



## Focus

# Election of new president, Danish priorities, Hungary debate top January plenary agenda

The parliament began the year with the election of a new president, followed by elections for vice-president and quaestors. That was followed Wednesday morning by a debate on the Danish priorities during their 6-months at the helm of the Council and on Wednesday afternoon by a debate on recent controversial developments in Hungary.

MEPs had their first opportunity to have a say on the talks for a new international agreement on **reinforced economic union**.

Also on the agenda during the 16-19 January plenary session in Strasbourg were rules to improve recycling of **electrical waste**, safer pest control and a call for measures to cut massive **food wastage** in the EU.

Read on for more details of what went on.

## Newsletter - 16-19 January 2012 - Strasbourg plenary session

### **Parliament to elect new President, Vice-Presidents and Quaestors**

The European Parliament's first act in 2012 will be to elect its new President, fourteen Vice-Presidents and five Quaestors. The three candidates declared so far to succeed Jerzy Buzek are Martin Schulz (S&D, DE), Diana Wallis (ALDE, UK) and Nirj Deva (ECR, UK).

### **Debate on Hungary**

Recent political developments in Hungary will be debated with Commission President Barroso on Wednesday at 15.00h. MEPs will comment on Hungary's controversial new constitution, which took effect on 1 January 2012, the laws implementing it and other measures taken by Viktor Orbán's government.

### **Danish Presidency to present its work programme**

Denmark's "Europe at work" programme and priorities for its six-month Presidency of the Council (January-June 2012), will be presented by Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt on Wednesday at 10.00h, and then debated with MEPs.

### **Priorities for international agreement on economic union and economic governance**

Parliament's demands with regard to talks on a new international agreement on reinforced economic union will be set out in a resolution to be voted on Wednesday. The resolution will also stress the need to ensure that any new economic governance system promotes growth and solidarity.

### **Stop wasting e-waste**

Europe is throwing away ever more fridges, phones and gadgets and often failing to recover valuable raw materials, MEPs warn. Legislation to improve collection and recycling of electric and electrical waste, while cutting red tape for producers, has already been provisionally agreed with Member States and will be put to a vote on Thursday.

### **Safer pest control**

Pest control products - to repel insects or kill bacteria - must be approved as safe before they can be sold in the EU. On Thursday MEPs will vote on a provisional deal, already negotiated with the Council, which provides for stricter health and environment checks on these "biocides", whilst streamlining the marketing approval process.

### **MEPs to call for measures to halve food wastage in Europe**

At least 50% of food wastage in the EU today is avoidable, and urgent measures are needed to tackle it, says a draft resolution to be voted on Thursday. MEPs will suggest awareness campaigns, food education courses, better packaging and new sell-by date labelling. In a separate debate with Commissioner Ciolos, they will also air the issue of rising food production costs.

### **European space strategy: adequate funding for Galileo and GMES programmes**

The EU's Galileo satellite navigation programme should get proper long-term funding and its GMES earth observation programme should be officially included in the EU's multi-annual financial plans, says a draft resolution on "EU space strategy" to be put to vote on Thursday.

## **Opening: tributes to Gilles Jacquier, Manuel Fraga Iribarne and Václav Havel**

**Outgoing President Jerzy Buzek paid posthumous tributes to Gilles Jacquier, a French journalist killed in the Syrian city of Homs, Spanish statesman Manuel Fraga Iribarne, and Czech statesman Václav Havel. He also expressed Parliament's condolences to the families of those killed in an Italian cruise liner disaster at the weekend.**

Mr Buzek paid tribute to Gilles Jacquier, a French journalist killed in the Syrian city of Homs on 11 January. Noting that over one hundred journalists had been killed worldwide in the past year alone, he reiterated Parliament's commitment to freedom of speech.

He also expressed Parliament's condolences to the families of the people killed in the Italian cruise ship disaster of 14 January. This tragedy should never have happened, and "lessons must be learned" from it, he added.

Manuel Fraga Iribarne, who died on 15 January, was a great statesman, a key architect of Spain's democratization, a founder of the Partido Popular and, in the 1980s, an MEP, said Mr Buzek, who asked the daughter of the deceased, MEP Carmen Fraga Estévez, to convey Parliament's condolences to the entire family.

Finally, Mr Buzek paid tribute to Václav Havel, who died on 18 December 2011. Mr Havel, a symbol of the "Velvet Revolution" and European reunification, was an outstanding intellectual, writer and courageous statesman, whose address to the European Parliament two years previously had been greeted with a standing ovation, recalled Mr Buzek. Mr Havel's funeral in Prague, which Mr Buzek attended, had been an "intercontinental expression of respect" for this great European, he concluded.

A minute's silence was held for both statesmen.

## Martin Schulz elected President of the European Parliament

**MEPs elected Martin Schulz to be the new European Parliament president with 387 votes in favour out of 670 cast. The 56-year old German MEP will lead the European parliament for two and half years, until the beginning of the next legislature in July 2014.**

Martin Schulz (S&D, Germany) replaces the outgoing President Jerzy Buzek (EPP, Poland).

### **"This Chamber is the place where the interests of the people are defended"**

In a brief address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg immediately after the vote, Mr Schulz said: "We must grasp the fact that people in Europe have little time for institutional debates because they are too busy worrying about their future, their jobs, their pensions (...). This Chamber is the place where the interests of the people are defended".

President Schulz warned that "for the first time since it was founded, the failure of the European Union is a realistic possibility" adding that, our interests can no longer be separated from those of our neighbours; on a shared understanding that the EU is not a zero-sum game, in which one person must lose so that another can win. The reverse is true: either we all lose – or we all win. The fundamental basis for this is the Community method. It is not a technocratic concept, but the principle at the heart of everything the European Union stands for!".

Over the past two years summits of the Heads of State and Government, meant "the representatives of the peoples of Europe have essentially been reduced to the role of rubber-stamping agreements reached between governments in backrooms in Brussels: the European Parliament will not stand idly by and watch this process continue", Mr Schulz said, adding that "the intergovernmental agreement on a new fiscal union will be the first test".

"Whoever breaches the values enshrined in our Charter of Fundamental Rights must reckon with us as adversaries. That is our duty as Members of the European Parliament". He also announced the presence of Hungary Prime Minister Viktor Orban tomorrow in plenary to discuss his country's controversial constitutional provisions.

A full version of the President's address is available via the link next to this article.

### **Full result of the vote for the President of the European Parliament**

Under Parliament's Rules of Procedure, to be elected President, a candidate must win an absolute majority of the valid votes cast, i.e. 50 per cent plus one. Blank or spoiled ballots do not count in calculating the majority required.

The result of the first ballot was as follows:

Votes cast: 699

Blank or invalid votes: 29

Valid votes cast: 670

Absolute majority of votes cast required to be elected: 336

Votes for the candidates:

Martin Schulz (S&D, DE) 387: Mr Schulz duly elected President of the European Parliament

Nirj Deva (ECR, UK): 142

Diana Wallis (ALDE, UK): 141

The votes to choose Vice-Presidents and Quaestors will take place on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning.

You can follow the ballot live on EP Live and EBS+.

## 14 Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament elected

**All 14 European Parliament Vice-Presidents were elected in the third round with a simple majority of the valid votes cast Wednesday morning. In the afternoon, five Quaestors were elected.**

Gianni PITTELLA (S&D, IT) 319 votes  
 Miguel Angel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ (S&D, ES) 295 votes  
 Anni PODIMATA (S&D, EL) 281 votes  
 Alejo VIDAL-QUADRAS (EPP, ES) 269 votes  
 Georgios PAPASTAMKOS (EPP,EL) 248 votes  
 Roberta ANGELILLI (EPP,IT) 246 votes  
 Othmar KARAS (EPP, AT) 244 votes  
 Edward McMILLAN-SCOTT (ALDE, UK) 239 votes  
 Isabelle DURANT (Green/EFA, BE) 238 votes  
 Alexander ALVARO (ALDE, DE) 235 votes  
 Rainer WIELAND (EPP, DE) 230 votes  
 Oldřich VLASÁK (ECR, CZ) 223 votes  
 Jacek PROTASIEWICZ (EPP, PL) 206 votes  
 László SURJÁN (EPP, HU) 188 votes

### Role of Vice-Presidents

Vice-Presidents are Members of the European Parliament Bureau. The Bureau is the body that lays down rules for Parliament. It draws up Parliament's preliminary draft budget and decides administrative, staff and organisational matters.

### Five Quaestors elected

On Wednesday afternoon, Parliament elected 5 Quaestors, Members of the Parliament who deal with administrative matters directly affecting MEPs themselves.

Quaestors were elected in the third ballot by simple majority of the votes. They are:

Astrid LULLING (EPP, LU)	<b>273</b> votes
Jim HIGGINS (EPP, IE)	<b>254</b> votes
Lidia GERINGER DE OEDENBERG (S&D, PL)	<b>235</b> votes
Bogusław LIBERADZKI (S&D, PL)	<b>216</b> votes
Jiří MAŠTÁLKA (GUE/NGL, CZ)	<b>207</b> votes

## Alarm bells for talks on closer economic union deal

**Parliament on Wednesday again sounded the alarm about possible pitfalls for the intergovernmental agreement currently being negotiated on closer economic union. Its resolution voices overwhelming doubts as to the need for any such agreement outside the EU system. It also stresses that democratic accountability must be improved, and says the deal should aim to boost growth, not just enforce austerity.**

The resolution was adopted with 521 votes in favour, 124 against and 50 abstentions.

Taking the floor ahead of the vote, the spokespersons for the political groups broadly agreed that, for different reasons, the planned international agreement was unnecessary and even dangerous.

Elmar Brok (EPP, DE) said, "This agreement would not have been our first choice of how to approach the issue. We must avoid a split EU and the rights of all EU institutions must be guaranteed".

Roberto Gualtieri (S&D, IT) said, "Our resolution is critical because we could have avoided an intergovernmental system. It is paradoxical that the ink hardly having dried on the six pack, some Member States already want to amend it through an intergovernmental system".

Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE) said, "This intergovernmental agreement is a very dangerous exercise. We must limit its scope to the minimum: to the golden rule. ... Within a maximum of five years all its content needs to be incorporated into the EU treaties".

Daniel Cohn Bendit (Greens/EFA, DE) said, "This international agreement is completely useless - we do not need it. Even the markets are not convinced by it because they want a coherent economic policy. This is not the response the crisis is demanding".

Martin Callanan (ECR, UK) said, "This agreement will do nothing to solve the immediate problems. It has diverted attention and resources away from truly addressing the crisis. The debts of many Member States are unsustainable and they need substantial reform and subsequently devaluation".

Soren Bo Sondergaard (GUE/NGL) said, "We will not achieve stability for the Euro with this agreement and its austerity will not lead to growth. It also strengthens EU integration without asking citizens. We cannot support it.

Nigel Farage (EFD, UK) said, "Austerity alone will not work. You are driving countries into depression just to save the euro project. Southern countries particularly need to get out of the euro and devalue".

### **A new treaty with little purpose**

The resolution raises doubts as to the necessity of any such intergovernmental agreement, given that its key aims could be better and more effectively achieved through the normal EU system. Moreover, the resolution argues that it is only through the tried and tested normal EU system that a true economic and fiscal union can be achieved.

### **... and many dangers**

The resolution also highlights the potential problems that the new agreement, in its current form, could create. These include compounding the lack of democratic accountability, and the resolution therefore argues that the national parliaments and the European Parliament must be included in all aspects of future economic coordination and governance.

An intergovernmental deal also risks permanently embedding a "two-speed" EU. To prevent this, the resolution says the substance of any such agreement should be incorporated into normal EU law within five years.

Finally, the resolution warns against developing a lopsided approach to dealing with the crisis which places too much emphasis on austerity. The agreement should therefore include commitments by the Member States in favour of a redemption fund, project bonds, a financial transaction tax and a roadmap for stability bonds, it says.

*Procedure: Political groups' motion for a resolution*

## Danish Presidency - Europe at work in the Parliament

**On Wednesday morning, Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt presented the programme of her Government's 6-month Presidency of the Council. Most of MEPs expressed their support and urged her to take a firm stand in solving the financial crisis.**

Ms Thorning-Schmidt focused on the programme's priorities, which are budget discipline, growth and jobs, green policies, ensuring safety of citizens and strengthening the voice of Europe in the world. "The path out of this crisis goes through more Europe, not less", she stressed.

Commission President José Manuel Barroso said that unless the roadmap presented in October is implemented, "our prospects for growth will not be achieved".

### **Group speakers**

Joseph Daul (FR), on behalf of the EPP, told Ms Thorning-Schmidt: "You need to be a political Presidency" because "the times in which we are living call for European players not to just oil the wheels or build bridges but to be committed players who make themselves heard".

"We are victims of financial markets and credit rating agencies, who decide on Europe more than we do", said Hannes Swoboda (S&D, AT). He criticised the talks on a new international fiscal compact agreement, citing the Financial Times description of it as "an irrelevant distraction".

"What Standard and Poor's is saying is in fact true", said Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE) and "European leaders should read their reports". The solution, he said, is "as everyone knows: stability bonds, common bonds, you choose the name".

Speaking for the Greens, Rebecca Harms (DE) praised the Prime Minister for her "critical approach" to the Europact, which excludes both the European and national parliaments from influence, the Presidency' commitment to greening and called for Eurobonds and called on the Presidency to "act now".

UK MEP Martin Callanan (ECR) thanked the Prime Minister for her frank assessment that a "financial transaction tax would do damage to European economy" and expressed the hope that the Presidency would reject "a common corporate tax base" and instead stimulate "growth and the internal market".

Speaking for the GUE group, Søren Søndergaard (DA) said that the Presidency programme looked at as if "it had been written by Merkozy". "No more EU-dictated cutbacks" he said: "We need jobs and improvements in general welfare".

Morten Messerschmidt (EFD, DA), likened the Prime Minister to the EU as regards lack of "popular support". He urged Mrs Thorning-Schmidt to "Come to Brussels, come to Strasbourg" as this would "minimize damage to her population". "

## Orbán faces political group leaders in heated debate on Hungary

Passions ran high in the chamber on Wednesday as several political group leaders raised concerns not only over specific legal and constitutional provisions in Hungary, but also what they saw as a wider undermining of democratic values in that country. Others vigorously opposed this view, warning that such an approach went too far. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told MEPs that straightforward solutions to meet concerns could be found.

The debate in Parliament came one day after the European Commission started infringement procedures against Hungary on three specific laws. The discussion saw highly contrasting views from opposite sides of the House on how to address the situation.

Speaking for the Danish presidency of the Council, Europe Minister **Nicolai Wammen** said that all EU countries must comply with the treaties. "If there are any doubts the Commission should examine and analyse the situation. That is exactly what the Commission has done." He stressed the need for dialogue with Hungary.

Commission President **José Manuel Barroso** said further action will depend on the response of the Hungarian institutions to the formal notices about the independence of the national central bank, the judiciary and the data protection supervisory authority, adding, I ask for the respect of democracy in Hungary in the best interest of Hungarians.

The problems raised by the Commission Tuesday in its formal letter can be solved quickly and easily, **Orbán** said. The measures taken over the past year and a half were necessary because Hungary was on the brink of economic collapse in 2010, he said, while accepting that some measures may have run counter to the interests of businesses and lobbyists. Turning to the new Hungarian constitution, Orbán reminded MEPs that no legal concerns had been raised about its articles last year.

EPP leader **Joseph Daul** noted that Hungary has undertaken many reforms in the past and is emerging from a period of poor economic conditions and severe problems of corruption. Turning to EU laws and principles and whether Hungary is respecting the democratic EU principles of freedom and democracy, he said, "I am sure that Mr Orbán is respecting these principles".

However, Socialist leader **Hannes Swoboda** said that essential issues, like the independence of judiciary - a breach of European values of democracy - are at stake. "You want to exercise power, stay in power. That is the spirit behind the changes and by your measures you are undermining freedoms you fought so hard for in Hungary"

Different international organizations have raised serious concerns about the new Hungarian constitution, media law, and the central bank, Liberal leader **Guy Verhofstadt** said, there is more at stake than an infringement procedure. The conformity of the Hungarian constitution and cardinal laws should be checked against basic EU values such as freedom, democracy, and the rule of law, he said.

In a press release yesterday Orbán said he was going to Strasbourg to "defend Hungarian honour against the European left," Greens leader **Daniel Cohn-Bendit** said, adding: he should remember that the EU is a house that we are building all together because we are fighting for freedom and democracy here. Orbán should also remember that even if he has the majority, "the minority has the right not to live in fear".

Speaking for the ECR group, Hungarian MEP **Lajos Bokros** talked about a multiplication of crises in Hungary. He criticised the government's economic policy and said before the new constitution came into force, Orbán's government had modified the old one several times "to avoid scrutiny".

**Marie-Christine Vergiat** for the GUE/NGL group criticised the new, rushed-through constitution, and the speedy legislative procedure. She expressed concern about respect for European values in Hungary and urged the EU to find a more effective solution.

# Focus

For the EFD group **Zbigniew Ziobro** said "we are using the power of the EU to restrict a sovereign state." He praised Orban for having the courage to bring about the changes.

## Better management of e-waste

**More of the EU's broken fridges, phones and gadgets are set to be collected and recycled, following MEPs' approval on Thursday of new targets agreed with Council. The update to Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) legislation offers consumers new possibilities to return small waste items to retailers and will also cut red tape for businesses.**

"After difficult negotiations I am very satisfied that we have agreed ambitious but achievable collection rates with Council. Europe will now recover more raw materials, which is excellent news both for the economy and for the environment", said rapporteur Karl-Heinz Florenz (EPP, DE) after the agreement was overwhelmingly approved in plenary by a show of hands.

Once Council formally approves the updated directive and it enters the EU lawbooks, Member states will have 18 months to update their national legislation.

### Collection and recycling

All Member States must increase their collection of e-waste, regardless of whether they already meet the current flat-rate target of 4kg per person per year.

By 2016, most will have to collect 45 tonnes of e-waste for every 100 tonnes of e-goods put on sale three years previously. By 2019, this must rise to a rate of 65%, or alternatively they can collect a comparable figure of 85% of e-waste generated. Ten countries needing to improve their facilities will have an interim target of 40% and may take until 2021 to reach the final target.

To help everyone play their part, Parliament successfully argued that consumers should be allowed to return small items (such as mobile phones) to any larger electrical goods shop, without needing to buy a new product.

Better processing will help to recover more valuable raw materials and prevent harmful substances going to landfill. Recycling rates will need to rise to 80% for some categories of goods. The best recycling techniques should be used and products should be designed to be recycled more easily.

### E-waste exports

MEPs also negotiated tighter controls on illegal shipments, to prevent e-waste being processed in countries where conditions are often hazardous to workers and the environment. The burden of proof moves from customs officials to exporters, who must properly demonstrate in future that goods are being shipped for repair or reuse as appropriate.

### Cutting red tape

Producers of e-goods will continue to contribute financially towards meeting processing targets. They will benefit from simplified registration and reporting requirements and will be able to appoint representatives instead of needing to establish a legal seat in each country where they operate. New measures will prevent double charging of registration fees within Member States.

*Procedure: Co-decision (2nd reading)*

## Stricter controls on pest control products

**"Biocides" - ranging from rat poisons to disinfectants - will be subject to tougher safety checks, following a European Parliament vote on Thursday. The updated rules aim to better protect human health and the environment, while streamlining the marketing approval process.**

"I am very pleased that we have found balanced answers to improve both safety checks and the approval process, so that Europeans will have access to new pest control products that are safe and effective", said rapporteur Christa Klass (EPP, DE), after MEPs approved the legislation by a show of hands. Council, which has already provisionally agreed to the new legislation, must give a formal green light for it to enter into force.

### Safer sofas

The updated legislation closes a loophole so that treated products - such as furniture sprayed with fungicide or anti-bacterial kitchen worktops - will be included under the rules and labelled. Agricultural pesticides will continue to be covered by other EU legislation.

### Restricting harmful substances

The most problematic substances - such as those that are carcinogenic, affect genes or hormones or are toxic to reproduction - should in principle be banned. Exceptions should only be made in Member States where strictly necessary, for example if a biocide is needed to safeguard against a specific danger to health. Approvals and renewals will be time-limited, while safer alternatives are developed.

Concerned about possible risks of nanotechnology, MEPs secured separate safety checks and labelling for products containing nano-sized materials.

### Opening up the market

The new legislation further harmonises the EU market for biocidal products and sets deadlines for applications to be assessed. The recognition of approvals among Member States will be improved and the possibility to apply for authorisation at EU level will be phased in from 2013, becoming possible for most biocidal products by 2020.

### Reducing animal testing

To avoid duplicating tests on animals, companies will be required to share data in exchange for fair compensation

*Procedure: Codecision (2nd reading)*

## Parliament calls for urgent measures to halve food wastage in the EU

Up to 50% of edible and healthy food gets wasted in EU households, supermarkets, restaurants and along the food supply chain each year, while 79 million EU citizens live beneath the poverty line and 16 million depend on food aid from charitable institutions. Parliament called in a resolution adopted on Thursday for urgent measures to halve food waste by 2025 and to improve access to food for needy EU citizens.

Since food is wasted at all stages - by producers, processors, retailers, caterers and consumers, MEPs call for a co-ordinated strategy, combining EU-wide and national measures, to improve the efficiency of food supply and consumption chains sector by sector and to tackle food wastage as a matter of urgency. If nothing is done, food wastage will grow 40% by 2020, says a study published by the Commission.

The most important problem in the future will be to tackle increased demand for food, as it will outstrip supply. We can no longer afford to stand idly by while perfectly edible food is being wasted. This is an ethical but also an economic and social problem, with huge implications for the environment, said rapporteur Salvatore Caronna (S&D, IT), prior to the vote. He also emphasized that "the ball is now in the Commission's court. We expect nothing less than a convincing EU strategy that will steer all 27 Member States to systematically tackle the issue."

### Better education to avoid excessive waste

To drastically reduce food wastage by 2025, new awareness campaigns should be run at both EU and national levels to inform the public how to avoid wasting food, says the resolution. Member States should introduce school and college courses explaining how to store, cook and dispose of food and also exchange best practices to this end. To promote the idea of using food sustainably, MEPs called for 2014 to be designated as "European year against food waste".

### Proper labelling and packaging

To avoid situations in which retailers offer food too close to its expiry date and thus increasing the potential for wastage, dual-date labelling could be introduced to show until when food may be sold (sell-by date) and until when it may be consumed (use-by date), says the resolution.

It adds that the European Commission and Member States should nonetheless first ensure that customers understand the difference between labels currently used within the EU, such as the quality-related "best before" and safety-related "use by" dates.

To enable consumers to buy just the amounts they need, food packaging should be offered in a range of sizes and designed to conserve food better. Foods close to their expiry dates and damaged food products should be sold at discounted prices, to make them more accessible to people in need, MEPs say.

### Public institutions should favour responsible caterers

Public procurement rules for catering and hospitality should be updated to ensure that where possible, contracts are awarded to catering companies that use local produce and give away or redistribute leftover food to poorer people or food banks free of charge, rather than just disposing of it.

EU-level support measures such as distributing food to least-favoured citizens or programmes encouraging consumption of fruit and milk in schools should also be retargeted with a view to preventing food waste, adds the resolution.

MEPs also welcomed existing initiatives in some Member States to recover unsold food and offer it to needy citizens and called on retailers to take part in such programmes.

### Food wastage figures

Current wastage in EU27: 89 million tonnes per annum (i.e. 179 kg per capita)

Projection for 2020 (if no action is taken): 126 million tonnes (i.e. a 40% increase)

***Responsibility for food waste:***

- households: 42% (60% of which is avoidable)
- manufacturers: 39%
- retailers: 5%
- catering sector: 14%

*(Source: European Commission)*

*Procedure: Non-legislative resolution*

## European space strategy: call for adequate funding

The EU's Galileo satellite navigation programme should get proper long-term funding and its GMES earth observation programme should be officially included in the EU's long-term budget, according to a report by Italian EPP member Aldo Patriciello on "EU space strategy" voted Thursday.

Europe's space policy aims to promote technological and scientific progress to stimulate industrial innovation and competitiveness. "The European space industry has a consolidated turnover of €5.4 billion and employs over 31,000 highly skilled people," Patriciello said, explaining that space activities and applications are "vital to our society's growth and development".

### **Galileo "enabling the EU to remain independent"**

The priorities for EU space policy are the flagship Galileo and Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) projects as well as climate change, security, competitiveness and space exploration.

Galileo will be the first satellite navigation system in the world designed for civilian use and will provide a viable alternative to the US global positioning system. "It should enable the Union to remain independent in a strategically important field," he said

Patriciello fears Galileo could lose the lead if the system is not completed on time and calls on the Commission to complete the legislative and financial framework. If the 27 satellites plus a suitable number of spare satellites and adequate ground infrastructure are deployed in reasonable time, "the EU will attain the added value of Galileo in terms of authentication, high precision and uninterrupted service (and) reap the economic and societal benefits," he said.

### **GMES: "without financing investment has been fruitless"**

The GMES programme is designed to help combat climate change, environmental degradation and civil protection by means of early warning systems and emergency management.

So far, GMES has been funded through the EU budget, but the Commission has said that after 2013, it should instead get intergovernmental funding. That could endanger the project, the draftsman said, "I hope that the Commission will complete the legislative framework by financing GMES in the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020. The lack of a financing plan providing economic support could mean investment made to date has been fruitless."