**Claude Moraes (S&D).** – Mr President, when the Commissioner spoke, it was a detailed explanation of why the full integration of Romania and Bulgaria must happen now. At the heart of that, he said that Schengen was precious to the whole idea of the European Union. I have never heard, in all the years that I have been here, a stronger case made for anything about the central cause of this European Union. Let us also be clear about this institution, the European Parliament, for anyone who is in any doubt.

Since 2011, for six long years, the European Parliament in its Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), has had unambiguous majority debates, well‑examined, detailed debates, making one conclusion, namely that second class status for Romania and Bulgaria is not an option. They must be fully integrated into Schengen. We have supported the measures to grant Romanian and Bulgaria access to the Entry-Exit System, the Visa Information System. We have even talked about visa-free travel to the US. We are doing this and being proactive in this cause, not just because we believe it, but because we have examined the case for these countries. This is a case not just for justice but for practicality. This is not just a case for the politics, but for understanding what it means for Romania and Bulgaria to be full members.

Then I refer again to the Commission and I ask the Council on this: this has not been a static process. In all of these six years, we have been strengthening the external border: Entry-Exit System, external border controls, the border agency, one of the fastest files ever created in this Parliament. All these measures and the hard work that has gone on with all of the issues of privacy and individual liberties that we had to tackle was to safeguard the external border. With all of this, we can surely ask that today there is an unambiguous and clear demand that two countries have justice and are fully integrated Member States of the European Union. Schengen is precious, all the measures are coming to make it, and I echo what the Commissioner said: together, all of us together, will make this happen.