**James Nicholson (ECR).** – Madam President, just two weeks ago Caterpillar announced that more than 200 jobs will be lost in Northern Ireland from the plant in Monkstown in County Antrim. This announcement, sadly, has been the latest in a series of job losses over the past number of years. Last year we had Caterpillar again, Invista, Sensata, and Michelin, which all announced massive job losses, and in the course of 2014, JTI announced that it would be closing its facility in Ballymena, with 800 job losses.

I know from the situation in Northern Ireland that these are highly skilled and highly motivated workers. The jobs that we are talking about are of both direct and indirect benefit to the local economy, and the cumulative effect of all these redundancies is therefore considerable. As we have heard, this month there are similar stories from other parts of Europe. At regional, national and European level I believe we need to identify and address the challenges facing the manufacturing sector and equip for the future, with a joined-up approach and a clear positive vision to make the most of future opportunities. That is why my party colleagues and I, and the business community, are calling for a specific manufacturing strategy in Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, our local executive does not appear to be listening.

*(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 162(8))*