**Lucy Anderson (S&D).** – Mr President, this report underlines that the retail financial services market requires innovation in order genuinely to help consumers and businesses. I welcome that fact. It also shows that there needs to be a focus on ensuring prevention of predatory lending and payday loans, which have resulted in the exploitation of small businesses and individual consumers, particularly the vulnerable, across the EU.

It is therefore vital that, in order to do so, the relevant European financial supervisors are given the appropriate resources to fulfil their full range of duties. A strong regulatory system will increase consumer confidence and the internal market cannot function properly without strong consumer protection mechanisms. Additionally, developing retail financial services should not be to the detriment of more traditional methods of banking and should bear in mind the needs of those who prefer face-to-face interaction. The report acknowledges that branch closures destroy community cohesion and are detrimental to the development of good financial services at a local level. This was reflected in the final text and that is why I voted in favour of this report.