply in terms of new products, processes and services that result in an increase in economic activity, it is essential that we equip ourselves with the instruments to measure our innovation capacity precisely in economic terms and that we do so on the basis of parameters, such as private investment and R&D, employment or the number of innovative companies. We have to establish indicators that reflect the capacity of innovation to generate growth, employment and an increase in GDP, and which allow us to compare our situation, in terms of intensity, with the economies of our competitor countries.

I would like to end with a few words as a member of a delegation that opposed the launch of enhanced cooperation on the unitary Community patent and to say that we opposed it, because we believe that the enhanced cooperation instrument may directly affect the internal market, territorial cohesion and the right of citizens of all Member States to have maximum legal security.

**Vladko Todorov Panayotov**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (BG) Mr President, Europe is currently faced with a comparatively new but very serious danger of lagging behind or even of a decline in terms of global competition in the field of science and technology. Such a development would put our prosperity, economic progress and social status under serious pressure. Put in simpler terms, Europe is under threat of turning into a mediocre actor on the global scientific and economic stage. Europe urgently needs innovation now.

I congratulate Mrs Merkies on her fine report. I am also delighted with the excellent ideas from Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn. This guarantees success because the Innovation Union is primarily a strategy for the European Union's economic development. We require the following for us to succeed in this. Firstly, we need to have better access to credit and financial support; we need more investment in scientific research and development; clear rules offering long-term prospects in terms of innovation; simplified procedures for accessing European and national support programmes; and cheap, simple European patents.

**Evžen Tošenovský,** *on behalf of the ECR Group.* – (CS) Mr President, today, we are discussing innovation strategy in plenary for the second time. In many of our debates on the standing of European countries on world markets, we regularly remark on the importance of boosting the competitiveness of the European economy. The EU's position on world markets will, in future, be greatly influenced by the success of innovations and the speed of innovation cycles. European states clearly operate at a very high level in research projects. The long-term problem, however, is the slow implementation of this knowledge in practice, due to complex bureaucracy.

The fund for science and research is one of the largest EU funds. It must therefore be our aim to simplify the bureaucracy involved in the transfer of research results as much as possible, and thus to provide maximum assistance to innovation, thereby strengthening the competitiveness of the EU. We must think how to deal with the commercial exploitation of the results of research projects within the framework of innovation measures. If we complicate the implementation of European research in the commercial sphere, we will find it hard to speed up the innovation cycle.

**Philippe Lamberts,** *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group.* – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, research and innovation policy is one of the three main pillars of the policies of the European Union. I would also say that it will increasingly become a strategic tool that is absolutely essential for our future. Why? Because we have the good fortune, or the challenge, of living at the dawn of a change of civilisation.

Think about this. We need to ensure the conditions of a decent existence for all, not only here and now, but elsewhere, too, and for future generations. This, in itself, is already a major challenge. On top of this, however, for the first time in the history of mankind, we need to do this within the physical limits of the planet. This, of course, radically transforms the context.

Our conviction is that Europe can be a world leader in this profound transformation, not only of our infrastructure and organisations, but also, and more importantly, of our way of producing, consuming and living. For us, it is by being right up there among the leaders that we will best ensure the competitiveness of the European Union. This gives me the opportunity to say that competitiveness is not an objective in itself. Our objective is to be in a position to meet the challenges which, let us not forget, threaten the very existence of mankind on this planet. If we are among the best, our competitiveness will, however, be assured.

A great many things have been said with which we agree. There are just two points I would like to raise.

Firstly, we need to maximise the impact of each euro spent. This requires better alignment between the different EU policies and between what is done at the level of the European Union and what is done at the level of the Member States. This means that we need to progress from a logic where the general rule is subsidy and exemption, lending and risk sharing, to a logic where catalysing private investment by using public funds is a major objective. The best way of doing that is not always by contributing non-repayable money.

Finally, we must have the courage to put an end to a number of huge white elephants, such as the ITER project which, in fact, gobbles up a substantial amount of European research money – EUR 7 billion out of EUR 60 billion – just imagine! We need to put an end to that.

**Niki Tzavela**, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – Mr President, I would like to thank Ms Merkies for all her efforts and her coordination during the period in which this report was being negotiated among the political groups. I believe that she has done a very good job. I have three points to make.

I am happy to see that the rapporteur has taken on board the role of broadband. The digital world and information and communication technologies are engines of innovation, and high-speed broadband should be an essential precondition for all European innovation partnerships.

Secondly, in the run-up to the FP8, we should further strengthen the monitoring and ex-post evaluation of results of EU-funded research and innovation activities. Thus, we see that Ms Merkies has quite correctly included in her report a paragraph calling on the Commission to develop an integrated indicator system that would allow better monitoring and assessment of progress and the measurable impact of innovation policies and programmes in the EU.

In conclusion, a few days ago, the President of the European Council, Mr Van Rompuy, stated that Europeans are not innovative because they are depressed. That is, indeed, an innovative assumption, but I think it is a matter of character. We need to encourage a culture of learning, curiosity and risk-taking.

**Franz Obermayr (NI)**. – *(DE)* Mr President, we are facing major societal challenges: the economic crisis, the ageing population, the scarcity of resources and the need to maintain our international competitiveness.

This makes it all the more important for us to promote innovation, which can counteract these problems by providing creative ideas and solutions. This is not just about introducing technical innovations, but also socio-political innovations. For example, in order to deal with the problem of the ageing population, we need so-called classic innovations, on the one hand, such as new drugs, and, on the other, we should be thinking about innovative models for society, pensions and healthcare systems. We need to create an environment today which promotes the innovations of tomorrow, including investment in research and development, protection for intellectual property, in particular, using patent legislation, and the encouragement of creative skills, starting in school classrooms.

Finally, I would like to mention a particular problem relating to the use of resources. Innovations should ultimately ensure that products last longer. This will be of benefit to consumers and the environment. Unfortunately, there are also innovations which have the opposite effect. Products are developed with deliberate weak points which shorten their useful life and increase consumption, such as laptops and smart phones. The Innovation Union must help to combat this.

**Herbert Reul (PPE)**. – *(DE)* Mr President, Mrs Geoghegan-Quinn, ladies and gentlemen, firstly, I would like to give my sincere thanks to Mrs Merkies for her hard work. I would also like to thank the many Members who were involved and the Commission for its support.

We are largely in agreement on this issue. Over the years, we have adopted a large number of programmes and papers here, from the Lisbon strategy to Europe 2020, and many more. We have constantly said that the future of Europe will depend on whether we succeed in resolving the question of innovation. We all agree that this involves all aspects of education, training and research, and that the entrepreneurial side is also important. Nevertheless, it

is true, as a previous speaker has just said, that other regions of the world are obviously able to mobilise talent and ideas more effectively than we can.

Therefore, we need to stop for at least a second or two to think about the reasons for this. Is it because we are providing too little funding or because we cannot find the right way of exploiting the potential that is there? This is what Mrs Merkies referred to in her speech.

I would like to mention briefly one other issue. I was part of a delegation to California and one evening, we met with young entrepreneurs and people who wanted to start new companies. I will never forget that evening. Those young people's eyes were shining, they were full of enthusiasm and they and others believed that they were capable of achieving something. They only asked for one thing. They wanted help for everyone who aimed to start up a business, so that they were given a chance, had the freedom to act, and did not spend all their time grappling with red tape.

I will not forget this, because it was a very, very important signal for me. How can we increase the effectiveness of our investments in research? I believe that the contributions made by the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in the area of research are interesting and exciting and could produce good results. The questions concerning venture capital and people can probably best be answered if we as politicians do not attempt to evaluate all the questions, to come to a decision and to draw up guidelines. Perhaps only a few regulations are needed. As Mrs Merkies has said, less is often more.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue card question under Rule 149(8))*

**Judith A. Merkies**, *rapporteur*. – (NL) Mr President, Mr Reul, thank you for your speech. How do you think that we can incorporate these ambitions within the framework of the Innovation Union into all the work that we do in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, into all the other documents that are still to come, into the common strategy framework, into all the research funding and into future programmes? How can the Commission ensure that, ultimately, a single thread runs through all these policy elements so that we actually attain the objectives set in this Innovation Union?

**Herbert Reul (PPE)**. – (DE) Mr President, I still believe in the things that are good and positive. In the spirit of the young people we met in California, I would like to say that we can achieve this. However, perhaps we do not need to impose regulations covering every detail.

**Britta Thomsen (S&D)**. – (DA) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to start by congratulating the rapporteur on this report. It is a very fine result. In the 2020 strategy, we acknowledged the fact that, if we are to maintain our level of prosperity in Europe, we need to increase our productivity. We therefore need to focus on innovation. However, it is important that we do not restrict innovation to research and technology. If we take innovation seriously, we must, first and foremost, invest in the human element. Innovation involves creative processes that can be taught and that should be included in the teaching methods used in the Member States, because we need workers with good suggestions for improvements to the job and solution models to tackle the new tasks. However, this means that we need to educate and provide further training for our workforce. We are also faced with the huge task of teaching businesses how they can best utilise the innovation potential of their workers. Worker-driven innovation is not only good for businesses, it is also good for job satisfaction, and it can help to reduce stress. I

would like to call on the Commission to enter into talks with the two sides of industry to discuss how we can best promote worker-driven innovation in Europe.

**Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR).** – (PL) Mr President, of course we are all in favour of innovation, particularly when it comes to science and industry – and I say this not only as a politician, but also as someone who once worked at a university, since I was a lecturer before I became a politician. In reality, however – and a few speakers have already mentioned this – we are losing the race for innovation against countries such as the United States and the Middle Eastern countries. This is why we are calling for our cooperation on innovation to be extended to include non-EU countries as well.

I am very pleased by the adoption of the amendment I tabled, which has been included as paragraph 167 and which calls for cooperation with the countries participating in the Eastern Partnership, and I hope that paragraph 71 will be similarly amended. This paragraph does admittedly refer to the Mediterranean countries, but it should be extended to include all countries involved in the European Neighbourhood Policy.

**Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD).** – (EL) Mr President, Mrs Merkies has produced an excellent report and I congratulate her. Of course, we also have the EU 2020 strategy, we have numerous efforts and numerous reports on innovation and youth employment on paper, which we need to put into practice. Young people in Europe are unemployed at a rate of 9.6% in terms of general unemployment, but this rate exceeds 20.2% for young people aged 19-27 and, of course, these people are in despair. Work is not just a livelihood; we have to understand that and we have to give young people the opportunity to work because, in doing so, we give them their self-esteem.

Every citizen must have the opportunity, of course, to develop innovative action, by taking part in the innovation programme, and to change Europe. Commissioner, the Commission communication refers to partnerships in the innovation sector. How does the Commission intend to promote closer participation by the regions, what means will be used, and what funding will be provided?

**Angelika Werthmann (NI).** – (DE) Mr President, the major challenges faced by the Innovation Union include the ageing population and maintaining healthcare systems. In order to ensure that the systems are sustainable and stable, they must be considered and discussed in their full context. It will only be possible to find successful solutions by looking at the interrelationships between the systems.

By 2050, the ratio of EU citizens of working age to those over the age of 65 will fall from 4:1 to 2:1. As a result, spending on pensions and healthcare is certain to rise. However, focusing only on pension legislation and increasing patients' contributions will not allow us to achieve our objectives.

Successful solutions will also have to consider the failings of our education and labour market policies. It will be essential to invest in training and to change the direction of our training policy in order to counteract a situation in which a growing number of jobs in highly specialised industries cannot be filled, while an equivalent number of low-skilled people of working age are relying on benefits.

As part of our labour market policy, we will have to coordinate our family and equality policies, instead of seeing them as contradictory.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE).** – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner, I should like to begin by congratulating the rapporteur on her excellent work.

Europe needs a sustainable and competitive economic model that responds to the major social challenges of today, and that ensures more and better jobs. The ‘Innovation Union’ initiative introduces a strategic European innovation policy that is integrated and oriented towards companies and people. The concept of innovation must go further than technological innovation: it must be associated with products, but also with processes, services, movements, systems and organisational structures.

In particular, social innovation aims to find new and effective solutions for pressing social needs. In addition, young people are the engine of innovation: we therefore need to implement policies that promote young people’s access to the labour market. It is also essential to create proper support mechanisms for small and medium-sized enterprises.

The success of innovation policy depends on the existence of a simple, efficient, unbureaucratic system for science and higher education. The proper financing of these two areas is a necessary condition for developing innovation.

Therefore, given the target of 3% of gross domestic product for technological research and development, I call on the Commission to consider the possibility of establishing an effective EU-wide system for governing this target, in the light of what is happening with economic governance.

**Catherine Trautmann (S&D).** – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, when we set ourselves the objective of strengthening our capacity for innovation and investment or the competitive advantage to be found with the United States and China, we speak of economic development, certainly, but specifically, we also speak of creating jobs. For that reason, we must give ourselves the means to strengthen innovation.

I would like to congratulate Mrs Merkies on the one-stop shop, the funding strategy, and the recognition of necessary risk-taking by researchers. Her report points in the right direction and proposes a context that is favourable to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are essential to the success of the European Union.

Innovation means attractiveness and competitiveness of the territories, and the involvement of the regional and local authorities is essential in terms of committing appropriations, reducing disparities and enhancing the active role that citizens must play. It is directly on the ground that the measure proposed in this report will contribute effectively to the achievement of the Europe 2020 strategy objectives.

**Edvard Kožušník (ECR).** – (CS) Mr President, Europe and innovation. I would like to say a little here about what my colleagues, Mr Migalski and Mr Tošenovský, were just talking about. Where are we, essentially? The US is ahead of us, Japan is ahead of us, and Brazil, India and China are hot on our heels. I see the Innovation Union programme as a programme coming at one minute to midnight. In all likelihood, this is the last opportunity we will have to get a grip in the area of innovation, and to prevent those countries from catching up with us. Any failure in this area by Europe as a continent will have fatal consequences – as all the other Members have said – for the competitiveness of Europe, for the quality of life of its inhabitants and, ultimately, also for the values which Europe represents for the world.



I am therefore pleased that the European Parliament has managed to initiate specific legislative measures, such as greater cooperation over the introduction of a European patent. I also consider the area of standardisation very important in relation to the introduction of innovations into practice, as well as their application by small and medium-sized enterprises.

**Zbigniew Ziobro (ECR).** – (PL) Mr President, in the speech I made here in Strasbourg last November, I highlighted the significant differences that exist between the old and the new European Union Member States when it comes to financial support for the research and development sector. In the long term, this will result in substantial imbalances in the development of the individual European Union Member States, and in the phenomenon given the ugly name of ‘brain drain’ by journalists, which is mistakenly referred to as intellectual mobility in the report. In order to guarantee sustainable development in Europe – and I would emphasise the word sustainable – the EU must earmark more funding for the development of innovation and research projects in the new EU Member States, under the heading of sustainable development.

It is also worth encouraging the individual governments to increase the sums allocated from the budget each year to research, and also to set a minimum percentage of the budget which must be used for projects of this kind. A further key issue is the funding of innovation in the SME sector, upon which we should place much more emphasis.

**Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE).** – (NL) Mr President, Commissioner, the main challenge is to do things differently – in a much less fragmented way, to have much less parallel activity from the Member States and the European Union – and also to invest in a better-targeted way. I believe that businesses and the citizens are watching on. The report, and your proposal for the Innovation Union, generate expectations. Indeed, we should also expect a lot from it, but I still want to highlight a couple of points on the instrumental side, in particular, including those of the European Union.

First of all, we need to ensure that funding is made easier and there need to be more subsidies and incentives for venture capital. Secondly, we already have the funds, but they are ring-fenced and separately governed: the regional funds, the agricultural funds and so on. We need to move to a multi-fund approach. Will you agree with this in the forthcoming regulations? What kinds of proposals will this be covered by?

My next point is that we have just seen that investment in research and development largely ends up in the twelve ‘old’ Member States, so further distribution is required. A re-balancing is needed. How can you support businesses and citizens in the ‘new’ Member States in this regard?

Finally, I wanted to say that this is a process that we would like to help you consider. How will you now conduct the dialogue? It says in your communication that, at the end of 2011, you will hold a convention and take some other action. I have already had the opportunity to speak with you a couple of times, including in the form of a dialogue, at the knowledge for innovation summits in this House. How will you organise that from here on in? We want to see more of you. In fact, I have a lot of faith in that. You currently coordinate such things in the Commission and that did not happen in the past. Along with Mrs Merkies, we will keep a close eye on you.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D).** – (RO) Mr President, I congratulate Mrs Merkies for the excellently drafted report. To ensure that the Innovation Union initiative contributes to

sustainable development, the education system needs to be modernised, the rules on accessing existing funds need to be simplified and converged, forecasts need to be made about the skills required, partnerships between universities and businesses need to be encouraged, along with standardisation, and intellectual property needs to be protected. However, broadband access is an absolute prerequisite for Innovation Union, given that it improves the level of citizens' involvement.

We call for more funds for innovation, but I think that, for consistency's sake, as we have also done in other cases, we must avoid prejudicing through this report the future of the cohesion policy, the common agricultural policy and the multiannual financial framework. I hope that this amendment will receive majority support tomorrow.

Finally, we call on the Commission to transpose the Union's innovation policy into an action plan with specific objectives and measurable targets.

**Francesco De Angelis (S&D).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to congratulate Mrs Merkies on her excellent work. I believe we have to invest more in innovation, research and knowledge, and we have to do so more boldly. Innovation must not be swallowed up by research. Innovation and research are not the same thing, and I welcome the fact that the report points out this strategic distinction.

The report sets some important objectives: it targets ordinary people and workers through social innovation; it introduces measures to facilitate access to credit and finance for small and medium-sized enterprises; and, above all, it establishes an increasingly close and direct relationship linking together businesses, research centres and our universities.

Facilitating and simplifying life for small and medium-sized enterprises through a one-stop shop and focusing on talent, creativity and innovative ideas are essential conditions for growth and development. Europe must take innovation policies seriously if we want to find a way out of the crisis and build a better future for our younger generations.

**Ioan Enciu (S&D).** – (RO) Mr President, at the moment, research and innovation are the privilege of the most developed Member States, which is detrimental to the European Union. The European Union must take this factor into account and foster the balance of potential innovative capabilities throughout the whole EU. Support must be given to new Member States to develop their research infrastructure by allocating additional resources, as Commissioner Quinn promised not so long ago. This is the only way we can be sure of preventing the gap between the east and west of the European Union from widening in terms of research and innovation, thereby enabling us to achieve our aim of creating a proper Innovation Union.

An idea is being promoted for structural or agricultural funds for financing innovation and research. I think that this notion is neither feasible nor fair. A realistic solution is to create specific instruments which will be earmarked only for research and innovation.

**António Fernando Correia De Campos (S&D).** – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner, Mrs Merkies, this strategy is important to all European countries, especially those whose economies are not competitive enough. It is essential to the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises. Jobs are being created more actively today. It is essential to universities and laboratories, whose survival depends, in part, on their relationship with productive sectors. It is essential to the financial system, which will find a new market in innovation as the classic manufacturing model becomes exhausted.

Innovation is top of the European agenda and, as it is a pillar of the Europe 2020 strategy, it will have to be served by new financial instruments so that it does not succumb to budgetary constraints in the current situation.

Finally, I should like to congratulate the rapporteur, Mrs Merkies, on her important contribution to a more innovative Europe with a more knowledge-based economy.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D).** – (LT) Mr President, I would like to add to the many congratulations my group colleague has already received for drafting an excellent report. The European Union is at a difficult crossroads. On the one hand, we urgently need to address problems caused by the crisis while, on the other, we need to adopt measures now, so that we can find an adequate response and implement the long-term commitments we have made to counter challenges like climate change, energy security, food security, our ageing society, and so on.

In today's global context, innovation policy has a huge impact on all areas of life and, in future, it will become the main pillar of economic, cultural and social development in the European Union. Hitherto, this policy has been fragmented and more oriented towards academic and scientific research, rather than transforming innovative ideas into real or adapted products or services that would stimulate growth and job creation.

I support the comprehensive approach to innovation policy and believe that together, we must establish a strategic and integrated European Union innovation policy that is geared to practical adaptation.

**Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE).** – (SK) Mr President, innovation is one of the main driving forces of European competitiveness, without which it would be impossible to achieve our set strategic objectives. For example, there is a pressing need for innovation in the areas of public health and environmental protection.

The Union and the Member States must therefore provide financial or tax incentives to businesses and individuals, in order to focus on scientific and technical research and development in areas that are less lucrative but highly beneficial to the public. In my opinion, we are still allocating relatively small amounts of the budget to research and I would therefore also like to emphasise the need for financing instruments in this area in future EU budgets.

The area of European research would also be supported by the introduction of a single European patent which, besides protecting the intellectual property of innovators, would also have the potential to reduce lengthy and costly bureaucratic processes, and avoid repeat applications from one entity in all Member States.

#### IN THE CHAIR: ROBERTA ANGELILLI

*Vice-President*

**Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, achieving the Europe 2020 strategy target of increasing research and development investment to up to 3% of GDP could create 3.7 million jobs and boost annual GDP by up to EUR 795 billion by 2025.

To achieve this, however, we will need 1 million additional researchers at a time when many of them are attracted at the moment by non-European countries where there are mechanisms to remove the bottlenecks preventing ideas from reaching the market. The fragmentation of research systems and markets, the underuse of public procurement to

stimulate innovation, the precarious nature of funding and the slow standardisation process are the problems which European Union countries are still faced with. However, we hope that they will be taken seriously if we want the Innovation Union programme to be one of the successes of the Europe 2020 strategy. This is the only way we will be able to achieve sustainable growth in Europe and resist the ever-growing pressure of globalisation.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** – (RO) Madam President, the Innovative Union initiative promotes a strategic European policy geared towards business. Particular attention must be focused on the objectives set in the Europe 2020 strategy. Innovation must be guided by public interest, improving quality of life and promoting social well-being. This means that globalisation and research are key factors in external competitiveness and economic growth. Additional factors include active commitment from SMEs and the involvement of European citizens.

The Commission should focus on technologies which underpin smarter, sustainable systems. All the strategies linked to adapting the EU to post-crisis conditions must be aimed at creating sustainable jobs. In this respect, Member States must promote stable economic models based on creativity.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, in a Europe without borders, and with an ongoing globalisation process, innovation can and must play an important role in enhancing social cohesion by improving the quality of services provided, no matter which sector they are from.

However, better services also require an improvement in vocational training. Therefore, I feel it is beneficial to initiate specific vocational training programmes, with a focus on innovation and encouraging creativity, aspects which can be nurtured, taught and enhanced at different stages of the training process. The European Commission must encourage and support Member States so that they include, to a larger extent, as part of the components making up national education systems, elements such as innovation and creativity, and encourage improvement in cooperation between education systems and the business world by developing new curricula and doctoral programmes, including at cross-border level.

**Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE).** – (GA) Madam President, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this topic.

Madam President, it is incumbent on us to sell the message to third-level educational institutions, research organisations and, indeed, private sector companies concerning the opportunities that are available under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for Research and Development. We must, at all times, highlight the benefits that can accrue to small and medium-sized companies under what is the largest publicly funded research programme in the world.

Support for research and innovation is vital for peripheral regions within the Union if they are to stay competitive in an increasingly globalised world. From an Irish perspective, the FP7 is helping to develop research that is, in turn, creating jobs and delivering new goods and services for our people. EUR 270 million has already been drawn down by Irish organisations in the agriculture, food, fisheries, health, energy, transport and ICT sectors.

In conclusion, I say that this is vitally important, particularly during these very difficult economic times, both in Ireland and throughout the Union.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Madam President, at a time of serious economic and social crisis, like that currently being experienced in a number of European Union Member States, a debate on innovation in all fields of knowledge and in all economic and social areas is welcome. However, it is necessary for this innovation to be guided by criteria of defending the public interest, improving people's quality of life, promoting social welfare, and preserving the environment and the balance of nature.

In this context, it is essential not to forget unemployment, which already affects around a quarter of young people, many of whom have been through higher education; not to forget that jobs are increasingly insecure, especially for women and young people; and not to forget the growth of poverty and social exclusion.

It is therefore time to go from words to actions, and to demand the necessary budget and policies that recognise the true value of people, their creativity and their capacity for innovation, and that respect workers' dignity.

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** – Madam President, a recent GE survey established that 85% of key people believe that innovation is the way to future prosperity for the European Union. It is one thing to establish it, but another thing to make it a reality. That is the challenge facing us.

I had the privilege of drawing up the draft opinion for the Committee on Culture and Education on the Innovation Union and I emphasised a number of points. One was the need to avoid duplication. This was prompted by an answer given by the Commissioner in her hearing, when she pointed out that one particular strain of salmonella was being researched by 40 different institutes – a clear case of a lack of joined-up thinking, and a waste of money. We also need productive cooperation between the various stakeholders. I saw a very good example of that at Santiago de Compostela University, which tracked research all the way until a new company was founded. Thirdly, we need to develop the European patent.

**Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Member of the Commission.** – Madam President, I would like to thank all the Members who took part in the debate. I think everybody here agrees that we need to improve the conditions for innovation.

Most of the speakers talked about jobs. That is what Innovation Union is all about. It is about taking the very basic blue-sky research that we do so well in the European Union, and translating it all the way to the marketplace so that we provide the jobs here, and they are not provided abroad.

A number of speakers raised the role of the regions. This is really important and we need to develop synergies between research and innovation funding, on the one hand, and structural funds, on the other. Indeed, Ms Merkies underlines that point in her report. All the regions of Europe should play to their strengths. I will go in a couple of weeks' time to Debrecen, in Hungary, to the 'Week of innovative regions of Europe' conference, where all the regions will come together to talk about the concept of smart specialisation.

Some of the less advanced regions can obviously gain from the networking and know-how that is fostered by research and innovation programmes while, of course, using structural funds to build up the research infrastructure facilities that they require.

Mr van Nistelrooij raised the matter of the Innovation Convention, and I would like to say that this is well advanced. As part of the preparation, we have invited Mr Reul, the Chair

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, to talk about the committee's representation at the heart of the Innovation Convention. Obviously, we have also invited representatives of the Member State governments, business leaders, stakeholders of all kinds, policy makers and so on.

We think this is very important because one of the things I consider essential in relation to innovation is that we should have a 'living document': in other words, that we will have the opportunity on a regular basis – in Parliament, internationally at the Innovation Convention, and also at Heads of State or Government level – to monitor progress and to insist, where the progress is slow, on speeding it up. That is very important if this initiative is going to be successful, to create the kind of jobs we want and to deliver what we expect it to deliver at the end of the day.

**Judith A. Merkies**, *rapporteur*. – Madam President, I would like to thank colleagues and innovative citizens for all their very valuable contributions. It was a very inclusive process. We are in unison here: we want to boost economic growth and move towards a different, sustainable social model. We want to stimulate SMEs and start-ups; we want to update our skills in lifelong learning; we want social innovation. We want the money actually to be spent on research and development, not to be kept in the pocket.

We agree that research is not a synonym for innovation; innovation stands on its own, though it might derive from research. Both are extremely important, but innovation needs to get an extra push. To clear up the issue of funding coming from the agricultural funds or the structural funds: the intention is not that we move funding from the CAP or the structural funds to the innovation funds, but that we pay attention to the horizontal aspect of innovation. We need innovation in agriculture and in regional policy too: we need it everywhere.

So where do we go from here? Let us not end with this one report. We cannot let it end here. Let us take this onwards, together with the Member States. Let us really try to get a different mindset. Let us spend the money, but let us change the policy. Let us change our economic model, move towards a sustainable model and create jobs.

The report said that innovation is not only a product, process or service, but also a movement. So let us be innovators here today. Let us start a movement: a movement for innovation.

**President**. – The debate is closed.

#### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Edit Herczog (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (HU) Innovation means the successful implementation of ideas in practice. We must not allow the Innovation Union to remain merely an exciting idea, a political objective. In the Committee on Budgets, we are working on firmly implanting the Europe 2020 flagship in the European Union's strategy through an independent financial framework. The Innovation Union is able to play a role in transforming the crisis-laden economy of Europe, which will be guided by sustainable job creation. If 3% of the EU's GDP can really be earmarked for research and development by 2020, 3.7 million new jobs will be created, which would increase annual GDP by some EUR 800 million by 2025.

We must treat it as a fact that the key to and, at the same time, the only effective tool for the European Union's economic recovery is research and innovation. This is why we must

unanimously support Member States devoting 1% of their gross domestic product to research and technological development. Willingness to take risks is a prerequisite for successful innovation, but this does not mean a risky investment for Member States now. The return is guaranteed.

In order to maintain European competitiveness, a change of approach is needed, the key drivers of which are enhancing innovation potential and encouraging more people in Europe to become entrepreneurs. This is why we revised the Small Business Act, making it consistent with the Single Market Act, which is able to show synergy with the Innovation Union as well. Our measures must be harmonised, because this way, efficiency is also increased many fold.

**Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE)** , *in writing*. – (PL) Innovation, competitiveness, sustainable development, creativity, efficiency – these are all fine words which fit in very well with current political, economic and labour market trends, but are there any concrete measures or real projects behind these words? Those who hear them will certainly react positively to their use, and they will help to promote the ideals they represent, and to gain support for them. Let us not forget, however, that these slogans must be backed up by practical measures, and that the appropriate legislative decisions must be taken and laws implemented which will contribute to the achievement of the objectives which have been mentioned, namely, the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. Europe and Europeans hold enormous potential; our task is to put in place the appropriate conditions for this potential to be exploited fully.

**Joanna Senyszyn (S&D)** , *in writing*. – (PL) As a member of the Committee on Culture and Education, I support the 'Innovation Union' initiative. I would stress the role played by education, vocational training and social research (into the fight against poverty and social exclusion) within the framework of this initiative. It is important to simplify the administrative procedures involved in submitting applications for EU programmes in the field of scientific research and innovation in such a way as to make it possible for more enterprises and scientific institutions to take part in them. Simplified procedures will also ensure that public funds are used more effectively and efficiently, and that the administrative burden is reduced.

Innovation policy should go hand-in-hand with policy in the field of vocational training and the labour market. New products and services are intended to help increase employment levels and promote the forecasting of future trends and the qualifications needed on the labour market. In view of the fact that women account for only 30% of European researchers and only 13% of directors of European research institutions, I would highlight the need for the 'Innovation Union' initiative to take account of future guidelines as regards a more balanced representation of women and men in scientific disciplines. I would also call for such guidelines to be implemented effectively by the Member States.

## **16. ILO Convention supplemented by a recommendation on domestic workers (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the debate on the oral question to the Commission on the ILO Convention supplemented by a recommendation on domestic workers, by Pervenche Berès, on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (O-000092/2011 - B7-0305/2011).

**Pervenche Berès**, *author.* – (FR) Madam President, Commissioner, I am delighted that, in advance of the next General Assembly of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), we can debate this welcome initiative of the ILO proposing to the Member States of this organisation a convention supplemented by a recommendation on domestic workers.

Commissioner, on behalf of the entire Parliament, I would like to thank you for agreeing to conduct this debate in the run-up to this conference. We believe this is best practice.

As we know, domestic work officially accounts for between 5 and 9% of all employment in the European Union. Looking at what we have collectively endorsed with the Europe 2020 strategy, it is clear that what are termed local jobs, namely, those that enable us to take care of our elderly citizens and those that enable women with young children to get back into work, correspond to situations that enable this domestic work to develop.

I believe that, within the European Union, it is essential that we support this welcome initiative of the ILO, since the development of our societies is fraught with tendencies – we know what they are. Global demand for domestic services will go on increasing, but we cannot, on the one hand, welcome the adoption of a decent work agenda by the ILO and, on the other, leave an entire section of the labour market totally unregulated and unprotected by any legislation.

The European Union must set an example. I know that, at times, we have a tendency to think that the conventions of the ILO are perhaps not for us. No. We, too, must lead the way on this point. In the area of domestic work, I believe that the ILO offers us an excellent opportunity for shedding light on the operation of some of our labour markets, since domestic work is too often precarious work, undervalued and undeclared. I will tell you quite simply. I understand that some of you have expressed concern about the recognition or regularisation of illegal migrants, but I am also concerned with the battle we have to fight in each Member State against undeclared work. In the area of domestic work, we know how these practices have, unfortunately, developed.

We hope that, next June, on the basis of a tripartite negotiation, the 100th session of the International Labour conference will set this convention and this recommendation in motion. We believe that they are essential for transforming what is too often a relationship of exploitation into a legal relationship. We hope that the legal recognition of domestic work can be achieved. Those who work with our elderly citizens and children must enjoy the freedom to associate and rest time and must not be victims of harassment and arbitrariness.

We must also ensure that this tool, which we are proposing to the ILO, will enable us to define, in this area, what we mean by the notion of decent work, whether with regard to the question of working hours, the question of paid leave, or the question of housing conditions.

I would like to know how the European Commission intends to approach these negotiations and this draft convention, and on the basis of what mandate it will act on behalf of all of us, so that tomorrow, in the area of domestic work, the European Union can set an example and that we, too, can give expression to the values of the European Union.

**László Andor**, *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, I welcome today's discussion on a new ILO instrument for domestic workers.



It is an important contribution to the second round of discussions on the new international standards which will probably be adopted in a few weeks' time at the 100th session of the International Labour conference.

As you know, the European Commission is a firm supporter of the ILO's decent work agenda. The Commission closely monitors and facilitates coordination among the Member States and has worked for the speedy ratification of a number of important instruments adopted in the last decade.

There are many reasons for developing new standards in the area of domestic work. For instance, there are a large number of domestic workers across the world, many of them belonging to vulnerable groups. Their precarious status and the fact that they often fall within the informal sector are also very important issues.

In the European Union, employment in this sector is very likely to expand, given population change and higher female participation in the labour market. That is why it is crucial to raise domestic workers' professional profile and improve their image.

Let me now look at the practical issues raised by the question and first explain the Commission's role in the ILO negotiations on a new convention and recommendation on decent work.

The institutional context needs to be borne in mind. The new instrument will be an international agreement. The Commission will therefore fulfil the role conferred on it by the Treaty with due regard for the special features of the ILO, where the European Union has observer status only – unlike the Member States which are members. That is why the Union cannot ratify ILO conventions itself.

The Commission followed the discussions actively and facilitated coordination among the experts of the Member States during the first round of discussions at the ILO in 2010. It has analysed the instruments as they developed during the negotiations in the light of EU legislation. The Commission was attentive, in particular, to any sections of the draft convention that could affect freedom of movement for workers.

As the new ILO Convention will comprise matters of EU competence, the Member States need to comply with the EU *acquis*.

In the next and final round of discussions in June, the Commission will continue to play an active coordination and facilitation role by working with Member State experts. My departments have been in contact with the social partners and a number of NGOs that have approached the Commission, and have had exchanges with the rapporteur for the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the professionalisation of domestic work.

Secondly, there is the question of the role of Europe 2020 in ensuring that precarious domestic jobs are transformed into decent sustainable jobs. We need to bear in mind the sector's potential in terms of job creation and reconciling work and family responsibilities, and thus its role in meeting the objectives of the employment strategy. However, we must not forget the need to ensure that domestic jobs – not all of which should be regarded as precarious and undervalued or underpaid – are indeed decent jobs.

What is more, the fight against undeclared work, which is widespread in the domestic work sector, is an integral part of the Europe 2020 strategy as the first annual growth survey has confirmed. Ways of moving from informal or undeclared work to regular

employment will be covered by the guiding principles on enabling conditions for job creation which the Commission announced in the communication on the Europe 2020 flagship initiative, 'An agenda for new skills and jobs'. We will be putting forward those guiding principles next year. A number of Member States have useful experience in working to reduce the informal sector and precarious employment, for example, by introducing service voucher systems.

Thirdly, there is the question of amending the current framework legislation on health and safety at work – Directive 89/391/EEC – and on combating discrimination – Directive 2000/78/EC.

It is worth pointing out that the definition of domestic workers in the draft ILO Convention is very wide. It not only covers persons working in private households, but also for them, as well as persons employed by employment agencies.

Domestic servants are excluded from the definition of workers in the framework directive on health and safety at work. However, the EU legislator seems to have intended that the concept of domestic servants be interpreted narrowly, so not all domestic servants under the Convention are excluded from the scope of the EU health and safety at work *acquis*.

Lastly, EU occupational and safety and health legislation provides minimum requirements and does not, therefore, prevent any Member State from introducing more stringent measures at national level. Consequently, the Member States are free to include domestic servants within the scope of their national legislation.

For the time being, the Commission has no plans to amend the framework directive on occupational safety and health. Nevertheless, the Commission considers that the current ILO initiative is a good opportunity to reflect on the situation of domestic servants in Europe.

I would add that Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation does not exclude domestic workers, so no amendment is needed for the ratification of the ILO Convention. The Commission issued a report on the application of the directive in 2008 and will continue to follow its implementation in the Member States closely.

The fourth point concerns ways of informing domestic workers of, and strengthening, their rights. Although not all domestic workers are low-skilled and do not all work in precarious conditions, they are a vulnerable category and the Commission encourages the Member States to ensure they are properly protected by developing and enforcing their labour rights.

The Commission expects the problem of undeclared work by non-EU nationals to be dealt with in part by the Employers' Sanctions Directive 2009/52/EC, which the Member States have to transpose into national legislation by 20 July this year. The directive will help to end the exploitation of illegally staying third-country nationals by some employers who pay them inadequate salaries and impose unsatisfactory working conditions.

One step forward would be agreement on the proposal for a directive on a single permit which provides for a common set of rights for third country workers residing legally in a Member State.

Let me now turn to the fifth and last point regarding the Commission's role in promoting exchanges of best practice involving policy on domestic workers. In this connection, I

want to mention a private project which the Commission is currently implementing at the request of this House, and which seeks to encourage the conversion of precarious work into work associated with rights.

Following a call for proposals issued under the pilot project in 2010, the Commission is co-funding a project that focuses on the consequences of the economic and financial crisis for precarious domestic, migrant and young workers, and on Member State measures to improve their rights. The project encourages exchanges of best practice, in particular, involving precarious workers' collective representation. A second call for proposals, to be issued this year, will relate more specifically to action to improve the rights of the poorest workers, including domestic workers.

The pilot project will also involve a study to gain a better understanding of precarious work in 12 Member States, and to promote its conversion into employment relationships carrying more social rights, in particular, by looking at what the Member States can do in practical terms to encourage this transformation and identify a core of basic social rights. A case study of the situation of migrant domestic workers in Italy was carried out recently in connection with a project on decent work and industrial relations cofinanced by the Commission.

Lastly, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee have called for sector-wide information and awareness-raising campaigns on the protection of workers' health and safety.

**Csaba Óry**, *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (HU) Madam President, the European People's Party is very pleased by today's debate. I believe thanks are due to Mrs Berès for initiating it, enabling us to join the ILO initiative, on the one hand, and, on the other, making us think about all that needs to be done for a category of workers whose conditions we often do not know about and, when we do know something, it tends to be depressing.

We also believe that the draft decision which has been published deserves support, and we think that those elements are particularly good which underscore and highlight that the aim here is to create decent working conditions and regulated employment in a field where, indeed, mainly migrant workers are concerned, particularly in certain countries, in a totally unregulated and uncontrolled manner, and very often in the form of a kind of modern slavery.

We have already mentioned that there are black holes in labour law regulation. This was discussed in connection with atypical contracts. Obviously, this could be a subsequent step towards being able to guarantee minimum working conditions and other rights linked to employment, and I agree with the Commissioner that of course, we ought to put our own house in order first. While welcoming the ILO initiative, what we ourselves can do is to call on the Member States of the European Union to do all they possibly can in their own labour law regulations in order to expose this black hole and regulate it accordingly.

**Alejandro Cercas**, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (ES) Madam President, Commissioner, the first thing that I wish to say is that all the socialist delegates subscribe to the words uttered by Pervenche Berès, Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, and we are very pleased about the position just taken by the Commissioner on this initiative of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The socialist delegates appreciate enormously the work that the ILO has been doing since it started. We believe that it has made an invaluable contribution to the history of humanity

and also of Europe. There is, too, no doubt that this new initiative on domestic work is very important, because there is a very large number of people who do this type of work and because it also very much affects women and immigrants.

We, the socialist delegates, believe that it would be very good if, at the next meeting in June, this draft convention and recommendation were to be approved and if Parliament, the Commission and the Council were to be active – not just passive but active – so that Europe measures up to what it says and its actions reflect its words.

If we do this, we will be helping – at least – to extend the Decent Work programme. We will be helping the world and many people, but primarily we will also be helping ourselves to be decent and to respect each other as an institution and as Europeans, but also so that our continent maintains its social model, which is impossible to maintain if we are an island of protection and rights within a world of misery and lack of protection.

Perhaps, Commissioner, it is also time for the Commission, the Council and for all of us to reflect on Europe because not everything is resolved here, either. In Europe, there are contractual forms that affect immigrants and women in this area of domestic service which are very precarious and contain major loopholes.

I would be pleased if, in the heat of this debate and deliberation, we were to understand that there are certain loopholes that must be closed in legislation in the EU and also in many Member States. We have problems regarding the health and safety of these workers. We have problems in many countries regarding the legal forms according to which the work is developing. Furthermore, we also have a major problem in the fight against abuse and discrimination against immigrants, many of whom work in European families.

We have many initiatives in hand at the moment. Commissioner, now would be the time to enhance our ethical commitment to assist the ILO, to help ourselves, and to perform work which is worthy for the future of humanity.

**Marian Harkin**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, I think it is important for us to have this discussion in the light of the upcoming adoption of an ILO Convention on Domestic Workers. I believe that we in this House should commend the ILO for its excellent work.

Domestic work – family caring, for example – takes place exclusively in the family home. Traditionally, of course, in the EU, it was women's work, although that is changing. Migrants and people from more marginalised communities are also more likely to work in a domestic situation. The value of domestic work is not included in our GDP calculations and, for that reason among others, domestic work is very often invisible and is certainly undervalued. Without any doubt, this leaves domestic workers in a precarious position, and very often they have to rely on the goodwill of employers. This is simply not acceptable. As we say in the resolution, it leaves domestic workers more likely to face discrimination and, indeed, multiple forms of discrimination.

The importance of this ILO Convention is that it will provide legal recognition of domestic work as work. Following on from that, domestic workers should be in a stronger position to exercise their rights. I think it is crucial that domestic workers have a right to core labour standards. That, of course, includes access to social security, health and safety protection and maternity protection, as well as provisions on working and rest time.

Because domestic work takes place largely within the family home, there can be issues of privacy involved. We need to find innovative and workable solutions to ensuring the health and safety of domestic workers and, in the overall context, to ensure that their rights are fully respected. One solution might be the use of model contracts. In the canton of Geneva, for example, there is a model contract which is automatically entered into by all employers and employees: it deals, *inter alia*, with issues such as the minimum wage, family allowances and holidays. I believe that contracts of a similar type operate in Belgium. They give greater security to domestic workers, simplify matters for employers and eliminate grey areas and ambiguities.

I also want to say that I am very happy to support the amendments from the Green Group where they talk about the inclusion of au pairs and undeclared work, but come forward with practical suggestions to ensure we are proactive in ensuring access to the open labour market for domestic workers.

Finally, I want to support the author of the resolution, Ms Berès, when she says that the European Union should lead the way on improving conditions for domestic workers. Commissioner, I was interested in your words on occupational health and safety and, even though you do not foresee extending the directive, I think your comments leave some scope for flexibility in ensuring better health and safety conditions for domestic workers.

**Jean Lambert**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, I, too, would like to congratulate Ms Berès for taking the initiative on this oral question and resolution. I would also like to thank the Commissioner for his answer. It is all too rare that we get a very specific response from Commissioners to questions in an oral question.

My group very much welcomes the proposal from the ILO for the Convention and the recommendation on domestic workers. We are aware that at least 20 of our own Member States have already commented on the draft and been actively involved in this. We look forward to early ratification by those Member States and, indeed, some interesting implementation.

People have talked very much about how this group of workers is particularly vulnerable. A lot of the work is done behind closed doors; it is invisible. Often, the workers themselves are isolated, and access to trade unions is often very difficult in this situation. Quite often, if you are taken on as a live-in employee, you can be seen as being on call 24/7. We know in this House that on-call working is a very controversial issue and something that we do not particularly welcome.

As has been said, domestic work is often undervalued, or seen as traditional women's work that 'anybody can do', but we have also made the point that a lot of it is actually quite skilled. It can quite often involve nursing care and various aspects of child development. Domestic workers often occupy a real position of trust. While many employers value that, there are only too many who do not. For example, in the UK we have seen a recent case of somebody actually ending up with a prison sentence on a charge of trafficking for domestic servitude. The young woman involved lost four years of her life to her employer, who received a nine-month sentence. So we need to look at how we identify that form of trafficking.

Migrant female workers are very vulnerable indeed. We have come across cases, for example, of workers entering the country with diplomats and having their passport taken away;

people in that situation have virtually no freedom, have no access to assistance and do not know about their rights.

I want to raise one issue concerning Article 17 in the proposed Convention, which is about the role of agencies. I think this is something that we really should be looking at at European level because, increasingly, it is being seen as a weak link in many of the issues that we are facing.

**Thomas Händel**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (DE) Madam President, Mr Andor, ladies and gentlemen, I understand from what you have said, Mr Andor, that the European Commission is obviously taking notice of this subject. I also conclude that it is being handled with too much restraint.

It is not the case, as Mr Óry emphasised previously in this discussion, that we know too little about what domestic workers in Europe do. On the contrary, we know so much that there is an urgent need for regulation. Between 5% and 9% of all employees work in private households. This is the worst paid group of employees in Europe, with the fewest rights and the largest proportion of illegal workers. Action is urgently needed in this area and this includes the European Commission. The situation we currently find ourselves in will not be improved by the free movement of workers. For this reason, the initiative in this International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention is very welcome and deserves our support.

I would like to comment on four points. Firstly, there are gaps in the definitions in the ILO Convention. If domestic workers cannot work occasionally, sporadically or not on an occupational basis in this sector, then the opportunities for circumventing the legislation are already in place. Secondly, there is an urgent need for mandatory employment contracts in this area. Thirdly, we must have not only sensible, generally binding minimum wage regulations, but also equal employment rights. Fourthly, these workers must be covered by a statutory social security obligation, in particular, given that this is a minimum wage sector.

I am pleased that Mrs Berès has called in her statement for a campaign to introduce standard working conditions. This is a good thing. We must ensure in future that work which does not pay a living wage is outlawed by society and is no longer tolerated.

**Jaroslav Paška**, *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – (SK) Madam President, according to a report from the International Labour Organisation, domestic work represents around 5% of the total number of jobs. It is a kind of invisible form of employment, which is not carried out in factories, shops or offices, but in the homes of private individuals. Women account for 90% of the workers, and do not work in a collective, but alone, in houses. The aim of their work is not to produce added value, but to provide care or services similar to the tasks which women usually carry out free of charge in their own homes.

The work is therefore financially undervalued and is often not considered to be normal employment under labour law, as a result of which workers are exposed to unauthorised and unfair treatment. The work is very often undeclared, and workers who come from rural areas or from abroad have low qualifications, do not know their rights, and become vulnerable individuals. Undeclared work deprives workers of social protection and deprives society of social security contributions. If we do not want domestic work to remain undeclared, we should turn this work into a proper profession and overcome the usual stereotypes, which often present such work to us as valueless.

We should therefore professionalise it. For that, however, we need to introduce new measures into the employment systems of individual Member States, including specific regulations in the area of tax, social security, and employment and civil rights which take into account the specific nature of work performed in this way. There are generally financial reasons behind the current tendency to provide and perform undeclared domestic work, because undeclared work is more advantageous to both parties than officially registered work which, besides tax and deductions, burdens both parties with extensive bureaucratic demands.

The aim of Member State measures should therefore be to amend or even eliminate the advantages of undeclared work, so that domestic work becomes a specific form of dignified employment.

**Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (PPE).** – (FR) Madam President, I would first of all like to thank Mrs Berès, Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, for allowing us to have this debate in the run-up to the conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and Commissioner Andor for agreeing to conduct this debate between Parliament and the Commission.

I would first like to highlight an initial point. Many have discussed our knowledge, or our lack of knowledge, of this world of domestic work. Simply, when we say, with some hesitation, that domestic workers account for between 5% and 9% of all workers, that means that we do not know the world of domestic work. The ratio is 1:2. I therefore call for our provisions to enable us, at European level, to gain a better understanding of the world of domestic work so that we can guarantee it better.

The second point I would like to make is that, while we have established the Europe 2020 strategy and we know that, in this Europe 2020, low-level jobs will be particularly under threat, we have to do everything here, in this world of domestic work, to ensure that specialisations are absolutely recognised.

Mrs Lambert said just now that a lot of domestic work is quite skilled, and we must identify such work and promote it and promote the skills involved.

The third point is that Europe cannot be founded on values of human rights and social rights and develop the relevant EU *acquis* without also developing the protection of wages, the protection of working hours, the protection of health, knowledge of the demands of domestic work, and without providing domestic workers with a certain number of guarantees. I wish to sound a word of warning, which is that this should not lead to the integration of workers that are in a totally illegal situation. We also need to know how to prevent the values we defend from being hijacked.

**Edite Estrela (S&D).** – (PT) Madam President, I am in full agreement with what has been said by my colleagues from the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament who spoke before me. I should like to congratulate the Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Mrs Berès, on this initiative which enables us to debate a very important subject. I would also thank you for your involvement, Commissioner, and for the sensitivity you have demonstrated.

Domestic work is economically and socially important, but it is work that is poorly paid, routine and undervalued by society. It has already been said that domestic work is mainly carried out by women, who are subjected to all kinds of discrimination. In fact, on the subject of discrimination, I should like to mention that, in my report on the revision of the

Maternity Leave Directive, I advocate the inclusion of domestic workers within the scope of the directive.

Domestic workers are currently excluded from the Maternity Leave Directive and from any European legislation guaranteeing the right to maternity protection, and they are not even covered by the Health and Safety Framework Directive. This is unacceptable discrimination that must be put right.

This International Labour Organisation Convention is therefore welcome and should be supported, in order to dignify domestic work and give these women the rights that other women have.

**Kyriacos Triantaphyllides (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) Madam President, a series of studies being carried out by the Member States illustrates that domestic workers face various problems, including low wages, discrimination, a heavy workload, conduct unbecoming on the part of employers and even sexual harassment. These problems are compounded by the fact that they are not treated as employees and therefore have no protection under international conventions or EU case-law. The term ‘domestic worker’ therefore urgently needs to be changed to ‘domestic employee’ and the question of contracts and terms of employment urgently needs to be regulated.

Approval of an ILO Convention on domestic workers would be a first step in plugging the existing gap, by safeguarding rights in connection with their employment, pay rises, the adoption of criteria for employers or even by clarifying that domestic employees need not necessarily stay in the employer’s home. As part of this endeavour, the European Union, in cooperation with the Member States, should seek to amend existing legislation, so as to cover domestic employees and, most importantly, to encourage cooperation between the Member States and exchanges of best practices.

**Thomas Mann (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Andor, ladies and gentlemen, in Germany, domestic workers are not covered by employment protection legislation. They are also not included in the European framework directive. The reason for this is that the state is not allowed to monitor compliance with regulations in private residences. There are similar obstacles in other Member States. A total of 15 of them have not included domestic workers in their employment protection laws.

However, these workers do deserve special protection. I am therefore in favour of adopting the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention, but I do not think it would be sensible to incorporate large parts of the convention into EU law. This would prevent the national parliaments from making independent decisions on the ratification of individual ILO conventions. Nevertheless, I would like to thank the ILO working groups for their excellent work.

There are still a few problems, for example, in the definitions. Article 1 should cover not only domestic work, but also household services. The article concerning rest periods is also problematic. Every employee must be given one rest day per week, but this does not have to be in the same week. The Member States must come to individual agreements on the time periods, because a certain amount of flexibility is needed.

The ban on payments in kind which are directly related to work, such as uniforms, tools or protective equipment, seems to me to be incomprehensible. I suspect that what is meant is that they must not be deducted from pay. In other words, we need a ban on deducting payments in kind from wages.



Once these inconsistencies have been resolved, I believe that we should sign the ILO Convention on domestic workers. Thank you very much, Mrs Berès, for your initiative, and thanks to all of those who have said that they want to attempt to make progress on behalf of people who, as we all know, deserve protection.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** – (RO) Madam President, I welcome the initiative to adopt a supplement to the International Labour Organisation Convention through the recommendation on domestic workers. I should mention that they account for 9% of the total workforce, but do not enjoy the same social guarantees. Failure to declare these activities is detrimental to both the workers and the state, which cannot levy taxes on them. I think that this category of worker is particularly vulnerable to abuse from employers. In many cases, domestic workers are immigrants without papers, which prevents them from contacting the authorities whenever they are exploited. I call on the Commission to adopt as urgently as possible a package of measures intended to protect and provide them with information. Close cooperation is required between national authorities and European institutions, with the aim of improving working conditions for this category of worker.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, the ageing population is increasing the demand for domestic care services. As a result of the economic crisis, the unemployment rate has risen to roughly 10%, with the youth unemployment rate even reaching 20%. In many Member States, economic recovery programmes have entailed a reduction in health budgets, which has also led to many employees being made redundant in this sector.

Failure to declare domestic care or cleaning services deprives these workers of the chance of a decent living and, especially, a decent pension. Given that the workers in these sectors are mainly women who are generally responsible for their own family, both in terms of raising children and looking after elderly relatives, I would like to ask the Commission whether any statistics are available on domestic workers at EU level and the level of each Member State. I would also like to ask what measures the Commission is intending to take to ensure not only the necessary flexibility but also the respect for the rights of these workers.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Madam President, I consider the debate we are having here important, as well as the initiative from our Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on the need to acknowledge the value of domestic workers, the majority of whom are women providing domestic help, cleaning and catering services, and who are commonly victims of serious exploitation and discrimination, which is even worse when they are also immigrants. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance to tackle this problem.

I also believe that a new International Labour Organisation convention and recommendation could be of significant help and should be adopted, if possible, at the 100th International Labour conference. There can, therefore, be no doubt that the Commission's role – your role, Commissioner – in encouraging the Member States, and also in drawing greater attention to the exact content of the convention, could be very important. However, I also challenge you to give your full attention to Union legislation to guarantee labour, salary, maternity and illness protection, and social security rights for domestic workers, both male and female.

**Elisabeth Schroedter (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Madam President, I would like to refer once again to Mr Andor's speech. He asked very cautiously whether the European Commission

has powers and responsibilities in this area. I believe that it has more responsibility, in particular, with regard to freedom of movement.

Posted workers immediately come to mind. One example of this is Berlin, where the unions have set up an advisory centre for posted workers. The largest group of workers who contact this centre, not only from Berlin but from throughout Germany, are nurses who are employed as domestic workers, sometimes in appalling and highly precarious working conditions. This is one way of circumventing minimum working conditions. Some of these people even have bogus self-employed status. This is why we have tabled this amendment. The majority of these people are workers from other EU Member States and from third countries. This demonstrates that the Commission certainly does have a responsibility to take action and to introduce minimum standards in this area.

**László Andor**, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, this discussion highlights the pivotal role of the ILO in the world of labour. I believe that we have to continue our close cooperation with the ILO because its work in this field, and in others of course, applies very much to the European context.

But the discussion also showed that many of the employment and social policies we are dealing with apply to domestic workers, although they are regarded as constituting a separate group.

Skills development, health and safety, decent wages and social security, the development of contractual arrangements – and I could continue this list, of course – are all aspects which have to be covered in the context of domestic work, and indeed the European Union must be a leader globally as well.

We need to work very closely with Member States, because many possibilities for action can be found at Member State level, and we continue with the exchange of best practices in this area.

As I mentioned in my introductory statement, we are currently implementing a pilot project, at the request of Parliament, to convert precarious work into decent employment, and two calls for proposals have been launched already. The second, issued earlier this year, is specifically a call for action to strengthen the rights of poorest workers, and there will be a study to better understand the phenomenon of precarious work as well.

Concerning the question on health and safety legislation and how it applies to domestic workers, the Commission at this moment does not plan to extend the scope of the Health and Safety Directive but we now have an opportunity to think about new rules on domestic workers as a group. It is important to note that Member States can, of course, introduce more stringent national rules. They can, for example, include domestic workers in national rules and go beyond the minimum requirements.

**President**. – To conclude the debate, I have received one motion for a resolution <sup>(2)</sup>.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 12 May, at noon.

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(2) See Minutes

## 17. Antibiotic resistance (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the debate on the oral question to the Commission on antibiotic resistance, by Paolo De Castro, on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (O-000048/2011 - B7-0304/2011).

**Paolo De Castro,** *author.* – (IT) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, today we have an important chance to tackle the growing problem of antibiotic resistance in animals responsibly and with commitment. This is a strategic issue for the agriculture sector and, in particular, for the future of the European animal husbandry system.

The data show that around 50% of the antibiotics in Europe are prescribed for animal use. If used properly, antibiotics are a useful tool that helps farmers keep their livestock healthy and productive and safeguard its welfare. Therefore, we are not here to demonise antibiotic use in animal husbandry, but we want to ask the Commission to provide a concrete response for the more efficient and effective use of antibiotics, in order to reduce resistance in animals.

In our resolution of 5 May 2010 on the EU Action Plan for Animal Welfare, this House underlined the link between animal welfare, animal health and public health, and urged the Commission and the Member States to address the difficult problem of antibiotic resistance in animals in a responsible manner. In particular, we called on the Commission to collect and analyse data on the use of all animal health products, including antibiotics, with a view to ensuring the effective use of such products. A year later, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, which I have the honour to chair, is here to ask the Commission to implement all relevant initiatives to resolve this long-standing problem, which can also have consequences for human health.

What is needed, Madam President and Commissioner, is a tangible commitment from the Commission that it will use the data collected to put the results obtained into practice, not only encouraging research and monitoring activities, but also ensuring more effective use of antibiotics as an important tool for fighting animal diseases.

On that front, I would point out that some studies show that low-energy animal feed could lead to a higher incidence of diseases and, hence, more antibiotic use. It would therefore be desirable to review the ban on the use of animal meal for non-ruminants, in line with the opinion of the European Scientific Veterinary Committee. These are the requests made in the resolution adopted in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on 12 April this year and which will be put to the vote in this Chamber tomorrow.

It has been hard work for the last few months, and for that reason I would like to personally thank Mrs Paulsen, the shadow rapporteurs and all the parliamentary groups for their invaluable contributions to establishing a common text on this issue. The future competitiveness of European animal husbandry may depend on how this problem is managed, and its cross-cutting nature calls for commitment and responsibility, through a coordinated approach and a shared political will.

**László Andor,** *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, first, I would like to emphasise that the Commission is fully aware of, and correspondingly concerned by, the threat to public health posed by antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

In reply to the first question, in 2009, the Commission asked the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to take a lead in collecting comparable data on the use of antimicrobials in animals. The project, the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption

(ESVAC), started in the third quarter of 2009. The EMA has worked together with the Member States, EU agencies and relevant stakeholders to develop the system. Findings from the data available from 10 Member States will be published as soon as possible. Twelve additional Member States are voluntarily starting to collect these data. The aim is to broaden the system to cover all EU Member States. A further aim is to have data on a more detailed level – at animal species level, for example.

Why do we need these data? We need them in order to adopt a science-based approach: only on the basis of this type of data can scientists properly assess the true risk of AMR attributed to the use of antimicrobials in animals.

Turning to the second question, I can assure the honourable Members that the Commission is aware that the control of AMR requires a multi-disciplinary approach. Therefore, the Commission consults its own services, Member States' relevant agencies and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis, for example, through meetings and public consultations. The Commission is working on AMR in close collaboration with its relevant agencies, in particular, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the European Food Safety Authority, the EMA and the European Union Reference Laboratory for AMR.

In reply to the third and last question, I would like to announce that the Commission is developing a five-year strategy on AMR. This strategy will adopt a holistic approach and will contain concrete proposals for further action to address the issue of AMR in relation to public and animal health. The strategy will be based on the Council conclusions and recommendations on AMR and on the outcome of the consultations I have already mentioned.

Work on the revision of EU rules on veterinary medicinal products and medicated feeding stuffs is ongoing. New tools and instruments to tackle AMR are being considered, for example, as options in the impact assessment.

Based on the evidence gathered, the Commission will decide the details of its legal proposal. Our objective is to present this Commission strategy on 18 November 2011, which will be European Antibiotic Awareness Day.

**Elisabeth Jeggle,** *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (DE) Madam President, Mr Andor, firstly, I would like to thank the chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr De Castro, for his initiative and for the question to the Commission on this important issue. Mr Andor, after listening to your speech, I would first of all like to ask you to move from theory to practice, because we need to take concrete action.

Antibiotic resistance is a subject which we must take seriously and which, hitherto, has had too little attention paid to it in the context of animal husbandry. Antimicrobial agents are undoubtedly very useful when properly used. They help farmers to keep their animals healthy and productive and also ensure high levels of animal welfare. In order to make sure that antibiotics remain effective in combating disease in animals and in humans, we must take a coordinated approach at an EU level.

In recent weeks, we have held intensive discussions on this subject in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and we have considered it in detail. The joint resolution was adopted by the committee on 12 April with a large majority: 34 votes in favour and 2 against. The excellent cooperation with all the shadow rapporteurs from the different groups has resulted in a very balanced and well thought-out text, which we must adhere to, and I would ask you to do so, during the vote in plenary tomorrow. The report is

balanced because it focuses on animal welfare, the problems of antibiotic resistance and cost-effectiveness as far as the farms are concerned.

Therefore, I would once again like to thank everyone involved in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and also Mrs Paulsen for the fruitful cooperation. I would now like to see the Commission take action.

**Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos**, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (PT) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the consequences of using antibiotics to treat animal diseases are well known and increasingly worrying. It is an area that is already subject to fairly demanding standards, to which the European Parliament has also been dedicating attention, and on which many positive initiatives are being realised, such as the network for collecting data on antibiotic resistance. However, these initiatives are still not enough.

I therefore call on the Commission not just to improve the monitoring mechanisms, but also to adopt the measures necessary for wider-ranging data collection, and for the series of incentives encouraging best practices in this area to be included in the common agricultural policy legislative package that is being drawn up.

The text of the resolution tabled by the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, whose most important recommendations received broad support, as my colleague, Mrs Jeggle, has just confirmed, deserves detailed analysis by the Commission. Above all, the recommendations need to be translated into concrete measures to better defend public health and the image of the quality of European products of animal origin.

**Marit Paulsen**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group.* – (SV) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I think that we have done a fantastic job in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. It is rare for a politically mixed gathering to be as much in agreement as we were this time.

Antibiotic resistance is, in fact, the biggest threat to both animal and human health that we face. At one time, infectious diseases were the most common cause of death in children, young people and young animals. In this regard, do not forget that both animals and people are mammals. We have the same immune defences and we have the same sensitivity to stress, which means that if we do not feel well, our immune defences are impaired and we need antibiotics because we will be more susceptible to serious infections.

We considered this with regard to human medicine. We took measures, we tried to tighten up our use of antibiotics and to understand what could happen. Do not forget that if we lose antibiotics as a weapon, we will be back to the time of our great grandmothers when what we currently think of as trivial infectious diseases, such as a small child's ear inflammation, could once again become fatal diseases. This is not something that is particularly easy to deal with in this respect and we should be taking it seriously. As I said, I am extremely pleased.

There are, of course, some details of this resolution that I would have liked to have more of or that I would have liked to be different, but the main thing is not that all of the commas are in place; what is important is our collective will to start the process. That is what I hope the Commission will take on board, because I believe that we will get an almost unanimous 'yes' tomorrow. I hope so, and I hope that this will be a strong signal that makes you sit up and listen. Thank you.

**Richard Ashworth**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, I would like to thank the Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development for bringing this issue up.

I share his concerns at the level of antibiotic resistance being found in bacterial infections of livestock. I agree with him that there should be growing concern that there is evidence of overspill to the human population, where we are finding that the efficacy of many once-reliable antibiotics has declined significantly, thereby putting human health at risk. So I support the intent of the debate. I also agree that the important first step must be to work closely with the various agencies and the pharmaceutical industry in order to monitor and assess the problem.

I want to state, however, that, contrary to popular opinion, this is not exclusively a problem brought about by intensive agriculture. The random use of antibiotics in agriculture is – or has been – common to all farming, be it large or small. Indeed, I would go further and say that large-scale producers today are usually vertically integrated under contractual terms with the processing sector, and that the prophylactic use of antibiotics is usually prohibited or restricted under quality assurance schemes.

However, it is clear that there must be some measure of control, and I look forward to hearing details of the Commissioner's strategy in due course. There are three points that I want to make. Firstly, any measures taken must be based on sound scientific evidence; secondly, they must be proportionate; and, thirdly, they should not place a further burden of regulation, and thereby cost, on the agricultural and veterinary industries.

**Martin Häusling**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, this is a very serious issue. It is of great importance not only for animal husbandry in future, but also primarily for human health. We must not forget this. This is ultimately not a problem for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. However, as has once again become clear, we do not have enough data. Only 10 Member States have provided information and that is too few. We need to deal with this subject rather more quickly and we need accurate controls.

We are paying too little attention to one factor in this context and that is intensive farming, both in large-scale buildings and in certain regions. We need to look at this and we can do something to prevent it. By restructuring our agricultural policy, we can make sure that the focus is on good animal welfare, that animals live in conditions suitable for their species, and that the animals are strong and robust, on the principle that prevention is better than cure.

What we also need, and this is a job for the Commission, is a long-term plan to reduce the use of antibiotics in agriculture. The main impact of antibiotic resistance is on workers in the agriculture industry, in other words, farmers and their employees. These people already have huge problems in this area. Another cause for concern is the suspicion that antibiotic resistance is being transferred directly via foodstuffs. We need to look carefully at this in the interests of the health of the European population. There is an urgent need for action here.

It is important to make it clear that 50% of all antibiotics are used in animal husbandry, which is far too much. Therefore, we must ensure that this figure is reduced in the long-term interests of agriculture and of public health.

**Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE).** – (RO) Madam President, World Health Day, celebrated on 7 April, had as its theme this year antibiotic resistance, regarded as a global threat to public health. Every year, 25 000 people die across Europe from causes associated with antimicrobial resistance. Animals and food of animal origin could play a role in the development of antimicrobial resistance in people. This is why the resolution being debated today is an important document.

The most important word in any discussion on this subject is 'caution'. It is not antibiotics which are bad, but their uncalculated and immoderate use is dangerous. Antibiotics must not be demonised, but used with caution in both people and animals. The measures proposed by this resolution on providing more information to vets and farmers must therefore be implemented as vigorously as possible. With regard to imposing a ban on the use of antibiotics as additives in animal feed, this must be subject without fail to international agreement.

A recent study highlights that in the United States, almost half of the samples of meat tested in stores contained *Staphylococcus aureus*, half of which were resistant to at least three classes of antibiotics. This demonstrates the widespread use of antibiotics in animal husbandry, and I must say that European farmers have had enough of being the only ones to adopt and comply with the rules at the risk of a drop in their incomes.

**Ulrike Rodust (S&D).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Andor, ladies and gentlemen, we must do everything we can to counteract the spread of antibiotic resistance. We are in complete agreement on this. This involves the responsible use of antibiotics in human medicine and in animal husbandry. The European Union must take determined action. We must not allow 25 000 people to go on dying from infections caused by resistant bacteria every year in the European Union alone. Antibiotics must not be used routinely or preventively. We must ensure that antibiotics are used responsibly in all the Member States.

It is of the utmost importance that every possible effort is made to keep livestock healthy from the rearing stage onwards, until they are fully grown. Ensuring that animals are healthy is the best means of avoiding infection and the use of antibiotics. The way the animals are fed is decisive in this respect, but the husbandry is also important.

We should also be open to the use of alternative methods, such as homeopathy and phytotherapy, in livestock husbandry. We need more research and more information in Europe about these alternative approaches.

**Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE).** – (NL) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, my home country, the Netherlands, is champion of the world. Not at football, alas – we just missed out on that last year – but in the use of antibiotics in cattle breeding. No other country in the world uses as many antibiotics in cattle breeding as the Netherlands. There are very serious consequences to this, and they are not limited to this usage in the Netherlands; 25 000 people die as a result of bacterial infections in Europe every year, as other Members have said. They reach people via meat. 90% of the chicken meat in the Netherlands contains resistant ESBL bacteria, and last month, it even came to light that resistant bacteria had been found in vegetables after being passed on via manure and the soil. Madam President, this really has to change. A country like Denmark has shown that things can change and that, with sound, strict measures, you can maintain a strong and healthy cattle-breeding sector whilst using far fewer antibiotics.

The Commission has stated previously, and again this evening, that it will put forward more far-reaching measures in November. They will then be fleshed out in 2012. I want to urge the Commission to really give this a high priority and not allow it to depend on the Member States, which are too slow to put the right measures in place.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE).** – Madam President, it is very clear that there is cross-party agreement on concern around antibiotic resistance. However, given what the Commission has just said – that we have data from 10 Member States and that it is not yet available to us – we really are talking about concerns about which we do not have detailed facts. We need that information.

I would like to see a league table of Member States' usage of drugs per head of animal population, so that we can actually look at countries which adopt best practice and benchmark them against others that are not. I do not mean to point the finger, but rather to allow those Member States who might be overusing antibiotics to improve their animal husbandry practices.

It is also right to say that farmers do not use antibiotics willy-nilly; they use them when animals are sick. Antibiotics are costly and therefore, farmers do not just use them as they would give an animal a drink of water.

We need to be a bit balanced in this debate. Let us get the information. We look forward to the strategy in November to help us avoid this growing problem for the European Union and its animal and human population.

**Peter Jahr (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, I am very grateful to the author of the question, the chair of our committee, for putting this subject on the agenda. The use of antibiotics in animals involves closely linked advantages and disadvantages. The medicines which help animals to remain healthy can, if used improperly, represent a major risk for people. Therefore, we need to take a coordinated, integrated and, above all, scientific approach, because we will have to continue using antibiotics to treat animals in future. At the same time, we must also reduce the risks for people.

This report meets precisely these requirements. I hope that the Commission will take up Parliament's suggestions, wishes and demands. Most importantly, as many previous speakers have said, we need an analysis of the current situation by all the Member States in the interest of animals, of European agriculture and, in particular, of the citizens of the European Union.

**Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE).** – (SK) Madam President, I would like to point out one fact which links veterinary medicine to human medicine. All other European congresses of microbiologists, when they spoke of resistance to antibiotics in humans, spoke of the so-called methicillin-resistant *staphylococcus aureus*. This is a scourge for which those of us in human medicine no longer have an effective antibiotic: we do not know how to cure it. Up to 25 000 people die from it every year.

Do you know how it came into being? Simply through the irresponsible use of antibiotics in veterinary medicine. Tonnes of antibiotics are literally stuffed into animals. In the case of animals that are dosed preventively, it is added to their food, and it thus also weakens man and his ability to combat the infections he gets, despite being in hospital, through hospital strains.



I would like to urge the Commission to speed up the gathering of research from all Member States, but also to support new research into antibiotics that would be effective for humans and would save lives.

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Madam President, the penetration of the food chain by products from the chemical and pharmaceutical industry is an inevitable consequence of the intensification of agricultural output. The human organism thus becomes the natural victim of the efforts of food producers to produce as much food as possible, as cheaply and as efficiently as possible.

We must therefore start to monitor the use of modern chemicals and pharmaceuticals in agriculture very closely and, in the interests of protecting the health of our citizens, also assess very purposefully, systematically and permanently the consequences of using these substances. Only the high quality permanent monitoring of food products will enable us to recognise early on the risks or threats which new technologies pose to the current population.

We may be talking today more about antibiotics and the growing resistance to them, but we must take note of the issue and assess it more comprehensively. I also hope that the Commission will regard concern for food safety as a coherent strategy.

**László Andor,** *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, the Commission strategy on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which we plan to present in November, will provide further ideas on how the Commission, together with the Member States and stakeholders, could tackle AMR in all sectors involved. Some of these actions may require changes in legislation. Others may not. The key is to select the right tools for the task in hand.

I fully agree with you that this is not only, or chiefly, an animal farming issue. This is why our aim is to reduce the development of antimicrobial resistance attributed to the use of antimicrobials in animals.

There are various tools here: education, awareness-raising campaigns and so on. By the same token, we believe that data has to be collected to promote better understanding of the problem. The Member States do actually show interest in providing data, which is encouraging.

And yes, we do have a timetable for action. Preparatory work is ongoing, including impact assessment, the revision of rules on veterinary medical products and so on. Legislative proposals, as I already mentioned, will follow in 2012.

The Commission very much welcomes the valuable input of Parliament and looks forward to continued collaboration with Parliament, Member States and stakeholders from all sectors, with the common aim of protecting the health of citizens throughout the European Union.

**President.** – To conclude the debate, I have received one motion for a resolution <sup>(3)</sup>.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 12 May, at noon.

#### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

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<sup>(3)</sup> See Minutes

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D),** *in writing.* – (PT) Antibiotic resistance in livestock and domestic animals has become a problem in recent years. In order to tackle this growing problem, I call for increased research and better controls on its effects in the food chain. If used correctly, antibiotics are an effective tool, but I call on the Commission to introduce concrete measures to make their use more efficient so as to reduce animals' resistance to antibiotics, as this is a problem that impacts on the entire food chain. It particularly affects levels of antibiotic resistance and so has human health repercussions. To achieve this, the budget for the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) must include the funds required to increase field work and to effectively monitor this problem. Finally, given the importance of this problem, I call on the Commission to draw up a plan for tackling it at EU level that takes into account the full extent of this problem of combating antibiotic resistance, above all, the link between animal health and antibiotic use, and the link between animal and human health.

**Ismail Ertug (S&D),** *in writing.* – (DE) We are absorbing antibiotics in our food, which is resulting in increased resistance. This is one area of medical progress which is gradually being ruined and we have known about this for a long time. Mr De Castro referred to the measures that have already been taken. I support the proposals made in the resolution. There are two aspects of this which I would like to focus on.

Regulations alone are not enough. In the dioxin scandal, we have seen how easily they can be undermined, if individual 'black sheep' behave in a very negligent way. Of course, we must have regulations and we need to introduce monitoring systems, but that is not the entire solution.

In the medium and long term, the solution is to make the use of antibiotics largely superfluous. We can achieve this firstly by investing in research and networking expert knowledge, secondly, by passing this knowledge on to farmers and vets and thirdly, by providing information to consumers.

We must make clever use of market forces, because it is consumers who decide in the long term how their food is produced.

**Pavel Poc (S&D),** *in writing.* – (CS) According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, there are 400 000 patients in Europe infected with multi-resistant strains of bacteria. I therefore welcome the resolution of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, in which I support, above all, the demand for the proper collection and analysis of comparable data on the sale of preparations for veterinary use, and the subsequent use of these preparations on animals. The collection of this data should be mandatory for all EU Member States. If the EU adopts strict measures on the use of antibiotics with agricultural animals, we can also expect changes to legislation in third countries, particularly because of the financial losses that would be caused by a restriction on meat exports to Europe. For example, 74% of all antibiotics used in the US are applied in animal husbandry, for preventing diseases or boosting the growth of healthy animals. Half of all meat products inspected in shops in the US contain dangerous bacteria (MRSA). This problem has been known in the US since 2008, and there has been no fundamental solution to date. Non-pathogenic multi-resistant strains of bacteria also represent a risk in view of the possibility of transgenic transfers and, according to the latest research, shared resistance. The emergence of new, multi-resistant strains of bacteria may deprive future generations of the possibility of making effective use of antibiotics. A scenario such as this

could have catastrophic consequences for human health. Resistance to antibiotics represents an enormously serious problem which must be resolved immediately and effectively.

**18. Agenda of the next sitting: see Minutes**

**19. Closure of the sitting**

*(The sitting was closed at 23:35)*