

WEDNESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2009

IN THE CHAIR: MR BUZEK

President

1. Opening of the sitting

(The sitting was opened at 09.05)

2. Preparation of the European Council (29 and 30 October 2009) (debate)

President. – The next item is the statements by the Council and the Commission on preparation of the European Council.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – *(SV)* Mr President, next week, we have a meeting of the European Council. We have a comprehensive agenda, which includes many issues that affect the welfare of us all. We will be discussing the issues of combating climate change, finding ways to lead the EU out of the financial and economic crisis, promoting energy security and dealing with the problem of illegal migration.

The European Union will be best prepared to tackle all of these issues if we have clarity on the issue of the Treaty. It is important for the Treaty of Lisbon to enter into force as soon as possible so that, among other things, we can continue the work of appointing the new Commission. That is why the European Council will also look at these issues.

I will begin with the issues in which I know there is a strong interest in the European Parliament. At the end of next week, the Heads of State or Government will attempt to obtain clarity on the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon and how the process will proceed. The overwhelming 'yes' vote in Ireland and the signature of the Polish President have given the work renewed vigour, but, as you all know, the Treaty cannot enter into force until all of the Member States have ratified it – 26 of the 27 have done so, but we are still waiting for the Czech Republic. The country's lower house and Senate approved the Treaty, but then 17 senators petitioned the Czech constitutional court to examine whether the Treaty of Lisbon is compatible with the Czech constitution.

We must, of course, respect the democratic process in the Czech Republic. On 27 October, in other words next week, the country's constitutional court will hold a public hearing on this matter. We believe that the court will give its ruling very shortly afterwards, but we still do not have a date for this. As you know, President Klaus has also stipulated certain conditions for signing the Treaty. We are waiting and attempting to find out exactly what these requirements and conditions will be. The debate in the European Council will therefore depend to a large extent on what happens in the Czech Republic. The statement by the Czech constitutional court and the subsequent procedure will be crucial for determining when the Treaty of Lisbon can enter into force.

In the European Council, we will also be discussing the preparations that have so far been made to ensure that the entry into force of the Treaty goes as smoothly as possible. In this connection, the Presidency will present a report describing the state of play with regard to all of these issues. In this report, we will present the Member States' views on issues relating, for example, to the European External Action Service – an issue that we will debate here this afternoon – the scope of this Service, its legal position, staffing and financing. I have read Mr Brok's report, which was adopted in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs on Monday. As I said, we will discuss this in more detail this afternoon.

I can already say that, for next week's meeting, this report will provide guidance for the High Representative's considerations to enable him or her, once the Treaty has entered into force, to very quickly produce a formal proposal for how the European External Action Service will function. The Council should be able to adopt this proposal very quickly, hopefully some time during the next few months. We have discussed many of these issues with the European Parliament and we hope that this will continue over the coming weeks.

The major issue at the European Council meeting will be climate change. Our aim is for the Council to take appropriate decisions, including on the issue of financing, so that the EU can continue to play the necessary leading role and thereby contribute to a successful outcome in Copenhagen.

At the Ecofin meeting yesterday, there was a long and involved discussion of the financing issue. The Presidency did its utmost to reach an agreement, but it decided in the end that this matter has to be decided by the European Council. Further debates are needed in some Member States to enable us to make progress in this regard. It is extremely important that we agree so that this process does not falter. At this stage in the international negotiations, we are well aware of the difficulties we are facing. Therefore, the EU, with an agreement on the issue of financing, could bring us a good deal further on in the negotiations.

The European Council meeting comes at an opportune time, shortly before the negotiation session of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in Barcelona and the meeting of the G20 finance ministers in St Andrews. We will only reach agreement in Copenhagen if all parties take action. Right now, the EU's environment ministers are meeting to discuss the conclusions concerning climate change. The aim is to be able to give a comprehensive picture of the EU's position on the issues that are currently under negotiation.

An important part of the Environment Council's conclusions will be to clarify the EU's strategy for a long-term reduction in emissions and to attempt to reach an agreement that may facilitate our decision regarding raising our emissions reduction target from 20 to 30% compared with 1990 levels. The Environment Council's conclusions will also deal with the question of a decision concerning the EU's proposal in the negotiations on emissions reductions for international aviation and maritime transport, develop the EU's strategy for measures in developing countries with regard to measurement, reporting and verification of investments and the role of sectoral mechanisms, and will further develop the EU's strategy to combat deforestation and forest degradation in order to speed up the negotiations.

The European Council will also evaluate the progress made in creating a new framework for the EU's supervision of the financial markets. As you know, the Heads of State or Government reached a very ambitious agreement in June with the goal of setting up a special body that will be responsible for the macro-supervision of the EU's financial system and three European supervisory authorities for the banking, insurance and securities markets. At the end of September, the Commission tabled its package of legislative proposals. This is one of the Presidency's absolute top priorities and we have established an ambitious timetable. Our goal is to have an agreement on the whole package by the end of the year.

I am therefore very pleased that the Ecofin Council was yesterday able to take a major step forward and reach a broad political agreement on setting up the new macro-supervisory body without pre-empting the debate in the national parliaments. The Swedish Presidency was also asked by the finance ministers to continue the dialogue with the European Parliament. We have had very good experience of this dialogue and we think that it works well.

It is now important to take the opportunity to push the work forward as quickly as possible. We need to show that we are doing our utmost to prevent future crises and that we are shouldering our shared responsibility by ensuring that consumers and investors regain their trust in the financial system.

I would also like to say a few words about employment in Europe – an issue that I know the European Council will discuss. Recently, we have noticed cautious indications of a recovery in the economy. However, the situation on the labour markets is expected to get worse yet and we will still need stimulus and support measures.

One issue that it is important for the European Council to highlight is how we will be able to deal with the consequences of the crisis while, at the same time, meeting our long-term goal of increasing the labour supply. A high level of employment is required for sustainable public finances. A high level of employment is also necessary for economic growth, for people's welfare and for a socially more cohesive Europe.

In this connection I would also like to remind you of what we said regarding exit strategies. The finance ministers confirmed that the recovery is real, but fragile. It is therefore important for us to continue with the expansive financial policy. Talks at the Council meeting led to an agreement to formulate strategies on the basis of the principles discussed by the finance ministers at their informal meeting in Gothenburg.

I would also like to say something about energy security. In line with the conclusions from June 2009, the European Council will next week assess what has been achieved with regard to energy infrastructure (interconnections) and crisis mechanisms. We have prepared a report on the progress made since January. The European Council will take note of the report.

The European Council will also adopt the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. We had a very rewarding debate on this during Parliament's plenary sitting in September. The Heads of State or Government will approve the Presidency's conclusions, which are to be adopted at the General Affairs and External Relations

Council on Monday. This strategy forms an integrated framework for dealing with the challenges we face and contributing to economic, social and territorial cohesion within the EU. I am convinced that this strategy can serve as inspiration for other macro-regions within the EU and, in so doing, strengthen European integration. The EU strategy for the Danube region is already taking shape and will be ready to be presented in time for the Hungarian Presidency in 2011.

It is with great satisfaction that the Swedish Presidency can now present the result of this initiative, the inception of which, of course, took place here in the European Parliament. We hope that the European Council will be able to urge all of the relevant players to start implementing the strategy very quickly. That is absolutely necessary if we want to start tackling the serious environmental problems and achieve the objectives of the strategy.

The European Council will also evaluate the progress made in implementing the conclusions relating to the migration situation in the Mediterranean. The Council will welcome the measures that have been taken in the short term – the launch of the pilot project in Malta, for example – as well as the progress made in setting up the European Asylum Support Office. It will also be noted that the EU and Turkey have resumed talks on migration.

We expect the European Council to call for further efforts to deal with the current situation in the Mediterranean region and to continue the work towards long-term solutions based on solidarity between the Member States. We also expect the Council to emphasise the need for increased efforts to implement the EU's Global Approach to Migration. The Council will be urged to strengthen Frontex and to introduce common rules for Frontex operations at sea.

Finally, there will also be a debate on external relations. In June, the institutions were asked by the General Affairs and External Relations Council to review how the EU can further engage in Afghanistan and Pakistan. A first draft was discussed at the informal Gymnich meeting in September and the Member States are currently discussing a detailed proposal in the working groups. At the foreign ministers' meeting next week, the EU will adopt a plan to strengthen our engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The plan will focus on strengthening state capacity and the institutions in both countries. It is extremely important for it to be possible to implement this plan immediately.

Extensive international measures are needed if we are to be able to turn developments around in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Military solutions alone can never lead to a sustainable solution. Without security and control, the economic progress will be lost. We also need to invest in establishing democratic institutions and strengthening civil society. The EU has an extremely important role to play in this regard in both countries. There are common problems as well as regional aspects and, of course, the approach varies between the two countries. We will be discussing this at the European Council next week and I will, of course, be available to listen to any comments and questions from the Members of this House.

(Applause)

José Manuel Barroso, *President of the Commission*. – Mr President, I broadly agree with the lines expressed by Cecilia Malmström on behalf of the European Council. Let me highlight two main issues: the Lisbon Treaty and all institutional matters on the one hand, and the fight against climate change and the prospects for Copenhagen, on the other.

First of all, I think this European Council should be able to take the final decisions to see the Treaty of Lisbon pass into force. For many years, we have known that the ratification of a new Treaty is not an easy business. We have had many setbacks and some disappointments, but every time the overriding case for the Treaty has won through – the compelling case for a democratic and effective Europe. I am confident that this will continue to be the case in jumping this final hurdle to seeing the Treaty enter into force after the strong support given to the Lisbon Treaty by the people of Ireland.

After the conclusion of the ratification process in Poland, we can now say that all Member States have democratically approved the Lisbon Treaty. We only need to see the process of ratification completed in the Czech Republic. Of course, the constitutional procedures under way in the Czech Republic must be respected, so too must be the need to respond to the democratic will to see the Treaty enter into force. That democratic will was clearly shown by the Parliament of the Czech Republic, so I hope that no artificial obstacles and no artificial delays will now cause more difficulties before full ratification.

I have already set out to this Parliament the importance of minimising delays in the nomination of the European Commission. However, we must do all we can to have a Lisbon Treaty Commission as these are

critical times for Europe. We need to be able to push ahead with an agenda this Parliament supported when it elected me President for a new term. To achieve this and to have the institutions working properly, we do need ratification of the Lisbon Treaty if we want a strong, coherent and effective European Union. So, I again make it clear that the European Council must assume its responsibilities and there must be a recognition of urgency and a realisation that there will be a real cost to Europe as long as the European institutions cannot work properly.

At the same time, it is right to push ahead now with the work on implementation and to be ready for the entry into force of the Treaty. I know that this Parliament is fully committed to this work. I am pleased to be cooperating with you to ensure that the benefits of the Treaty will come into play as quickly as possible. There are many areas in which this Parliament has already begun its work and has made a major contribution, crystallising ideas in areas like the European citizens' initiative. I know that this afternoon, you will be debating Elmar Brok's report on the European External Action Service. The report starts from exactly the right basis to ensure that the service, like the rest of the Treaty's innovations, makes our Community system even stronger and better performing.

I know there have been concerns from the outset that the EAS will be some kind of intergovernmental body floating outside the European Union system, but the service should be firmly anchored in the European Union system. It should inevitably work very closely with all the institutions, the Commission first and foremost. The decisions it prepares will be taken by the Commission or by the Council in CFSP matters. In fact, I am convinced that its success will depend on this to ensure that the European Union's external action is more than the sum of its institutional parts. If it can work with the democratic underpinning of this Parliament, the Council's connection with national administrations and the Commission's expertise and European vision, that service can truly become a powerful tool for the European Union to achieve its goals on the global stage. A *communautaire* European external service, a service based on the Community method, will be a strong service for Europe and a strong tool for a united Europe projecting its influence in the world.

At the same time, the European Council must take forward an active policy agenda. It must maintain the momentum of our work to address the economic crisis, mainly its impact on unemployment. We must carry forward the work we agreed at the G20. We must do everything we can to see that the proposals made by the European Commission on financial supervision enter into force as soon as possible. We must push on with our programme to address energy security.

The most important issue in policy terms in the Council will be Copenhagen. A successful outcome at Copenhagen remains a primary concern for Europeans and a major task for the global community. There are less than 50 days to go to Copenhagen. Progress in the negotiations remains slow. It falls again to the European Union to show leadership and to keep up the momentum. The targets we have put on the table have provided an inspiration for others to step up their actions, but we all know that to galvanise real global action, we need to take a further step. We need to help developing countries with concrete ideas on finance, as the European Commission proposed last month. We estimate that by 2020, developing countries will need an additional EUR 100 billion or so a year. Domestic finance, namely from the large emerging economies – developing but emerging economies – and the carbon market should cover a large part of this, but large-scale international public finance should also be forthcoming, with the European Union paying its fair share.

The Copenhagen agenda is not just about climate change. This is, of course, the main target, but the climate is also a question of a development, and we should not forget that very important dimension. This will be a major commitment, especially at a time when public budgets are already under pressure, but we all know that the longer we wait, the higher the costs will be. The task for the European Council is again to find creative solutions, to show that the European Union is united behind the need to fight climate change.

First, Copenhagen must show that the drive to cut emissions is on its way; second, it must show that we are prepared to help those ready to take that step. This is the best way to make the case for the kind of active Europe that the Lisbon Treaty brings – driving ahead with an agenda that shows that the European Union brings concrete benefits for its citizens.

To have an ambitious agenda, we need to have an effective institutional framework, and I come back to my first point. The Lisbon Treaty is the first Treaty of the enlarged Europe. This generation, particularly among our friends in central and eastern Europe, remembers well when Europe was divided, but we are not here for ever. Institutions will last, so we need to have institutions for the enlarged Europe. The Lisbon Treaty is the Treaty for the Europe of the 21st century, with strong institutions which are able to deliver concrete results in the Europe of 27 and more members in the future. Institutions alone, however, are not enough.

We need a strong political will to achieve our goals, and I hope that the European Council at the end of this month will show that will for a strong ambitious outcome at Copenhagen.

(Applause)

Joseph Daul, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) expects the next European Council to bring to an end the overly long period of uncertainty over the European institutions and to provide the necessary impetus to establish the new Commission and also the stable President of the Council and the High Representative planned in the Treaty of Lisbon.

Above all, the Council must take the required measures to boost the recovery of growth and to put Europe in the best position to create employment, since the crisis will endure for as long as social cohesion is not re-established.

Firstly, on the institutions, I would like to remind everyone that the Polish President's decision to sign the Treaty means that every country but one has cleared the way for Europe finally to move forward without wasting time.

On 27 October, two days before the European Council, the Czech constitutional court will study the compatibility of the Treaty with the country's constitution. Of course, we will respect that decision, whatever it may be.

On the other hand, my group deplores the fact that the Czech President, although his parliament has as such adopted the Treaty of Lisbon, has produced a new pretext for delaying his signature, since everyone well knows that this is just a pretext. I find it regrettable that other countries are following in his footsteps and, in their turn, demanding assurances on this or that aspect of the Treaty. We must not surrender to the temptation to open this Pandora's box and I congratulate the Presidency for stating this clearly.

The PPE group expects the European Council to indicate clearly that the European Union will not accept any delaying tactics. Everyone in Europe has, directly or indirectly, supported the Treaty and now we must move ahead. Each of us knows that, as long as European public debate is monopolised by the institutional issue and as long as Europe does not have the tools needed to make decisions both democratically and effectively, the real political, economic, social and ecological issues will not be addressed with the speed and seriousness required. We can well see that currently, we are in a stalemate.

Parliament must be able to proceed with the hearings of future Commissioners as quickly as possible and it must be able to decide on the appointments for all the positions available at the Commission and the Council before the end of the year, if possible.

The PPE group also expects from the European Council some clear guidance on economic policy, drawing conclusions from the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh, which produced mixed results, and we are already seeing in the press that it is as if nothing happened.

Europe must do everything it can to enable its businesses to return to a sufficient level of activity to recruit but also to invest in research. Europe must also do everything it can to create a fair commercial environment.

Finally, on climate, I expect the European Council to produce a strategy suited to the situation, that is, the weakness of our partners' commitments so far, less than two months before Copenhagen. I ask this clear question: what pressure are we going to put on the United States, China and all the emerging countries? Moderate and polite pressure or maximum pressure? As much as I congratulate myself that Europe is a pioneer on this issue, it cannot be the only party to make the efforts required to combat global warming.

There are only 50 days before the Copenhagen Summit - 50 days is not much, but it is enough if we know how to be convincing, and therefore I ask you, Mr President of the Council and Mr President of the Commission, to tell us how you intend to use these 50 days.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the October session of the European Council will be a key moment and it will show whether or not Europe is aware of the urgent need to act on the economy, on social questions and to overcome institutional quarrels. My group, the PPE, appeals to the sense of responsibility of each of the EU's 27 Member States.

(Applause)

Hannes Swoboda, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Malmström, Mr Barroso, before I look at the institutional issues, I would like to make a brief remark about Copenhagen.

You are completely right, Mrs Malmström, and Mr Barroso has reinforced this, that one of the essential decisions which we now have to make concerns Copenhagen. We need binding objectives, not general statements. This will not be easy to achieve, because the Americans have not yet completed their legislative process. We will also have to take some decisions after Copenhagen during the course of next year. However, there must be binding objectives in place at the end of the process. That is absolutely essential.

Secondly, as far as the financial markets and the economic situation are concerned, the bonuses which are currently being paid are both outrageous and provocative. This applies particularly to America, but it will also be the case in Europe. This is not the central problem, but it demonstrates how many managers still do not understand what the new regulation of the financial markets involves and what responsibilities they have to the population as a whole. Mrs Malmström, I admit that you are right that the question of employment policy in particular must be given priority. It is not just about retaining the stimuli which were put in place as part of the economic recovery plan. It is also about introducing new measures to stimulate employment.

Yesterday, the President of the Commission gave a positive response to Stephen Hughes's request. I am very pleased that we have at least been able to reach a consensus that employment policy must lie at the heart of our activities over the next few years.

Now I would like to say something about Lisbon. Firstly, with regard to the lack of a signature from Václav Klaus, I am assuming that the constitutional court will make a positive judgment. I find it unacceptable that the Beneš Decrees are being used in this way, that this issue may perhaps be reopened and that the signature may be delayed. I would like to remind my fellow members from the Czech Republic that before their accession, we commissioned a report on the Beneš Decrees – Mrs Malmström, you will remember, because at that time you were one of us – which investigated whether the Beneš Decrees presented an obstacle to the accession of the Czech Republic. The majority opinion at the time was that they did not. The decrees do not have a different impact now, but they did have an impact at the time that they were drawn up. When we say that the Beneš Decrees were not an obstacle to the accession of the Czech Republic, this means that it is unacceptable now to use the same decrees in order to refuse to sign the Treaty of Lisbon. We must make our opinions quite clear in this regard.

The Treaty of Lisbon has two main objectives: on the one hand, more democracy in Europe, which includes more parliamentary democracy, in particular in the European Parliament

(Protests)

– you do not want that because you are not in favour of more democracy – and, on the other hand, more efficiency. Mrs Malmström, it is now a very important task for you to ensure in the next few weeks that the institutional issues and the staffing issues do not stand in the way of this. Yesterday, Mr Barroso rightly said that we need a Council President over whom we have no influence, but who can work well with the Commission – and I would add here with the Parliament – and who believes that the community method lies at the heart of the decision-making process. That is very important. We do not need a Council President who shows off, dazzles everyone and tries to pull the wool over our eyes. We need a Council President who can work with us effectively.

Of course, we need an External Action Service, not only for the reasons mentioned by the President of the Commission and to provide effective regulations concerning unity and a common foreign policy, but also for reasons of parliamentary control. It is not acceptable for items suddenly to be removed from the Treaty of Lisbon, which is intended to give more parliamentary control, with the result that we ultimately have less parliamentary control, if the External Action Service is to be completely independent.

I know that we must find a compromise. However, you must be aware that we – together with Mr Brok, the rapporteur – fully agree with the President of the Commission that we need a clear structure. The decisive factor for us is once again parliamentary control, including control over the External Action Service and the foreign policy drawn up by the High Representative, although, of course, we acknowledge the role of the Council. As you were once one of us and have fought for this in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, we see you as a fellow combatant in this area. I hope that we can implement the Treaty of Lisbon in the way in which it was intended in order to bring about more democracy, more parliamentary control and more efficient foreign policy.

(Applause)

Zoltán Balczó (NI). – (HU) Mr Swoboda, you mentioned that the Czech Republic was reassured at the time of its accession that there was no need for concern about the Beneš Decrees as they were not valid. Are you aware that the serious consequences of these decrees are still valid? Therefore, if we have rule of law here, and we regard the whole of Europe to be governed by such, in this respect, the Czech Republic still has outstanding business with both the Sudeten Germans and Hungarians.

President. – Mr Swoboda, could you comment on that?

Hannes Swoboda, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (DE) Mr President, I have become heavily involved in this issue, because many Sudeten Germans live in Austria and I recognise their rights, hardships and worries. However, we must finally lay the ghosts of the past and look to the future. The future is not about the Beneš Decrees. It is about a free Europe with free citizens whose rights are based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights. That is my vision of Europe.

Guy Verhofstadt, *on behalf of the ALDE Group.* – Mr President, ‘the train has already travelled so fast and so far that I guess it will not be possible to stop it or turn it’. That is a quote from President Klaus and it is probably the only time that I agree with him, that the train has already travelled so fast and so far that it is not possible to stop it or turn it.

This is a major quote from President Klaus, because apparently, it seems that he has accepted the fact that nothing can delay the Lisbon Treaty any longer. I think it is normal that if 27 Member States have ratified it, and have approved it, we can also now have his signature.

I think that this change in his attitude can only be explained by our and your determination to go forward with the whole process as foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty, and we have to continue doing that in the coming days and weeks. I hope days, not weeks. In other words, the best way, in my opinion, to secure President Klaus’s signature and the final ratification of the Treaty is simply, Mrs Malmström, to go forward with the whole process and with implementation. He is saying that the train has travelled so fast that it is impossible to stop it, so you have to continue with the train.

In that respect, it is absolutely necessary that the Council speeds up the procedure for the nomination of the new Commission, and puts forward as fast as possible the package for the President of the Council and the High Representative. I repeat that this is the best way to show President Klaus that he is right, that the train is running faster and faster every day, and that there is no other option for him than to put his signature under the Treaty. If you wait, he will wait. If you go forward, he will sign. That is my opinion.

My second point is about the External Action Service. I hope that the Council can reach agreement on that, but not any agreement. We should avoid duplication. My fear is that we are creating two parallel structures at the moment: one is the Commission and Union delegations, as in the new Treaty, which today amounts to more than 6 000 people, local staff included, working for the Commission and the President of the Commission. The other is a new External Action Service with several thousand people working for the High Representative.

At the end of this whole process, it is absolutely clear and necessary that we have only one structure dealing with external affairs and not this parallel structure of Commission delegations on the one hand, and external action services on the other. I hope that we have an agreement in the Council, but I also hope that it will be an agreement in which it is very clear that there can be no duplication in the Commission structures, with Commission delegations on the one side and the External Action Service on the other.

Rebecca Harms, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group.* – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Malmström, Mr Barroso, on the subject of the Czech Republic, I would first of all like to say that I feel that Mr Klaus is a very bad loser and that his actions represent a particular kind of political impertinence. I would like to ask you very, very urgently not to respond to a bad loser who obviously does not even respect Czech law, because he does not respect the constitutional majority which voted in favour of the treaty in the Czech Republic and who disregards the legislation in the Czech Republic, when he demands an opt-out for the Czech Republic concerning the validity of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. In my opinion, that would be one step too far in relation to this Czech troublemaker. The citizens of the Czech Republic, who have done so much for the reunification of Europe when the Germans fled there, deserve something better. That is all I have to say on President Klaus.

(Applause)

On the subject of climate change, Mr Barroso, you have rarely heard me agree with you as much as I will today. I am very, very enthusiastic about the fact that you have once again said here how important it is for

the Europeans to make a clear commitment to contributing a specific sum to the international fund for climate protection measures for the developing countries. Yesterday, I was ashamed to read that the German state secretary for finance, who was taking part in negotiations in Luxembourg, compared the negotiations to a game of poker. He said that when you play poker, you do not tell anyone what you have in your hand. However, the preparations for Copenhagen are certainly not a game of poker. As Mrs Merkel and other leading politicians in the European Union have repeatedly said, this is the biggest challenge of all. This is the most important challenge for the community of people who live together on this planet. I believe that this must be taken seriously.

From 2020 onwards, EUR 100 billion should be available to help the developing countries to meet the obligations concerning climate protection that they must then take on and to carry out their adaptation measures. This would amount to around EUR 3 billion from 2020 onwards for a country like Germany. In comparison to what we are currently making available in economic recovery packages or to rescue the financial sector, this is peanuts. I am ashamed that failure in Copenhagen and this dreadful, embarrassing poker game are being accepted. The way in which the European Union negotiated yesterday in Luxembourg demonstrates that it is not the driving force. It has not taken on the leadership role in international climate protection. Instead, it is one of the major blocks to progress. You must realise that all of the negotiations today in Luxembourg and next week in Brussels are being followed throughout the world.

I can only call on Mr Barroso urgently once again to ensure that the Commission stays on course. The financing for this international fund must be transparent. We have been talking about this for two years, ever since Bali. Mrs Malmström, I believe that the Swedes are doing the correct thing in the negotiations. You must remain consistent and respect the vote in Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. The objective is to reduce CO₂ emissions by 30% by 2020. If we lower our sights, we will never achieve the two degree goal.

I have a major problem with the credibility of the Swedish Presidency of the Council. I believe that you should finally convince your state-owned company Vattenfall not to invest consistently and unrestrictedly in coal throughout Europe and, in particular, not to invest primarily where no certificates need to be purchased. This strategy on the part of Vattenfall goes against your good reputation in the preparations for the world climate negotiations. I would also ask you to ensure that the legal proceedings initiated by Vattenfall against the Federal Republic of Germany to bring about changes in Germany's environmental law in favour of Vattenfall's coal-fired power stations are dropped. I believe that unfortunately you have a small, but growing black spot on your otherwise spotless reputation. You should ensure that everything is in order before you go to Copenhagen.

President. – Colleagues, please keep to the allotted time. Your speeches are very important but nevertheless, I have another request for a blue-card question. I am not going to take every blue card because we must go ahead with our discussion. In a few minutes, there will be another request; if it is a Rule 149(8) request, I will take it.

Timothy Kirkhope, *on behalf of the ECR Group.* – Mr President, may I first of all congratulate the Swedish Government on its Presidency in general and particularly on the way it has attempted to advance the very important issues of climate change and dealing with the economic and financial crisis that faces us. I think Mr Reinfeldt and his government deserve our thanks for the way they have done this but, as has been the situation in many Presidencies, they have also had to accommodate a lot of internal institutional distractions – in this case, in relation to the Lisbon Treaty.

Institutional theology is not the priority of the citizens of Europe. What we need, of course, is the Lisbon Agenda, not the Lisbon Treaty.

The Lisbon Agenda has a noble objective: an objective of creating the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs, greater social cohesion and respect for the environment by 2010.

Now that should have made a real difference in the lives of millions of people and provided a firm foundation for our economic future and yet, as Mr Reinfeldt himself said, the Lisbon Agenda has been a failure.

Why can we never actually get results that matter to our citizens? The laudable aims in the Laeken Declaration were not then put into practice, and now the Lisbon Agenda faces the same lack of purpose and achievement.

So near, Mr President, but so far, and again initiatives relating to the economies of Member States must be clearly understandable to ordinary people. Job creation should not be about creating jobs for former Prime Ministers to be President of the Council, or for globetrotting aficionados to be High Representatives for Foreign Affairs.

Those two jobs will hardly help hard-pressed small and medium-sized businesses in any of our countries. They will not ease the crisis being borne by millions of families right now.

And institutional changes do not help with climate changes. The greatest threats to our world need confronting, and practical and workable solutions need to be found. Thousands of pages of text, most of it too complicated for our citizens ever to understand, simply consumes the trees that we need to protect.

Let us put pressure on the world community to come together to save the planet for future generations, not on those who do not fully share the enthusiasm of some people for the European institutions.

Despite all this, I do hope that the Swedish Presidency is able, in the time remaining to it, and indeed at the summit, to focus the attention of all European leaders on the major issues that concern the people – those issues they concentrated upon at the start of their Presidency regarding the economy, Europe and indeed climate change. I wish them well in the remaining time and thank them for their work so far.

Lothar Bisky, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Malmström, Mr Barroso, there has been much speculation over staffing issues during the last three months and over the possible entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which my group has rejected for three good reasons.

In simplistic terms, firstly we want priority to be given to a social Europe rather than to a radical market orientation. Secondly, we want disarmament instead of the development of military capabilities and, thirdly, we want more direct democracy rather than a Europe made up of elites.

We should at long last be dealing with specific issues of content. While we are arguing over names and positions, more and more people are losing their jobs. The banks have, of course, been rescued. At the same time, Mr Barroso is calling for us to bring an end to the economic recovery plans soon – yesterday the deadline was set for 2011 – and for the budget deficits in the Member States to be reduced quickly. This will mean reductions in salaries and pensions, cuts in public services and social security provision, higher value added tax and a lack of collective agreements. One current example of this can be found in the German commercial cleaning industry where workers have been on strike for three days.

These are the problems which are affecting people in Europe and these are the problems which the Council should be dealing with. Instead of this, the main subject of concern is adding clauses to the Treaty of Lisbon to encourage the Czech President to sign it. If this is really as simple as it seems to be in practice, I would ask the Heads of Government to think more carefully about a social progress clause in the Treaty of Lisbon. That would be much more appropriate.

At the beginning of the parliamentary term, a series of positive proposals were made concerning a more social EU policy. This did not just relate to the social progress clause. It was also about a new economic recovery plan for Europe in order to create and retain jobs and about increased investment and sustainable environmental growth.

A European Employment Pact for more and better jobs, for equal pay, for more rights for employees and better working conditions was called for. There were discussions about increased solidarity among the Member States and ensuring the sustainability of the social security and pension systems.

I have not yet identified any strategy within the policies of the Member States or the policies of the Commission which might lead us towards these objectives. Of course, the Council must now consider the appointments to the new Commission and the possible changes to the Treaty of Lisbon. However, the focus must be on the problems I have referred to and on their solutions. My group's vote on the College of Commissioners will be dependent on this.

Nigel Farage, *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – Mr President, Mr Barroso said this morning that all Member States had democratically ratified this Treaty. That is not true. The British people have not had a say on this, despite being promised it, and until we get a referendum on this, I will refuse to recognise the legitimacy of this Treaty.

(Protests)

Now all eyes are on President Klaus and what he may or may not do next week, and it is interesting. I know that you all hate President Klaus because he believes in national democracy.

(Protests)

But what he is doing here is that he is standing up and defending the Czech national interest. He fears German claims over Sudeten properties and, having listened to German politicians on this subject, I think he is absolutely right to be fearful.

So, hang on, President Klaus; if they do not give you what you want, do not sign the thing. If they do give you what you want, it will need to be reratified in 25 Member States, which will mean that the British will have a referendum, and I am sure, as democrats, you would all like to see a British referendum on this Treaty. I certainly would.

And I wonder, at the end of this summit, are we really going to have a new European emperor? Is it going to be Tony Blair with his Empress Cherie? Well I have reached the conclusion that I want Tony Blair. Please do appoint Tony Blair, the man that gave away GBP 2 billion of the British rebate in return for nothing; the man who promised us a referendum on the constitution and refused to give it to us.

It is perfectly clear that, in this European Union, the prize for national betrayal is a high one indeed. So please appoint Tony Blair. It will bring home the truth to the British people that it is not the elected representatives that matter in this European Union, it is people that give away national democracy in favour of the European Union that win the top jobs. Please, please, give us Tony Blair as the first President of Europe.

Diane Dodds (NI). – Mr President, it is disappointing – but not unexpected – that the Council and the Commission are determined to push ahead with the Lisbon Treaty. I know that it might not be popular in this House, but it is my genuinely-held belief that in the United Kingdom, there should be a referendum on the Treaty. I do not understand why both Conservatives and Labour are unwilling to give that.

However, this morning I want to direct your attention, Minister, in particular, to the financial crisis that continues to dog Europe. Last night, Mr Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England, indicated that UK lending to the banks was close to GBP 1 trillion. Indeed, he indicated that never before had so much money been owed by so few to so many people and with so little real reform. Mr King went further to indicate that regulation of the banks was not enough, but that there was a moral dilemma at the heart of this banking crisis in that financial and banking institutions knew that they were too big to fail and that the taxpayer, whether in the United Kingdom or in any of the other regions of Europe, would always have to help them out, no matter what the crisis. This is a very serious charge, Minister, and comes from one of the banking world's own leading members. There must be a will to tackle this moral dilemma at Council meetings, and this House would be interested to know what that will is and how it will be done.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) Mr President, thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a few comments now, even though I will, of course, remain here until the end of the debate.

I would first like to address Mr Verhofstadt. No, I do not think that it will be possible to stop the train either. I hope that the train will enter the station very, very soon. I can assure both Mr Verhofstadt and the honourable Members that the Swedish Presidency is in very close contact with the Czech Republic and we hope very soon to be able to give a more exact and definite answer to the question of what is to happen with the Treaty and when. Like you, we are keen for everything to fall into place as quickly as possible, with regard to both the posts that are to be filled and the list of commissioners that is to be presented to the European Parliament for the hearing that you are to hold. During the summit, we will take all the necessary decisions that it is possible to take. We will have all the preparations in place for the Treaty of Lisbon to enter into force as soon as we have all the ratifications.

I would also like to express my thanks for the huge amount of support that Members from all groups have shown for the Presidency's absolute top priority, namely to reach an agreement in Copenhagen. This is extremely important. There is a huge amount of responsibility resting on Europe's shoulders to settle the issue of financing so that we can show that we are taking our share of the global responsibility and can send out the appropriate signals.

Mr Daul, we have very intensive contact with other players. In only a few weeks' time, we have the summit with Russia and China, as well as the US, and climate and energy issues will, of course, be given priority in discussions with all of these countries. We also have the working group meetings and the Barcelona Summit

in ten days' time. In addition, the finance ministers will meet in St Andrews, so there are many opportunities to talk about this. I am not satisfied with the results so far, but I remain totally optimistic that we will still be able to reach an agreement in Copenhagen. People all over the world are expecting us to do so.

I also believe that it will be a very good thing if the EU can show results with regard to the handling of the financial crisis. Even though we are now seeing some positive signs, we still must not forget that we need to have the new supervisory bodies in place so that we can be better equipped to avoid similar crises happening in future and to be able to recognise them in time. I therefore hope that monitoring systems and the macro-supervisory body can be established as soon as possible.

Institutional issues are extremely important. It is important for the European Union to be able to take decisions and for this to be done democratically and in an effective manner. In this regard, the Treaty of Lisbon is an important instrument. At the same time, the European Union will never win the trust of its citizens if we do not deliver results on specific issues. The handling of the economic crisis and environmental issues are what people the world over, not least in the European Union, are concerned about. If we can move forward and achieve results at the summit and later in the autumn, then I believe that it will create a very good basis for increased legitimacy and trust in the European institutions.

José Manuel Barroso, *President of the Commission*. – (FR) Mr President, I think that the Chairman of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), Joseph Daul, and Mrs Harms have asked some very important questions.

How can we ensure success at Copenhagen, especially when other partners are not making the same effort? In fact, there are difficulties, because there is a clear lack of ambition on the part of some developed countries in terms of a concrete commitment to reduce emissions. The largest economies in the developing countries are also unwilling to integrate their national plans for mitigation with the global agreement and, at the moment, there is no credible financial plan.

So, what do we do in this case?

Firstly, I believe this is not the time for Europe to rein in its ambition. That would provide an excuse for the negative elements not to make any effort. Consequently, it is our job to continue to demonstrate ambition and leadership but, at the same time, and here I am replying in concrete terms to Joseph Daul, to say that our offer, especially our financial offer, is a conditional one. We are prepared to help those countries which are making genuine efforts to reduce emissions. It is therefore important to make a conditional offer in financial terms, but to rein in our ambition would be a mistake.

I believe success is still possible in Copenhagen. There are also positive aspects. The United States has re-entered the negotiations. It should be recalled that a few years ago, the United States was not really participating in the process but they are now committed to the negotiations. It should also be recalled that Australia and Japan have announced ambitious goals – not yet in binding terms, certainly, but at a political level. Even China, Mexico, Brazil and South Korea have announced ambitious national plans but have not yet agreed to integrate them into a global agreement.

Let us, therefore, emphasise these positive aspects and create this dynamic and I hope that the European Council at the end of this month will not supply the sceptics and the Cassandras, who are already saying that we need a plan B, with ammunition. I have already said that there is no plan B, because there is no planet B. What we need to do is concentrate and not miss this historic opportunity afforded by Copenhagen.

My final point is to express my surprise. I would never have expected a British Member of this Parliament to question that great institution that is the British Parliament. One of the greatest contributions of Britain to civilisation was, and is, the British Parliament.

(Applause)

Let us be clear. The British Government has negotiated the Treaty. The British Government has signed the Treaty. The Parliament of Britain – the House of Commons and the House of Lords – have approved the Treaty. Her Majesty the Queen has ratified the Treaty. The instruments of ratification of the UK are deposited in Rome.

So the United Kingdom has ratified the Lisbon Treaty and I hope that everybody – particularly the British Members – respects the British democratic system.

(Applause)

Othmar Karas (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Mr Farage is now leaving. I hope that there is no one in this Chamber who hates what he has implied about us. Hate goes against the European ethos, and egoism, protectionism and nationalism are the greatest enemies of the Community of the European Union.

Secondly, I hope that there is no one in this Chamber who is playing off parliamentary democracy against the citizens and who sees a dividing line between us and our job as representatives of the citizens, as he has implied.

We have all seen the sparks flying in the run-up to the summit and we are hoping for a decisive, liberating judgment from the constitutional court. We expect the Council to fulfil its responsibility to Europe, not to allow itself to be held hostage by one person and to take the necessary decisions concerning staffing, the institutions, the schedule, the content and the finances.

However, I also call on the governments not to look for the lowest common denominator when selecting and nominating the commissioners, but instead to find the best solution for the Community of which we are all a part. I call on the governments not to play the familiar old party political games when selecting the commissioners, but instead to put common European responsibility at the heart of the selection process. I call on the President of the Commission to produce an ambitious set of requirements for the commissioners and the Member States.

My second point concerns supervision of the financial markets. I welcome the proposals for macro-supervision, but they do not go nearly far enough. We also need micro-supervision and, in my opinion, the Commission proposal represents the lowest common denominator, the minimum. We must go further. We must put in place a supervisory body for the European financial markets which has the authority to take the necessary measures, similar to the European Central Bank.

(The President cut off the speaker)

Jo Leinen (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, the demand from Václav Klaus for an addition to the Charter of Fundamental Rights is both arbitrary and superfluous. However, it is easy to oppose, because the charter refers only to EU law and applies only to the future. Therefore, if necessary, the Council should make a political declaration. In a few weeks, the ratification of the treaty, which we have been waiting nine years for, should then take place.

The European Council must make the necessary preparations, but should not jump to any hasty conclusions. This applies also to the European External Action Service. The High Representative is responsible for proposing a concept for the service, not the Council bureaucracy. I would therefore ask the Council Presidency to ensure that the service is not in a position off to one side, but can integrate itself into the community system, as Mr Barroso has said.

This treaty gives us the legal basis for a common energy policy and for a common climate protection policy. I can only hope that the fog lifts before Copenhagen, because we must not leave these questions open until the conference. The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety has made clear demands, including with regard to financing. I hope that there will be agreement on a financing concept next week at the summit. Furthermore, we need internal burden-sharing within the EU. Germany and other countries must give way, as we need a fair deal both within the EU and between the EU and the developing countries throughout the world.

Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE). – (FR) Mr President, I would like to ask three questions.

Firstly, there is the issue of climate change. Everyone can see that the European Union has a special duty to lead the nations of the world in Copenhagen. To do this, we must be demanding and ambitious as far as goals are concerned, but we must also acknowledge the debt we have to developing countries. Each country must agree to make an appropriate financial effort. If we cannot demonstrate solidarity, this will not work.

My second point concerns the issue of migration. It is obviously good to improve the operations of Frontex, but if we really want to help the countries of southern Europe, then we must move towards harmonising the right to asylum, review the Dublin Convention and, most of all, finally draw up a genuine immigration policy. I believe this is the only way of addressing this issue in a calm and responsible way.

Finally, the third issue is foreign policy. The Council is going to take the issue of the External Action Service forward. So much the better! We are probably going to have a High Representative. So much the better! Yet

what would be better still would be to speak with a single voice, at least on the conflicts shaking the world. I am thinking particularly about Afghanistan, where I want to note that the number of European soldiers committed is almost the same as the number of US soldiers.

There will be an EU-US Summit on 3 November and the Europeans have a special responsibility. They must propose a strategy that is not exclusively military. If we do not do this, no one else will.

Gerald Häfner (Verts/ALE). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Treaty of Lisbon is on the home straight and it is now time to look to the future. We must make Europe more social, more environmentally friendly and more democratic. We have a lot of catching up to do in these areas in particular.

I would like to see a Europe in which the citizens regard themselves not just as observers or as the object of the European Community, but as its subject. I would like to see a Europe which people feel is a Europe for citizens, but we have a lot to do in order to achieve that.

I said that the Treaty of Lisbon was on the home straight, but it is here in particular that it can easily be thrown off course.

I am frustrated by the fact that shortly before the completion of the ratification process, we are seeing an increasing number of blatant violations of the European ethos and of European law. One individual European president is attempting to hold his people, his country and the whole of Europe to ransom. Now he suddenly explains that the Charter of Fundamental Rights should not apply in his country. If what I found out yesterday is true, then he has even been given assurances of this kind. This would really be outrageous and I would be pleased if the situation could be clarified and a clear explanation given that assurances of this kind have not been made. Otherwise, it seems that we are returning to the Middle Ages, with despotic rulers granting their subjects only those rights that they are prepared to allow. However, we are not in the Middle Ages, we are in Europe and Europe is a community based on law, a democracy.

The Czech parliament and senate have already voted in favour of this treaty, without making demands of this kind. They have, of course, done this for good reason, because they want the Charter of Fundamental Rights to apply in the Czech Republic. It lies at the heart of this treaty and we should not allow the heart to be torn out of the treaty without good cause.

The fundamental rights are the inalienable rights of all citizens, which should not be available only to some of them. Europe is a community based on law, a democracy. It is not a bazaar. This means that we should prevent dreadful deals of this kind being done with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and we should not, under any circumstances, allow it to be qualified or called into question. We should not permit things of this kind to become negotiable and Europe to be turned into a bazaar.

These events are a demonstration of how important it is for us to strengthen democracy in Europe.

(The President cut off the speaker)

Oldřich Vlasák (ECR). – (CS) Mr President, Minister, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to respond to the previous speech. It is absolutely clear that the next meeting of the European Council will be dominated by institutional questions and the process for ratifying the Lisbon Treaty. In the debates on the future direction of the EU, we should, in my opinion, behave towards each other with an appropriate sense of humility and, at the same time, we should calmly respect the sovereign decision-making mechanisms of the various Member States and their constitutional actors.

I would now like to return to my own topic. I personally consider macro-regional strategy to be no less an important item on the Council's discussion agenda. Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it was already agreed during the last parliament that the Baltic Sea region was suitable for a pilot project aimed at implementing an internal EU strategy for the macro-region and I am therefore pleased that this particular Council decision will most probably be ratified.

At the same time, I believe that the time has now come to begin starting thinking about the issue of how to replicate this pilot strategy. If we take a look at the map of Europe in this context, we will see that the greatest differences, whether economic, social or cultural, still persist along the borders between the former socialist bloc and the West European capitalist states. These differences are apparent here in Parliament as well. Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, we are still talking about the old and the new Member States. Twenty years after the Velvet Revolution, we are still applying exceptions to the free movement of persons when we

make use of transition periods for the free movement of workers. These are absolutely clear barriers which should be systematically dismantled ...

(The President cut off the speaker)

Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL). – *(EL)* Mr President, the statements by the Council and the Commission on the forthcoming European Council summit signal an escalation in the anti-grassroots policy of the European Union and of the governments of its Member States, with a new all-out attack on the working classes. The primary objective of the European Union and the governments of its Member States, be they centre right or centre left, is to safeguard the continuing profitability of the monopolies by shifting the burden of the capitalist economic crisis on to the working classes throughout the European Union.

While the European Union has supported the monopoly behemoths with a package of hundreds of billions of euros, and a new round of funding for them cannot be excluded, in this new phase, the faster promotion of capitalist restructurings planned within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy is being favoured. At the epicentre of the anti-labour attack is the abolition of the eight-hour day and collective agreements, and the generalised application of flexicurity and temporary flexible and badly-paid jobs, by strengthening the institution of local employment agreements and internships. Social security, health, welfare and education systems are being laid on a Procrustean bed, with sweeping changes being made to the detriment of workers, further paving the way for the penetration of monopoly business groups in these wealth-producing sectors for capitalism. At the same time, mass redundancies, over five and a half million last year, employer terrorism and intensification of work have created mediaeval conditions in the workplace. One typical example is the long-standing crime being committed against the workers of France Telecom, where 25 workers have been pushed into suicide by unacceptable working conditions and the intensification of slavery.

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD). – Mr President, the big problem for the Member States is, as Mr Bisky said earlier, the crisis in jobs. Youth unemployment is 24% in France, 25% in Italy and 39% in Spain.

Nevertheless, we can be sure that the European Council meeting will be saturated with a colossal triumphalism in the context of mass unemployment. This triumphalism is improper and distasteful, and it will be there because the elite assume that they have got their Lisbon Treaty.

All the moves so far towards your European superstate have taken place by stealth or manipulation and, in the case of the Lisbon Treaty, the manipulation has been so shameless and so blatant that the Treaty lacks democratic legitimacy. From that, there will be consequences. To quote, 'They are ringing the bells now; very soon they will be wringing their hands.'

Csanád Szegedi (NI). – *(HU)* Mr President, Mrs Malmström, ladies and gentlemen, any debate about the signature of the Treaty of Lisbon is superfluous until we have clarified with each other what our most fundamental values are. Allow me to give you a few examples relating to the largest disenfranchised minority in Europe, which is the Hungarian community living outside the Carpathian Basin. Are you aware, for example, that territorial self-determination for the two-million-strong Hungarian community in one of the European Union Member States is still not on the agenda even to this day, although we all know that territorial autonomy is a European legal institution?

Are you aware that in the same country, Romania, several tens of thousands of Csango Hungarians cannot, even to this day, worship and be taught in their mother tongue? We then have a state which is younger than me, Slovakia, with its Slovak language law, which we can rightly say brings shame on Europe. To top it all, there are despicable politicians who are using the inhumane Beneš Decrees as a basis for negotiation. What kind of dictatorial, racist Europe do we live in then, where the Beneš Decrees can be regarded as a basis for negotiation? We have had enough of having dictatorships being forced on us, always under the guise of democracy.

We Jobbik MEPs would like to live in a Europe without the Beneš Decrees, without a Slovak language law and without a Treaty of Lisbon, where there is not a single Hungarian persecuted on account of their ethnic origin and mother tongue. I would like to ask Mr Swoboda then: if he said that the Beneš Decrees are not valid, when were the victims compensated?

Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE). – *(RO)* There are certain speakers in this Parliament who, regardless of the topic being discussed, talk on the same subject, not always in an appropriate manner.

The first priority during the European Council meeting must obviously be to find a solution so that the Czech Republic can finalise the procedures for ratifying the Treaty of Lisbon. However, this solution must be a fair one for all the other Member States.

At the same time, we must not forget the current economic crisis which we are still facing and which we must also find immediate solutions for. The economic and financial crisis, along with the special financial measures adopted last year, have destabilised in an alarming way the public finances of the majority of the European Union's Member States. So far the Commission has 17 of the 27 Member States in its sights for having an excessive deficit, with estimates showing that another three Member States will soon be in the same situation.

Regardless of their economic power, Member States have exceeded the figures committed to as the crisis has caused a sharp drop in budget revenue and growth beyond the public expenditure planned for. There are actually clear conditions for an economic recovery in the near future, which is why we can initiate the discussions on reducing the financial incentives in certain areas.

However, we need to take into account the specific situation of each Member State separately and the European institutions must acknowledge that we are not yet at the point where public support can be waived completely for all economic sectors. Member States must agree on continuing the recovery strategy and on suitable instruments for supporting this, including stepping up structural reforms which may, in the medium term, reduce the fiscal deficit and naturally contribute to economic recovery.

If the post-recovery period is not managed properly by Member States, it may destabilise the European Union's internal market. Therefore, the decision in favour and permission to continue providing public support must be made based on the specific conditions from one state to the next.

Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D). – (FI) Mr President, I agree with Mr Marinescu that the forthcoming Council should find a solution to two issues. One is completing the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, and the other is new cures for the economic and financial crisis. We are presently living through the deepest crisis in Europe's economic history. This crisis will mean a thorough shake-up of people's opportunities, income, pensions and jobs, and we must be aware of that.

The European Union began its recovery very well. We should thank the Commission for that. The Commission and the European Central Bank even acted so quickly that the United States of America followed Europe's example. Then things rather oddly began to slow down and people started to say that the crisis was over. The crisis, however, in fact lies ahead, because a four-bladed guillotine hangs over the European Union, in the shape of growing unemployment, indebted national economies, an ageing population, and the huge structural change which will take place in the forestry industry, the car industry, and so on.

Actually, the only good thing about this economic crisis is that policy is required to resolve the problems. As for the new financial architecture, the Commission is being quite unambitious about this. Hopefully, the financial crisis work group that Parliament has set up will be a new source of guidance. The objective must be the regulation of the financial markets. Over-regulation, however, must not be allowed to prevent growth and employment.

Silvana Koch-Mehrin (ALDE). – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Malmström, Mr Barroso, Mrs Wallström, I am guessing, Mrs Malmström, that you have so many subjects to discuss that you would rather have two weeks than two days for the summit next week. These are subjects which are of genuine importance to the citizens of Europe, such as the economic crisis and how it can be overcome, highlighting opportunities to create new jobs and, of course, Afghanistan. These are not new subjects. However, what is new is that this time, it is possible to discuss everything from the perspective that the EU will really be able to function more effectively and that we will have a new treaty.

This is an exciting prospect and, therefore, you should now act quickly to implement a common supervisory structure for the European financial markets, to put in place a common foreign policy and to prepare for the summit in Copenhagen. You should also clarify quickly what the future leadership structure of the EU will be and bring an end to this self-absorption. What we need is less navel-gazing and more reports of success from the European Union. For this reason, I wish you success, luck and all the authority you need.

Oriol Junqueras Vies (Verts/ALE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to point out that I am unable to make my speech in Catalan since it is not yet an official language, even though it is the language of more than 10 million European citizens. For that reason, I am speaking today in Italian.

The Finnish Government recently recognised the right of all citizens to have a broadband Internet connection as a universal service. This service is, in fact, an element of economic development, social justice and territorial balance, because it guarantees access to information, thus preventing the digital divide. In the same way, affordable broadband access is crucial when it comes to building the knowledge-based economy laid down in the Lisbon objectives.

Will the next European Council adopt measures to ensure that the European Union as a whole sets the world an example in this area too?

Martin Callanan (ECR). – Mr President, there will be many important issues discussed at the European Council, but from my point of view, one of the most important is the future of the Lisbon Treaty.

Many speakers in this debate have spoken, without any apparent irony at all, of the Lisbon Treaty bringing increased democracy and accountability to the EU institutions, forgetting that they deliberately took a view that there should be no democracy or accountability in the progress of that Treaty itself. There was active collusion between the Heads of Government to avoid any referenda taking place on the Treaty lest the people were inconvenient enough to actually say they did not want it.

I listened with great interest to Mr Barroso's comments earlier. Let me explain to him why people in the UK are so angry about this. In the 2005 UK general election, all three main political parties committed themselves in their manifestos to a referendum on the European Constitution, as it then was. It subsequently became the Lisbon Treaty, effectively the same document. In the vote in the House of Commons, two of those parties then reneged on those promises and refused people a referendum, so it is a matter of basic trust and accountability in politics. People want the referendum that they were promised. If they had not been promised it, then Mr Barroso's comments would have been correct and there would have been the normal parliamentary ratification process in the UK.

I supported Mr Barroso in his re-election, but we do not need lectures from him about trust and accountability in politics when, at the same time, he seeks to support those who would deny people a referendum. So that, in short, is why people in the UK feel so strongly about this referendum. They look over the water to Ireland and see that the people of Ireland have been asked to vote twice on the document when we have been denied the possibility to even vote once. You cannot, on the one hand, argue that it will bring increased democracy and accountability to the EU whilst, at the same time, denying the electorates of the EU any say whatsoever on this document.

Mario Borghezio (EFD). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I too should like to make a few points which, in view of the possible entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, must be developed, and also, I would say, above all, in the light of the very significant effect of the German constitutional court's recent judgment on the Treaty of Lisbon.

I should like to concentrate in particular on the issue of the lack of democratic legitimacy as a result of two aspects: the inadequate representation in the European Parliament, and also in the various European institutions, of countries with the largest populations, and the lack of consideration shown for the national parliaments with regard to the exercising of sovereign powers at European Union level.

I should like to mention another, in my view significant, shortcoming of the Treaty of Lisbon, which is that the role of the regional parliaments is basically ignored. While little consideration is shown for the national parliaments, I would say that the principle of subsidiarity has been dealt a kind of death blow by the Treaty of Lisbon as it stands today.

The judgment by the German constitutional court, precisely because of its authority and its strength, should have led, and should still lead, to a comprehensive legal and political debate in this House that specifically deals with the dangers, the risks that may arise as a result of the European Union federalisation process introduced by this treaty.

I also wish to mention the rights of stateless nations, from Padania to Brittany, Corsica to Valle d'Aosta. There are dozens of stateless nations that should be mentioned, bearing in mind the fact that what the founding fathers wanted to build was a Europe of the nations, not a federalist Europe or a Europe of the biggest interests.

IN THE CHAIR: MR PITTELLA*Vice-President*

Franz Obermayr (NI). – (DE) Mr President, with regard to the subject of illegal immigration in the European Union, I would like to point out that there has been a significant and very serious increase over the last year. According to the Commission, the number of illegal immigrants recorded has risen by around 63%.

In 2008, 62 000 sets of fingerprints of illegal immigrants who had been apprehended were entered in the EURODAK database. We cannot even guess at the number of immigrants who were not caught.

The geographical situation of Austria, where I come from, makes it a particularly popular destination and this has had disastrous consequences. For example, 58 of the 64 Kurds who were apprehended recently disappeared into the reception centre and immediately submitted applications for asylum, which involves a long-winded procedure.

The burden represented by the constantly growing number of illegal immigrants – I would like to emphasise the word ‘illegal’ here – is becoming unbearable for the citizens of the EU. If we do not solve this problem quickly, we should not be surprised by the growing scepticism about the EU and the sense of resignation among our citizens. I therefore ask the European Council to consider this subject on 29 and 30 November.

Elmar Brok (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Wallström, Mrs Malmström, ladies and gentlemen, the Treaty of Lisbon must now enter into force and be implemented quickly. More than ten years of debates among the institutions are enough. Now, at last, we need these instruments in order to be able to help the citizens of Europe. Particularly during this economic crisis, we must do something for the citizens in the fight against unemployment and similar problems. For this reason, we should rapidly bring these debates to an end.

This is why I am asking President Klaus to clear the way for the treaty which has been ratified in all 27 countries. In the Czech Republic, the constitutional court has said ‘yes’ to the treaty on two occasions and it will do so again for a third time. It is also perfectly clear that the Charter of Fundamental Rights is only applicable in the context of European law. Land regulations are exclusively a matter of national authority. The law in force before Community law will not be invalidated by Community law. These three safeguards are in place, so he has no need to worry. If necessary, the European Council will have to clarify this once again by issuing a declaration.

In this context, I would like to make another comment. The implementation of the treaty must reflect the three principles of the draft constitution and the Constitutional Convention: efficiency, transparency and democracy. At this point, I would like to mention the External Action Service in particular, as we will be debating this subject again this afternoon. Transparency, democracy and, in particular, the principle of community must not be sacrificed in order to achieve efficiency. The necessary safeguards must be put in place. We could say that part of the Commission has a *sui generis* character, but it is possible to discuss all sorts of issues here. For this reason, Mrs Malmström, I would like to ask you to drop your government’s current plans and not to draw up guidelines for the External Action Service during the meeting of the European Council next week, which would limit the scope for negotiation, but instead to come to final decisions on this subject together with the new High Representative so that we have a common, fair basis for negotiation.

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD). – Mr Brok, you mentioned 10 years of debates about the Lisbon Treaty. Has it occurred to you that, in the 10 years of debates, you and your colleagues have simply failed to convince enough people, and that is why you and your colleagues have had to resort to the blatant manipulation to which I referred earlier to get the Treaty through?

Elmar Brok (PPE). – (DE) I would like to say to my fellow Member that the institutional changes resulting from the Treaty of Nice, the Constitutional Treaty and the Treaty of Lisbon have always had the broad support of the people of Europe and the broad support of the majority of European states. There have always been individual states which have made different decisions, partly for internal political purposes. Now the decision has been made in the parliaments of 27 states – and parliaments are not a second-class form of democracy – or in referendums as in Ireland. As a result, a vast majority is now in favour of the Treaty of Lisbon, including the majority of your own people.

Libor Rouček (S&D). – (CS) I would like to make a few comments ahead of the European Council meeting concerning the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in my own country, the Czech Republic. The Czechs have given a clear ‘yes’ to the Lisbon Treaty through their elected representatives in both chambers of parliament. All of the public opinion polls indicate that they want President Klaus to sign the Treaty quickly. The Czechs

also want to be guaranteed the same human, civil and social rights in Europe as other Europeans. It is for this reason that they also gave a clear 'yes' to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. President Klaus is known for his long-standing opposition to the Charter, and particularly its social sections. Now, under the pretext of the so-called Sudeten threat, he is attempting under pressure of time to negotiate an opt-out for the Czech Republic.

The European Union must not play this dishonourable game. A majority of Czechs want the Charter in its entirety, including the social sections. It is sad, regrettable and demeaning to the role of the Czech President to drag the Sudeten Germans into this game 65 years after the end of the Second World War. Both the Czechs and the Sudeten Germans have experienced more than enough horror and suffering through war and displacement. I firmly believe that both the Czechs and the Sudeten Germans have learned from this tragic experience and that the Czechs, Germans and Sudeten Germans want to live together and build a new united Europe together in peace and cooperation.

Fiona Hall (ALDE). – Mr President, the Swedish Presidency and the Commission both refer to the importance of an EU agreement on the financing of climate change measures for developing countries. I agree. But the offer on the table from the Commission is a smoke-and-mirrors proposal which developing countries have every reason to question.

Mr Barroso said just now that the carbon market in emerging countries will cover most of the EUR 100 billion a year estimated cost of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

But there is no certainty that the international carbon market will deliver EUR 38 billion a year in financial flow to developing countries. We have seen how unstable the carbon price has been in the EU ETS and how long it is taking for a proper carbon market to emerge.

A further major flaw is the assumption that developing and emerging countries will be happy to fund their own energy efficiency measures. That is absurd. What is blocking energy efficiency in our own Member States is the lack of up-front funding mechanisms, yet we are assuming that developing countries can find their own money. We need to have extra finance.

Andreas Mölzer (NI). – (DE) Mr President, I would like to make three comments on the forthcoming Council meeting. Firstly, the Irish 'yes' vote is, in my opinion, primarily a result of the financial crisis, while the banks were rescued a year ago with taxpayers' money. Now the bankers will once again be receiving record salaries. The EU will certainly be measured by the extent to which it can bring an end to the disappearance of billions of euros of tax payers' money into this black hole.

Secondly, new faces are filling the top positions within the EU as a result of the Treaty of Lisbon. Their professional qualifications are definitely second-rate, because the majority of the candidates are failed politicians who have been voted out of power in their native countries. Who will represent the EU now? The Council President, the High Representative or the Commission President? There is certain to be chaos.

My third comment, Mr President, is as follows. If President Václav Klaus of the Czech Republic signs the Treaty of Lisbon, on the condition that a footnote is included which ensures that the Beneš Decrees remain in force, in other words, decrees which run contrary to international law and human rights, then there will be two types of fundamental rights: those for Germans, for Sudeten Germans and for all the others. That cannot be allowed to happen!

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PPE). – Mr President, with the Lisbon Treaty approaching, we expect the October European Council to make progress on one of the priority issues – the European External Action Service. The European Parliament has consistently called for the creation of a genuine common European diplomacy. The EAS has the potential to ensure the unity and consistency of our external action, which is most needed if the Union is to act with one voice and meet external challenges such as energy security in an efficient manner.

To seize the opportunity offered by setting up the EAS, we expect the Council to take into consideration the position of the European Parliament adopted this week in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, and especially the following. To have a strong external policy, we need to equip the new head of European diplomacy with proper instruments to enable him or her to strengthen our foreign policy. The EAS should be based on the Community method with the clear involvement of the Commission and the European Parliament. The scope of the HR's competence needs to be large, involving such CFSP-related policies as enlargement, neighbourhood, trade and development.

The condition for a strong, coherent foreign policy is democratic legitimacy, which can only be provided by the strong involvement of the European Parliament. This involvement should be considered at two stages: ex ante consultation of the Parliament during the process of setting up the service, and ex ante consultation of the Parliament in setting foreign policy goals. Once the High Representative and the service are in place, the European Parliament should have a strong mandate to play an active role in the scrutiny of the EU's foreign policy and the service.

In the implementation phase, we should not allow the Lisbon Treaty-based foreign policy provisions to be diluted. The democratic legitimacy of the new service also depends on its composition. The geographic balance of the Union should be taken into account. Fair representation of all Member States in the EU institutions is a core principle, and the EAS should be no exception.

Pervenche Berès (S&D). – (FR) Mr President, Madam President-in-Office of the Council, more than four months after the election of this European Parliament, you are going to convene a European Council at a time of indecision for the European Union, with a Commission which is still in place to deal with day-to-day matters.

If we do not want to drive European citizens completely to despair, it seems to me that this European Council could send out two messages. The first is that, one year after the solidarity shown by all European states regarding the banks, you must start a European debate on the tax on financial transactions or on the contribution that the banks must make to Member States' budgets to ensure solidarity in return.

Mrs Malmström, on behalf of the European Commission, the President of the Commission yesterday told us that he was supporting the budget as set out today and that, one year after the recovery plan, nothing new would be included. However, over the last year, the situation on the employment front and the debt front has become considerably worse. The budget proposed to us today is a budget which will not even finance the second part of the recovery plan that you designed a year ago. So this is the advice that the European Council must act on: taxation of financial transactions, solidarity of the banks with regard to Member States' budgets and a real recovery plan, as it was initiated a year ago, even though we criticised it at the time for not going far enough.

Marian Harkin (ALDE). – Mr President, firstly, I am pleased to see my former colleague Cecilia Malmström here, particularly in light of the convincing 'yes' to Lisbon in Ireland, followed by the signature of the democratically elected Polish President. I think these two further endorsements will, I hope, facilitate the Swedish Presidency to preside over the full ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

However, most European citizens are far more concerned about what the EU is doing to deal with the current economic crisis rather than the detail of Lisbon. So I say to my Eurosceptic friends: 'Get over it'. Before the Irish 'yes' vote, 27 million EU citizens voted 'yes', 24 million voted 'no'. That is democratic legitimacy.

So let us deal with the real world. In this context, I want to speak about the Progress Microfinance Facility, which will give those who are unemployed a chance of a new start and open up the way to entrepreneurship. This facility will provide EUR 100 million and could leverage a further EUR 500 million of microcredit. But I am saying to the Commission and to the Council: this is not nearly enough. This is a real opportunity for the EU to be responsive to the real needs of its citizens, but we need greater investment.

Wim van de Camp (PPE). – (NL) Mr President, it is good that the European Union is savouring the success of the Irish referendum for a while. We should also count our blessings that an important step has been taken towards the Treaty of Lisbon. Of course, we are all concerned about the Czech Republic. We shall await the court ruling with respect, but please do be patient and sensible in your dealings with Mr Klaus. If we hit out at him, it could well be counterproductive.

Copenhagen and the success of this conference is a source of hope, not only for Europe but also for the world. Sustainability is a source of technological development. Important technological developments in Europe, for example, CO₂ storage, can also help to combat the economic crisis.

This brings me to my third point: the economic crisis. We want a citizens' Europe. More attention should be devoted to employment, and the Council's plans are good in that respect. Yet these plans are still very remote to many citizens, who are largely unaware of them. Financial supervision of banking institutions is also very important, and I hope you are able to make progress on this, too, next week.

Finally, the approach to the asylum issue. I strongly support the intentions of the Swedish Presidency, but tangible results, including from the Council deliberations, have failed to materialise. Last week, at the meeting

of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, the complaint was raised that the Commission, the Council and Parliament are still achieving too few tangible results.

Gianluca Susta (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that the time has come for this House to stop the endless debate on the Treaty of Lisbon, which we have still heard going on today.

I believe that we must respect the wishes of this Parliament, of the great European countries, of the 27 and of the 26 that have ratified this treaty in various forms, but democratically, and thus the offences to the treaty and its democratic content must also be rejected. I also believe that the Council meeting at the end of the month will be an important opportunity to reaffirm the need to revive the idea of Europe beyond Lisbon and to revive the economy, as well as to ensure that Europe does not back down over the major issue of climate change. From that perspective, I believe that what we have heard lately from the President-in-Office, but also what we have heard today, is insufficient.

Europe beyond Lisbon is failing to interpret the strong content of the new treaty and is failing to comply with the terms of the Lisbon Agenda. Therefore, if we 500 million Europeans want to remain the world's biggest economic power, a power that is preparing to become a major political player on the international stage, I urge the Commission to fully carry out its mandate of proposing European legislation on the major issues relating to the economy, the economic recovery and the labour market recovery, and I urge the Council to turn a long list of headings into an actual policy to help resolve the economic difficulties.

This is what I believe we are lacking. We are lacking a major economic recovery plan, we are lacking in major areas such as the revival of the infrastructure policy with Eurobonds, and we are lacking a high-profile European approach. This is what we expect from the European Council at the end of the month.

Johannes Cornelis van Baalen (ALDE). – Mr President, it is extremely important to fight the economic crisis, and that also means helping the small and medium-sized enterprises. We must be committed to the outcome of the Stoiber Committee, and I want to hear from both the Commission and the Council whether they are committed to this process and what we are going to do, because we have to cut red tape.

Another point I would like to discuss is the Ankara Protocol. The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs said in a public interview in The Hague that Turkey will not ratify or implement the Ankara Protocol. That is a statement in an authorised interview in *de Volkskrant* of 7 October 2009. What are we going to do? We cannot, as Commissioner Rehn said in the Foreign Affairs Committee, just kindly ask again. The deadline is 1 November. What action are we going to take?

Gunnar Hökmark (PPE). – (SV) Mr President, Minister, Commissioner, it is nice to see you here. I would like to mention two things ahead of the European Council summit. The first point I would like to raise concerns the climate. I think it is important to go into the negotiations with the goal that the best solution to the issue is a solution that involves everyone making a joint commitment. I say this because, in the debate, we sometimes talk as if it was a matter of formulating the best solution here in Europe or in a particular country. However, that is not enough if we are unable to get China, India and a whole host of other countries that are currently not involved in the joint climate commitment on board. This means that pragmatism and results must take precedence. This type of solution must also be based on all countries being prepared to make a commitment. It must not be the case that commitments and policies in other parts of the world are based on continued investments from Europe. They must instead be based on a sound economy, sound growth and the sound development of new opportunities – with the help of Europe and other wealthy countries.

My second point concerns the financial markets. I think it is important to emphasise that, more than anything else, stability on the financial markets requires what we call a stable macro-economy, in other words, stable public finances. This means that the debate about getting away from the large budget deficits is much more important than what individual financial market regulations should look like. However, it is also the case that stable financial markets require us to have stable growth, stable investments and the creation of new jobs. This means that, when we legislate on the financial markets, that legislation needs to involve better supervision, cross-border measures and transparency, but not so many regulations that investments and growth happen in other countries. That would put the stability of our own economy and our own financial markets under threat.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – (ES) Mr President, the positive outcome of the Irish referendum makes the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty more plausible and imminent than ever. This is good news, as it means that we will finally have institutions that are able to take action. First of all, they will be able to

help us emerge from the crisis and address its social dimension, namely the matter of generating employment. However, in addition to this, climate change, energy and the rules of fair trade should also be on the agenda.

The Summit also provides an opportunity to provide the initial, decisive momentum required to determine the membership of the new Commission, and we have already heard President Barroso make predictions concerning the selection criteria.

I would like to highlight the importance of two things. Firstly, as a member of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, I think that the membership of the Commission should be balanced. The S&D Group has mentioned how significant it would be for the High Representative to be a member of this political family, but there is no doubt that it is also important to ensure a gender balance.

On the other hand, the group also mentioned the distribution of portfolios and referred to one which is important to me as a lawyer who is committed to freedom, and as Chairman of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, and which is related to the subdivision of the Directorate-General for Justice and Home Affairs into a DG dealing with matters concerning justice and fundamental rights and another dedicated to security matters.

I think that this is not the right solution. The right solution does not involve subordinating justice to the importance of security or setting them up against each other, but rather in creating a Directorate-General for Justice and Fundamental Rights, a second Directorate-General for Home Affairs and a third one which does not link security with immigration but instead separates them, thereby creating a Directorate-General for Security and another for Immigration, Asylum and Refugees, which includes the field of fundamental rights.

Brian Crowley (ALDE). – Mr President, in our debates about these summits, you will find if you go back over 10 years that many ideas, many similar plans or proposals have come forward from Members within this House, from members of the Council and also from Commissioners, and, if anything, the last year has proven one thing to me, namely that when the Union acts together in solidarity with big plans and big ambitions, it moves the world. Maybe now is the time for greater plans and bigger ambitions as regards how we move forward.

Many have spoken about the scourge of unemployment which has come upon so many people in the last number of months, and have said that now is the time to take serious action to remove the dead wood of regulation and get rid of the dead wood of blockages to businesses and to entrepreneurs creating those businesses.

Could I say that when we speak about solidarity, it is not about the big against the small, and one fear that I have is that the new G20 could impact negatively on small countries and medium-sized countries which are emerging in these new markets.

Finally a word to the President-in-Office: you might put the issue of copyright term extension on the agenda for the Council as well under the Swedish Presidency.

Tunne Kelam (PPE). – Mr President, with the Lisbon Treaty about to enter into force, this is an historic moment to concentrate first of all on Europe's common future and common good. I am afraid that it is not the best opportunity to use these last moments to advance national interests, playing on the nerves of other partners.

Global challenges to Europe cannot be solved without efficient common institutions and common policies. However, today's Europe needs more than ever the far-sightedness, moral commitment and perception of common European values that inspired our founding fathers to break the vicious circle of history and national egoisms. That is why we need for Europe's progress and credibility in the world not necessarily good conductors of affairs but real statesmen, strong democratic leaders having a vision and authority to bring about a change also in Europe.

Therefore we need a clear commitment to, and practical implementation of, European common institutions. We need not only a common foreign and security policy, with an external service, but also a common energy policy. The European Council will also approve the Baltic Sea Strategy. I would like to thank the Commission and the Swedish Presidency once again for taking it on board. Now, the task of the Council is to implement it without losing time. I hope that the Baltic Sea Strategy will get the attention it deserves, also from the Spanish and Belgian Presidencies. I support the idea of Minister Malmström that the Baltic Sea Strategy can

be seen as a model pilot project for other macroregions of Europe. Nevertheless, no EU strategy will be taken seriously without having sufficient resources for its implementation. The existing budget line needs some money and some credibility.

Edite Estrela (S&D). – (PT) I would like to make two brief points. The first is about the Treaty of Lisbon: following the ‘yes’ vote in Ireland and the signing by the President of Poland, it is expected that the Constitutional Tribunal of the Czech Republic will deliver its opinion and President Klaus will do what he should, and sign the Treaty. The Council cannot give in to the blackmail of the President of the Czech Republic. The Treaty of Lisbon is essential for the better functioning of the European institutions, in addition to providing other benefits, such as strengthening the powers of the European Parliament and the rights of citizens. That is why it is imperative that the Treaty of Lisbon comes into force soon. The Council and the Commission should give President Klaus a deadline for him to start behaving like the President of a democratic country that is a member of the European Union. We cannot entertain the thought for one moment that the whim of some leader can prevail over the will of the majority.

My second point is about the Copenhagen conference. Ladies and gentlemen, the world needs a global agreement to fight climate change; both developed and developing countries need to stop the planet from overheating, and so they need to pool their efforts and make a courageous decision. Copenhagen is our big opportunity to avoid catastrophe, as the scientists say. There is no argument to be had in invoking the financial crisis as a reason to delay or scale down the plans for Copenhagen, and such attempts are not to be taken seriously. We need a sense of ambition if we are to save the planet.

Gay Mitchell (PPE). – Mr President, within a generation, the population of the European Union will be about 6% of the world’s population. We are not far beyond that now, which is why we simply cannot continue to rotate the presidency of the European Council every six months and have up to five different people speaking on foreign affairs-related issues for the Union. But also within that generation, the population of the world will have increased by about two billion people. Ninety per cent of that increase will be in what is now the developing world, where up to 11 million children die each year, about five million of them for want of medicines that have been available in what we call the West for over 30 years.

In that context it is not only important that we are well organised to run Europe internally; it is also important that we are equipped to deal with situations like this in the developing world, which is why I want to make a case for a strong, independent, separate Commissioner for development aid who will have his or her own clear budget and remit and who will be accountable to this Chamber through our Committee on Development.

It is crucially important that the High Representative, Minister for External Affairs, whatever title you want to give that person, will have a lot on his or her plate, much to do, but there is one single issue which commands and must command our particular attention. I want to advocate strongly that not only do we continue to have an office of Commissioner for Development, but that this portfolio is given to somebody who is equal to the task and determined to ensure that these, our neighbours who are a short journey away from the European Union, are treated with respect, this for selfish as well as selfless reasons.

Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D). – (SK) The most important item for the forthcoming Council meeting will be to complete the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and to bring the Treaty to life.

The process ushered in by the Lisbon Treaty will strengthen the Union both internally and in a global context. Strengthening the position of the Union is closely connected with strengthening cooperation in the area of the current third pillar. The Union will be more open, more effective and more democratic. The main challenge and priority is to secure fundamental rights and freedoms as well as integrity and security in Europe. The way to achieve these objectives is full support, effective implementation and sufficient respect for existing laws and instruments relating to the protection of human rights and civic freedoms.

The Stockholm Programme emphasises the assertion of these rights, especially in the areas of justice and security. We must give precedence to mechanisms which facilitate the access of citizens to the courts so that their rights and lawful interests can be enforced throughout the Union. It must also be our strategy to strengthen police cooperation and the enforcement of rights as well as improving security in Europe. The internal security strategy must be developed with a view to combating mounting extremism in the Member States, eliminating the tension stirred up by irresponsible politicians and through concrete solutions over such sensitive questions as, for example, immigration, asylum policy or the issue of the Roma and national minorities in such a way that these issues are not exploited by right-wing extremists.

Properly organised migration can benefit all of the parties involved. Europe will need a flexible immigration policy which can respond to the needs of society and the labour market in the various EU Member States.

In relation to securing a credible immigration and asylum policy which is sustainable in the long-term, we must, however, pay close attention to the problem of illegal migration, which is a serious concern for our citizens.

Mario Mauro (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, be brave, be brave, be brave, that is the recommendation that I feel like making ahead of the Council meeting and, for this reason, when it comes to debating the nominations for the new commissioners, the new European Union Foreign Affairs Minister and the President of the European Council – thus the people who, together with President Barroso and the other commissioners, will have to oversee European policy in the near future – the only method of decision making to be used is that of considering the best possible interests of European citizens.

Therefore, the people who should be chosen are those who have depth as politicians and human beings, whose national and European political efforts have been distinguished by a concern for the common good. These must be the foundations on which we continue to address the major issues such as climate change, investigating further perhaps the requirements of the various economies and the economic crisis, with the aid of courageous initiatives such as the Eurobonds, which we should also put on the agenda of the next Council meeting.

To conclude, I should like to cite the words uttered by Pope Benedict XVI the other day – which I would be delighted, just once, to see upheld in the next European Council too – because they are words that provide a timely reminder of the responsibility shared by all citizens and by all political representatives, which is to fulfil the request that we seek in unity and in the common search for truth, that crucial incentive that we need to start building something important for ourselves and for future generations.

Progress and civilisation are born of unity, and Europe was great when it conveyed these fundamental values that it derived from the Christian faith, turning them into the nations' cultural heritage and identity. For this reason, I believe that it is clear which path we must follow in order to be able to overcome the crucial challenge of relaunching Europe as a global power.

Zuzana Roithová (PPE). – (CS) Mr President, the Lisbon Treaty is a key issue. The jurisprudence of the Czech Constitutional Court is consistent and I do not believe that the Court would have found next week that the Treaty was inconsistent with the Czech constitution. I doubt, however, that the President will end his obstruction. The Czech Republic, however, does not have a presidential system and the government can bring an action against such a president for exceeding his authority. It is a fact that Václav Klaus refused for years to appoint a particular lawyer as a judge simply because he had lost a dispute with him in court, nor does he respect the decisions of the Supreme Administrative Court. Along with this lawyer, 500 million European citizens have become hostages to the whims of our President. The damage is not inconsiderable. At a time of crisis, the appointment of a new Commission is being held up, Parliament lacks the powers to resolve the budget, the national parliaments cannot, in the meantime, issue yellow or red cards and we are not making use of new powers to combat epidemics, energy crises, terrorism and organised crime or the new principles in civil defence and humanitarian aid.

It is possible the Charter may be rejected, all because of the defunct Beneš Decrees. This is simply absurd, not only because of the timing, but also because there are no legal grounds for it. Article 345 of the Lisbon Treaty even states explicitly that it does not apply to ownership issues in the Member States. The Charter does not create new legal possibilities over and above those that already exist for ownership disputes in the Czech Republic. In addition, Regulation 44 on the recognition of judgments does not take ownership issues 50 years back into the past. The Czech media are nonetheless seething with doubts. What is really going on in the Czech Republic? It is clear that the next presidential election in the Czech Republic will be hard fought and Václav Klaus is endeavouring, through this piece of theatre, to cultivate the image of a powerful leader who can take on the entire EU single-handedly and defend the property of Czechs against foreigners. I appreciate the fact that the EU did not put any pressure on the Czech Republic, and I would like to call for patience until the democratic deficit caused by our President is resolved at home, well ahead of the elections in the UK. In conclusion, I would like to call again on the Council to stand by the Czech Republic in opposition to the one-sided introduction of visa requirements by Canada against Czech citizens and to take a decision on joint sanctions.

Georgios Papastamkos (PPE). – (EL) Mr President, my speech will concentrate on three points. First point: the economic crisis. The crisis indiscriminately hit all the economic systems, both the strong and the less

strong. If we interpret ten years' experience of EMU in light of the economic crisis, it is clear that economic policy needs to be more europeanised. It is also clear that economic risk needs to be europeanised. Trust is good, control is even better.

Second point: climate change. The European Union is rightly at the vanguard of global ecological diplomacy. I absolutely agree with the President of the Commission, Mr Barroso, that, in the run-up to the Copenhagen Summit, there is no plan B. The ecological debt burdens everyone without exception. I support the idea of creating a global climate bank, which will have funds from the Emissions Bank to finance efforts by developing countries to create environmentally-friendly development standards.

Third point: immigration. Obviously we need to proceed more quickly in adopting a common immigration policy. However, there are also foreign policy aspects to immigration. We must proceed as quickly as possible in establishing effective foreign policy relations with third countries, because there is a great deal of pressure on countries, especially in southern Europe. I wish to say quite clearly that Turkey's stance is provocative. I was pleased to hear the Swedish Presidency point that out. The European Union's message to Turkey – and to other countries – must be loud, clear and effective. This framework forms part of the Community *acquis* and everyone must respect it.

Peter Liese (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Malmström and Mr Barroso have covered the subject of climate change and the preparations for Copenhagen. I agree with everyone who says that the Council must draw some ambitious conclusions. However, I would advise against looking only at the industry which has been covered by the Emissions Trading System since 2005, when considering both financing and the issue of who must bring about the reduction.

We need more industries to shoulder the burden. More than 50% of emissions are not yet included in the Emissions Trading System. We need more industries to take responsibility in order to achieve our objectives and to guarantee financing. I am referring to the air transport and shipping industries. I have been disappointed by the actions of the Council and the Commission up to now. During the preparations for Pittsburgh, this subject was not included in the Council's conclusions.

If we want to be successful in Copenhagen, it is essential that we speed up what we are doing. The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety did this on Monday. I would ask the Council and the Commission to look at this in more detail.

Secondly, I would like to say that I know that the discussions will be very informal, but the Council must also be discussing the composition of the new Commission. In all modesty, I would like to make a suggestion. For historical reasons, pharmaceutical legislation has come under the supervision of the Directorate General for Industry and the Commissioner for Industry. Of course, pharmaceutical legislation is a matter for industry, but it is also a health issue. In all the Member States, in the European Parliament, even in the US, this area forms part of health policy. Therefore, perhaps it is now time to try a change in this area. Please ask the Commission President to take a look at this issue.

Vytautas Landsbergis (PPE). – Mr President, President Barroso mentioned here yesterday, in his nice response to Mr Farage, that in the EU we need the President of the Council to be a true European. I am sure both of you and many here share that view. Do we also need somebody in that position who would be a true 'Gazpromian', like Gerhard Schröder, Paavo Lipponen, etc.? Or maybe you think those qualities are pretty compatible, so a good 'Gazpromian', especially if they voted for friendly and bribing relations, is the best European. That way, we could speed up the current development of the EU towards becoming the 'GU' – the 'Gazprom Union' – and so avoid the situation in which Russia totally ignores the EU while working exclusively on splitting it. What is your opinion about 'Gazpromians' for the Presidency?

Mirosław Piotrowski (ECR). – (PL) Mr President, the Treaty of Lisbon has not yet been ratified, and is still only a draft political document. This means that, in the European Union, we remain bound by the principle of unanimity. Every country has the right to declare reservations. The President of the Czech Republic, Václav Klaus, is acting within the framework of established rules. Putting pressure on the President in fact affects not only him personally, but also the many millions of citizens of the countries of Europe who have announced serious reservations about this document. At the forthcoming European Council, the leaders of the Member States of the European Union should think deeply about the advisability and the consequences of consciously by-passing the will of the citizens whom they represent.

Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D). – (RO) The European Council will be invited to adopt the strategy on the Baltic Sea region. I believe that this provides a good model for the European Union's future strategy on the Danube region.

The Danube region covers 10 states, six of which are Member States of the European Union, with a population of 200 million. This number includes 75 million people who live in areas bordering the Danube. This is why I think that it is important for this model to be used for the Danube strategy as well, which will need to have an action plan and action programme for the coming years.

Still on the subject of the European Council's programme, I also think that it is of paramount importance for us to adopt at European level the financial instruments required for the development of an 'eco-efficient' economy. I am talking, in this case, about energy efficiency in buildings and sustainable transport in particular.

Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, Minister, Madam Vice-President of the European Commission, my question concerns the application of the Treaty of Lisbon, especially the promise made to the Irish people to have one Commissioner per country.

In December 2008, it was agreed that the European Council would take the appropriate legal measures to ensure we have one Commissioner per country. Mrs Malmström, what are these legal measures? Information is being circulated that there would be an amendment to the Treaty of Lisbon with the accession treaty of Croatia, or are there other appropriate legal arrangements? Could you provide us with this information? How do you also envisage increasing the number of MEPs by 18, since there are 18 extra MEPs who should constitute the next European Parliament with the next Treaty of Lisbon?

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL). – (PT) Mr President, this coming Council should give absolute priority to changing the liberal policies that have led to the severe economic and social crisis. This should be the time to face up to the poverty experienced by around 80 million citizens of the European Union, including more than 30 million workers whose wages are so low that they and their families merely survive, and are unable to escape from their state of poverty. This should be the time to commit to tackling the severe unemployment which continues to rise, and which could reach 30 million within the next year if we do not take appropriate measures immediately.

This Council's main challenge, therefore, is to break with the neoliberal policies of the Lisbon Strategy and the Stability Pact. These should be replaced with a real programme for progress and social development that will promote high-quality public services, support production and micro-, small and medium-sized businesses, valuing those who work, and creating more employment with rights, including jobs for women and young people.

Enikő Győri (PPE). – (HU) Ladies and gentlemen, according to some rumours I have heard, there is an idea going around about how to possibly get the Czech Republic's President Klaus on board, which is to somehow incorporate the Beneš Decrees into the Treaty of Lisbon afterwards. I would like us to guard against this kind of legal jiggery-pokery and nonsense for three reasons. Firstly, I believe that we would create a dangerous precedent whereby any constitutional expert would feel that they can interfere in a contract retrospectively and, as we can see, this is dangerous because the Slovak government has already stated that if Klaus can do so, they would like to as well. Therefore, I think that this would be a dangerous precedent.

Secondly, it is wrong to cite the Irish as an example. What the Irish were asking for was also originally included in the Treaty of Lisbon, and they were not objecting to what was not in it. Therefore, their request did not encounter any legal obstacle. Thirdly, the content of 13 of the 143 Beneš Decrees disenfranchised Hungarians and Germans. I believe that the European Union cannot allow reference to be made to such documents.

Rachida Dati (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, I would like to continue with the argument from my speech yesterday on the preparations for the Copenhagen summit, and then mention yesterday's Ecofin meeting, which was not hugely successful.

I was questioning you on the responsibility we have as industrialised countries to behave in such a way that developing countries can follow us in our efforts to combat climate change.

At Copenhagen, we cannot act as if we all have the same capabilities – this would mean that we were all starting from the same place, to arrive nowhere in the end. Therefore, to convince our partners in development to join us, we must obviously address the question of the aid they should be given and not wait for the results of the Copenhagen Summit.

At the next European Council and in the important context of climate change, the 27 absolutely must agree on the way the European Union thinks about aid to developing countries.

Yesterday, as I said, the Ecofin Council of Finance Ministers did not manage to reach a common position on this set of problems. However, we know that this issue is absolutely central. The European Commission had already made its proposals and I very much hope that we can take the initiative and carry our partners with us to achieve the global solidarity required to overcome the problem of climate change.

Charles Goerens (ALDE). – (FR) Mr President, my question is aimed at the Presidency-in-Office of the Council. You know that the central issue regarding the future Presidency of the European Council is knowing whether he or she intends to prefer the Community method in all circumstances. Do you think this criterion should be made a precondition of the appointment of the President-in-Office of the Council?

Recently we have, from time to time, witnessed intergovernmental drift. I think it is time to close this period and return to the beginning of the European integration process and to stay faithful to the legacy of Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet.

Angelika Werthmann (NI). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we always talk about the ‘economic and financial crisis’ in quotation marks. Why do we not refer to a structural crisis? All of this began with a genuine banking crisis which included the investment banks. This is one industry, but the entire world economy suffered as a result.

Romana Jordan Cizelj (PPE). – (SL) Ladies and gentlemen, the conference in Copenhagen will soon be upon us and yet we have only moved a small step forward since last year’s conference. We ought to have achieved a great deal more and acted with greater determination. We find ourselves struggling, not only with the financing, but even to make a commitment on individual countries’ emission reduction targets.

Industrialised countries need to play a more visible role on this score and we need to send a clear message to the United States of America. The specific difficulty which we face with the United States is that we know that they will not even have passed the necessary national legislation by the time December comes round. I think that we should clearly voice our expectation that President Obama deliver on one of his most important pre-election pledges, i.e. that America would play a proactive role in countering climate change. Likewise, we should clearly voice our expectation that President Obama take advantage of his appearance in person to bring about a successful conclusion to the conference.

Jaromír Kohlíček (GUE/NGL). – (CS) Madam President-in-Office of the Council, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the European Council is undoubtedly an important body and it should therefore resolve fundamental issues. The number one issue is to provide work that can ensure people a decent standard of living. I am surprised by the succession of meaningless speeches which betray a lack of knowledge and foolishly mix together a bizarre goulash of revanchist demands and extreme liberal methods. The European Council should reject such voices out of hand and, at the same time give, a clear signal that its primary aim is to get industry moving again and to resolve the critical situation in agriculture. If, instead of this, it accedes to cuts in the social area, along with relief for banks and the most wealthy, then no positive impulse can be expected, especially if there is an insistence on abstract criteria of financial stability. In conclusion, I would like to say to all those who have desperately resisted ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by referendum: put your own house in order, and if you are unable to explain what is good about this Treaty to your own citizens, do not lecture others.

Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE). – (ES) Mr President, I would like to mention the challenges we must face and overcome in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, namely, establishing a proper, joint migration and asylum policy; effective control of our external borders; an effective integration and repatriation policy, a Eurojust that is credible and trustworthy; a Europol to serve the Community, under the control of the European Parliament; progress in terms of harmonising the field of civil and criminal justice; effective transatlantic relations, especially with the United States, based on trust and equality; an equitable solution to the issue of SWIFT data; an effective data protection policy; better protection for the euro against counterfeiting and active promotion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Robert Goebbels (S&D). – (FR) Mr President, my question is very simple. We have a newly-appointed President for the new Commission, but when will we have this new Commission? In these difficult times, it is impossible to work with a Commission half of whose members are already packing their bags. We need a new impetus in Europe – we need this new Commission soon.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Mr President, one of the lessons to be learnt from the recent referendum in Ireland is that a good PR campaign makes a big difference. In June 2008, the Irish people voted against the Lisbon Treaty. A little over a year afterwards, they voted by a two-thirds majority in favour. Did the European Union have a much greater impact on their lives in the interim? No. But the message of the European Union was sold far better by the ‘yes’ side in the second campaign.

Particularly now with the Lisbon Treaty coming into being, I think it is important with the new competences that much good work will be done. However, the Commission must also engage in a proper PR strategy to bring that good work home to the citizens. So I would ask the Commission what plans they have in that regard so that future referenda will be passed much more easily than in the past.

Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE). – (RO) Mr President, my name is Luhan, not Luman. I warmly welcome the fact that the political groups are in support of promoting the ratification process. To ensure that the European Union can operate efficiently, we need the Treaty of Lisbon and we need it to come into force as soon as possible.

At the moment, the Czech Republic is the only Member State which has still not ratified the Treaty. As the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) has already said, we are calling for President Klaus to show a responsible attitude and ratify the Treaty by the date of the European Council at the end of October. Otherwise, we are going to remain stuck in this institutional debate and we are not going to be able to focus on the real problems which ordinary citizens are facing, such as the economic and financial crisis, unemployment and social inclusion, nor are we going to be able to reinforce the European Union’s image as a genuine global player.

I believe that we have discussed the merits of this Treaty so much that there is no point in us reviving this debate. What we are interested in now is that at the next European Council, we can confirm that the ratification process has been finalised in all Member States so that we can move on to the next stage of establishing the College of the Commission.

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (SV) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your questions and comments. We often talk about a citizens’ Europe, the people’s Europe, and then we interpret this to suit our own political purposes. There is actually nothing wrong with this, but if we ask the citizens ‘what do you want from Europe?’, then the citizens of all the European States say ‘we want cooperation in Europe that is based on a number of values and that solves our common problems – the economic crisis, unemployment, the climate issues, international crime, the migration problem and so on’.

That is what we are here to do. Many of these issues will be discussed at the summit in ten days’ time. Of course, we will not succeed in solving all of them, but hopefully, we will be able to take some important steps in the right direction and thereby create more of a ‘citizens’ Europe’. We must take these decisions in a way that is democratic, open and allows transparency.

We may each have different views on the Treaty of Lisbon. The view held by the Swedish Presidency and the Council and, I believe, the majority in this Chamber, is that the Treaty of Lisbon will bring Europe closer to the citizens. We will take decisions in a more efficient and democratic way and we will also lend increased strength and weight to the European Union in our global relations. It is therefore important to get the Treaty in place and I can guarantee that we will do our utmost to ensure that this happens as soon as possible.

There is still no solution with regard to the Czech President. I have heard that there is some speculation here, but nevertheless there is still no solution. We are in intensive talks with our friends in Prague and we hope very, very soon to be able to present to you a proposal for resolving this issue. I would like to point out that we must, of course, await the ruling of the Czech constitutional court before we can go any further.

In the meantime, preparations will continue with regard to codecision with Parliament and to the European External Action Service, which we will discuss this afternoon. I will return to many of the views that have been expressed and other questions relating to the Treaty of Lisbon. We have had very constructive cooperation with your President, Mr Buzek, and his colleagues concerning how Parliament, the Council and the Commission can cooperate once the new rules are in place.

A few questions have been asked about Afghanistan. Yes, Mrs de Sarnez, we hope to be able to make progress in discussions on a more unified European view with regard to Afghanistan, based both on the military presence that the European Union has there and on increased support for civil society and the democratic, state-building processes. Intensive discussions are being held right now on how we can support the election

that is to take place on 7 November. That is very soon. It is difficult to put European election observers in place in such a short space of time, but we will, of course, do our best to achieve this.

The European Union's long-term goal, which we support, is to have a common asylum and migration policy. We will not manage this by the end of the year, partly because we need the Treaty of Lisbon to enter into force first. However, I do agree with you that it is important. In the meantime, we are working on the Stockholm Programme and one of the things we are discussing in this connection is migration-related issues. They are very complex issues, of course, and concern cooperation with third countries, trade, aid and the possibility of introducing a framework so that we can also have legal immigration into Europe. They also concern solidarity and reception systems. The Commission will report on the progress that has been made in this regard. We will then take further decisions in December.

Mr van Baalen, the issue of the Ankara Protocol is important. We often say to our Turkish friends that they must ratify and implement the Ankara Protocol. This issue will not be discussed at this summit, but we will discuss enlargement later in the autumn, with a possible decision being taken in December. Therefore, I will certainly return to this issue again.

With regard to the number of commissioners, the European Council has, of course, decided that each State is to have one commissioner. Under the present Treaty, it would be possible to change this in 2014. As soon as the Treaty is in place, we will have time to review any legal adjustments that may be required to guarantee that every State can retain its commissioner, and we will do this. We are in talks with the various legal bodies to see whether further amendments to the Treaty will be necessary or whether it is sufficient for the European Council to decide this unanimously.

The same applies with regard to the 18 extra MEPs. As soon as the Treaty is in place, we will begin preparations for this. A number of States have already made preparations in order to be able to send the Members in question here quickly. Mr Audy, the national voting system is a bit more complicated in some States. It may, therefore, take some time. I hope that the preparations get underway as soon as possible. I am very pleased that the European Parliament has allowed these Members to be observers while they are waiting to formally become MEPs. Together with the forthcoming Spanish Presidency, we will do our best to ensure that this goes as quickly and as smoothly as possible.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks, not only for this debate, but also for the extremely strong support that this House is giving the Presidency with regard to the issue of the climate. We will do our utmost to make it possible to take decisions on European funding at the European Council meeting, based both on the European contribution and on our contribution in relation to the developing countries, thereby allowing us to send out a strong signal and to give the international negotiations a boost to make them as successful as possible in Copenhagen. It is the most serious and important task facing our generation to take appropriate, concrete steps to combat global warming and put in place a global regulation. I am very grateful for the support and commitment that the European Parliament is showing in this regard.

Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the Commission. – Mr President, first of all, thank you very much for this lively and interesting debate. It is very clear that the sense of urgency about the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty is tangible in this House and in this debate. As you will understand, the Commission, like Parliament, is eagerly awaiting the entry into force of this new Treaty.

We all know that the political process of approval has now been concluded in all Member States. It is, of course, for each Member State to finalise the ratification process and, in so doing, they have to respect their internal procedures, but it is also clear that no individual Member State acts in a vacuum. Their decisions or delays will have an impact on all.

We of course hope that the Czech Republic will very soon be in a position to ratify the Treaty. I would also like to remind everybody here about the loyal cooperation that is one of the principles and main features of the European Union. I think it is of crucial importance that Member States can trust each other on the commitments made.

May I also comment on the fact that many of the Members of Parliament here have made a distinction or a divide between reality – with unemployment and an economic crisis – on the one hand, and the text of the Lisbon Treaty on the other, but of course, the whole idea is that the text of the Lisbon Treaty is there to deal with the context and that we will be better equipped to take effective decisions on immigration or asylum policy, on energy security, etc. This is the whole idea, and we have to link them instead of dividing them, but

we hope that we will very soon come to the end of this eternal debate on institutional issues and be able to use these new effective instruments.

The Commission is now working actively to prepare for implementation when the Treaty enters into force. I know that this afternoon, you will be devoting a specific debate to the External Action Service. This is therefore not the time to enter into a full discussion on that issue. But I would say that we are facing a real challenge here.

It is a challenge to draw together the different players in the field of external relations, and the overall aim has to be to achieve a diplomatic synergy. A certain degree of creative thinking is necessary while respecting the interinstitutional balance.

We also need the Service to be fully accountable to this House – to the European Parliament. I strongly believe that the setting-up of the External Action Service can be a success if Council, Parliament and the Commission work closely together. We must also respect the fact that it is for the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission to make a proposal in agreement with the Commission.

On another important issue, the European Citizens' Initiative, the Commission intends to launch a Green Paper in mid-November. We intend to hold a broad consultation with citizens, civil society and all stakeholders in order to launch the legislative proposals very soon after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

The consequences of the economic and financial crisis will appear high up on the Council agenda. We heard this particular theme evoked often during the debate. I agree with those who said that there is no room for complacency. It is true that the policies in response to the crisis are starting to bear some fruit – financial markets are starting to consolidate and confidence is improving – but we are far from full recovery and the consequences of unemployment are, and will remain, very severe. Political efforts must also continue to support active labour market policies.

The Commission of course – and I say this in response to some of the questions raised during the debate – stands by its budget proposal. We hope that Parliament will also confirm our ambitions by your vote. As President Barroso said yesterday in the Question Hour, what has been done so far is not enough.

The employment situation is such that we all need to do more at European, but also at national, level. Unemployment is our first concern today and we hope that we can count on the European Parliament in continuing work on this, and also to put pressure on the Council, and at national level, to approve our proposal on easing the management of the structural funds, because that could definitely help.

Another issue raised concerned the administrative burden. This Thursday, the Commission will adopt a very far-reaching Communication on administrative burden reduction. That Communication will set out what has been achieved so far and what still remains to be done. It also builds on the important work done by the Stoiber Group. According to this particular report, the picture is very positive, and the proposal for how to deal with the administrative burden reduction is on the table. Unfortunately the majority of these proposals are pending before the Council, so again we hope that the European Parliament will help us to put pressure on the Member States to actually move forward on these issues.

I would also like to say something about financial market supervision which has, of course, regularly appeared on the Commission agenda over recent months. A complete new supervisory framework must be set up at EU level, and we are pleased to see that some progress has been achieved. There is broad agreement in the Council on the Commission proposal on the Systemic Risk Board for macro-prudential supervision. We hope Parliament will give its support to this. Much more effort is needed when it comes to the supervisory authorities for micro-prudential supervision and, again, we count on the will of both Council and Parliament to arrive at an ambitious and efficient solution as soon as possible.

Finally, let me say something about the topic which also features at the top of the Swedish Presidency's agenda, namely climate change, because we only have a few weeks to go to the Copenhagen conference. I think several of you have touched upon what will be the core issue which will determine success or failure. I would call it climate justice, because this is about the relation between developing and developed countries and the will to present a credible proposal for the financing of both mitigation and adaptation measures and the way we also show our willingness to lead the way.

The Commission – and it is the only body to have done this – has presented a proposal for financing. It has been criticised by many as not being enough. I am sure it will not be enough, but it is the first step, and hopefully it will also make the others come up with their own efforts and put something on the table that

we will be able to negotiate in Copenhagen. We will, of course, continue to be fully active and not lower our level of ambition, but instead encourage all other parties and partners to take a full part and take a seat at the table – including the United States, for the first time – so that we can respond to all the concerns of citizens.

I can assure you that we have no intention of lowering our ambitions, but instead will make sure that we work proactively for a good deal in Copenhagen.

President. – The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Gerard Batten (EFD), in writing. – There is fevered speculation that Tony Blair may be appointed the first President of the European Union under the Lisbon Treaty/European Constitution. Nearly thirty-eight thousand people have signed a Europe-wide petition opposing his presidency. It is easy to understand why. As Prime Minister of Britain Mr Blair has shown himself to be a liar and a fantasist. On a relatively modest Prime Minister's salary, he has mysteriously managed to become a multi-millionaire. In the MPs expenses scandal now engulfing the House of Commons, only one MP's expense records have unaccountably gone missing. They are Mr Blair's. I share the revulsion of those opposed to Mr Blair's presidency. But who in fact would make a better presidential candidate than Mr Blair for this Union founded as it is on deceit, lies and corruption? Mr Blair brought Britain to the edge of ruin. He could do the same for the EU. The EU and Tony Blair deserve each other.

Ivo Belet (PPE), in writing. – (NL) Mr President, we assume that the agenda of the forthcoming European Council will also include the economic crisis, in particular the situation with Opel. The acquisition of Opel and the massive national State aid promised in this connection is more than a test case for Europe; it is about the credibility of the European Commission, which must ensure that no unlawful State aid is granted. It is unacceptable for healthy, profitable plants to be closed because the Member State in which they are situated is unable to provide as much State aid as another – larger and more powerful – Member State.

We must also learn lessons from the Opel affair: it is not yet too late to launch a coordinated European strategy for the automobile sector. CARS 21 was, and remains, a praiseworthy plan, but it is far from sufficient. Europe must produce a vigorous plan for the future that drastically accelerates the development of the sustainable electric car. To do so, we need to bring European car manufacturers together round the table, and to focus resources from the Seventh Framework Programme on this. It is time to creep out of our defensive position and to give all the workers in the largest industry in Europe a positive signal.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) One of the prime objectives of the next European Council will be to ensure the success of the UN Conference on climate change, which will take place in Copenhagen in December.

The Council's conclusions on the EU's position in the Copenhagen conference are fundamental for ensuring that the EU speaks with one voice. It is important to keep an ambitious negotiating position. The EU should demonstrate that it is united and set an example of leadership, especially by helping developing countries, which will face costs of about EUR 100 billion per year from 2020 in order to adapt to the impacts of climate change and reduce their emissions.

Establishing the structure of a funding system for developing countries, particularly the least developed, is of paramount importance, along with defining the sources and amounts of this funding, so as to ensure an agreement in Copenhagen.

This agreement will allow a protocol to come into force that will replace the Kyoto Protocol from 1 January 2013 and will ensure an effective reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, while allowing European industry to remain competitive in global markets.

András Gyürk (PPE), in writing. – (HU) We are hoping that by the final October session of the European Council at the latest, the final obstacles will have disappeared preventing the Treaty of Lisbon from coming into force. This agreement may, in many respects, inspire the European Union to have a more efficient decision-making process. I would like to highlight one example: energy security. One sign of progress is that, unlike up until now, energy policy has been given a separate section in an EC Treaty. Based on the events of the last few years, I think that the new chapter will set out the guidelines in the EU's energy policy. The objectives to be supported include the development of energy efficiency, support for the use of renewable sources and the interconnection of networks. As an MEP from a new Member State, I am particularly pleased that the concept of solidarity also features in the new energy chapter. However, the Treaty of Lisbon does

not in any way, at least when it comes to energy policy, present us with a ready-made solution. The inclusion of the new chapter acts much more as a warning: Europe needs to take urgent steps to reduce its dependency and promote its environmental views.

The Treaty of Lisbon in itself offers absolutely no guarantee, just an opportunity. This is an opportunity for Member States to consolidate the foundations of a common EU energy policy, while being aware of their own interests. The development of alternative supply routes, the interconnection of networks or even the provision of protection against external purchases cannot be conceived in the future without a suitable degree of political determination and cooperation from Member States.

Iosif Matula (PPE), in writing. – (RO) The impact of Ireland's approval of the Treaty of Lisbon is making itself felt across the whole European continent. The purpose of this Treaty is obviously to simplify the decision-making process after the EU's expansion towards the east. Against this background, the message conveyed by our partners in Ireland is in support of solidarity among Europe's citizens. We are also talking about one of the last European Councils to be held under the EU's rotating presidency system. This fact is all the more significant in that the selection has to take place of the occupants of the main posts that will be held in the coming years. This is an issue which has triggered lively debates, involving countless political sensitivities. In my opinion, our task is to deal with an issue where clear-cut principles must take priority over any feelings of pride of the moment. It is our duty to offer the European Union consistency, efficiency, a long-term future and balanced development for all regions so that it can face up to the challenges on the global political stage, whether we are talking about the economic crisis, climate change, our common identity, etc. Indeed, the European Union will acquire the strength it deserves only when we are on the same wavelength at a global level and when we can be identified as an entity that takes united action.

(The sitting was suspended for a few minutes)

IN THE CHAIR: MR VIDAL-QUADRAS

Vice-President

3. Voting time

President. – The next item is the vote.

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

3.1. Freedom of information in Italy and other Member States of the European Union (vote)

– *Before the vote:*

Edite Estrela (S&D). – (PT) Mr President, I would like to ask for the floor under Rule 157(1) of the Rules of Procedure in order to speak about the second draft amendment, presented by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), to the joint motion for a resolution on freedom of information in Italy and other Member States.

This proposed amendment brings shame on the European Parliament and, in the name of the truth, it should not be debated, still less voted upon. Its premises are false and are based on a mere fallacy dreamed up by Portuguese political parties during the electoral campaign. They were given the correct response by Portuguese voters.

However, an unquestionable truth (and I have the evidence here to prove it) is that the MEP who has tabled this amendment showed his intolerance and inquisitorial mindset yesterday on his website, by calling for the writer José Saramago, the Nobel Prize-winner for literature, to renounce his Portuguese nationality. It seems pretty clear who is attacking freedom of opinion.

– *Before the vote on the joint motion for a resolution RC-B7-0090/2009:*

David-Maria Sassoli, on behalf of the S&D Group. – (IT) Mr President, in accordance with Rule 147 of the Rules of Procedure, I should like to remind you that, in the debate on human rights in the world in 2007, this House decided not to do as the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) proposed

and make reference to persons who represent high civil or religious institutions for the purposes of strengthening political arguments.

We therefore ask you to adopt the same measure with regard to the amendments to our resolution tabled by the PPE Group, which make explicit reference to the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano.

President. – Mr Sassoli, you raised the issue of inadmissibility, under Rule 147 of the Rules of Procedure. As a result, the Presidency, namely President Buzek, has examined this matter in depth, as you can imagine. He has based his analysis on the following principles. First of all, the amendments to which you refer, namely Amendments 7, 8 and 9, are directly related to the text which they intend to modify. Secondly, they do not aim to delete or replace the entire text. Neither do they alter various paragraphs in the text nor can it be claimed that they do not affect all the language versions.

Therefore, in strict application of the provisions of Rule 147, the President is of the opinion that they fulfil all the relevant admissibility criteria. Thus, the President has decided that they are admissible.

With respect to the reference to President Napolitano, who is a former, much-loved colleague, there is a precedent which allows us to include the names of people, of politicians, in our texts.

Mr Sassoli, if you wish to proceed with your request, there are, of course, other courses of action open to you, under the Rules of Procedure, such as an oral amendment or, of course, a vote against the above-mentioned amendments.

Mario Mauro, *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (IT) Mr President, I fully agree with the Presidency's interpretation regarding the amendments. I have an oral amendment, therefore we will keep all of the amendments and propose that we simply delete the name and surname of the President of the Italian Republic.

Therefore, in accordance with our standard practice, my proposal is not to include the reference to individuals and to delete 'Giorgio Napolitano', leaving the amendments and the option to vote on those amendments. I feel that this will enable us to convey in some way the sense of respect that we have for the President of the Italian Republic, who clearly said what he said and who was referred to in the debate by all of the speakers from all of the political groups.

Niccolò Rinaldi, *on behalf of the ALDE Group.* – (IT) Mr President, having noted the Presidency's decision on the admissibility of these amendments, I would simply ask the authors of these amendments to withdraw them for the sake of political expediency.

I do not believe that failing to mention the name and surname of the President of the Italian Republic will change a great deal, given that it is the President of the Italian Republic who is the subject of these amendments. I think this is something of a ritual where our work is concerned; I have never seen MEPs from other countries cite the Queen of England or the President of Germany in our resolutions for what may appear to be exploitative reasons. Therefore, I would simply ask that Amendments 7, 8 and 9 to the resolution be withdrawn.

President. – Mr Sassoli, given that you asked this question, and that Mr Mauro has put forward a proposal in response to yours, would you like to take the floor, in order to reply?

David-Maria Sassoli, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (IT) Mr President, we are in favour of deleting the name and surname of our Italian President. Naturally, we will vote against those amendments.

President. – In that case, we will withdraw the name and surname of the Italian Head of State.

– *Before the vote on paragraph 3:*

Nuno Melo (PPE). – (PT) Mr President, my oral amendment is as follows: regrets and deplores the influence wielded by the Portuguese Socialist Government, which has led to the decision to terminate the programme *Jornal Nacional* on the Portuguese television channel TV1, and notes that this decision is now under investigation by the Portuguese Regulatory Authority.

(The oral amendment was not accepted)

– *After the vote on Recital D:*

József Szájer (PPE). – Mr President, I would like to remind the House that the European Parliament should not accept resolutions which apply double standards. This is why I am quoting an example from my country – from Hungary – where the Finance Minister filed criminal proceedings against a journalist because he did not like what he was writing about him.

This is why I think that mentioning the Italian Prime Minister in your text filing lawsuits against Italian and European newspapers and not mentioning this case – I think what happened in Hungary is more serious – applies a double standard. So I would call on our colleagues on the Left here not to vote against this amendment because that would only demonstrate and make clear that your activity is nothing but a show – a show bullying the Prime Minister of a country where there is no Left.

(Applause)

The Government is not from your family, but you do not accept the same standards when there is a Socialist government. So the amendment follows along the right lines.

(Applause)

‘whereas the European Parliament shall not accept double standards; whereas, in order to put political pressure on journalists disclosing corruption cases linked to high-ranking officials and ruling party politicians, the Government administration in Hungary has recently introduced steps to launch criminal proceedings against such members of the media;’ – namely Mr Tamás Pindroch, the journalist from the *Magyar Hírlap* – ‘whereas bearing in mind in particular that criminal proceedings were launched against the journalist who was investigating the scandals of a high-ranking former member of the government and one of the candidates for European Commissioner; whereas this has resulted in an atmosphere where the press is under political pressure in Hungary’.

I ask you to support this amendment in order to keep your credibility. It might make it clear that you are not bullying a particular person whom you do not like and who does not share your political views, but you really are supporting the freedom of the press in Europe.

(The oral amendment was not accepted)

President. – That concludes the vote.

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Mario Mauro (PPE). – *(IT)* Mr President, I have taken the floor to inform you of a very serious event, which has nothing to do with this vote and on which I call on the Presidency of Parliament to obtain information as quickly as possible, so that we may take action to defend our prerogatives and immunities.

This morning, officers from the Italian police force forced their way into the private residence of a Member of our delegation, while he was here in Strasbourg. He therefore had to hurriedly leave Strasbourg to return to his residence on the order of the Italian courts, which ordered the search of an MEP, that is to say of the private residence of an MEP, in clear breach of the fundamental aspects of our prerogatives and immunities.

I am simply asking for Parliament and the Presidency to verify whether the initiative taken by the courts and the Italian police force with regard to Mr Mastella constitutes a disrespectful act and an extreme violation of the terms of our immunity.

President. – The Presidency will address this issue in order to unequivocally defend our privileges and immunity.

Vytautas Landsbergis (PPE). – Mr President, I hope that a previous unfortunate vote on a Lithuanian law that has yet to come into being has helped many colleagues understand the danger, which has to be prevented, of the European Union turning into the Soviet Union.

4. Explanations of vote

Oral explanations of vote

- Freedom of information in Italy and other Member States of the European Union

Antonio Masip Hidalgo (S&D). – (ES) Mr President, I hope that Mr Berlusconi will be prosecuted by the judicial authorities for the crimes he has committed, and that his domination of the press will end. Certain MEPs, who did not vote in favour of the conviction, should stop turning a blind eye, as what is happening in Italy, with respect to freedom, is a very serious matter. It affects and concerns all Europeans, whatever the outcome of the vote today.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D). – (LT) I voted for the resolution drafted by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats together with other groups, because freedom of information, freedom of expression and diversity of opinion must be ensured in all of the Member States of the European Union. Freedom of information is the foundation of a free democratic society and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, it is laid down that every person has the right to freedom of expression, and this right includes the right to have one's own convictions and to obtain and distribute information and ideas without the interference of government institutions. Therefore we, Members of the European Parliament, must support the development of independent media and fair competition at national level. In order to ensure effective freedom of the press, government institutions must be prepared to defend freedom of expression and to foster its development, which is the most important thing ensuring the fundamental values and rights of the European Union.

Crescenzo Rivellini (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, 'what a caterpillar calls the end of the world, the entire world calls a butterfly'. That thought by a Chinese philosopher is of relevance in this debate, if we consider that President Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize despite attacking the hostile television coverage he received, and here we are discussing allegations of a lack of freedom that are motivated by one thing only: the culture of hatred against Mr Berlusconi.

The culture of hatred, as demonstrated by that photomontage of the Prime Minister behind bars at the street demonstration on press freedom, where red flags and insults of all kinds prevailed. The culture of hatred for which this Parliament must assume responsibility if it is to prevent the disgraceful anti-democratic attack of a Jacobin left.

It may be that Europe, which has always struggled to tolerate a strong and decisive Italy, is pretending to be unaware of all this in order to downsize Italy's power. The Italian people will not allow this; they will not allow devious European powers to try to rationalise Italy due to the culture of hatred of those in Italy who merely want to overturn the centre-right's democratic electoral win.

Of the newspapers with the highest readership figures in Italy, 18 are against or are not aligned with the government, and only five can be ascribed to the centre-right, and we hear all kinds of insults. That is the truth, and in the interests of democracy, it is time that this House talked about an Italian left that is anti-democratic and addicted to the culture of hatred.

Krisztina Morvai (NI). – (HU) Let us send a message to those liars in Hungary who claim that Jobbik has and can have no place in the European Parliament, saying that the votes of the three-member Hungarian Jobbik delegation determined that Italy could not be condemned here today by the unjust, discriminatory forces present. This is the first thing I wish to say. Secondly, we did not do this based on political group discipline, but according to the benchmark of justice. We also took into account, first of all, that they would have tried to use double standards. Indeed, I complained to Mr Barroso yesterday that in Hungary the socialist-liberal government had violated the freedom of opinion, not through the concentration of press or media, but by shooting people in the eye, putting them in prison, torturing them in prison and conducting a series of sham trials. Mr Barroso said in response to this that it was an internal matter. How can this be an internal matter, when the case in Italy is not an internal matter? Jobbik will not allow such double standards to be applied in Parliament.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, Europe, too, has noticed that the Italian opposition has become delirious, imagining things that do not exist.

Of course, we cannot rejoice at this because we would have preferred to have come to Parliament and talked about the real problems for which people are asking us for solutions, but we can take comfort in the fact that at least Europe has given a verdict that not even Antonio Di Pietro will be able to question. In fact, this already happened in 2004, with the central figure again being Mr Di Pietro, supported by other Members, and now he has sent the others here to do the same thing, but there has been no kind of rejoicing on the part of this movement.

Moreover, the Italian electorate wanted to remove communists from the parliamentary arena, and they no longer sit on these benches. Freedom of the press in Italy is nothing more than an attempt by publishing groups, magistrates and politicians to delegitimise the Prime Minister and his government. However, this gives rise to a situation where manhunts exist and where only one man is targeted obsessively, and to a civil war that, fuelled by a certain left-wing element, may result in very serious consequences.

Sjiri Oviir (ALDE). – (ET) There are several ways to destroy media pluralism and feed biased information to the population, and to prevent diversity of opinions. One possibility is to monopolise the media economically through ownership, but this is not the only one. Monopoly of information can be achieved, for example, by filling appointments in leading public media bodies with members of a single party – that is, with members of the ruling party – and by blocking other opinions. There are other examples, and we in this Chamber have heard about them in the course of the discussion on this subject. Those were probably facts.

All of this gives evidence of the fact that if Europe wants to be democratic, it needs rules, it needs directives in order to create media pluralism. For this reason, I supported the resolution put forward by ALDE, the socialists and the greens, which makes proposals of exactly this type.

Carlo Casini (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, first of all I wish to correct my first and second votes – I meant to abstain, but I made a mistake because I acted in haste and pressed the wrong button. My first two votes are abstentions from the whole day's votes.

The statement I am making is this: there is a grave original sin in the proposal that has led to today's debate and it is a sin that has already been pointed out by the President of the Italian Republic. Added to this sin is the opportunism of choosing the Italian Prime Minister's legal action against certain newspapers – a process that is clearly in full compliance with the rule of law – as a means by which to attack him.

Therefore, we have not voted for the proposal by the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, by the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left, and so on, but nor have we voted for the motion by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) because, although it deserves recognition insofar as it safeguards Italy's dignity, it totally overlooks the problem of the balance between the media and the other state powers, which exists in Europe and which is a serious problem in Italy too. This does not just concern the Italian Prime Minister's conflict of interests in this area; it concerns other problems too.

At national level, on the other hand, my party, the UDC, is continually challenging the majority on this. I believe that we, too, must send out a message of support by abstaining.

Carlo Fidanza (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, this debate has shown us how the Italian left is increasingly far removed from the sentiments shared by our people. There has not been an uprising among Italians; there has been a political manoeuvre by a judicial, publishing and political elite to invalidate a verdict legitimately delivered by the people a few months ago.

Ladies and gentlemen, those who have said in this House in the last few days that Italians are concerned about press freedom being threatened by Mr Berlusconi are lying, and they know it. All honest Italians recognise that in Italy, there are newspapers, radio stations and TV channels that operate freely; that many of those newspapers have an editorial policy that is opposed to that of the Italian Prime Minister; that if there is a lack of pluralism it is within the only – and I stress the only, ladies and gentlemen – trade union recognised by Italian journalists, which is shamelessly biased towards the left; and that programme makers, commentators and comedians whose views conflict with those of the Italian Prime Minister can easily find jobs and work within state-run television channels or within television channels owned by the Italian Prime Minister, without their freedom being threatened.

If Italians do have some worries and fears, then, like those of all Europeans, Mr President, they concern the crisis, illegal immigration, jobs and pensions, but certainly not freedom of information, which has never been under threat and which, on the contrary, is under attack every day from the partisanship of the left.

Lena Ek (ALDE). – Mr President, I will quote John Stuart Mill and then I will continue in Swedish. 'If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.'

(SV) Italy is part of the European cradle of democracy. It is therefore regrettable that the Italian media is in the situation it is in today. Respect for fundamental human rights in all countries in Europe is the heart of

EU cooperation. It is totally wrong to claim, as the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) is doing, that this is not the case. The PPE Group is hiding behind these arguments and in so doing, is serving the cause of Silvio Berlusconi.

Diversity in the media involves many different players having the opportunity to operate without the State interfering in their content. In order for us to have a vibrant democratic debate in Europe, we need independent media in all Member States. How this is achieved is not a matter for the EU. Ensuring the freedom of the press, on the other hand, actually is a matter that should be dealt with at EU level. I therefore regret the result of today's vote on the resolution on the freedom of the media in Italy.

Peter van Dalen (ECR). – (NL) Mr President, I am not impressed by Mr Berlusconi's political and moral leadership and, unfortunately, Italy is not top of the list of countries when it comes to freedom of the press. However, freedom of information and of the press is primarily a matter for Italy itself. The Italians themselves must take action on this. Fortunately, they are indeed doing so, for example, by lifting the immunity of the Italian Prime Minister. In addition, the recent launch of the newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano* shows that there is a critical press in Italy and that it has room to manoeuvre.

Therefore, I call on the Italians themselves to remain vigilant for any attacks on freedom of the press in their country. I hope it is not necessary for the Brussels bureaucracy to interfere in this. After all, we do not want 'more Europe' but rather a Europe that focuses on its core tasks. Only then can Europe gain the confidence of the electorate.

Hannu Takkula (ALDE). – (FI) Mr President, freedom of information is a very important issue and, for my part, I voted in favour of it. We must remember, however, that freedom also entails responsibility, and we in Europe need critical and transparent communications. We need to ensure that this is also the case in the future. European history shows what sort of horrors have resulted when the media has been closed off and information has not been allowed to flow freely.

On this matter, I think that we in the European Parliament need to look at the whole of Europe, and not just at an individual Member State. That is why we need to extend the issue and establish principles that we adhere to, whether it is socialists, liberals or the right who are in power. The same rules have to apply to everyone and in all cases, we must act to ensure that freedom of information will be preserved. That is one of the fundamental freedoms that I hope the European Union will also preserve in the years to come. I also hope that everyone will be treated according to the same standards.

Chris Davies (ALDE). – Mr President, the European Union claims to embrace fine principles about freedom and democracy, and they are all restated and reinforced in the Lisbon Treaty, but time and again we turn a blind eye to blatant transgressions taking place in one Member State or another. We do not point the finger at those who fail to support the principles upon which the European Union is based. We do not like to rock the boat, but we had the chance today to take a stand and to say that control of the press by the Italian Prime Minister is a clear abuse.

There are problems in other Member States, but in Italy it is at its worst. Thanks to the votes of the UK Independence Party and the British Conservatives, we lost today by one vote: there was one vote in it. The Conservatives in Britain say they want to repatriate social and employment policy from the European Union. They do not say that they also want to prevent the European Union having any role whatsoever in standing up for the basic freedoms that support democracy across Europe.

Philip Claeys (NI). – (NL) Mr President, I, too, am delighted that the resolution has been voted down, as it is unacceptable for this House to be misused to conduct a political witch-hunt against a specific politician. It is equally unacceptable for this House to style itself a kind of European Big Brother on this, an inquisitor-general who directly interferes in an issue that is purely and simply a matter for the individual Member States.

Those striking out here at a supposed threat to freedom of information in Italy, a threat that is wholly imaginary, are the first to advocate muzzling laws purely and simply aimed at the political elimination of dissidents. This left-wing hypocrisy is abhorrent. Indeed, if there were even half as much freedom of information in Belgium as there is in Italy, we would already have made considerable progress.

Daniel Hannan (ECR). – Mr President, it reflects no credit on this House that the whole of our agenda today, the whole of our vote, should have been taken up with a matter that ought never to have come to the floor. It lies beyond the purview of this Parliament and is within the prerogatives of one of our Member States.

I hold no particular brief for Silvio Berlusconi. I am delighted that the British Conservatives no longer sit with his party in the European People's Party, but I cannot have been alone in being put off by the Pharisaical self-righteousness that we have heard from the other side during this debate. They complained about Mr Berlusconi having immunity from prosecution without mentioning that they, as MEPs, have a similar immunity. They complain about his domination of the media, without mentioning the tens of millions of euros of public money that this Parliament spends on promoting itself.

This resolution, and the fact that it came before us at all today, reflects no credit on anyone – no credit on the Italians, who took to this Chamber an argument that they had lost in their own nation state, and no credit on the rest of us for presuming to get involved. Such issues ought to be properly determined through the national democratic mechanisms and procedures of the Italian Republic. Let me repeat my call for the Lisbon Treaty to be put to a vote. *Pactio Olisipiensis censenda est!*

Syed Kamall (ECR). – Mr President, I think all of us in this Chamber are concerned about media pluralism. We all want to see greater media pluralism right across the EU. I have concerns about media pluralism in a number of Member States. I have concerns about media pluralism in a number of countries outside the EU, but about which the Socialists often never raise this issue, for example, Cuba and North Korea. The Socialists keep rather quiet about media pluralism in these countries.

But there is a very important principle here. The Rolling Stones once said 'You can't always get what you want', and when you can't get what you want, what you do is rely on the democratic process in your country to persuade the people to remove the government you do not support. You do not decide to go to the European Parliament and try to get democratic decisions overturned there. This is a principle that the Conservatives hold dear, and this is why I am proud that the European Conservative and Reformist Group played its part in voting down this despicable resolution.

Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, I believe that this Parliament's democratic vote has unquestionably demonstrated something that everyone knows to be true, namely that there is freedom of information in Italy.

You see, what the left were trying to do was to look for topics to raise objections about – why? Because, as I already said in Brussels, they have so many newspapers in Italy, but they do not know what to write, and so the only thing that they could say – delaying this Parliament's work for a month in the process – was that they support the notion that there is no freedom of information in Italy.

In their many newspapers, they cannot write that, in Italy, a government has moved the earthquake victims of Aquila out of the tent cities and back into proper houses in the space of four months; in their newspapers they cannot write that, in three months, a new Berlusconi-led government in Italy has removed the rubbish from the streets of Naples that they had allowed to build up for years; they cannot say that, according to the OECD, Italy is the country in which there have been the fewest job losses, despite the economic crisis; they cannot write in their newspapers that, in Italy, no banks have collapsed and no savers have lost their money, despite the economic crisis; they cannot say it, no one reads them, no one believes them, and they lay the blame on the alleged lack of freedom of information.

Do you know what we say in Italy? We say that they are like those who have opened the ring, let the bulls escape and are looking for the horns: they have lost the bulls, the votes, the numbers in Italy; they tried – I shall finish here, Mr President – to recover them in Europe, where they also had a majority, but where they also lost that majority.

With all due respect to those in Europe who wanted to demonstrate that the opposite is true, democracy has shown once again that freedom of information is alive and well in Italy.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Mr President, I am very pleased with the outcome of today's resolution because Italy is a Member State of the European Union and to include it individually in a motion before us would be somewhat superfluous. However, I hope that in the future, we have an opportunity to discuss freedom of information, freedom of the press, and the freedom of individual journalists, within the organs they work for, to express their opinions. And we should ensure that this applies right across the European Union, as we should not be discussing only one particular country. Today's result was a good day for the European Union and a good day for democracy.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, as usual, we find ourselves discussing and voting on issues exclusively of national interest and relevance in the European Parliament, and thus not in the Italian Chamber of Deputies or in the Italian Senate.

Once again, after the immigration-related accusations made against the Italian Government in this House by those who are on the opposition not because of a strange conspiracy that they see themselves as the victims of, but because of the sovereign will of the people, an opportunistic, ridiculous and self-serving attempt has been made to distort the reality of the situation in Italy, with the sole aim being to denigrate the government and our country in the person of our Prime Minister, Mr Berlusconi.

Minority parties have tried to gain the upper hand in the elections with a one-sided publicity campaign, compensating for the lack of ideology and content in their political programmes with a campaign designed to cause systematic damage to our country within Europe. Those MEPs who have supported the Italian opposition should focus on issues that strictly concern their own countries, without looking at the Italian situation through the deluded and deluding eyes of my fellow countrymen. They belong to a party that has distinguished itself over the years by having a policy that consists of just one thing: the systematic and targeted abuse of the Italian Prime Minister, the leader of a coalition that was democratically elected by 17 million Italians.

Written explanations of vote

- Freedom of information in Italy and other Member States of the European Union

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of the resolution by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament on freedom of information because I believe that press freedom is one of the pillars of the free and democratic society which I support, and whenever it is at risk, as in Italy at present, we must be ready to protect it. In Italy, freedom of expression and freedom of the press are clearly at serious risk.

The fact that the Prime Minister controls, whether directly or indirectly, a vast empire of publishing houses, daily and weekly newspapers and three television channels is clearly incompatible with the political office occupied by Mr Berlusconi and with the requirements of a democratic state and a member of the EU. Added to this are the attempts to pressurise and manipulate the public television station. We should not forget that the current economic crisis has further weakened the media, making them more susceptible to pressure from advertising companies or public institutions. It is imperative that the European Commission finally issues a proposal for a directive on pluralism and concentration of the media, clarifying the rules to be followed in all Member States on this issue, which is so vital for democracy.

Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) I voted in favour of changing the title of the draft resolution on freedom of information in Italy, following the European Commission's statement of 8 October 2009, to delete the word 'Italy'. Even if the situation in Italy is extremely worrying due to a continuing conflict of interest between the ownership and/or control of the public or private media and some political powers, I share the opinion of many colleagues that the European Parliament should not point the finger at one or other Member State.

Liam Aylward, Brian Crowley and Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE), *in writing.* – Today we voted on a variety of resolutions and amendments. In essence, there were proposals before us which condemned the running of media services in Germany, Portugal, Hungary and Italy.

As members of the leading party in the Irish Government, we have consistently opposed proposals put forward in the European Parliament which condemn the internal activities of individual governments and individual countries within the European Union.

We have consistently opposed political strategies since we joined the European Union whereby the European Parliament is asked to adjudicate on political divisions and arguments that take place internally within individual countries in the European Union.

That has been our policy stance in the past and that is our policy position now. We have always been consistent.

We will always uphold the freedom of expression, which is a fundamental right of all citizens in Europe.

Ivo Belet (PPE), *in writing*. – (NL) The surprising result of this vote will hopefully create scope for a real debate, a debate on the substance of the problems threatening media pluralism in Europe. We wholeheartedly support such a debate. We all know that freedom of the media is under pressure in several Member States (see the most recent Press Freedom Index report, published yesterday by Reporters Without Borders).

However, it is essential that we take a fundamental approach to these problems and develop an instrument to improve the situation throughout the EU, so that journalists are able to do their jobs without pressure from private or political stakeholders. Some Members of this House preferred to take a national tack and settle domestic national accounts, but it is good that that strategy failed, as it would have risked nipping the debate in the bud. We must now move away from these national games once and for all and invest our energy in structural solutions to a problem that, in the longer term, constitutes a real threat to our rule of law and to democracy in Europe.

David Casa (PPE), *in writing*. – The notion of there being any form of breach of the right to information in Italy is erroneous. Firstly, it is not the case that the European Parliament should be used as the forum in which to discuss matters that should remain within the internal competence of the domestic courts and parliaments of Member States. In addition, it is clear that the recent criticism of Italy was only initiated in an effort to attack the Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi. Hence, I have voted against the resolution.

Carlos Coelho (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The relationship between political power and journalism is a complex and delicate one, but it is clear to me that no one should have the right to impose his/her own 'truth', censoring ideas, persecuting journalists or limiting freedom of expression and information. The freedom of information and expression is one of the basic principles which underpin the European Union, and it is essential in any democracy. This also means that we should not trivialise this debate or use it for political gain.

In submitting a resolution on freedom of information in Italy, the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament are confusing the European Parliament with the Italian Parliament. They show that they have double standards when they refuse the proposal to include cases from other countries, such as Germany, Hungary or Portugal, where the unjustifiable cancellation of *Jornal Nacional* on TV1 was mentioned. They are not interested in freedom of information in Europe, but only in Italy... Intriguingly, on this very day, we learn that Portugal has fallen 14 points in the rankings of press freedom published by Reporters without Borders.

Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) Freedom of the press is essential in a democratic society. Consequently, I believe that the need for a balanced media market must be supported by all Member States, which must commit themselves, both individually and jointly, to providing European citizens with the opportunity of obtaining the most accurate information possible. I believe that it is absolutely necessary for all European citizens to exercise actively their rights and obligations so that they are properly informed, but can also understand and criticise the way in which they are informed by the European institutions, as well as by every Member State individually.

Anne Delvaux (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) As an ex-journalist, I abstained from all the proposals and amendments put to the vote this Wednesday. I wish to thereby express my strong criticism of the use for party political purposes of a debate as fundamental as freedom of the press, a fundamental right which, in essence, should not, under any circumstances, be the subject of political horse-trading and battles between the left-wing and the right-wing!

Italy is experiencing attacks on the freedom of the press and this is totally unacceptable. However, have we heard from Bulgarian, Romanian or French journalists as well? Have we examined closely the political or economic interference that exists in other countries in the EU? How can we be sure that politics in our own countries is not interfering in editorial control and content? If we had extended our study with a new report, we could have supported our resolutions so that they hit, in the most appropriate way, their real target: freedom of the press in the European Union! I think that this fundamental right deserves more investment than what has emerged in these texts – texts which have all missed the point.

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D), *in writing*. – I voted for this resolution which calls for a directive on media concentration and the protection of media pluralism. Unfortunately, the EU's legislative framework on media pluralism and media concentration is still inadequate. The European Union guarantees freedom of expression and information in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Indeed, Article 11 of the Charter explicitly states that 'the freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected' Media Freedom and pluralism are essential to a free, healthy and democratic society. The increasing concentration of media in the hands of wealthy patrons clearly stifles open debate. We need

be very wary of wealthy business interests controlling the flow of information and pushing a self-serving market-driven, anti-regulation, and, often, anti-Trade Union agenda. Equally, and for the same reasons of ensuring impartiality, public media operators should be independent and not subject to interference by governmental authorities.

Frank Engel (PPE), in writing. – (FR) The European Parliament is once more called upon to give an opinion on a national issue, that is, the threats to freedom of expression in Italy. The Luxembourg members of the PPE group are of the opinion that, as a matter of principle, the European Parliament should not interfere in a conflict of interest, genuine or not, in a Member State. Parliament should not demand European legislative measures each time a political or legal issue cannot be resolved satisfactorily in the eyes of all the parties concerned in a given Member State. This is why we have voted against any attempt to legislate at the European level on a problem of conflicting interests in a specific Member State.

This being the case, we are in favour of a genuine European debate on the press and the problematic mergers that can exist in this area. This debate should not focus on one specific Member State but address the issue in an objective and consistent way for the whole of the EU, so that the solutions to these problems can be based on existing Community legislation.

Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing. – (PT) The Portuguese Socialist delegation in the European Parliament denounces and condemns the actions of certain Portuguese MEPs from the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) who have tried to tarnish the image of Portugal and the Portuguese Prime Minister with the unfounded accusation of interference in the media. This was carried out as part of a campaign to whitewash the attacks by Silvio Berlusconi's Italian Government on freedom of expression and the media. The Socialist delegation cannot but express its regret that certain Portuguese MEPs are dragging this debate, which was instigated by certain parties during the recent electoral campaign, and one to which the Portuguese electorate gave a resounding answer, onto the international stage.

Unlike those behind this campaign, the Socialists are not asking any Portuguese citizens to renounce their nationality, but we do denounce those who attack the good reputation of Portugal so as to fulfil possible commitments to Silvio Berlusconi.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Commissioner Viviane Reding has made an appeal to the Chamber for when it debates this issue, asking us not to use the European institutions to resolve problems that should be resolved at national level, as set out in our Treaties. I could not agree more, and I deplore the use of such tactics by the European left, particularly the Socialists. I recall that, during the previous term, the Spanish Socialists sought to manipulate the European Parliament by gaining outside support – which was scarce in their own country – for a disastrous anti-terrorist policy. This unfortunate pattern of behaviour persists. As the Chairman of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) has complained, these attitudes are rife with bad faith and do nothing to build public confidence in the European institutions.

I wonder whether the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament would be as eager to hold a similar debate about Portugal and its government's repeated interference in the media, which, within a few months, led to the replacement of the editor-in-chief of a noted newspaper (*O Público*) and the sudden termination of a television news programme (TV1), which has already been roundly condemned by the regulatory authority for the media.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) We voted in favour of the resolution in defence of freedom of information because we believe in defending the freedom of expression and information, and pluralism rather than concentration in the media. Nevertheless, we disagree with certain aspects of this resolution which verge on interference in the democratic life of the individual countries, and we have major doubts about a possible directive on this matter, especially given the current composition of the European Parliament.

Our struggle for freedom of information and expression, the rights of journalists and other media professionals, for universal access to information and guaranteed pluralism in the media cannot be used to provide cover for partisan schemes whose prime objective is the European Parliament's interference in countries' internal affairs, through the use of double standards, depending on which political entity has an interest in a particular issue.

Therefore, we have also abstained from voting on the proposals of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) on issues relating to TV1 in Portugal, although the Portuguese Communist Party is known to be critical of this situation in Portugal.

Mathieu Grosch (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) I regard the debate on the freedom of the press as very important. The situation in Italy is worrying, but it is the task of this European Parliament to debate the subject in general or for all countries which pose a problem in this area.

To only mention Italy while knowing that problems also exist in other countries, for example, Romania, Bulgaria, Portugal and Hungary, creates a partisan debate which does not contribute to freedom of expression and of the press.

Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted today against the joint resolution proposed by the PPE, the ECR and the EFD on freedom of information in Italy and other Member States, as well as against the amendments tabled by these groups to the joint resolution proposed by the left and the united centre, since they were essentially aimed at stripping the Italian Prime Minister of his responsibilities to comply with the principle of pluralism that is a fundamental value of our democracies. They also scandalously attacked the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano. I strongly supported the joint resolution co-signed by my group, because I fundamentally support freedom of expression and am in favour of European legislation on media mergers, despite the opposition of the right, which has already been demonstrated several times. We should note the fears coming from Italy following the recent pressure exerted by Silvio Berlusconi on the Italian and European newspapers, as well as on the European Commission's freedom of expression regarding the Italian authorities' diversion of migrants at sea to Libya, in violation of the principle of non-refoulement.

Filip Kaczmarek (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) I voted against the draft resolution because it is harmful and does not comply with European standards. In the name of certain particular interests, the Left has infringed, among others, the principle of the application of uniform standards to all Member States. The prevention of a vote on the oral amendment moved by Mr Szájer provides abundant proof that the true objective of the resolution was not to show concern for freedom of the media. The real objective of the resolution was the desire to attack the Italian Government, and only the Italian Government. This is because that government is disliked by the Left. The Left is free to dislike the Italian Government. I do not see any reason, however, to go along with this attempt at treating the European Parliament as a tool, and with this attempt at involving our Chamber in an ongoing political fight within a Member State.

Freedom of the media is also universal and important when it is under threat from Left-wing governments. I am very glad that we have rejected the draft, which was only on the order of business so that the Left could attack its political opponents in Italy.

Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE), *in writing*. – (FI) Mr President, freedom of expression and an independent media are the cornerstone of democracy and they have to be valued highly and protected. Like many others here, I am worried about the developments we have witnessed in some Member States, including Italy and Hungary. If this resolution had dealt with communication and its problems throughout the EU generally, I would also have warmly supported it. This time I could not do so. I support the principle expressed by our group, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), that the EU should not interfere in any national affairs for which it has no legal mandate to do so. I am therefore satisfied with the result of the vote on freedom of information in Italy and that all nine motions for resolutions were rejected in plenary today. I share my group's concern that, with its demands for Europe-wide legislation on media pluralism and ownership, Parliament would be doing more to destroy freedom of the press than to establish it. The Member States of the EU each have their own proper institutions to find a solution to fundamental problems, and this problem of Italy's must also be solved at national level. That, however, does not mean that we should deny that the problem exists at all.

I myself voted in line with my group's position on the joint motion for a resolution by the socialists, liberals and greens, except on one issue. Our group's Amendment 10 underestimates, or actually rejects, the problems of freedom of information in Italy, and so I could not support it. Logic also prevented me from supporting our group's own motion for a resolution, as it too yielded to the temptation to deal with a situation in just one Member State, and by way of striking a balance, it sought to underrate the problems.

Jean-Marie Le Pen (NI), *in writing*. – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, is it in Italy that the head of state threatens, takes legal action at the slightest criticism and becomes personally involved in a court case to kill a political opponent? Is it in Italy that the party in power treats the slightest non-sycophantic information as 'vileness', as an 'absolutely unprecedented campaign of violence', as a deliberate attempt to 'trip up' the Head of State? Is it in Italy that the press is criticised when it spreads the news of affairs like nepotism benefiting the Head of State's kid? Is it only in Italy that those in power have special links with the executives of the

large private television channels and appoint the heads of the public channels? Is it in Italy that we change the law on audiovisual advertising in favour of our friends?

Is it in Italy that a minister is invited onto a major television news programme to confess to having engaged in sex tourism, an act criminally punishable, except in this minister's case? No, this is in France! It astonishes me that the French socialists, communists and greens in this Chamber do not think it is worth using this debate to denounce the dubious practices of 'sarkozia'!

Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE), *in writing*. – I voted against the resolution on the freedom of information in Italy and in other EU Member States mainly due to paragraph D mentioning the 'critical situation in Romania and Bulgaria', quoting a Freedom House report. I have carefully read this report, especially the section related to my country, and therefore I can say that this sentence is not true. The quoted report clearly says that 'The Romanian constitution protects freedom of the press and the government has become increasingly respectful of these rights'.

Relating to the President of Romania, Mr Traian Băsescu, the report states that 'he has proven to be less controlling and manipulative of the media than his predecessors.' Another strong argument to prove our freedom of expression is that 'Romania is considered a regional leader in high-speed broadband connections'. Through the Internet, all journalists can express themselves freely and get in touch with the public. I therefore think that the reference to Romania and Bulgaria was used without taking into consideration the entire context.

David Martin (S&D), *in writing*. – I voted in favour of the resolution, and strongly support calls to prevent media monopolies operating in Europe. Freedom of information is a hugely important issue, and given the strength of feeling and close vote, I hope it is an issue we will return to. I was disappointed that after the amendments were rejected, we were unable to pass the final resolution.

Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (ES) I voted against Resolution RC7 0088/2009 tabled by the Right, and in favour of the joint resolution RC7 0090/2009 tabled by the remainder of the Groups in the House, because I defend freedom of expression and information, as well as media pluralism, and because I am concerned by the situation in Italy, where there is a conflict of interest between the political, economic and media powers, as well as worrying media concentration, involving both public and privately-owned media. The situation in Italy constitutes a serious attack on media pluralism and, in this respect, the actions of the right-wing government, led by Mr Berlusconi, have been unacceptable. I think that it is right to remedy this anomalous situation, which could have serious repercussions for the whole of the European Union, and take steps to guarantee the independence of the public media channels and protect them from any kind of governmental interference. I wanted my vote to explicitly reflect my disapproval of the Italian authorities placing any pressure on European national newspapers or intimidating them.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) Today's votes on the motions for resolutions are based on a debate which takes some beating in terms of its political one-sidedness. The United Left has launched an attack on Berlusconi and taken its revenge on him. It is true that there is a high media concentration in Italy, but the threats to freedom of speech and democracy have been exaggerated. It is obvious that they will oppose everything which is not on the left.

In the joint motion for a resolution, the Greens, the Social Democrats, the Communists and the Liberals have asked for the EU to be given the authority to monitor pluralism of the media, as it is euphemistically called. I strongly reject this, because the authority in this area must lie exclusively with the Member States. I felt that I had to speak out against these party-political attempts to intervene and that I had to vote against the joint motion for a resolution put forward by the left, because for me and for the Freedom Party of Austria, freedom of the media and freedom of speech are among the most important aspects of democracy and they need to be defended.

Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) Freedom of expression is one of the values forming the basis of democracy. The institutions of the European Union must protect the freedom of expression through their actions, as well as provide, in this regard, a source of inspiration for the whole world. However, the European Parliament cannot be involved as an arbitrator or lever in Member States' domestic policy disputes, as is the case with this resolution and also with the resolution concerning the 'situation' in Lithuania voted on during the previous sitting. In view of these considerations, I voted against the motion for a resolution.

Franz Obermayr (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) It is true that there is a significant lack of freedom of information in Italy, particularly because the Italian Prime Minister, Mr Berlusconi, has brought the majority of the

television channels directly or indirectly into his sphere of influence as a result of his political position and his media empire. However, this is not a problem which is specific to Italy. For example, in France, constitutional reform has led to the establishment of regulations which allow the president of the republic to appoint the heads of the public broadcasting companies (Groupe France Télévision, France 2-5). This has caused significant controversy in France. (In addition, the chairman of the largest privately-owned television channel, TF1, was Mr Sarkozy's best man and therefore has a very close relationship with him.) It is possible that this case, from the perspective of the European Union, is motivated more by party politics and by opposition to Mr Berlusconi, rather than being a genuine debate on the freedom of the media and the freedom of information. For this reason, I have voted against this motion for a resolution.

Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) Bearing in mind that three European Union Member States (including Romania) were classified by the organisation Freedom House as having a 'partially free' media, I strongly believe that intervention is required at European level to ensure that one of the most important principles of democracy, namely, freedom of the media is respected.

I believe we must call on the Commission to guarantee pluralism in the media by implementing common standards at EU level. I voted in favour of the European Union resolution and I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate the need to adopt a directive on the freedom of information.

Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – The Green/EFA Group, together with the S&D Group, ALDE and GUE, have tabled a common text. Until the very last moment, all these groups proved their willingness to take on board other political groups in this House, including proposals by the EPP to include concern about press freedom in other Member States. It turned out that these proposals were not serious attempts to find a consensus. The price to pay for such an agreement was the deletion of any reference to Italy, as well as our call on the Commission to put forward a Directive on media concentration and pluralism in the EU, which constitute the very essence of our resolution.

The amendments tabled by the EPP only sought to dilute the text and were an attempt to divide the supporters of the text. That is why the Greens had to vote against even if, at least for some of them, we could have reached an agreement during the negotiations. That is not a constructive way of working on the part of the EPP. We regret that the right-wing groups once again refused to ask for a European response to a European problem.

Catherine Soullie (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) Freedom of the press is an absolute requirement. A democratic legislative institution like the European Parliament obviously cannot question this benefit. The protection and defence of freedom of information must be guaranteed in all circumstances. Nevertheless, the European Parliament does not have a duty to be a supranational court of justice. Pluralism and freedom of all media must be ensured in the European Union, but it does not behove us as MEPs to judge a country and its leaders on the nature of the relations between the press and the political world.

Interference by the European Parliament in this area is unacceptable. What is our legitimacy for issuing any opinion whatsoever on the condition of the Italian media? This is an internal political debate of a Member State, a debate that must be held and resolved inside the frontiers of the State concerned. The rejection of the amendment which intended to change the name of this resolution to give it a more Community-orientated feel demonstrates the targeted and purely political nature of this debate. We must be careful we do not transform our assembly into a court.

Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (EL) We refused to take part in the final vote on a motion for a resolution which, on the pretext of controlling Berlusconi in the Italian media, promotes the more general interests of the plutocracy in order to concentrate the media at national and European level. It calls for directives to be adopted which will essentially alter the right to information and freedom of expression on internal market and competition matters, by imposing the manipulations of big business on information and adjusting the public service to private-sector criteria and the rules of the free market. The centre right and centre left supporters of the European one-way street are commending and are eager for outright intervention by the EU in the internal affairs of the EU of the Member States, are supporting the sovereignty of big business in the field of information and are jostling, with unsavoury confrontations and masked intentions, to see who will win the favour of the plutocracy to best serve its interests. The major media contractors are attempting, in a vulgar manner, to manipulate the conscience of the workers, so as to impose the anti-grassroots policy of capital applied by the centre right and centre left governments. The people are not deceived by the cockfights in the European Parliament and efforts to elevate it to the post of censor which, moreover, is the basic support framework for the interests of capital.

Kyriacos Triantaphyllides (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (EL) We support the joint motion for a resolution, but we do not wish to be associated with references to a proposal for a directive by the Commission on concentrations in the media and the protection of pluralism, because we consider that this competence, on such a serious and necessary matter, should be vested in the Member States.

Derek Vaughan (S&D), in writing. – By voting in favour of the joint resolution tabled by the S&D, ALDE, Greens and GUE, I feel I have shown my support for freedom of the media in Italy. As an elected representative, I believe it is my role to support moves to prevent an over-controlling media presence, not only in Italy but across European Member States. I believe monopolisation of the media to be dangerous and think it is necessary to push for greater freedom in the media across Europe. European citizens should not be subject to media censorship and selective news coverage.

Iva Zanicchi (PPE), in writing. – (IT) Mr President, a little over a year ago, I took my seat for the first time on these benches and I was incredibly moved given the deep respect I have for the European institutions and for this Parliament in particular. I deeply regret the fact that this House is being degraded by being forced to waste time on targeted attacks by political parties that are using and abusing it for their own national and regional interests.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it is precisely the events taking place at the lowest, provincial level in Italy that are the greatest demonstration of freedom of the press and of information: think of all the local newspapers, the newspapers of the cities, large and small, that people read every day and see who they talk about! Think of newspapers such as *La Repubblica* and of the entire left-wing press. Today, the European Parliament has once again lost the opportunity to tackle a serious debate on freedom of the media in Europe, which is being held hostage by those who are using this House for the purposes of attacking the Italian Prime Minister.

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Françoise Castex (S&D), in writing. – (FR) I voted for this resolution criticising the deteriorating situation of the press in Europe, especially in Italy, and which thereby demanded legislation on media mergers. Therefore, I find it absolutely scandalous that the European right – amongst them MEPs of the UMP – has spoken out against the protection of freedom of expression, thus aligning themselves with the position of the extreme right and Europhobe MEPs. Through this vote, the European right has shown that its reflex action was to protect the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, a member of the PPE and at the head of a media empire that is unprecedented for a political figure, Mr Berlusconi regularly threatens journalists and elected members who oppose his actions. This is no interference to say that the fact that the Head of the Italian Government controls the transalpine media is an insult to the freedom of the European press. Surely Italian democracy deserves respect, like all the EU democracies. However, its representative has not shown himself worthy of it today. It is in the name of our respect for the Italian people that we have a duty to censure him today.

Nessa Childers (S&D), in writing. – I voted for this joint motion due to my deep concern at the concentration of media ownership in Italy and across Europe. In Ireland, we have a possible similar situation developing and I hope the European Parliament will explore this issue again. These questions must be fully explored and a watching brief should be maintained by the Parliament in relation to these developments and trends in media ownership in Ireland and across the EU. I also note my disappointment that Fianna Fáil TDs voted against this modest motion on media ownership in Italy.

Alan Kelly (S&D), in writing. – The issue voted on refers to issues of regulation of media ownership. Many people refer to the democratic deficit of the EU; however; given the concentration of media ownership throughout Europe, the greatest threat to real democracy are the media barons of the world. If people think owners do not influence newspapers think again. Rupert Murdoch owns almost 200 news outlets throughout the world. Only a minority of those had an anti-war stance on Iraq. Democracy depends on the public being informed. Concentration of media ownership means that enhancing the business interests of an elite minority can be disguised as independent editorial. The public must always be given a choice when it comes to news dissemination. In Ireland, we have our own problems with media ownership that we must regulate. This House must support freedom of speech and freedom of media expression. It is with regret that colleagues on the right differed.

Catherine Soullie (PPE), in writing. – (FR) Following the vote on the joint resolution on freedom of information in Italy and in the European Union as a whole, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian

Democrats) is very satisfied. What we needed to do was to set out clearly the role of the European Parliament: we are a legislative assembly and not a tribunal on the internal affairs of the Member States. It would not have been appropriate for this disguised personal attack to have been supported by Parliament. I am very pleased with the outcome of the vote. Although it was very close, it re-establishes the value of the principle of subsidiarity within the European Union and its institutions.

5. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes

(The sitting was suspended at 13.05 and resumed at 15.00)

IN THE CHAIR: MR ROUČEK

Vice-President

6. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting: see Minutes

7. Welcome

President. – I am delighted to inform you that the delegation from the Parliament of South Africa have taken their seats in the distinguished visitors' gallery. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the South African delegation which is here to take part in the 14th inter-parliamentary meeting between the European Parliament and the South African Parliament. The head of the African delegation, Mrs Joanmariae Louise Fubbs, Chairman of the Committee on Trade and Industry of the National Assembly of South Africa, is accompanied by the Chairman of the Committee on International Relations and five other colleagues from the South African Parliament.

As you know, Europe and South Africa share the same values, as far as democracy, human rights and multilateral cooperation is concerned. The Republic of South Africa is not only a regional power but also a rising global power and a valued partner who will help us to solve the challenges of the global financial and economic crisis. We firmly believe that we must deepen our dialogue and develop ever closer relations and cooperation. Our two regions should act together, not only over efforts to find a way out of the current crisis, but also in the creation of a new global order that will be of lasting benefit to us all. Once again then, Mrs Joanmariae Louise Fubbs and esteemed colleagues from the South African Parliament, I welcome you.

8. The institutional aspects of the creation of a European external action service - Creation of a European external action service: State of the negotiations with Member States (debate)

President. – The next item is the joint debate on Elmar Brok's report on the institutional aspects of setting up the European External Action Service (2009/2133(INI) – (A7-0041/2009)) and the declaration of the Council and the Commission on the creation of a European External Action Service.

Elmar Brok, rapporteur. – *(DE)* Mr President, Mrs Malmström, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, we are approaching the time when the Treaty of Lisbon will finally be ratified and we are now beginning to consider how the treaty should be implemented. We all know that the constitution must be turned into reality, which is just as important as the written words in a constitution or in a primary law, such as the treaty.

Therefore, I would like to remind everyone once again about the original intention, because our current discussions about the External Action Service, the High Representative and the Vice-President of the Commission represent one result of the Constitutional Convention, which was taken over by the intergovernmental conference for the Treaty of Lisbon.

The intention was to make the European Union more efficient by moving towards a situation where Europe speaks to the world with a single voice. This is why we need this new type of High Representative and Vice-President, who must have a reliable service so that he or she can do justice to this task.

The second principle of the Constitutional Convention was transparency and the third was democracy. These were the three starting points and it was clear to the parliamentary majority of the Constitutional Convention, which was made up in particular of national members of parliament, that the European Union is always

better in areas where it acts according to the community method and is always relatively poor in areas where it acts according to the intergovernmental method.

In line with the spirit of these preparations, the implementation of the treaty must not lead to a strengthening of the intergovernmental approach with the result that the community method, which is democratically controllable, more successful and more transparent, is suppressed.

Therefore, I sometimes do not understand why the Member States are primarily interested in organigrams, but not in how these principles are put into practice. We are of the opinion that we do not need a new bureaucracy located in the middle between the Council and the Commission which, in the long term, would consist of 6 000 to 8 000 people, would lead a life of its own and would become an independent kingdom outside our control.

Let us assume that this service will be assigned to the Commission as an administrative body and let us recognise that it must have a *sui generis* character. It cannot be a normal office of the Commission, because in the area of foreign and security policy, the authority is divided between the Community and the Council. Therefore, we must ensure that there is a safeguard in place for the Council so that its rights can be expressed in a reasonable way and so that a loyal approach is taken.

It is important to emphasise that the national experts in the Commission must be treated in a different way than was previously the case; in other words, they must be given equal rights. It must be made clear that Parliament's scrutiny and budget rights must in no way be restricted, but instead should be strengthened.

Therefore, I would like to remind the Commission at this point in the debate that we not only have the right of consultation, but also that we parliamentarians have forced the Commission to give its consent. We will not leave the Commission and the High Representative out of the hearings. We must ensure that, in the case of changes relating to staff regulations and financial regulations, the European Parliament has the right of codecision in the same way as in the budget procedure. Therefore, I would like to invite the two institutions to describe in their declarations the way in which the principles of efficiency, transparency and democracy can be combined with one another. This is not clear to me from the earlier COREPER documents which I had access to.

(Applause)

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) Mr President, Commissioner, Mr Brok, honourable Members, the development of the European External Action Service is a matter that I know is of great interest to you here in Parliament. I read with great interest and a strong sense of involvement the report tabled by Mr Brok and approved on Monday in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs. Naturally, the Presidency is in complete agreement with what Mr Brok says in his report about the External Action Service in fact being key to our common work to make European foreign policy into an active and more cohesive instrument to enable European policy to be viewed in a better light around the world.

The intention is to bridge the gap that has existed between the Commission's and the Council's work so that the Union's policies are moving in the same direction. This is necessary in order for us to be able to be as effective as possible. It is therefore important that we give the External Action Service as good a start as possible. This is one of the greatest and most important challenges in the Treaty of Lisbon. There are many pieces of the puzzle that need to fall into place and extensive preparations are therefore underway in the Council.

The objective is for the European Council to agree on a report that the High Representative, once he or she has been appointed, will be able to use as a starting point when he or she tables a proposal on the External Action Service. During this work, the European Parliament will, of course, be consulted in connection with the tabling of the proposal by the High Representative. Until this time, the Presidency will ensure that there is a regular dialogue with the European Parliament. We have had this dialogue up to this point and will continue to do so. It is important for the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission to have regular contact on these issues, not only between officials, but also at policy level.

Immediately after the Irish referendum – and we are very pleased that the result was positive – the Member States and the Commission began very intensive work to prepare the European External Action Service. This work is progressing and I am absolutely certain that we will be able to present a number of usable ideas to the European Council next week with regard to the future High Representative. Since it is the High Representative's job to table the final proposal, he or she will, of course, be involved in the work as soon as

he or she has been appointed. This is very important in order to enable him or her to have some input into the proposal.

The Presidency will present an agreement on principles covering five major elements, namely, the scope of the External Action Service's activities, its legal position, its staffing and financing and the EU delegations. We have not completed this yet and discussions are still ongoing, but I will give you an idea of how far we have progressed hitherto, and in this regard, there appears to be a high level of agreement between the Council and the Commission, and I hope eventually with the European Parliament, too.

With regard to the scope of the European External Action Service's activities, it is clear that we should establish geographical and thematic 'desk functions' with collective responsibility for tasks that are currently handled by the Commission and the Council Secretariat. The Commission will continue to have the main responsibility for matters relating to trade, aid and enlargement, even though it still remains to be established exactly where the dividing line between the Commission and the External Action Service is to go with regard to aid.

The Member States and the Commission also agree that the legal status of the External Action Service should reflect and support the unique role, *sui generis*, that it has within the EU system. Whatever legal solution is finally decided upon, it must fulfil the principles of good administration and the prospect of accountability.

Staff will be recruited from the Commission, the Council Secretariat and the Member States. This is clearly laid down in the Treaty of Lisbon. All of these categories of personnel are to be entitled to take office on equal terms. The EU delegations will be placed under the authority of the High Representative as soon as the Treaty of Lisbon has entered into force.

One important matter in the setting up of the European External Action Service is contact with the European Parliament. Once the High Representative has been appointed, he or she will regularly consult the European Parliament on the principal paths and the important choices of direction within the common foreign and security policy as well as the common security and defence policy. I am sure that close contact with the European Parliament will also be fostered at the level of the officials. The European External Action Service should therefore have a facility that is responsible for contact with Parliament.

This is roughly as far as we have got in the discussions. I cannot go into more detail, as we have not finished our talks yet, but we will do everything we can to continue to keep Parliament informed of the progress made. Of course, the High Representative has not yet been appointed, so these ideas are still just ideas, that is all. Ultimately, it will be the High Representative who tables the proposal in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty.

With that, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak and I look forward to a constructive debate, during which I will, of course, listen very closely to Parliament's views and answer any questions you may have to the best of my ability.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, we are, I hope, on the very last lap of the process of bringing the Treaty of Lisbon into force, completing a process which has taken eight years of discussions and negotiations. After the decisive result of the Irish referendum, we all hope that the Czech ratification can finally follow very soon. If we achieve this on the 20th anniversary of the reunification of Europe, it will be a great day for Europe and its citizens – not least because we will be able to focus all our attention on the pressing challenges and policy concerns that lie ahead of us.

As we reach the final stages, allow me to congratulate Parliament, and particularly the Constitutional Affairs Committee, with Elmar Brok as rapporteur, on delivering its opinion on the key element of the Lisbon Treaty which is the External European Action Service. The creation of the EEAS offers the European Union and all its component institutions the chance to achieve what we have long hoped for: to have a common voice in the world and to strengthen the EU's influence in the world.

Mr Brok's report recognises this great potential. Together with this important debate and many other consultations with Parliament representatives, it provides vital input to our work with the Swedish Presidency, but also with the Member States and the Council Secretariat, over the coming months. I am happy to confirm that the Commission strongly supports Parliament's overall approach. I agree with the principles of transparency, democracy and coherence that you have just mentioned. It is obviously important that all the institutions work together to help the newly-appointed High Representative Vice-President in his or her task of preparing the decision on the creation of an EEAS – a decision which, as you know, requires the consent of the Commission and the consultation of Parliament.

Firstly, let me mention the status of the EEAS. Indeed it will be *sui generis* as there is no model to follow. We are building something new. It will neither be intergovernmental nor purely based on the Community method, but we must ensure that the new system has a genuinely European approach inspired by and grounded in the strengths of Community policies, as again was mentioned. The key question for us all is what the EEAS should be able to deliver. This should be our objective. By bringing together the various actors in the field of external relations, we can ensure that our relations with the outside world are clear, coherent and driven by a single set of policy goals. It must carry authority as the core of EU external policy, the place where policy is developed and coordinated. It must also be seen to be such, both from inside and from outside the European Union, and the EEAS will only be effective if it works well with other institutions and fully respects the interinstitutional balance.

This is why I think it is very important that the EEAS should be set up in a way which allows it to work very closely with the Commission and the Council and to respect the need to be fully accountable to the European Parliament. For the Parliament, the bringing together of external action responsibilities into a single service will, I believe, mean a step change in Parliament's capacity to fulfil its role of scrutinising Union policy. Like the service itself, the way in which Parliament relates to the service and to the High Representative Vice-President will also, in a way, have to be *sui generis*.

The creation of the EEAS will require a variety of decisions, probably including changes to the Financial Regulation and the Staff Regulations, both of which require a Commission proposal and adoption through codecision.

The High Representative Vice-President needs the authority to manage the service, but the service also needs to serve the EU system as a whole – most obviously, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council, as well as the other Commissioners with a role in external relations. It must be able to offer its assistance, both in Brussels and in third countries, to the European Parliament and to its official delegations which travel abroad.

The close involvement of the Member States in the new service is one of its key innovations. The COREPER ambassadors are looking at how best to ensure that high-quality Member States' diplomats can be brought into the service early. We in the Commission are examining how this may be done pending the modification of the Staff Regulations, and appointment to the service should be through selection procedures based on merit, with appropriate account being taken of the need for a geographic and gender balance. This very much meets the wishes expressed in the report.

We also believe that all members of the EEAS, whether officials of the EU institutions or Member States' officials on temporary contracts, should enjoy the same rights. They will be equal in every sense.

As for the scope of the service, it needs to have a comprehensive overview of the Union's relations with the rest of the world, so it needs geographical desks as well as horizontal services to cover questions such as CFSP and CSDP, human rights and relations with UN bodies. The aim is to prevent duplication and to ensure that all those responsible for delivering EU external policy work effectively together, and the Commission will also continue to have services responsible for trade, development policy, aid implementation, humanitarian aid and enlargement. It will also, of course, continue to drive the external aspects of the Union's key internal policies, and a central question in the current debate is how to manage the programming of external assistance.

I can assure Parliament that the EU's development policy, including poverty eradication, will be a central part of the Commission's external activities. The High Representative Vice-President and the Commissioner for Development will work extremely closely together on this. The fact that the new High Representative will also be a Vice-President of the Commission, responsible for coordinating all of the EU's external action, will help. The service will also be responsible for the administration of delegations, though the people inside delegations will come, as now, from different services – not just the EEAS, but also the Commission services and maybe other institutions and bodies of the European Union.

From the entry into force of the Treaty, Commission delegations will become EU delegations. This will give them new responsibilities, but it will not diminish their role in representing the full range of Commission activities. The EU delegations should be responsible for representation, coordination and negotiation as from the day the Treaty comes into force. In most places, this procedure will go quite smoothly. However, in some, where the workload is particularly heavy, it will be necessary to organise a form of burden-sharing, not only with the rotating Presidency but also with other Member States.

The creation of an entirely new external service is a major undertaking. It will, as your report says, evolve over time. We will learn together. Our first aim must be that during the period between the entry into force of the Treaty and the coming into being of the EEAS, the effective delivery of the EU's external policies is maintained. We and the Council Secretariat will work together with the High Representative Vice-President to ensure that there is no gap. But we need to look further. We will be bringing together officials and diplomats from the different institutions and all the Member States. As we know, a common foreign policy is not just the sum of 27 national policies. We need people within the EEAS who, while not losing their distinctive national ties, think European. We therefore need to create an EU diplomatic culture and an EU *esprit de corps*. For this, training is essential.

The report raises the promising idea of the creation of a European diplomatic academy. In the meantime, we can make good use of the Member States' diplomatic academies. I very recently attended the 10th anniversary of the European diplomatic programme, which has anticipated and shown the way. It is worth remarking that since the 1970s, the Commission has already organised training seminars for more than 5 700 diplomats. One of the tasks of the EEAS will be to establish a training strategy to ensure that all members, whatever their background, will be equipped to carry out their tasks. Heads of delegations, in particular, will have to be able not only to carry out their political role, but also to handle all the Commission activities that are such a substantial part of a delegation's mandate.

Mr Brok's report also raises the question of whether consular services might be covered by the EEAS. The Commission is open to this idea even if it may take some time to develop. These are matters for the future. For the present, it is a challenge for us to ensure that the EEAS functions well and in the interests of all: the European citizens, the Member States and the European Union. The Commission supports the creation of the EEAS, wants it to succeed, and will contribute in every way possible to ensure that it does so. This report shows that Parliament will do the same.

I am sorry to have been a little long, but I think this is such an important matter. Please forgive me, Mr President.

President. – Commissioner, of course I forgive you, because I fully agree with you. It is a very important topic.

Alojz Peterle, on behalf of the PPE Group. – (SL) Madam President-in-Office of the Council, Commissioner, former colleagues from the European Convention, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to congratulate the rapporteur, Mr Elmar Brok, on having clearly defined the position of the European Parliament on the matters associated with the creation of a European External Action Service.

The establishment of such a service is a logical and necessary consequence of the decision to combine two foreign policy roles in one and it is crucial to the development of the European Union's foreign policy identity. Integrated diplomacy will mean simplification, more unified and more effective action, as well as greater visibility and recognisability.

The issue of how to install this joint service is not merely a technical one. It will also impact on the implementation of the political intention which the European Union wishes to achieve by vesting the roles of High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission in one person. The development of the new service should spring from the same spirit which brought together these two foreign policy roles and which will result in the unification of the Council's and the Commission's foreign policy efforts.

It is important that this service is established with due regard for the roles of, and cooperation between, the Commission, the Council and Parliament, and that it is founded on mutual trust and the will to cooperate.

Although I think that, in the interests of the European Union, the single service should commence operations as soon as possible, I strongly support the recommendation that it be phased in, in order to enable it to adopt the most appropriate and most efficient form. It seems reasonable to me that the service should form part of the Commission's administrative structure, both in terms of organisation and budget.

To me, it is absolutely vital that the future service also include staff from national diplomatic services, which would undoubtedly result in a better and more accessible service for European Union citizens and, in particular, for those countries which have only a small number of diplomatic representations.

Roberto Gualtieri, on behalf of the S&D Group. – (IT) Mr President, Minister, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, with this debate and with the report that we will approve tomorrow, this House intends to demonstrate its desire to help establish the European External Action Service, even at this preliminary stage,

by conducting a constructive dialogue with the Council and with the Commission. We believe that calling for this interinstitutional dialogue straight away is above all useful and sensible, given that the procedure laid down by the treaty provides for Parliament to give its opinion on the proposal to be presented by the High Representative, and because Parliament's prerogatives as regards the budget make it crucial that it gives its consent and cooperates. This is without mentioning the consent of the Commission, as discussed by Mr Brok, which provides further scope for the European Parliament.

However, we also believe that it is our duty to call for this dialogue straight away because the European External Action Service is one of the most important innovations introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. Its characteristics are intended to have a considerable bearing on the way in which European governance is reorganised and thus, on the way in which the overall balance of the Union's institutions is decided on in practice.

The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament agrees with the position adopted in the Brok report, which it played an active part in drafting. It is a position that aims to develop the role that the Service can carry out as a bridge between the Community dimension of the Union's external action and the intergovernmental dimension of the common foreign and security policy, as laid down in Title V of the Treaty of Lisbon.

Naturally, we are aware of the unique nature of the Service, which also reflects that of the role of the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission, just as we are aware of the fact that the Service must not incorporate all of the services used by the Commission when it implements the numerous aspects of its external action – which does not just boil down to the CFSP – starting with development cooperation.

However, we think it crucial that the Service be able to make the Union's foreign and security policy more effective and its external action as a whole more consistent. We also think it crucial that the Service be under the democratic control of Parliament and, to this end, we believe that its inclusion in the administrative structure of the Commission is the option that is most consistent with these objectives, which we really do have at heart. For this reason, we have voted in favour of the Brok report.

Andrew Duff, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, the Commission is quite correct to say that the service ought to combine all the instruments and assets that are required for the conduct of an active foreign policy across the globe. It is crucial that all the partners in this great project begin to trust each other and the service, including the most populous and imperious states.

It is crucial for the Foreign Office in the UK to send their top people to the service rather than their discards. I agree fully that, for the sake of parliamentary scrutiny and financial control, the service ought to be attached to the Commission, for administrative and budgetary purposes. I have to say to the Council that it is not acceptable that the service is placed in the same class as the Economic and Social Committee or the Ombudsman as part of the Financial Regulation. I think that this Brok report has been a practical preparatory stage of the process of setting up the External Action Service but I also believe that we should pause now before we go further and settle important questions before the High Representative Vice-President is in place.

For Parliament, it is crucial that we have a political interlocutor to negotiate the establishment and future programme of the External Action Service, so, please, states – bring us your people for all these posts.

Indrek Tarand, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (ET) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it has been a great and a pleasant experience to work with several admirable people. I want to congratulate Mr Brok and also many others who made their contributions. Now, however, I would like to quote Mr Barroso, who this morning wisely stated: 'Even institutions do not last; we need enormous political will.' Actually, institutional creation is not possible without political will. In order to prevent a situation where we create just one more institution, our political will must always be paramount at the creation of a new establishment. The goal is a truly European, and in reality, a *sui generis* organisation which serves the common interests of all Europe's citizens. If we want to avoid the duplication or possible waste of resources which is so typical, we must guarantee that the allocation of budgetary resources and the use of these resources takes place under the supervision of the European Parliament.

The report broadly defines the principles reported to the European Supreme Court, which would help us to appoint the high representative and also to put a plan in place. After this plan, we will all be in a better position, and also we will get the opportunity to put our own political will into operation. As everyone is aware of the aspirations of the Green party – such as the concept of peace creation, the absolute application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and, of course, the subject of gender equality – I will not start going

over these today, though I promise to address these subjects again in due course. All the same, in my opinion, the Council would be very wise to consider appointing a female High Representative, as we all know that the President of the Commission is not a woman. In fact, a woman has never been appointed to lead Europe, and therefore if we are creating a new European institution, it would perhaps be a good idea to consider this aspect.

In dealing with the report, I have drawn attention to certain negative attitudes coming from some areas. It was suggested that the European Parliament does not have any role to play here and that it is trying simply to give itself more importance with this report. My response to this attitude is that Parliament is important and we must take this into account. Our report about the European External Action Service provides a very good opportunity to bring such facts to light. Therefore, I call on everyone to support the adoption of the report, taking into account the fact that it does not incorporate all the improvements and wishes. The main thing is to adopt the report now.

Ashley Fox, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, I want to express my disappointment that yet again, this Parliament is considering a report that pre-empts the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. I wonder whether we would be having this debate today if the German Constitutional Court were still considering the Treaty. I suspect not, and I ask why the Czech Republic is treated differently. As the English author, George Orwell, might have observed, all Member States are equal, but some are more equal than others.

I want to speak against the setting-up of a European diplomatic college. At a time when all Member States face huge budgetary pressures, the EU should show restraint. We should act as guardians of the public purse. Our aim should be to spend public money prudently and endeavour to return money to the Member States and the taxpayers we represent, when we can.

This proposal is uncoded. It is another example of how some Members of this Chamber are all too eager to make grand gestures with other people's money. A European diplomatic college is a waste of money and would become another burden on the taxpayer.

I wish to remind colleagues that any common position on foreign policy would be determined by the Member States represented in the Council, not by the Commission, and certainly not by this Parliament. Any additional staff the EEAS requires should be seconded from the Member States, and they require no separate training. The policy that they will represent to the world will be that of the Council of Ministers, not some independent European policy.

A diplomatic college would only become necessary if the EU were to take control of foreign affairs away from the Member States. I hope that day never comes and I will do my utmost to prevent it.

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

Andrew Duff (ALDE). – Mr President, could I ask the speaker if, should he be disappointed and the Treaty actually finds itself in force, he would support the appointment of Mr Chris Patten as the High Representative?

Ashley Fox (ECR). – Mr President, I am very grateful to be asked my opinion, but I rather doubt that it will be my decision.

Helmut Scholz, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. The Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left has repeatedly made clear in plenary its fundamental criticism of the direction and nature of the foreign and security policy of the European Union and has been opposed to following this course, including in the Treaty of Lisbon. This joint debate at the beginning of this parliamentary term covers one of the most important reports of the term. Unfortunately, although I understand Mr Brok's motives from the perspective of parliamentary activity, we have to get something underway within a deadline which makes it difficult to weigh up properly and responsibly the dimensions and complex issues resulting from the content of this new structure.

It has become clear during the course of the debate how much unfortunately is still up in the air and therefore within the political poker game between the interests of national power and government and the EU structures. The GUE/NGL group is opposed to this. Therefore, we hope that the European Parliament will have the opportunity after the negotiations to consider the European External Action Service (EEAS) again in accordance with the expectations expressed this morning in plenary to the Swedish Presidency concerning restraint in the formulation of the negotiating mandate. We in Parliament should also ensure that the citizens of Europe are as well-informed as possible about the different aspects of the EEAS, particularly in the face of the doubts

and criticism relating to the Treaty of Lisbon and the demand for more transparency and democratic codecision in this respect.

The discussions about the establishment of the EEAS have been taking place for months behind closed doors. My group would like to repeat that the failure to include the European Parliament, the civil society organisations that have so far been affected, or even the national parliaments, gives rise to serious questions. This is particularly the case because a lively debate and open and transparent discussions about the institutional structures are of great importance for their legitimacy in future and for their public accountability. As a result, I welcome Mr Brok's approach in which he attempts, by means of his report, to achieve parliamentary codecision for the European Parliament at the very least. Some of our requests aim to produce the same results.

We oppose all efforts – and I say this unequivocally and categorically – to include political-military structures in the EEAS, regardless of whether this happens now or in the future, as has been recently proposed by France, among others, in the Council. The possible combination of military planning, secret service structures and general diplomatic and political tasks is not acceptable from our point of view.

Morten Messerschmidt, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – (DA) Mr President, yesterday, I was asked to give three reasons why people should vote against this report. That is pretty easy: democracy, democracy and democracy.

First of all, it is farcical that any parliament would want to adopt a report based on a treaty, the fate of which is still completely uncertain. No one knows what the future of the Treaty of Lisbon is, and anyone with even the smallest modicum of respect for democratic structures – the smallest modicum of respect for Member States such as the Czech Republic – would hold back on this project until there was clarity about the future of the treaty.

Secondly, this report (and the whole foreign affairs service that is now being constructed) represents a complete undermining and disavowal of and failure to appreciate the sovereign right of the Member States to conduct their own foreign policies. It is also the reason why this report seeks to make the Commission responsible for everything. The Commission, of course, particularly in its role as a 'civil servant', is very obviously not popularly elected. In other words, if the people want a different foreign policy, there is no chance on earth of changing the policy conducted as it is only the Council, meaning the governments, that people have the ability to change – not the Commission.

That means, thirdly, that it is a democratic farce that this Parliament wants to hand more power, some absolutely crucial core areas within the sovereign State, to the Commission, which has no popular mandate. This Parliament is based solely on *kratos* – purely on power. It is never ever based on *demos*. Our focus should instead be on *demos* – we should be focused on the people and not on power. We must, therefore, have more democracy. For that reason, this report must be rejected.

Andrew Henry William Brons (NI). – Mr President, this report tries to put our minds at rest about the service but, to my mind, it does exactly the opposite. It claims, on the one hand, that the service complements Member State diplomacy and does not call it into question. However, the rest of the report, in my view, flatly contradicts that assurance.

Paragraph 4 says that the service – that means its powers – cannot be circumscribed or predetermined in advance. Paragraph 8(d) suggests that delegations, which are part of the service, might take over consular services from Member States. It is clear that this service is intended – not in the short term but in the long term – to take over and replace diplomatic representation of Member States, perhaps in the end, even the vetoes of the United Kingdom and France on the UN Security Council.

When you hear an EU body giving an assurance that they will not do such and such, you have a pretty good clue as to what they are up to. With apologies to Mr Shakespeare, methinks the report doth protest too much. Who or what will actually exercise any control over this body? Not, I think, the Council. That has to act unanimously. If it cannot decide, the service will simply be carrying on with its own agenda. What about the Parliament? No, that is limited to consultation. This body will conduct foreign policy over the heads of Member States with no effective control by Member States or the European Parliament. National governments will be reduced to the status of a parish council.

Carlo Casini (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, first I all I feel it is my duty to thank the rapporteur, who has done a marvellous job, and, as chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs,

I must also thank all of the members of the committee and of both committees – the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Development – who delivered the opinion, for their very swift work.

We have, in fact, tried to prepare a document – which I hope will be approved – that can be presented to the Council of 29 and 30 October. We are well aware that this report is not a definitive report. It is intended merely to point out a few courses of action, a path of some kind to follow, to the Council and thus to the High Representative who will be appointed.

It will be the High Representative's job to devise his own organisational plan which, in turn, will have to be examined by us. Therefore, it is only guidelines that are being submitted to our Parliament. We also know that the success of this operation regarding the External Action Service is linked to the role of the High Representative, who will have to be able to organise and manage everyone. Through him, we want a consistent and uniform foreign policy. We are well aware that there are problems, that much has already been said, but problems are there to be solved. The important thing is that the compass, the information, the scope is clear.

The Brok report provides some interesting proposals in this regard – I have to be brief because my speaking time is up – but, in any case, they include the integration of the Service into the administrative structure of the Commission, the decision to further develop the Community model and the proposal, which is, moreover, laid down in the Treaty of Lisbon, that the staff must be taken from the secretariats of the Commission and the Council and from the delegations of the Commission itself.

There are two innovations that I believe are worth mentioning: Union embassies, headed by officials from the European External Action Service, which would also include the Commission delegations present in third countries and the Council liaison offices, with the possible secondment of experts from the Directorates-General; and the foundations that have been laid for the establishment of a European diplomatic college, which is an interesting idea.

My speaking time has run out. I only hope that this report really is adopted, and adopted by a large majority.

Zita Gurmai (S&D). – Mr President, as we all know, the European External Action Service is one of the major innovations proposed by the Lisbon Treaty. Therefore, we have to be very careful and responsible during its setting-up.

We all agree that it should start functioning as soon as the Lisbon Treaty is in force. The Commission and the Council are already working on the guidelines which they are expected to present to the European Council meeting at the end of this month. It is therefore essential that the European Parliament influences this process.

Today's debate and the resulting resolution are of the utmost importance because we have to send a very clear message now as proof of political consensus on the setting-up of the service to the Council and to the European Commission.

I am very proud of my colleague's work, which is the result of cross-party deliberations in this House. We insist that the Community model in the Union's external relations is preserved. The Members are keen to have the service attached to the European Commission and part of the overall community budget. The EEAS should form part of the Commission administratively and budget-wise, and should formally be a part of the Commission as a *sui generis* body attached to the Commission structure.

The budgetary commission is extremely important. It is a lever with which the EP can exercise its power. In this way, Parliament should, and will, exercise budgetary control and democratic scrutiny over it. There are many issues to cover, for example, the clear division of tasks within the EEAS and the responsible European Commission units – taking into consideration that we do not know yet the structure of the future Commission – and the relation between the High Representatives and the different Union representatives abroad, but this resolution will be the first position of the European Parliament from which the further steps will follow.

We should not forget about the human factor either. The High Representative should be a person of merit, expertise and excellence, supported by the Commission, Council and national diplomatic services. I am convinced the institutional set-up of the EEAS must include gender architecture that duly reflects the commitments made by the Union with regard to gender mainstreaming.

Last but not least, as a person who has been working for women's equal political representation over the last 15 years, I would be glad if this person were a woman.

Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck (ALDE). – (NL) Mr President, some fellow Members have seen fit to use their speeches to try to give us lessons in democracy. May I point out, therefore, that in both the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, whose opinion I drafted, we made sure that the discussion and vote on our respective texts were not held until the outcome of the Irish referendum had become known. We did so out of respect for the verdict the Irish people were to give. They did say ‘yes’, fortunately, but they could have said ‘no’. We wanted to take account of this, and also of next week’s European Council meeting. Hence, we had to accomplish our discussion and texts in an extremely short period of time. The same fellow Members who seek to give lessons in democracy have, of course, complained about this, too. I digress.

Today, we are experiencing a particularly important point in time. Our texts expressing our opinion on what the future European External Action Service should look like herald a new era for the European Union. Those of us who have been following the evolution of the Union for years and remember the first modest steps on foreign policy, let alone security and defence policy, of the Treaties – first Maastricht, then Amsterdam – may have thought, as I did at the time, that we would never see this day, that we would never manage to lay down the foundations of a common European diplomacy.

Those of us who have watched attentively as the ideas on this have evolved will also remember that, just a few months ago, some of our national diplomatic services were absolutely unwilling to accept a kind of instant ‘big bang’, with all the current delegations brought under the authority of the future High Representative from the very first day. I am absolutely delighted about this.

My own political and governmental responsibilities in my previous political incarnations have taught me that none of this will be simple. Yet we are experiencing an important point in time, and I hope that this report will be adopted by a very large majority.

Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE). – (DE) Mr President, our group supports the basic structure proposed by Mr Brok in his report and, in particular, the retention of the controlling rights of the European Parliament and the retention of the Community tasks as Community tasks. However, in order to ensure that our common External Action Service is a great success and not just an appendage of the Commission or the Council, we must now discuss its content and its functions.

The EU needs a new, integrated foreign policy which will allow it to confront the world’s problems effectively. The External Action Service must enable the EU to implement comprehensive, integrated political strategies and campaigns. We need this service now, for example, during the discussions on climate change in Copenhagen. We must do away with traditional diplomacy, otherwise this service will bring very little added value.

I would therefore like to promote four areas which, in our opinion, will help the service to create a new foreign policy. Firstly, we want the new service to have a directorate for peacebuilding and crisis management. We have the corresponding financial instruments and missions, but until now, we have only had small and fragmented organisational units. Secondly, we want the staff to be given comprehensive education and training. Simply having attended a diplomacy college is not enough. In addition, we want to ensure that those members of staff who wear uniforms have not merely been educated at the defence college. All of them must complete at least part of their education together and this is why we are calling for a European External Action Academy. Thirdly, we do not want a dual structure for the Council President within the Council Secretariat. Therefore, the External Action Service should also be supported by this organisation. As far as appointments to the top jobs are concerned, my colleague, Mr Tarand, has already mentioned that we firmly believe that it is time that a woman is appointed.

Charles Tannock (ECR). – Mr President, as the Union seeks a broader role in international affairs, it arguably should have the tools to project our common values throughout the world, providing, of course, there is unanimity in all 27 Member States.

But how will that role develop? Where will its limits be? We in the ECR Group believe, as an anti-federalist body, that foreign policy must ultimately remain the preserve of our individual Member States. It is therefore of concern to us that the Lisbon Treaty, if it becomes law, appears to set in train a series of developments that could end up undermining that prerogative.

The proposed European External Action Service must complement and not compete with or undermine Member States’ bilateral diplomatic activity and must draw its authority mainly from the Council and not from the Commission. Parliament must exercise its rights to scrutinise the EEAS and shape its budget. Given

that there is much talk about EU embassies in the Brok report, I would like the Commission once again to repeat the assurances it gave me a year ago that EEAS missions or delegations will not be called embassies. To call these missions embassies would compound the fear that the EU is seeking all the trappings of a sovereign state.

IN THE CHAIR: MR LAMBRINIDIS

Vice-President

Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL). – (ES) Mr President, my group – the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left – is going to vote against this report, primarily because we do not support the Treaty of Lisbon.

For us, the Treaty of Lisbon does not reflect the spirit of the European project envisaged by and for the citizens. In fact, quite the opposite is the case. It provides a model in crisis, a model which prevents public intervention in the economy.

There is a desire to move forward at two different speeds: we are hurrying to ensure that Europe has a single voice abroad, but the European Union does not have the power to call the economy back to life using its own instruments, as it has no treasury or any active industrial policies. Neither does it have the capacity to intervene in the price of money nor control of the European Central Bank. Therefore, we do not share this philosophy.

If the Treaty of Lisbon is adopted, with the Commission's approval and following parliamentary consultations, five thousand officials will be employed at the European External Action Service, following a decision of the Council, based on a proposal by the future Vice-President.

We do not agree with this structure because it is also being given the powers to solve all kinds of military crises. We believe that there is a lack of control. In our opinion, this control should fulfil the highest democratic requirements, as is the case in each Member State.

Therefore, we think that this philosophy does not follow in the spirit of the kind of Europe that our group want to build, namely a Europe that is, in fact, capable of intervening in matters that fundamentally affect us, such as the current recession and unemployment rates that are currently the highest they have been since the 1930s.

That is why, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to vote against this report.

David Campbell Bannerman (EFD). – Mr President, this Brok report is positive proof of the emergence of a single European Union superstate. The wicked Lisbon constitution already forces an unelected President and Foreign Minister on us all. Now this report adds a new European diplomatic service, the so-called European External Action Service, but embassies represent national interests.

So what national interests will these new EU diplomats and embassies represent? They will not be those of our nation states, our trade or our companies. They will be those of the European Commission. All other national embassies will become redundant. Already, British embassies around the world are selling off properties.

This master plan for an EU superstate is built on foundations of deceit, dishonesty and denial, but federalists are not creating a new United States of America. They are creating a new Yugoslavia. By forcing very different nations, cultures and economies together under a rigid, undemocratic Soviet-style bureaucracy, you are entering very dangerous waters indeed.

I worked for the British Government on the Northern Ireland peace process. I saw what happened when democracy fails. It is not pretty. Now I see democracy failing here in Europe. You profess to love peace but, by railroading through Lisbon and by this power grab of our embassies, you are putting Europe firmly back on the road towards war once again.

Martin Ehrenhauser (NI). – (DE) Mr President, the Council's actions are not transparent. The decisions are made *de facto* in the numerous, largely non-transparent working groups and in COREPER. In 2008, only 1% of the agenda items in the Council of Foreign Ministers were debated publicly.

Against precisely this background, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has been developed since the end of the 1990s without any consultation or democratic control. Against precisely this background,

the European External Action Service will also be established. My response is a clear 'No'. This must not happen! We need genuine democratic parliamentary control and we also need genuine transparency.

I am also rather surprised that you in particular, Mr Brok, are now suddenly in favour of parliamentary control. Is it not the case that specifically in the area of the ESDP, the Treaty of Lisbon will remove this parliamentary control? However, you are in favour of this treaty. On the subject of budgetary control, it is quite clear from the discharge of the Council how your group is acting. Is it not the case that in the next few weeks, your group will vote in favour of the discharge of the Council in the Committee on Budgetary Control, although the Council has not given adequate responses?

It is unfortunate that although your draft has very good beginnings, it is in fact hypocritical, it is not credible and it is ultimately an admission of the failings of the Treaty of Lisbon.

Rafał Kazimierz Trzaskowski (PPE). – Thank you very much Mr President, Commissioner, Minister, I have to start with the footnotes. As much as I really admire the rhetorical flair of our friends from UKIP, I find it quite interesting as someone coming from Central Europe that you are so ready to share your experience of living under the Titoist regime in Yugoslavia or under the Soviet regime. Really interesting.

First of all, let me congratulate Elmar Brok for preparing a report which so magnificently represents the mainstream, and let me repeat that, the mainstream of this House.

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the new Service, we will increase our ability to speak with one voice. We agree that the new Service should be as close to the Commission as possible, because only the Community method guarantees the coherence of our actions and, most importantly, the points of view of us all will be taken into account to the same degree.

For the new service to be credible it has to be endowed with as much democratic legitimacy as possible. Therefore, all the efforts to take care of this House's powers of scrutiny have to be saluted.

Most importantly we have to do everything to ensure that the new service is of the best quality and that it is trusted by everyone. We have to do our utmost so that the Commission, the Council and 27 Member States send their best people to work in the EEAS. That is why they have to enjoy the same status. Work in the Service should be treated as an integral part of their career at home. The people working for the service have to be chosen on merit, but also according to geographic balance so as to counteract the unfounded fears that the Service could be hijacked by anyone.

The Lisbon Treaty is important and different from all the other treaties because so much depends on its implementation. I hope that the insights of this House will help the Council and the Commission to actually implement this Treaty in such a way that we will increase our ability to speak with one voice.

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D). – Mr President, I want to welcome the Brok report and urge rapid progress on establishing the EEAS as a democratically accountable service. I have great hopes that this service can lead to greater coherence between our policy objectives and decisions, particularly as they impact globally on sustainable development, on human rights, and on the eradication of poverty.

We have failed so far to ensure that our policies are coherent. Often our trade policies conflict directly with our development cooperation policy. I also want to warn against any thoughts about subsuming development policy as part of our foreign policy. We need an autonomous development service answerable to an autonomous Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid. To ensure coherence, we need benchmarking, screening and impact assessment for proposed decisions as they impact on development policy objectives.

Louis Michel (ALDE). – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I congratulate Mr Brok and thank him for the excellent report – I would even call it a remarkable report – that he has presented to us.

The creation of this new external service is an opportunity that should not be missed. Parliament must have its say, not only on the budget, but also on the service's overall structure. As has been said, this service will have to have internal operating rules that are one of a kind. We cannot do without such operating rules, which are in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty. To act otherwise would be to arouse the distrust of certain Member States. I am thinking in particular of the smallest and newest Member States.

We must also focus on the core of the external service's mandate, set the strategy and the political priorities, and create consistency within external action. It is vital not to fall into the trap of duplication by the external

service and the Commission delegations, but instead to develop a specific service generating added value for joint external action. The external service must be wholly in step with the Commission. It must not drift off course to become or inspire intergovernmental action. I would also like to add that the profile of the High Representative/Vice-President is clearly crucial for the added value of the service.

Finally, Mr President, while we both agree that the sphere of development has its own aim, at the same time, it is an external policy instrument. To deny that would be naive. One solution could be to keep programming as a responsibility of the Commissioner for Development, in agreement with the High Representative.

The final point is that this debate cannot be separated from the debate on the budget for the European Development Fund.

Bastiaan Belder (EFD). – (NL) Mr President, now that the Irish referendum is behind us, the European Parliament is again venturing to show what it stands for, and is doing so with great drive and enthusiasm. This report paints a Utopian panorama of an external service that is to implement the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which is not yet functional.

One striking feature of this report is its heroic attempt to urge the Commission to throw its full institutional weight into the balance. What is the reason for this position? I think that many of my fellow Members wish to use the external service as a Trojan horse to gain control of the CFSP via the Commission.

It is a disgrace that the European Parliament and the other institutions still have no idea of exactly how this service is supposed to work. The gradual process discussed in paragraph 4 is a risky institutional venture, pure and simple, and will surely end in institutional tears, if you will excuse the pun.

György Schöpflin (PPE). – Mr President, I too would like to add my voice to those who support the Brok report and also to express my fascination for the paranoia that has come from that side of the House.

The External Action Service is, without any doubt, a potentially major element in the promotion of coherence in the EU's relations with the rest of the world. These relations are often wide-ranging, complex and have a significant impact on the world outside Europe. It is vital, therefore, that these activities are thoroughly coordinated in order to ensure that EU policies have the impact that they were designed to have. Indeed, once the External Action Service is up and running, it will affect the EU's stance, for example, on the common foreign and security policy, as has already been noted, the promotion of the democracy agenda, human rights, channelling of aid, and dealing with the multi-faceted issues of development.

The question of coherence is central in this context. If different parts of the European Union place different emphases on policy issues, the impact will be muted and will very likely have unintended consequences. Consistency is pivotal in this connection. The External Action Service will, in the light of this, have a considerable responsibility in working together with all the other institutions of the European Union that have an external dimension. Clearly, the effectiveness of the Service will necessarily structure the work of the High Representative but, in the medium term, its work will resonate throughout all the institutions of the European Union. It is a two-way process.

When seen from this perspective, it is essential that the Service should be accountable, obviously to the High Representative but also, more broadly, to Parliament itself. The Service will, at the end of the day, represent the European Union in all its aspects, hence the emphasis on accountability, transparency and coherence.

Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, one Europe, one voice! We have taken another important step towards a common foreign policy for the Member States. The decisive factor involves ensuring that the position of the High Representative is held by a strong, independent, competent person and that he or she has the necessary scope and freedom to develop and structure the service in accordance with the requirements and, of course, in accordance with the principles of the European Union, which include the observance of fundamental human rights. That is *sui generis*.

It is essential that this is done transparently, that Parliament plays an appropriate role and that budgetary rights and budgetary control remain with the budgetary authority. However, it is also essential that the national governments once and for all give their own interests a lower priority and offer their full support to this office and to the tasks of the service and do not constantly stick their oar in whenever they feel like it, which is what we are unfortunately used to.

It must also be made clear, and this is very important to us, that development policy should remain independent, because these things must not be combined arbitrarily. Let us see the new office and the portfolio

which we have fought for over a number of years as an opportunity for the future and let us not talk it down and pull it to pieces right from the beginning. One Europe, one voice! That is our task and that is what we must focus on: no more and no less.

Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE). – (DE) Mr President, what do we want to achieve with the European diplomatic service? We want to set the political priorities of the European Union for the 21st century. Many countries and many people outside Europe expect Europe to play a strong role in peacekeeping and conflict prevention and, in areas where this has not worked, to restore peace and to help reconstruct the country in question. For this reason, it makes sense to establish a peacebuilding department.

However, in the negotiations, some of the representatives of the Member States in the Council have put their foot heavily on the brakes, including the representatives of Member States which are generally regarded as pro-European. At best they have one foot on the accelerator and one on the brakes. This generates a lot of heat, but not much movement. We therefore hope that the negotiations for a really strong European External Action Service (EEAS) controlled by the European Parliament are successful. The citizens of Europe want Europe to speak with one voice. People outside Europe expect this. The EEAS will not be able to achieve this on its own. However, it represents a step in the right direction. Let us make sure that it works.

Lorenzo Fontana (EFD). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that, given the importance of the subject under discussion, Parliament should have had more time to explain its position to the Council. Instead, the committee process lasted only a few days and we are now holding a debate in Parliament two days after the adoption of the provision within the Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

The proposal to establish the European diplomatic service is a leap forward when compared with what is strictly provided for by the treaties. Furthermore, the European External Action Service, as it is described by the report, appears difficult to integrate with the Member States' foreign affairs ministries. What will happen to these ministries? Will they dissolve? That seems unlikely.

Moreover, how will the powers of these embassies, with regard to visas, for instance, fit in with the work already carried out by the national embassies? Who will the so-called ambassadors of the European Union be appointed by? By the Commission, as seems likely, or will the Member States be able to appoint their own? Moreover, the idea of calling the future representatives 'ambassadors' is provocative, given that the European Constitution, which provided for a European foreign affairs minister, has not been adopted. We cannot pretend that the European Constitution was not rejected by the French and the Dutch.

Andrzej Grzyb (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, our European Union project is, of course, unique, and we have stressed this many times. The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon which, I hope, will be accomplished effectively, will also create new institutions. One result of these moves will be the establishment of the European External Action Service, which is primarily intended to ensure that external relations are both coherent and effective.

As Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner has said, it will be a *sui generis* entity but, at the same time, it is worth recalling Mr Brok's statement that the fundamental principles which should apply in the creation of this service, alongside effectiveness, are transparency and a democratic mandate. Effectiveness should be ensured by consensus on establishment of the European External Action Service, both among the institutions, and here I am pleased by the declarations of the Council and the Commission, but also by the inclusion of matters related to development aid, humanitarian aid, enlargement and international trade. The EU also needs a strong voice in matters which concern energy policy and solidarity, for example.

Regarding transparency, I expect a balance to be achieved when establishing the European External Action Service. I have in mind not only a balance between institutions, but also a geographical balance when making appointments to the European External Action Service. This is something of vital importance that I cannot emphasise enough. The current representation does not meet this requirement if, for example, we consider Directorate-General RELEX or the Commission Delegations outside the EU. The service should be established pursuant to democratic standards, and I expect Parliament to play a significant role here, both in the establishment process and later in the interviewing of candidates for heads of delegations, together with the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

As concerns training personnel, it is proposed to create a European diplomatic college. This is an important venture but, at the same time, I would like to take this opportunity of stressing that there are, in fact, national centres, and also numerous European colleges with experience in training personnel. We ought to draw on this experience. I have in mind Bruges, Natolin, Florence and Maastricht.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, I would also like to welcome the establishment of the European External Action Service as a step in the right direction, representing progress in making Europe more consistent and effective on the international stage.

I also believe creating this service will add a significant political dimension to the European project and give Europe a more political profile.

I would also like to underline the need for consistency within the action taken by the service with regard to administrative and budget responsibilities and on this point, of course, relations with the Commission, on the one hand, and with Parliament, on the other, are crucial.

As far as Parliament is concerned, I also believe that this service must cooperate directly and very closely with Parliament in order to keep MEPs constantly informed of its activities, as well as appointments to the most important posts. In addition, the High Representative will, naturally, be a well-known figure, but I believe that the other members of the service should also be people who inspire a high level of confidence.

I would also like to emphasise the issue of recruitment. As some of my fellow Members have said, I think that geographical representativeness is important, and a balance must be found for the small countries and for the new Member States.

Finally, I would like to mention briefly the importance of this common European culture which, of course, is being created in different schools and different institutions, but I believe that a consistent initiative on the subject, creating a European-level structure, would be a good idea.

Mário David (PPE). – (PT) Mr President, it is essential that the primary objective in creating the European External Action Service is to consolidate the efforts of the European Institutions, ensuring the creation of an efficient service capable of articulating, formulating and implementing a European response to the present international challenges.

It should also be more than the sum of its parts; it should constitute added value to the existing efforts by the Member States and the European Union. Against this backdrop, I believe it is essential that what makes the EU special – in other words, the Community method – should take centre stage in this new reality. That is why I fully support the Brok Report, which advocates and safeguards close collaboration between the Commission and the future service.

On this note, I would like to point out two things. Firstly, there needs to be close coordination between the President of the Commission and the High Representative, who will also be a Vice-President of the Commission, in order to ensure that it is effective and works smoothly. Secondly, there is the need for an alliance between Parliament and the Commission in order to combat the expected intergovernmental drift, which may compromise the effective running of the service.

Parliament must therefore be vigilant and make sure that the European External Action Service will be a centre of excellence, representing the best expertise in foreign policy.

(The President gave the floor to Mr Dartmouth so that he could ask Mr Preda a 'blue card' question)

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD). – Mr Preda, in your speech, you used the phrase 'a common European culture'. Do you regard the admission of Turkey into the European Union as being fully compatible with the common European culture to which you alluded?

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – (RO) I talked in my speech about a common culture from a diplomatic perspective, as part of a political culture. As far as I am concerned, I believe that, in this sense, Turkey is also part of this European political culture which includes a totally respectable tradition of diplomacy. Thank you for your question. This is what I should have addressed first.

Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, as a member of the Committee on Budgetary Control, I am concerned about the way in which the Commission and the Council are excluding the European Parliament when it comes to the question of the External Action Service. We have no documents and we are the only ones who have no documents, who have not been involved and who are forced to accept what has been negotiated. This is outrageous!

What I have seen during this debate and following the statements by the two representatives is that the Community instruments are being dismantled. We will also see an opt-out from the instruments which involve parliamentary rights, such as the Budget Regulation. We in the European Parliament must pay

attention. The answer to the question of 'Who decides what?' has not become clear to me in the course of the debate. I believe that this is an open question. I also believe that if our budgetary and control rights and our codecision on this issue are not respected, it will be very difficult for us to work together with the Council and the Commission over the next few years.

Richard Howitt (S&D). – Mr President, I want to support a strong External Action Service with geographic desks covering the whole world, responsibility for the European Security and Defence Policy, and combining Council and Commission functions on planning, conflict prevention and crisis management.

But I do want to agree with Mrs Malmström that this is not prejudiced by retaining responsibility for trade development and enlargement in the Commission, which is why I have collaborated with my colleague, Mr Gualtieri, on an amendment to paragraph 6(c) supporting bringing together EU development policy programming and implementation.

The critics should understand that there are problems in the existing system. A High Representative with no direct responsibility to us in Parliament, duplication of functions between Council and Commission, splits between EU Special Representative and Commission heads of delegation, human rights sometimes ignored for trade and geopolitical interests, etc.

This major reform of the Lisbon Treaty has to be made to work and will do so.

Finally, to Mrs Ferrero-Waldner, I know she will be containing her excitement following the intervention of the UK Independence Party and she understands that British Embassies are not up for sale.

Ivo Vajgl (ALDE). – (SL) Mr President, what we are doing today is giving the green light to the European Union to press on with a major achievement in its efforts to create a greater and more important role for itself in global foreign politics. I should like to congratulate Mr Brok on a detailed and very substantive report. I believe that it is vital that the new service should complement the existing services of the European Union, which will continue to be offered. It is also important that European Union representations around the world are not duplicated or triplicated. It seems to me that there is a real risk of that happening.

Finally, I should like to add that we should emphasise the role of the consular services of such new representations. Small countries do not have much money and do not have representations all over Europe and all over the world, which is why they have high hopes of this service. We, in Slovenia, have had a good experience of working in collaboration with Austrian diplomats. Commissioner, we would like that cooperation to continue to act as a kind of template.

Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE). – (FI) Mr President, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, I would like to bring to your attention the fact that the European Union is committed in everything it does to compliance with human rights and, obviously, these also include the rights of women, as already mentioned here. I myself believe that the common European External Action Service will definitely improve our opportunities to take human rights into account in all our work, though this will not happen by itself.

I would like to hear you describe how you intend to ensure that human rights and aspirations for equality are mainstreamed into this forthcoming External Action Service. I will give you an example: not all EU delegations at present comply with the seven human rights guidelines we have agreed on together. Now we have the opportunity, through training programmes, for example, to raise the profile of these important matters. Mr Brok's report also mentions training. I would therefore be interested in hearing your views on these matters.

Zoltán Balczó (NI). – (HU) Mr President, the question that is being asked here at the moment, and what we are actually talking about, is whether, while progressing along the path determined by the Treaty of Lisbon, there will be a superstate initiative or 27 countries will have close institutional cooperation. Constitutional courts are now debating this issue as well and want to make a decision. In Strasbourg, prior to the first sitting, the EU flag was raised and the EU anthem was played, along with a military parade. A state has an anthem and a flag, cooperation does not. We have heard here about us sending an ambassador to represent us around the world. We also hear about Europe speaking with one voice. We do not agree with this. We envisage a different path for Europe's future. This does not make us paranoid, as those preaching tolerance are saying. We still want Europe, it just happens to be a different Europe to what most people want.

Íñigo Méndez de Vigo (PPE). – Mr President, because the speaker was so kind as to agree to answer a question, I am going to ask one. Real Madrid, which is a Spanish football club, has got a flag and an anthem. Do you believe it is a state?

(Laughter and applause)

Zoltán Balczó (NI). – (HU) A flag belonging to other states is not usually raised amidst a military parade, as in this case, while playing the anthem. If you believe that Europe operates like a football team, this means that you have your own individual view on this. Europe should not be a club of fanatics rallying around one flag, even though you might be an ardent fan, but it should be a team representing different perspectives instead.

Danuta Maria Hübner (PPE). – Mr President, the discussion on the European External Action Service is taking place at a time when the need for a long-term EU strategy on how to work with the other parts of the globe in the dramatically changing world has become urgent. We need bold strategies, vision and actions, as the emerging global powers are modernising more quickly than Europe ever did and are becoming more and more assertive.

Our geopolitical strategic thinking in foreign policy cannot be limited to climate change and energy security. One of the three institutions that will, in practice, be active in foreign policy – President of the Council, President of the Commission and High Representative – must have the geopolitical strategic competences assigned to it and not only short-term fixing of emerging problems, which leads to lowest common denominator-based foreign policy. In my view, the natural candidate for these strategic competences is the High Representative, drawing on the competences and expertise of the European External Action Service.

Andrey Kovatchev (PPE). – (BG) The creation of the European External Action Service and a successful start to its operation will mark a major political success in the European Union on its way to achieving the goal of having a proper European common foreign and security policy. This would allow Europe to truly speak with one voice. It will be possible to provide an answer to the famous anecdotal question asked by Henry Kissinger: ‘Who do I call if I want to call Europe?’ because Europe’s telephone number will be the telephone number of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. At present, in order to find out what Europe’s position is, we need to know 27 telephone numbers, one for each Member State.

It goes without saying that for this service to be able to start operating, the prospective High Representative must submit here in our Parliament his or her proposal for setting up the service. I also hope that this person will take into consideration Mr Brok’s report and will have an equal and fair representation of all Member States, in particular, new Member States.

Krisztina Morvai (NI). – Mr President, it is really interesting to hear how some Members are very irritated by this famous one voice being challenged and the whole status quo being challenged. I call upon and invite the citizens of Europe who elected us to be here to listen to this conversation through the transparency of the Internet and give their opinions about all these things we are talking about.

I wanted to raise another issue, however, I recalled during the discussion when Mrs Ferrero-Waldner visited the Israeli Government during the terrible bloodshed of the Gaza war. I will never ever forget, Commissioner, how you hugged and kissed the members of the Israeli Government during that terrible time.

How can I be sure that if this resolution is accepted nobody is going to hug and kiss war criminals on my behalf?

Elena Băsescu (PPE). – (RO) I would first of all like to congratulate Elmar Brok for drafting this report. As the previous speaker also said, it is three decades since the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, asked the question: ‘Who do I call if I want to call Europe?’ Creating the post of High Representative and an external service will allow the European Union to answer this question.

With these functions available, I believe that European diplomacy should be able to play a more active and decisive role in defending the EU’s basic interests, which also concerns energy security.

I welcome the fact that the High Representative and the heads of the diplomatic missions should engage in permanent dialogue with the European Parliament.

With regard to the deployment of staff as part of the external service, I believe that, apart from the fact that the relevant employees must have excellent knowledge and skills, consideration must also be given without fail to ensuring proper, proportional representation for Member States.

Piotr Borys (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, I, too, would like to express my sincere thanks for this splendid, factual report. Thanks to establishment of the European External Action Service, the European Union will be able to have an active presence in the international arena as a creator of international policy. This is extremely important. Of course, we all agree that the question of the quality of services is principally the responsibility of the Commission and the Member States, and that in this matter, cooperation is needed between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

However, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether, on the basis of her contact with the European Parliament, she envisages a practical possibility of using our work in the form of active cooperation, for example, in interparliamentary delegations. I think there are many forums where the High Representative and the European External Action Service could cooperate actively with Parliament, including by means of delegations. Are appropriate preparations being made in this regard?

Riikka Manner (ALDE). – (FI) Mr President, Commissioner, firstly I also want to thank the rapporteur for an excellent report. I wish to emphasise, however, that in order to make the European External Action Service work, we must also pay genuine attention to the small Member States and each country's special characteristics in the area of foreign and security policy. It is only by doing that and by having this debate that we will be able to make the EEAS a viable entity.

It is important that the report also mentioned the importance of transparency and democracy. In addition, it is my view that we should stress the importance specifically of the issues of soft security in connection with the EEAS. The European Union was created on the basis of peace and stability, and we can promote these globally, in particular, by means of humanitarian aid, development cooperation, crisis management and international trade.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – Mr President, I found it interesting that some of the honourable Members who speak so warmly of democracy cannot accept that the Lisbon Treaty has been democratically adopted by 26 Parliaments and one referendum.

(Applause)

There is one man's signature remaining, I agree, but I feel very confident that the Treaty will enter into force very soon, and that we should have the External Action Service in place. That is a good thing. It is supported in Member States, in national parliaments and, honourable Members – if you look at Eurostat surveys for instance – also by citizens all around the European Union. This is because they think – like we do, like I do, like most people here do – that it is important for the European Union to be able to act in a more coherent and stronger way if we want to promote our values and work towards peace and democracy all over the world.

We should, of course, avoid bureaucracy and duplication but, as Mrs Ferrero-Waldner said, we are building a new body. It is *sui generis* so we have to find ways to develop it. What the Coreper is discussing in cooperation with the Council, the Commission and with Members of the European Parliament – Mr Brok and others, and I personally have also had several discussions with Mr Buzek in order to try to keep Parliament informed – is the general framework and the tasks of the External Action Service. That now has to be discussed politically, and it will be the task of the High Representative to then develop the details. That will be done in close cooperation and in dialogue with the European Parliament. I am quite convinced of that.

Of course, there are still issues to be resolved. What is important is that the High Representative has the instruments to execute his or her tasks in the most efficient way. That means that he or she has to be responsible for the EAS administrative budget, but also for the appointing authorities. Obviously, any legal solution that we choose – and there are discussions still to be held here – must respect all the budgetary rules in place, thereby ensuring appropriate accountability.

The Council might not agree with all the details in the Brok report, but I think it is a very valuable contribution to this discussion. I hope it will get broad support in this Parliament. I would like to thank Mr Brok for the work he has done and for the debate here in the Parliament.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, again I want to say we are not deciding whether the External Action Service will be there or not: it is already there with the Lisbon Treaty. As my colleague just said, and I too am confident, the Lisbon Treaty will be in force fairly soon.

I shall now comment on a few things that have come up in the discussion, and I think it is worthwhile taking them up. First of all, we, as the Commission, are committed to making the EEAS a success. It needs to be a

shared enterprise with full buy-in of all the EU institutions and the Member States from the very start. From my own experience as Commissioner for External Relations, I think a lot of things will be done in different ways in future. I can see the need for the High Representative Vice-President to have a degree of managerial and budgetary autonomy.

At the same time, it is clear that the EEAS will need very close links with a wide range of Commission services and therefore, it is important that we work together. I support Parliament's objectives of ensuring transparent and accountable budgetary arrangements for the EEAS. That is also clear so I think that we are looking forward to working towards the right formula on that.

Second, under the Treaty, the political accountability for the European Parliament is primarily through the President of the Commission and the High Representative Vice-President and other Members of the Commission. We welcome the clear signal in Mr Brok's report that the High Representative Vice-President should be the appointing authority for the EEAS and the senior delegation staff.

In the new system, heads of delegation and other senior EEAS staff will be EU officials under the Staff Regulations, subject to defined appointment procedures and obligations of independence. We would have questions about the implications of singling out one group for EP hearings in this way. Even if it were a question of hearings only for a more political post, the same consideration would apply. I think this is certainly not in line with the practice in Member States.

Again, we understand, however, that Parliament has an interest in having an in-depth exchange, be it formal or be it informal, with key senior officials in the EEAS and the delegations. I think this could be done after somebody has been appointed; then they should go to Parliament and discuss things with Parliament.

I have also noted with great interest and pleasure that the question of human rights and the question of women's rights have been mentioned. I can only tell you that all the EU institutions are committed to gender mainstreaming. This will also apply in the EEAS, but appointments also have to be on merit, so merit and gender mainstreaming have to go together.

I wanted to quickly comment on the Israeli Government and my trip to the Middle East. After the Gaza conflict, it was very important to obtain a ceasefire. I tried to contribute to the first ceasefire and I think it was my intervention in particular that made it possible to open humanitarian corridors and set times to deliver humanitarian goods at that very difficult and decisive moment.

Finally, on the matter of delegations, as I said before: they are open already. The European parliamentary delegations that you mentioned are already open for Commissioners or for Council members to go there, but it also depends on the time schedule. The situation should be the same in the future.

Elmar Brok, *rapporteur*. – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Malmström, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the attacks that have been made here on a common European foreign and security policy belong in the past. In opinion polls, 70% of the citizens of Europe say that they want a stronger common foreign and security policy, because they know that this is the only way of keeping the peace in Europe and of looking after the interests of Europe throughout the world. The statements that you have made belong to the past. These are the sort of statements that have led Europe into war and we want to put an end to them.

We would also like to state that we want this foreign policy to strengthen Europe's ability to act. I would also like to say explicitly that foreign policy is not the job of parliaments. Operational foreign policy must be the responsibility of the executive. This is the case in all national states. However, this means that parliaments – and in this case the European Parliament – must have full rights of control. It must be made clear how this applies to the budget, in which areas there is a right to information and where there is genuine accountability.

I would like to invite the Council and the Commission to include in their documents less information about organigrams and about the members of the national delegations who will be appointed to specific posts. Instead, they must describe the rights of the Parliament in these COREPER documents and not simply say that the rights of Parliament must be maintained full stop. I believe that some action must be taken here. In addition, I am of the opinion that the High Representative or Vice-President, who has yet to be appointed, must be involved in drawing up the proposals and must not be presented with a *fait accompli*. This must also be taken into account. Mrs Malmström, it would generate a lot of confidence if you would refer to the High Representative in future as the High Representative or Vice-President of the Commission. Then we would all be talking about the same subject and this would be helpful in establishing that we really are speaking about the same thing.

(Applause)

President. – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 22 October 2009.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Gabriele Albertini (PPE), in writing. – (IT) The text on which we are preparing to vote tomorrow is an excellent foundation for the negotiations ahead of us.

I am grateful to Mr Brok and to Mrs Neyts-Uyttebroeck for the excellent work they have done in spite of the little time available. On the basis of this work, the committee that I have the honour of chairing will be able to conduct a constructive but firm dialogue with the future High Representative and to defend the Community character of the new External Action Service. The message that we want to send out to the Commission and the Council is basically this: we want a service that has extensive powers and which fulfils our ambitions of making the European Union a global political player, and we want this to happen on a consensual basis, that is to say, with the involvement and the support of all three institutions – Parliament, the Commission and the Council.

I therefore urge the Commission to be courageous in the negotiations and to defend the Community model, and I invite the Council once again to involve this Parliament and, in particular, the committee that I chair, in the negotiations from the outset, in order to complete this crucial stage in the creation of a true European foreign policy.

Cristian Silviu Buşoi (ALDE), in writing. – (RO) The creation of the European External Action Service is an absolute must in order to improve the effectiveness of the EU's external action. The purpose of this is to promote a much more consistent foreign policy and raise the EU's profile at an international level. However, achieving these objectives depends on how we organise this service.

The report contains a number of particularly important proposals. We need an organisation which is as streamlined as possible and avoids any duplication. This is why I support the merger of Commission delegations in third countries, of the Council's liaison offices and the offices of the EU Special Representatives, as well as the creation of 'EU embassies'. From an efficiency perspective, I also find it an interesting proposal that these delegations will adopt certain consular functions, such as dealing with Schengen visas.

I wish to stress the need for standard training for staff so that we can really have a professional service which meets the EU's needs. Setting up a European diplomatic college seems an ideal solution to me for providing diplomatic staff with training based on common standards in order to guarantee consistency for the EEAS. Indeed, in the future, a European diplomatic career could become just as attractive as a diplomatic career for a Member State.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This is yet another of those regrettable documents by the European Parliament which seeks to influence, in the negative sense of the word, the whole way the European Union operates, by exploiting the legal personality conferred upon it by the Treaty of Lisbon, although this has not yet entered into force, as we are still waiting for the Czech Republic to ratify the Treaty.

This report is symptomatic of the militaristic nature of the European Union. The aim of the report is to ensure that foreign policy serves the interests of military expansion by the major powers within the European Union, by taking advantage of what they inserted into the Treaty of Lisbon in order to bolster their decision-making powers, even though there are Member States that hold different views.

One example is the following statement in the report:

'the military and civilian crisis management units must be placed under the High Representative's authority, while the command and organisational structure may have to differ from that for civilian personnel; the sharing of the intelligence analysis of players within the EEAS is of vital importance in order to assist the High Representative in fulfilling his/her mandate of conducting a coherent, consistent and efficient external Union policy.'

Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE), in writing. – (FI) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, last spring, the European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Dehaene on the effects of the Treaty of Lisbon on the EU's institutional balance. In it, Parliament requested that future nominations for top posts in the EU should also take account of the gender equality angle. Now, just a few months later, the European Parliament is adopting an even

more stringent position in favour of the implementation of equality. Parliament's position on equality is therefore clear. Vice-President of the European Commission, Margot Wallström, has been proactive in matters to do with equality. José Manuel Barroso, the Commission's re-elected President, has also promised to be sympathetic to the notion of equality when he forms the new Commission. The Member States, however, are in a crucial position here. I am convinced that we will find suitable Commission candidates in the Member States of the European Union, both men and women. Thank you.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) The Treaty of Lisbon promised to bring about all sorts of changes. The EU was to become more responsive and more democratic, the European Parliament would have more powers of codecision and the citizens would have their EU referendum. However, Member States are, in fact, being put under pressure by the threat of commissioners being removed. Now is the time for the EU to show its goodwill and finally to ask the people about the accession of Turkey. However, referendums seem only to be held in order to be ignored. It is also difficult to work out how the EU is to become more responsive if the responsibilities of the newly created posts are only outlined in the treaty. Conflicts are as inevitable in this area as they are in the new External Action Service whose rights of access have not yet been clarified. Our extraordinary budget is already becoming increasingly costly and covers an increasingly dense network of EU agencies which inevitably involve duplication of effort and overlapping authority. Therefore, it is important to maintain the balance so that the new system, on the one hand, does not result in any duplication, but allows synergies to be exploited, and so that, on the other hand, parliamentary control cannot be circumvented, the Member States cannot be blocked and national authority remains unchanged. Along with all of this, the new body must have the necessary authority to complete its tasks and to work efficiently with Europe's strategic partners.

Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) Ladies and gentlemen, the establishment of the European External Action Service is an exceptional project and particularly worthy of support. It is intended to assist the EU High Representative but, at the same time, we must remember to ensure a proper level of qualification, as well as its institutional and national representative character. Recruitment of people to the service should be done taking special care to maintain principles of transparency and equality. It is also worth noting the fact that the European External Action Service will extend the possibility of receiving diplomatic assistance, because every EU citizen will be able to apply for this. This is a *de facto* extension of the present possibility of applying for assistance to the foreign service of another Member State, if the Member State of origin does not have a diplomatic or consular office in a particular country. The European External Action Service should also represent added value because of the synergy of its three basic components – services which have their origins in the present European Commission, the Council and the Member States. In my opinion, the EEAS should recruit candidates from all three sources. This will ensure its professionalism, effectiveness and unique character. Effectiveness will also be achieved through the large number of European Union representations which will arise from the transformation of today's Commission representations. With reference to Mr Grzyb's speech, I agree with him that the creation of a European diplomatic college could be obviated by making use of national and regional centres which are already renowned across Europe for the professional training they provide for future diplomats.

9. Preparation of the TEC meeting and the EU/USA Summit (2 and 3 November 2009) - Transatlantic judicial and police cooperation (debate)

President. – The next item is the joint debate on the Council and Commission statements on:

1. Preparation of the TEC meeting and the EU/USA Summit (2 and 3 November 2009) and
2. Transatlantic judicial and police cooperation.

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) Mr President, honourable Members, as you know, our relations with the US and the transatlantic cooperation between the US and the EU are extremely important. It is a cornerstone of EU foreign policy, founded on the values of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights and international law, which is something that unites us. The new administration in the United States has shown great interest in deepening and extending links with us in Europe. We will have the first Transatlantic Economic Council with President Obama's administration on 26-27 October. Shortly after that, on 3 November, there will be a summit between the EU and the US. These are two important opportunities to strengthen our relations. Today's debate is therefore very important.

I would like to highlight a number of areas on which we are cooperating and in connection with which we hope to be able to achieve results and closer relations during the summit.

On the issue of the climate, we welcome the higher ambitions on the US's part. We must work together with the American administration to achieve a comprehensive, globally binding agreement in Copenhagen. We call on the US to set targets that are comparable to those set by the EU. The United States and the EU must be prepared, together, to support climate measures such as emissions reduction, adaptation, financing and other support for developing countries.

Another important issue is, of course, the financial and economic crisis. Very close cooperation will be needed in order to follow up the agreements that we reached at the G20 summit and to restore confidence in the financial markets. Together, we will work to conclude the Doha round with a positive result in 2010, because this is extremely important in the efforts to promote recovery and combat protectionism.

We will, of course, also discuss a number of regional issues, for example, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, the Middle East, Russia and the Western Balkans. We have regular and ever closer cooperation in connection with crisis management, which found expression, for example, in the US's participation in a civil CSDP task, the Eulex mission in Kosovo.

We are also cooperating on energy issues, which is something that needs to be strengthened now, and we hope to be able to establish a special energy council between the EU and the US at ministerial level.

There is interest on both sides in deepening cooperation on domestic and legal matters. I will come back to this in a moment, as I understand that the debates have been combined.

With regard to non-proliferation and disarmament, cooperation between the EU and the American administration has gained new momentum, and Barack Obama is giving priority to this issue. We hope that this can be reflected in a new joint declaration on non-proliferation and disarmament in connection with the summit in November.

Both sides of the Atlantic are interested in strengthening our cooperation with regard to development. The EU and the US are, of course, responsible for the vast majority of all the world's development aid. The forthcoming summit is therefore an excellent opportunity to discuss this and any other relevant issues at the highest level. The Swedish Presidency is very pleased to have the opportunity to represent the EU.

I would like to say a few words about the economic partnership and the Transatlantic Economic Council, the TEC. This will provide us with a mechanism at the highest possible level to speed up current negotiations and establish new areas for regulatory cooperation. We need to draw up a work programme for the TEC that can be established next year. That will give us a forum for cooperation, where we can deal with issues relating to globalisation and rapid technical changes. Up to now, it has been an important forum but it could, of course, be better, not least when it comes to the broader strategic issues relating to the transatlantic economy and common economic challenges. The Transatlantic Economic Council is even more important today in light of the financial crisis.

Allow me now to say a few words about legal and police cooperation. For a while now, we have had cooperation with the United States in this area, which is reflected in a number of agreements on extradition and mutual legal assistance which will enter into force in a few months. We often discuss this with the European Parliament, which I know is an active and committed partner on these matters – often a critical partner, too, which is a good thing. In this regard, I only need remind you of the debate on passenger name records, for example. Once the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force, the European Parliament's influence on, and involvement in, these matters will increase.

We are currently working on what is referred to as the Washington Statement, which will describe the situation with regard to legal and domestic policy issues and the cooperation in this area between the EU and the US. This statement must be meaningful and it must be followed by concrete measures. What we need is not more elegant words, but rather cooperation that is tangible and active.

Naturally, we need to establish our common values, namely democracy and the rule of law, along with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We are, of course, interested in cooperating in all areas that constitute a threat to these common values.

We are seeking early consultation between the two parties when political incidents occur that may affect the other party. We are emphasising our common ambitions to be active in international forums to achieve full implementation of multilateral obligations.

We are cooperating with regard to increasing the security of travel documents and the introduction of biometric passports as an international standard. An important example is the agreement on airline passenger data. Together, we will ensure that the agreement works, but at the same time, the privacy of individuals must be protected and the systems of the different countries must be respected.

The list of areas of cooperation is a long one. Let me name just a few: people trafficking, the sexual exploitation of children, the drugs trade, economic crime, IT crime, corruption, the confiscation of aids to, and the profits from, crime and the fight against terrorism. This all requires joint and, to a certain degree, coordinated efforts.

We have been working to improve legal cooperation with regard to detecting, investigating and prosecuting cross-border criminals and terrorists. We look forward to the agreement between the EU and the US on extradition and mutual legal assistance entering into force at the beginning of next year.

The agreement has now been transposed in all 27 EU Member States and a joint working group has been set up between the EU and the US to ensure that the agreement is implemented. Seminars are being planned to bring the players involved closer together and to help them monitor the implementation.

Finally, I would like to mention three more points. The first concerns the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is extremely important. The fight against cross-border crime and terrorism often requires the exchange of personal data which, to some degree, forces us to make certain concessions with regard to fundamental freedoms and rights. This must be counterbalanced by the fundamental and rigorous protection of personal data. The cooperation and dialogue in this area is continuing and should be stepped up.

My second point relates to critical infrastructure. We need to cooperate with one another in connection with the damage that could be done to critical infrastructure in the event of a natural disaster or a terrorist attack or attacks on our information systems. That could have devastating consequences. There is huge scope for cooperation in this area.

Thirdly, the EU and the US have undertaken to work on the basis of the principles of freedom, democracy and justice. We are determined to promote these principles throughout the world. We do this whenever we work together and when we work in international forums such as the United Nations.

The cooperation between liaison officers and delegations has proved fruitful, for example, in the Western Balkans and in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This cooperation must be improved. The various measures within this cooperation can complement each other. We also need to coordinate our technical assistance better. We will continue our donor cooperation, the cooperation on aid and the operational cooperation in respect of Latin America and West Africa to help in the fight against the drugs trade and to be able to meet other challenges.

I am very pleased that the American administration is showing such a strong interest in cooperating with us. It is in our interests to take up this offer of working to safeguard our values and our interests in a constructive dialogue, a cooperation which will hopefully lead to some tangible results in the future.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, in my remarks, I shall touch upon the forthcoming EU-US Summit that will be an important milestone in our transatlantic partnership, as well as addressing certain EU-US aspects, particularly on climate change negotiations under way and also some critical GLS issues.

The change in the US Administration in January has had a very significant impact on EU-US relations, and our partnership has got off to a good start. I would say we have re-energised our relations and I am convinced that the Lisbon Treaty, once in force, will also contribute towards the further strengthening of this vital relationship by providing the European Union with an even stronger foreign policy identity. That is also what our friends in Washington expect.

But let us be also clear. Our aspiration for a true partnership of equals with the United States also means that Europeans must be willing and able to deliver. I would say that it is a dual momentum, internal and external, that makes the summit in Washington so important.

The first formal summit with President Obama took place after our informal meeting in Prague this spring. Now the preparations for the Washington Summit are in full swing. We are working with the US side on delivering tangible results in priority areas. The global economy and climate change are likely to be the two major areas of focus of the summit discussion, in addition to a number of key foreign policy challenges.

On the economy, the focus in Washington will be on joint efforts to combat the economic and financial crisis and securing a sustainable global economic recovery to secure jobs and create growth. We will move further on governance issues for the global economy, notably on financial regulation and a timely follow-up to the G20 Pittsburgh Summit. The Commission will also emphasise our joint interest in countering protectionist tendencies and we will call on the US to renew efforts to bring the Doha Round to a successful end.

Secondly, on climate change, we as the European Union will encourage the US to go to the Copenhagen conference with ambitious objectives to reach a sound global agreement, and we will also engage with the US to make progress on establishing a cap-and-trade system across the Atlantic.

Thirdly, on foreign policy, we will, of course, also discuss with the US how to meet urgent foreign policy challenges. Here we will focus on how to cooperate further and more closely on the Middle East peace process, on the challenges posed by the nuclear ambitions of Iran, and on ways in which we can assure the renewal of the compact in Afghanistan, which is at the basis of our concerted efforts there. I will have a separate foreign policy meeting with Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Bildt to discuss these matters in greater detail.

Furthermore, I expect the summit also to adopt a declaration on non-proliferation and disarmament, taking forward EU-US cooperation in many of the areas identified by President Obama in his speeches in Prague and New York. This initiative, which carries strategic importance in itself, is indicative of the renewed US commitment towards effective multilateralism, which the European Union has every intention of supporting and consolidating.

Last but not least, a further major summit outcome will be the creation of a new EU-US Energy Council which will have its first meeting on 4 November. On the EU side, the Council will be chaired by myself, my colleagues, Commissioners Piebalgs and Potočník, and the Presidency, and on the US side by Secretary Clinton and Secretary Chu. The Council will look at global energy security, energy markets and product regulation, at new technologies and research. In short, it will provide added value in a policy field, the importance of which is obvious.

Now there is also a new Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC). That will be complementary to the Energy Council, which we will re-energise as well. The TEC meets in Washington next Tuesday – so before the Energy Council – and its outcome will obviously feed into the summit talks as well.

A promising area in our transatlantic cooperation is what we call upstream cooperation. We will discuss policy approaches early on, so that we will avoid divergent regulation down the road. It goes without saying that we need such cooperation more than ever. The needed coherent response to the financial crisis is the best example for it. We will also explore whether we can intensify this forum of cooperation for nanomaterial health care-related information.

Upon a US initiative, we also intend to launch closer cooperation in the area of innovation. Both sides recognise that enhancing the innovative potential of our industries and our workforces is essential for the creation of jobs and growth and therefore for a successful emergence of the coming crisis. And the Commission, of course, will also repeat our European concerns on some critical issues such as securing trade, potential distortions of competition from State aid and procurement policy in the US.

Finally, we as the Commission have also, from the very beginning, strongly relied on the European Parliament's support for the TEC process, and we are grateful for this. So rest assured that we will very much support the initiatives by the European Parliament's delegations for relations with the USA to strengthen parliamentary involvement in TEC matters on both sides of the Atlantic.

We would like to consolidate the TEC's role as a bilateral forum to address both day-to-day and strategic issues regarding transatlantic trade and investment. And importantly, the TEC will have reached out to the transatlantic legislators' dialogue and civil society stakeholders, too, so clearly we need the expertise and political thrust of legislators to tap the full potential of the transatlantic market place.

My colleague has already mentioned that GLS will also be very important. There will be a Troika meeting on GLS affairs on 27 and 28 October in Washington, in the framework of our cooperation on justice, freedom and security. Vice-President Barrot will represent the Commission. We are in the final stages of preparing a statement that will aim to renew our transatlantic partnership in these areas. In the Washington meeting, there will be the opportunity formally to exchange the instruments of ratification of the extradition and mutual legal assistance agreements so that they can enter into force in early 2010. These agreements will strengthen our efforts in fighting crime in today's globalised world.

On another critical matter close to the hearts of the citizens, we certainly need to make further progress, as was mentioned. We will reiterate the call for visa-free travel to the US for all EU citizens; we will express our concern over the prospect of a fee for the electronic system for travel authorisation as the de facto new tourist tax; and we will once again remind the US of the need to lift the restrictions on travellers with HIV/AIDS under the US visa waiver programme, as you have mentioned.

Finally, a delegation from the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs will be travelling to Washington around the time of the ministerial meeting, so we trust they will also be able to convey the same messages. Vice-President Barrot is also ready to meet the Committee on Civil Liberties delegation while in Washington.

IN THE CHAIR: MRS WALLIS

Vice-President

Elmar Brok, *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, Mrs Malmström, I have just noticed that gender mainstreaming has become a feature of this House. We must be aware that the issue of the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) is a very important one and that the body which was established a few years ago needs a new driving force, because we are in a transition period with a new administration in the US and soon a new Commission. I hope that the meeting next Tuesday will ensure that the TEC continues and that it has the appropriate spirit.

A transatlantic market with no trade barriers would result in economic growth of 3.5% in the US and Europe and 1.5% worldwide. In the context of this economic crisis, this issue is very closely linked with jobs. For this reason, we should make the most of this opportunity and explain in public statements that we are taking this initiative seriously. Mrs Ferrero-Waldner, we should also make sure that security policy in the field of energy is handled by the new energy security council and that the regulatory issues are dealt with in the TEC. It is important that these two areas are not mixed together in order to prevent duplication and to ensure that we have a solution at the end of the day.

This involves, in particular, the question of the legislators. It will not be possible to remove barriers without the participation of the European Parliament and the US Congress, because 80% of the regulations are enshrined in law. For this reason, the administration cannot achieve this on its own.

There is one final comment I would like to make about the summit. Climate change, Afghanistan, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and disarmament are all important issues which offer new opportunities as a result of the new administration. I would like to wish you success in ensuring that all of this is included and I hope that the new Nobel prize winner, in cooperation with the European Union, will achieve major success for all of us in these areas.

Hannes Swoboda, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (DE) Madam President, Mrs Malmström, Commissioner, the fact that Mr Obama and the new majority in Congress are presenting us with a significant opportunity to intensify our cooperation, in particular, with regard to the common transatlantic market, has already been mentioned. However, this should not be a common market for deregulation, but a common market based on the foundations or on the principles of a social market economy, with sensible and appropriate regulations where these are required.

Mr Brok is absolutely right that this must, of course, have a legislative basis, regardless of whether we are discussing the regulation of the financial markets or environmental and energy policy regulations. Taking a joint approach in this area would make a major contribution towards shaping global relationships.

One area which has already been touched on and which we could discuss this morning is the central issue of climate policy. Many of us will be in Washington in the next few days, where we will have the opportunity to hold discussions with our colleagues from Congress. Although the legislation concerning climate policy has not yet been passed, the representatives of the US Government are at least partly authorised to make

binding undertakings, even if the details cannot be finalised until after the US legislative process has been completed.

It is essential that Copenhagen is a success. It is not the end of a process, but it is an important step in the process of achieving a common climate policy. We must all ensure that Copenhagen is a success. It can only be successful if we have binding climate policy objectives.

Finally – and this has also already been mentioned – regardless of our friendship and mutual affection and regardless of our good relationship, there are certain things that we cannot accept. These include the repeated protectionist measures, for example, in the market for defence equipment, the discriminatory visa policy aimed at some Member States and the visa charges demanded by the US which have already been referred to. It is important that we talk to the US from a position of equality. It is important to establish a partnership, but also to explain what we cannot accept, which in this case, is a policy that discriminates against Europeans.

Sarah Ludford, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, on behalf of the ALDE Group, I strongly welcome the fact that this resolution calls for a strengthened strategic partnership between the EU and the US as a cornerstone of EU external policy. It also rightly reiterates the role of an integrated transatlantic market by 2015. We must not let the trees of myriad disagreements on specific issues obscure the wood of an overwhelming interest in common values and objectives, and action on promotion of democracy and human rights, resolution of conflicts and protection against security threats among others.

On the economic side, the ALDE Group has emphasised the need to avoid regulatory arbitrage in the financial sector and to address issues such as ‘too big to fail’ institutions. We have put in an amendment to paragraph 39 since, as far as I can see, there simply was no G2 leaders’ agreement to work on a financial transaction or Tobin tax, so it is absurd to welcome such an agreement, even if we have already done so, erroneously, in the G20 resolution.

The ALDE Group also calls for deletion of paragraph 38, which appears to seek the abolition of intellectual property rights. But, as Mrs Malmström has explained, a large part of the transatlantic relationship relates to justice and security matters. The ALDE Group fully supports close cooperation in this area but it must respect fundamental rights, including privacy, and be progressed within a democratic and transparent framework. In that respect, it is a pity that MEPs have not been consulted on the joint statement to be agreed next week – especially as, with the Lisbon Treaty, almost all of these matters come within codecision.

It is puzzling why the Commission and Council are promoting a new agreement on access to SWIFT financial data on EU citizens when the Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement allows for specific requests. I would like an answer on that.

Finally, it is a pity that the new context of justice and extradition cooperation nonetheless permits the completely unjustified extradition from the UK of Gary McKinnon, a computer hacker who has Asperger’s syndrome, rather than his being prosecuted in the UK.

Very finally, I fully support what Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said about visa-free travel for all EU citizens and we are very critical of a ‘visa lite’ fee for the ESTA.

Pascal Canfin, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (FR) Madam President, in her speech, Mrs Malmström said that action was needed, not just fine words. I can tell you that the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance will follow the results of this summit between the United States and the European Union very closely, since it comes at a key moment in the path leading us, on the one hand, to Copenhagen and, on the other, to the reform of the international financial system.

On this last point, the casino has now reopened, banks’ profits are once again reaching historic levels – USD 437 billion in profits for the US banks – and our view is that there is less political will than there was six months ago. We therefore have enormous expectations of this summit, which is intended to show that, in both the US and Europe, the political will to regulate capitalism and to regulate the financial institutions is still present.

In order to achieve this, we would like to suggest that progress be made on two very important points. The first is combating tax havens, and this is something that was not mentioned in your speeches. The US Treasury admits that tax havens result in a yearly tax revenue loss of USD 100 billion. We therefore wanted to emphasise this point and to tell you that it is important for the United States and Europe to work jointly on this issue at the summit.

The second point, which has just been mentioned, is the tax on financial transactions. When Mr Barroso was a candidate for re-election to the presidency, he expressly said that he was in favour of such a tax. A fortnight ago, the European Parliament for the first time voted, by a majority, for a tax on financial transactions, provided that they formed part of an international framework. The Group of the Greens therefore calls upon you to put this subject on the agenda for the United States/European Union Summit in early November.

My last point is that on climate, we have a responsibility to remove a thorn from Mr Obama's foot. President Obama wants to act, but he is blocked by his majority. The best thing that the European Union could do for him is to make an undertaking, at the end of October, to provide EUR 30 billion of funding for climate adaptation expenditure in the global South and to commit to a 30% reduction in its own emissions. Once this is done, we will be able to make progress in negotiations. This is our responsibility. We must do it before the summit.

Tomasz Piotr Poręba, *on behalf of the ECR Group.* – (PL) Madam President, deepening relations between the United States and the European Union should be the foundation of EU external policy. After all, the United States has been our closest ally for years. Currently, many challenges are before us, which we must face up to together, shoulder to shoulder with Washington. In the area of security, we are troubled by the attitude of Iran and the worsening situation in Afghanistan. A little closer to our borders, Russia is becoming an increasingly unpredictable and authoritarian neighbour, and the Kremlin is exerting neoimperialistic pressure on the countries which lie just across its borders.

In order to defend and remain faithful to the values which are common to America and Europe, we must always speak with one voice when we have to deal with cases of violations of human rights and threats to citizens' fundamental freedoms. We must be united in defence of our security. We must not forget that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is the foundation of our transatlantic relations. This is why the area of security, freedom and democracy should be extended to include those European countries which increase Euroatlantic security. It is essential for active strengthening of ties with the United States to be a priority for the European Union.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (FR) Madam President, Commissioner, Mrs Malmström, in the current economic crisis the newly-elected Parliament is entitled to up-to-date information which is as precise as possible regarding the structure of the plan for a large transatlantic market and regarding the deregulation objectives that this involves in the economic and financial spheres, in contrast to the dream set out by some of our fellow Members.

Is this large deregulated market to be implemented by 2010 or 2015? Has it been confirmed? Personally, I think it would be very detrimental for Europe, given the miserable state of the fundamental elements of the US economy and the refusal by the US to set its financial house in order, in addition to reasons of principle that lead me to oppose the idea that this partnership should be, as many of you have said, the cornerstone of the European Union's policy.

This consideration also leads me to ask what measures will be taken to combat the collapse of the dollar and the risk that it poses to Europe and the rest of the world. Why has the proposal for a common world currency, put forward by China for the benefit of the stability of the world economy, been rejected without serious examination?

I want to warn against an outmoded enthusiasm for Atlantic cooperation, which ends up being a very archaic conformism, at this point in the world's history where we need, more than ever, to affirm an existence that is independent of the wishes of the United States of America.

Krisztina Morvai (NI). – Madam President, regarding the joint fight against terrorism, as a criminal and human rights lawyer, let me make a suggestion. I think it would be very important and useful to put together a joint working group of experts, academics, practising lawyers and so on, drawing conclusions from the often very painful experiences of the post 9/11 era, where human rights have been suspended in the name of the fight against terrorism.

I come from a country where, in the last three years, the government has been suspending human rights and sending people to prison completely without any foundation. In this day and age, they do it in the name of the fight against terrorism. We have 16 very probably political prisoners in prison, charged with terrorism, without any evidence whatsoever. Suspended human rights, habeas corpus, right of defence, prisoners' rights: I know what I am talking about. We have to be very careful when we talk about the fight against terrorism and we have to do it in a very professional and very careful way.

Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE). – (ES) Madam President, the relationship with the United States is, strategically speaking, the European Union's most important relationship.

The United States holds a key position in the world and the European Union is increasingly becoming a global actor. We can, and should, undertake many things together. First of all, we should take a leading role in creating a new, global world, featuring new challenges and the emergence of new actors.

We need to further strengthen our relationship and create new institutional mechanisms. This is the right time to undertake such action. We have a government in Washington which favours multilateralism, a European Union strengthened by the Treaty of Lisbon and we are witnessing the emergence of a new world which we want to shape together.

The resolution we will adopt tomorrow specifically supports the strengthening of the institutional mechanisms, something which Parliament called for in its resolution of 26 March.

The decision to create the Transatlantic Economic Council two years ago was the right one. However, in today's world, we also need to develop excellent coordination in terms of policies and security. We need regular meetings between officials responsible for external affairs and security. That is why this House, this Parliament, supported the creation of a Transatlantic Political Council which, in the future, must include the energy council that you wish to establish at the next summit.

The Parliament also wants two summits to take place every year. If we have two summits with Russia, why not with the United States? Ladies and gentlemen, there is increasing talk of a G2 being set up by the United States and China, that is to say, a privileged relationship between the top global players. It worries me that we Europeans may weaken our role as partners and undermine our privileged relationship with the United States. We must explain to the United States that, in the field of foreign policy, the Union will be strengthened by the Treaty.

The European Union, or the Europe of today, is no longer the problem it had been for decades. Today, in this complex world, Europe should be part of the solution, and I hope that is the way the United States sees the situation. In order for this to occur, as the Commissioner pointed out, Europeans also need to act in line with the global role we want to have, and to be up to the mark, with respect to the privileged relationship to which we aspire with the United States.

To summarise, a key issue for the upcoming summit, in my opinion, should be the strengthening of transatlantic relations, including at institutional level.

Ioan Mircea Pașcu (S&D). – Madam President, the transatlantic relations that are crucial for both the EU and the US have been seriously tested in recent years. Now, with a new Administration in the White House which is redefining US priorities, and France back into the NATO military structure, the perspective is better. Personally, I consider that the time is now ripe for a substantive evaluation of transatlantic relations to give them the solid basis they deserve to withstand the current common challenges posed by the international environment – energy, climate change, emerging new powers, the financial and economic crisis, and terrorism.

This time we should go beyond superficial policy differences and evaluate our deeper common interests which, until now, have simply been taken for granted. The truth is that, without such a profound joint evaluation, we in the West could lose the initiative to other centres of power, who will not hesitate to shape the world according to their interests – not ours.

Security in Europe, for instance, is one such common interest and therefore stands at the heart of transatlantic relations. Even if, for now, war on the continent is not a serious proposition, the culmination of some current negative trends could bring back that possibility if we fail to respond properly. Progress is not irreversible, as we all know so well in central Europe. That is why, before considering a proposal to re-evaluate the current security architecture of the continent, we should try to have definite answers as to the continuation of US involvement, the future of NATO and the role expected of the EU after the Lisbon Treaty comes into force.

If Europe wants to realise its ambition to be a true player in world politics, it should eliminate such differences between its members, thus trying to motivate them equally around true common economic interests.

Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE). – (DE) Madam President, Minister, Commissioner, the fourth meeting of the Transatlantic Economic Council represents the ideal opportunity for this forum to turn over a new page. The TEC must be more ambitious. Both parties to the transatlantic dialogue agree that overcoming the

economic crisis and combating climate change are our overriding priorities. Now it is a question of agreeing on a specific agenda for the TEC which reflects these priorities.

Collaborating on innovations for the development of low-carbon economies and energy efficient societies is particularly important. In addition, it is also important to involve various stakeholders more closely, such as the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue, a forum consisting of 80 consumer organisations. These organisations could help to make consumer protection a central theme in the dialogue about regulation of the financial markets. The objective of establishing a common transatlantic market by 2015 may be too ambitious, but it must be judged on the basis of the fact that it will improve the lives of people on both sides of the Atlantic. This is why the Greens are in favour of a transatlantic new deal.

James Elles (ECR). – Madam President, I agree with those speakers who said we have a real opportunity in front of us with a new US Administration in place.

Three quick points. Firstly, we seem to have evolved into a situation where we have a huge number of subjects which are discussed between the EU and the US, but no strategic dialogue, and yet they tell me in Washington that the US and China have a much greater strategic dialogue than between us across the Atlantic. Is it not time at this summit to say that we want a strategic dialogue for a strategic partnership?

Secondly, regarding the point on protectionism on the TEC, it is quite clear that the biggest danger in the next 12 months is closing markets rather than opening ones, and yet we have the transatlantic market which is, as Mr Brok said, the biggest opportunity we have for generating growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

Is it not time to make the transatlantic market a major part of trade development, rather than putting it to one side as a regulatory issue? It is actually a major opener.

Lastly, it is disappointing that we have no study and no road map as promised by Mr Verheugen. The study was paid for by Parliament. If you want Parliament to cooperate on saying how we now need to see how to open markets, please release this report, as the resolution says, by 15 November.

Daniel Caspary (PPE). – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, if you believe that the European Union needs partners, as all the previous speakers have said, then this becomes particularly clear in the area of the economy. The transatlantic market has a trade volume of around EUR 2 billion per day. This makes it obvious how important the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is. It also becomes clear that free trade agreements are important and, above all, that we must focus more closely on the transatlantic partnership.

I am sometimes concerned about what is happening on the other side of the Atlantic when I look at the new President. He will find the time to accept the Nobel prize in Oslo, but it was difficult for many European Heads of State or Government to get appointments to meet with him on the fringes of the G20 Summit. He had time in Copenhagen to support his home city's Olympic bid, but unfortunately he did not have time to join us in an important European celebration, in other words, the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the iron curtain. I would be pleased if we succeeded in convincing him that he should not wait until a few days beforehand to decide whether the TEC meeting should take place, but instead that he should support the TEC with complete conviction over the next few years.

We need trade between Europe and the US to be made easier. We need improvements in the area of joint standardisation. We need the removal of duties and non-tariff trade barriers. We must prevent more protectionist measures from being taken by both sides. We must guarantee that products are safe for our consumers. We must prevent anti-terrorism measures from obstructing all these activities as is currently under discussion. For these reasons, I would be happy if we could make real progress in our cooperation. Many of the issues which concern us in other areas of the world, such as wage, social and environmental dumping, are not problems in the transatlantic relationship.

I believe that we should take the opportunity, on the one hand, to work together with the Americans to solve our common problems and, on the other, to attempt to play a joint role throughout the world in making progress within the WTO or other international organisations, such as the International Labour Organisation. I am hoping for good results in this respect next week.

Véronique De Keyser (S&D). – (FR) Madam President, the election of President Obama has rightly been welcomed as a victory for US democracy. However, the recent Nobel Peace Prize that has just been awarded to him places him under pressure. Peace in the Middle East? It is something we hope for, but he is certainly not the master card. Peace in Afghanistan? There, US strategy has freedom of manoeuvre, but if President Obama listens to his hawks, he risks another Vietnam. It is a telling sign that the book by Gordon Goldstein

describing the dramatic spiral towards failure in the war in Vietnam has been flying off the shelves in Washington, and there are no copies left in the shops.

The President must now choose between two strategies: one focuses on stabilisation, the eradication of poverty and the economic development of Afghanistan, by providing a military as well as a civilian presence throughout the country. The second aims to concentrate on a few urban areas and from there to launch large-scale operations against Al-Qaida. Both options require the despatch of troops, but the first is oriented towards the people, and the second towards the war with, in the background, the risk of a catastrophe.

Should Europe not save Barack Obama from the old demons haunting the United States, and help him to choose the first of these strategies, focused on the people? That, at least, is the view of my group.

Charles Tannock (ECR). – Madam President, the ECR Group is strongly Atlanticist and seeks ever closer economic, trade and political ties with America, which we consider to be the EU's foremost ally and not competitor. We also remain in debt to the USA for its contribution to NATO, which is based on our shared democratic values, and we welcome America's belated commitment to fighting climate change.

However, we should not pretend to agree on everything. I am concerned for instance about the conflicting messages coming out of the US Administration regarding Russia. Washington's emphasis on resetting US-Russia relations appears to excuse the Kremlin's blatant interference in its neighbours' affairs, notably in Georgia and in Ukraine.

The scrapping of the US missile defence shield, due to be deployed in Poland and the Czech Republic, was also questionable.

The recent discovery of a secret nuclear facility in Iran could well confirm this judgment, but we must now all redouble our efforts to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions and, as allies of the US, we strongly support their military struggle against Jihadi terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan and their strong efforts to bring lasting peace to the Middle East.

Diogo Feio (PPE). – (PT) Madam President, I would like to begin by pointing out the importance of relations between the United States and the European Union, particularly during a time of global economic crisis. There is an increasing need for us to take joint action in tackling the crisis, in the energy market and in the fight against terrorism, but we also need action that is more focused and does not degenerate into more taxation or the kind of absurd attacks currently targeted at a financial system that is necessary for the market.

Focusing on the financial issue, I would like to highlight the efforts that are being made by both the United States and the European Union towards a policy of better lawmaking, with emphasis on the involvement of stakeholders in the debate on the report. Coordinated action between the United States and the European Union is essential if we are to achieve a more mature state of economic relations, and, indeed, one that will lead to a transatlantic market, perhaps by 2015.

We need to defend Atlanticism here, too. It is just as vital to reduce the administrative barriers between the United States and the European Union, so as to create a competitive environment and a market that is more appealing to individual citizens and businesses alike. I believe that the transatlantic market can be built on a stable negotiating basis, which will stimulate economies and stop the threat of new economic and social crises like the one we are experiencing at present.

To conclude, Madam President, I wish it to be quite clear that these are unique conditions, and that a more Atlanticist approach can bring about a better situation.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – (ES) Madam President, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner referred to the importance of ensuring that the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs attends the transatlantic EU-US Summit, and I welcome the emphasis she has placed on the matter.

Furthermore, as Chairman of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, I would like to draw your attention, first of all, to the importance of signing the treaties on extradition and mutual judicial assistance. Significant efforts have been made to strengthen not only political, but also judicial, cooperation, thereby strengthening the ties between Eurojust and analogous institutions in the United States.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the contribution made to strengthening and initiating, over the next five years, the transatlantic dialogue and, thirdly, I would like to highlight the work performed by this Parliament.

That is why I would like to ask that information be provided at the next part session of the European Parliament in November concerning the outcome of this summit and, in particular, the chapter on judicial cooperation and cooperation on criminal matters.

Fourthly, it is clear that the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon will result in the formidable launch of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, as a new aspect of the European Union's remit, and a new field of European policy on which this Parliament will also decide.

That is also why, in sensitive matters such as the protection of data and fundamental rights of persons, agreements on Passenger Name Record and SWIFT data should always be consistent with the resolutions adopted by this Parliament in order to guarantee the protection of personal data and, in particular, the resolution adopted on 17 September.

Finally, with respect to visas, we must remember the importance of reciprocity, as there is currently much room for improvement in that area. It is good to cooperate with the United States on visas, but this is an excellent opportunity for us to reinforce the importance of reciprocity in order to ensure that we remain on an equal footing with the United States when signing agreements.

Harlem Désir (S&D). – (FR) Madam President, Mrs Malmström, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, cooperation between Europe and the United States is crucial in resolving most of the major crises in the world, and the new US administration certainly provides an opportunity. It has already taken some initiatives that have marked a break with the past: in Iraq, on Guantánamo, on the anti-missile shield. It would be naïve, however, to think that that will be enough to make US and European points of view identical in all situations, and that transatlantic relations will now be very simple.

Whether on preparations for Copenhagen or aid to developing countries, on Doha and protectionism, on financial regulation and combating tax havens, on the relaunch of the peace process in the Middle East or a firm policy on the nuclear issue in Iran, the US is extremely unwilling to take action. This goes beyond the issue of whether or not the administration has good intentions, and often relates to the influence of lobby groups on Congress, or simply the defence of its interests by a great power which is being shaken by the new world order.

All these spheres will only make progress if Europe plays its proper political role as a separate global player, in a partnership of equals – to use the Commissioner's expression – and fully assumes its responsibilities.

From this viewpoint, I must say that there is a certain confusion in the European attitude and sometimes even a certain naivety, and that this also extends to Parliament. The approach being taken to the idea of a large transatlantic market, which was Sir Leon Brittan's hare-brained scheme back when he was Commissioner, poses certain risks.

This affair of barriers to trade is being tackled as if the problems were only of a technical nature. Naturally, economic and commercial trade between the United States and Europe is important for jobs and for businesses. It ought to be developed. First of all, however, trade is not really in danger. Secondly, when there is a conflict, either it relates to defending our economic interests – for example, as in Airbus – or it poses a risk to our health or environmental rules – in the case of beef containing hormones, for instance, or chlorinated chicken – and we should therefore not prioritise the improvement of economic relations over our own internal model, our social model, our environmental model, or development model, as if economic relations were an end in themselves. We must be able to combine the two, and we should not surrender our political autonomy in search of a partnership that is, in itself, a commendable objective.

Peter Skinner (S&D). – Madam President, I have a couple of points. It is difficult to see how we can fit all of the resolution that we have set out on the TEC into the TEC. It is a very small operation, as we know. I will be there next Tuesday, Commissioner. I look forward to seeing you, along with Mr Brok and other parliamentarians, an issue I will come back to at the end.

We do, however, have key issues which can be raised in the TEC and can be dealt with as they are sufficiently upstream, to borrow your words, Commissioner. Financial services, for example, which are appropriate to deal with because the outcomes are very closely discussed and are near agreement – not just in G20 but ongoing discussions that we have in Parliament and with the Commission and the Americans.

In particular, accounting remains one of these aspects within the reach of policymakers and legislators. Adoption of high-quality global standards for accounting by 2011 is something which needs to be concluded quickly on the US side. On insurance, too, Solvency II has helped to set global regulation – one which needs

an answer, frankly, from the US side – and I thank Chairman Kanjorski in the US Congress for the work he has done on the Federal Office of Information.

Finally, let me just say, on the transatlantic legislators' dialogue, that Congress and Parliament need to step up their game in this area. We do not want to follow the Administration and the Commission, as most people in this House would agree. We want to be amongst the leaders for change. We need to be the impetus for this change. TEC needs our support, but the TLD needs to be at the heart of the discussion – not just on the side and not just as advisers, but very much part of the central aspect of this whole transatlantic relationship.

Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D). – (PL) Madam President, I would like to thank you for giving me the floor. I think it is very important that we are discussing transatlantic relations, because we find ourselves, in part, in a paradoxical situation. The changes which have taken place in the United States have largely been very well received in Europe. On the other hand, however, the United States is showing greater interest in other important countries and continents than it did in the past. In particular, a revival of contacts between the United States and China has been observed, as have efforts to improve relations with Russia.

Our problem is that, in my opinion, we want to bring too many matters into the discussion. I think we should concentrate on two areas. The first area concerns financial and economic matters. The second area is security. The United States and Europe could do a lot more together in both these areas.

Michael Theurer (ALDE). – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, we have drawn up a major resolution which covers a number of themes. However, one important point – trade – is only touched on briefly. I believe that international trade is a decisive factor. The fall in world trade is one of the causes of the economic and financial crisis and I would like to see a greater focus on world trade, even now in the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC).

It is not the case that the US and the European Union agree on every area. On the contrary, we have only a few trade agreements, there is a risk of bilateralism and there is the possibility that the Doha Development Round will not be continued by the US. Therefore, we should address the critical points and I hope that the TEC will introduce some new stimuli to revive international trade.

Jan Philipp Albrecht (Verts/ALE). – (DE) Madam President, I would like to look again at one aspect of transatlantic cooperation in the field of policing and justice relating to Swift, which has already been mentioned, that is, the transfer of Swift bank details to the US.

I believe that we should remember when discussing this point that the Council has given itself a mandate for negotiations with the US on the transfer of data. We should remind the Council to keep to this mandate in its negotiations with the US. I am very concerned that the European Council will be pressurised to accept the demands of the US and to circumvent European data protection standards.

I believe that this would send out the wrong signal, particularly because there will be many areas where the level of data protection will be brought into line as a result of the Treaty of Lisbon over the next year in agencies such as Europol and Eurojust, etc. I believe that we would be sending out the right signal if the Council and the Commission were to adhere to the data protection standards and uphold them in the face of the US or to insist on a postponement.

Zoltán Balczó (NI). – (HU) I read the following in a European Union White Paper in 1996: a fierce global battle is expected in the coming decades between Europe, the United States, Japan and the emerging Asian countries. Fortunately, this battle is taking place not with weapons, but mainly in the economic sector. Europe must hold its own in this. President Giscard d'Estaing, who was Chairman of the Convent, the leader of a government drafting a failed constitution, said that Europe must not be the United States' rival, but a reliable partner. This is a key issue in the EU-US Summit's success. We must strive for partnership, but if our only consideration is for the United States to regard us as a partner, and we do not get involved in conflicts on behalf of Europe's population, we cannot achieve success in important matters.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) Madam President, I would like to thank all of the honourable Members for their contributions to this debate. There is a high level of consensus on the importance of deepening our cooperation with the American administration and the summit that we are about to hold. I am very pleased that the American administration is showing such a desire to deepen and develop our relations. I think that we have done our homework and we are very well prepared to take some important steps. We have a number of problems in common with our partner, the US, and it is therefore appropriate to find common solutions.

I think that we will be able to make progress with regard to the climate, the economic crisis and the Doha round – and once again confirm how important it is to conclude this – and that we will be able to get extremely important processes off the ground in the legal sphere. The economic partnership is a particularly important forum for us. We also understand the importance of discussing important regional issues – Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Middle East, for example.

There were a few specific questions for me. As regards the question of visas raised by Mrs Ludford, both the Council and the Commission are doing everything they can to ensure that visa-free travel will apply to all EU Member States. It is regrettable that we do not have this in place yet, but we are continuing to work very hard to make it happen.

With regard to the so-called Tobin tax, I know that there are Members of this House who strongly support this. I will say this: a Tobin tax can only work if it is global and if it has global control instruments – otherwise, it will simply be another protectionist measure. There is currently no basis whatsoever for an international, global agreement on a Tobin tax and therefore the Presidency will not push this issue. I want to be clear on that.

With regard to SWIFT, we are in agreement with the US on the importance of being able to exchange information on financial transfers. This is valuable in the fight against cross-border crime and terrorism. We now need a new agreement, as the Belgian company SWIFT is moving to Europe, but we are both keen to retain the programme in order to prevent the financing of terrorism.

As a transitional phase, we need to find an agreement that can apply for a short period until we have the new Treaty of Lisbon in place. Experts have looked into this, including the French judge, Jean-Louis Bruguyère, who was asked by the EU to inspect the TFTP. Bruguyère found that the legal certainty requirements and the protection of personal data in the current agreement are adequate. In the more permanent agreement and once the Treaty of Lisbon has entered into force, there will eventually be opportunities for the European Parliament to take an active part in shaping this.

The meeting that we are to have next week is a very important one, but it is nevertheless just a meeting. I believe that we can make progress, resolve some issues and get some important processes off the ground relating to those matters that we have in common and need to resolve in a close and strategic partnership with the American administration. I am very pleased about the strong support in the European Parliament for the efforts of the Council and the Commission. I will, of course, report to you the results next time we meet in the plenary sitting in Brussels.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, I would first of all agree with James Elles about a greater strategic dialogue with a great strategic partner. This is the objective that we have.

As I said before, it is about cooperating for global recovery, so financial and economic questions will be very high on our agenda. We have been one of the driving forces behind the activation of the G20 Summit process which was raised, as you know, to leaders' level last November on the initiative of President Barroso and President Sarkozy, but we are not the only ones that are needed.

The Pittsburgh G20 Summit has also been a success in providing a platform for flexible macroeconomic coordination as we also seek exit strategies to gradually pare back our respective policies of immediate crisis response.

The IMF and the World Bank agree that this will require different approaches from each party depending on the respective economic situation. Given the current global economic situation, the leaders will naturally also discuss possible ways out of the crisis, of boosting growth and creating jobs, and the question of the regulation of financial markets will be particularly important.

We think it is necessary to ensure the rapid establishment of a globally coordinated system of 'macro-prudential' supervision based upon close cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and the Financial Stability Board.

On banking, we need to deploy the London and Pittsburgh commitments for better and more capital and stricter prudential rules consistently among financial centres. We need to intensify our work towards effective global convergence policies on crisis management and systemically important financial institutions.

We should also achieve a single set of high-quality global accounting standards on financial instruments by the end of 2010 and, hopefully, complete convergence by June 2011.

On climate change, we had a very first exchange on climate change with President Obama in Prague. I was personally present and we pressured the United States to do more on climate change, but we also know that President Obama has a very important health care issue in Congress and the Senate. I therefore think that we will have to put even more pressure on him to redouble the efforts to find committed, binding regulations for Copenhagen, in the light of his preoccupation with the domestic agenda.

With regard to the TEC, this is a very important new mechanism, or re-energised mechanism, to work on all matters regarding the free market and market barriers. We want to eliminate these, which is the ultimate objective of the TEC. This was clearly stated in the TEC framework agreement of 30 April 2007. Of course, I am aware of the different ideas that have been raised recently – such as reaching a unified transatlantic market by 2015 through the elimination of existing obstacles to economic integration: the so-called Millán Mon report. We no doubt need to work on the right balance between ambition and realism, which is why we are working on medium-term priority tasks for the TEC.

On the question of barriers, we already know that you, Parliament, want to have a study, and we welcome your support for this study. It would be important in guiding future work for the TEC. The study has not yet been finalised, but is under way, and there are still a number of technical issues to be cleared up before it is totally ready for publication. Commissioner Ashton here will deal with this, and I will certainly convey Parliament's interest.

Let me also say, because this was mentioned, that the Energy Council will not overlap with the TEC. The agendas will complement each other. It is clear that security issues will go to the Energy Council, whereas regulatory issues go to the TECH. The focus of the Energy Council is on new technologies and energy security.

A very brief word on SWIFT and some GLS questions that have been mentioned. The SWIFT agreement is needed as it sets out specific safeguards on data. That is clear and the mutual legal assistance agreement would also really like to go there.

It should also be known that this mutual legal assistance agreement is at the heart of the SWIFT agreement, and any US request is subject to the authorisation of an EU judicial authority within that framework, so we have to keep working on it.

On the ESTA, we issued a preliminary assessment which concluded that, based on the interim final rule, ESTA is not tantamount to the Schengen visa application process as defined in the European Commission's common consular instructions. We will, however, prepare a final assessment once the final rule on ESTA has been published, and this evaluation will also address the question of the ESTA fee if the fee is really put into place. You can imagine that we do not want it.

A last answer on terrorism. In our work on the summit, we are discussing with the US how to move towards closer cooperation in the fight against terrorism, especially in the light of the plans to close Guantánamo.

The need to ensure respect for fundamental rights is essential. The conclusion of the mutual legal assistance treaties will also help us in this respect. We will therefore also cooperate on how to prevent radicalism, including misuse of the Internet.

You can see that there is an enormous range of issues. We have spoken about all the political issues before, but I agree with the Council President that although this will be an important summit, it will only be one meeting of a few hours. Not everything will be solved in one meeting, but it will be a very good restart or re-beginning.

President. – I have received six motions for resolutions⁽¹⁾ tabled in accordance with Rule 110(2).

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 22 October 2009.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Elena Băsescu (PPE), in writing. – (RO) The EU-US Summit in November will strengthen the transatlantic partnership and promote dialogue between the two great powers. Relations between them must be based on the values and objectives that we share, and ever closer cooperation is in our common interest and benefit.

(1) See Minutes

The European Union and United States must adopt a vital role in combating climate change. On this point, a number of joint commitments have been made in the fight against the adverse effects of global warming. As far as Europe is concerned, one viable, practical solution for protecting the environment is to put the Rhine-Main-Danube navigation canal, which provides a direct link between the ports of Rotterdam and Constanța, into operation.

Using inland water navigation as an option will attract numerous economic benefits and also help reduce sound pollution and cut greenhouse gas emissions. Using this canal and raising its profile will make the transportation of goods cheaper, safer and more efficient in terms of the use of energy resources.

Environmental protection policies can be supplemented by measures supporting transcontinental mobility and international connections, while also providing safety and security for European goods and citizens.

Tunne Kelam (PPE), in writing. – As the Lisbon Treaty is about to enter into force, the rapid progress in the transatlantic relationship between the two biggest democratic and economic entities will have an increased importance. Both the EU and the US continue to be key actors in international trade and providers of stability. The European Parliament has been a leading force in advancing transatlantic cooperation, having proposed in its resolutions the creation of a transatlantic free market, as well as establishing new structures for closer political and interparliamentary relations. The Transatlantic Economic Council has done good work so far. I hope that in the near future, we shall be able to work out solutions to overcome the regulatory barriers between the EU and the US. The role of legislators in this relationship will be important. Members of the European Parliament are willing and ready to fully contribute to TEC processes.

We should encourage the US Congress to fully commit itself to a routine Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue and thus also to an active participation in the TEC. I would like to ask the Commission and the Council how the European Parliament's resolutions have been followed up and, at the same time, to encourage both institutions to vigorously work towards achieving a transatlantic free market area.

Alan Kelly (S&D), in writing. – Relations between the US and the European Union have always been strong. It was with American aid that a shattered Europe was able to reconstruct and develop in the post war years. Now the world again faces a crisis and it is more vital than ever that we retain this link and work together to resolve the problems which have beset the world economy. The European Union and the United States have a strategic role to play in the recovery process. Combined, our gross domestic product represents more than half the world's GDP, and we have the world's strongest bilateral trade partnership, making up almost 40% of world trade. However, further developments must be implemented if we are to combat the economic crisis effectively. The Transatlantic Economic Council has created for itself the goal of an integrated Trans-Atlantic market by 2015. This will be done by reducing barriers to trade. If this goal is accomplished, economic growth can re-commence and the recovery process can begin. The risk of a further 'Credit Crunch' is not over. To avoid further economic collapse and unemployment, the EC must ensure coordinated economic policies are put in place in both areas.

Franz Obermayr (NI), in writing. – (DE) It goes without saying that the economic relationship between the US and the EU must be maintained. However, we must not, under any circumstances, allow the US to monopolise Europe in economic terms. On the contrary, we must learn from the economic crisis, which had its origins in the unsupervised financial markets in the US. Europe must maintain its economic independence and find its own way out of the crisis, particularly as bonuses amounting to billions of dollars are being paid out on the New York stock exchange as we speak. Therefore, I am calling for the European position on the Transatlantic Economic Council to be strengthened. At the EU-US Summit in Prague in April 2009, President Obama pressed the European Union to offer Turkey full membership in the near future, claiming that the EU would be contributing to better understanding with the Islamic world. The fact that the US is supporting its strategic NATO ally (so that Turkey would clear the way for Rasmussen to become Secretary General of NATO) should not result in the negotiations on full membership being accelerated. Despite American support, Turkey will not become a suitable candidate for accession, because there is no sign of huge cultural, geographical, economic and political differences being reduced. The EU should take a clear position with regard to the US on this issue.

Richard Seeber (PPE), in writing. – (DE) In the light of the economic crisis and the preparations for the climate conference in Copenhagen, it is important for us to take the opportunity of the Transatlantic Economic Council meeting to strengthen further the relationship between the EU and the US. In the area of the environment, we must discuss new types of foods in particular. The opportunities and perspectives of nanotechnologies are also a relevant subject. We should definitely hold open discussions on the topics of

genetic engineering and animal cloning. Europe should not be afraid to explain clearly to its trading partner the concerns of some Member States. In the area of chemicals and toxic substances, we must work towards high standards of protection and better coordination. This will not only make trade and economic relationships easier, but will also guarantee in particular that consumers in Europe are protected against toxic substances in the environment and in the products they use. Constructive discussions will help to ensure that the special relationship between the EU and the US is maintained.

Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), *in writing*. – (PL) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, it is good that the resolution on preparation of the Transatlantic Economic Council meeting and the EU/USA Summit (2 and 3 November 2009) calls, on page 17, for the United States to treat citizens of the European Union equally and to include all EU Member States in the Visa Waiver Program.

It is high time that the appeals by Parliament, the efforts of the Commission and the endeavours of the visa-discriminated Member States produced results. Otherwise, it will be necessary to take radical action and introduce a visa requirement for American citizens. It is time, at last, to bring an end to this one-sided privilege enjoyed by the United States. The European Parliament must not tolerate American discrimination of European citizens on the grounds of their nationality. The position of Parliament in this matter is all the more significant because not all the governments of the Member States understand the necessity of applying the principle of visa reciprocity. One of these is the government of the Republic of Poland. The position of the citizens is completely different. Over 61% of Poles are in favour of the introduction of entry visas for citizens of the United States. In an Internet poll, the number of respondents declaring themselves in favour of such a measure was as high as 96%.

I trust that the forthcoming EU/USA Summit will be a turning point, at least in terms of visa policy, and that in the new year, in 2010, the citizens of all EU Member States will be able to travel normally. In other words, I hope they will enjoy the same freedom as all American citizens who can travel to the EU country of their choice.

10. Question Time (Council)

President. – The next item is Question Time (B7-0212/2009).

The following questions are addressed to the Council.

Question No 1 by **Bernd Posselt** (H-0303/09)

Subject: Human rights in Cuba

How does the Council assess the current human rights situation in Cuba, in particular with regard to political detainees? Does it have information about the conditions under which the Cuban doctor, Darsi Ferrer, and fellow-prisoner, Alfredo Dominguez, are being held, which are clearly inhumane in the extreme?

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – I am, of course, ready to move from the US to Cuba and Mr Posselt on a very serious matter, so thank you for your question, Mr Posselt.

The Council remains seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Cuba, in particular, the lack of progress for civil and political rights. The people of Cuba do not enjoy freedom of speech and assembly. There is no free press. Access to information, including the Internet, remains limited. Restrictions on citizens' freedom of movement into and within Cuba have not changed. There are currently 208 political prisoners in Cuba. This figure has decreased from 2 034 in 2007, but most of the releases were due to completion of sentence. Member States' missions in Havana are closely monitoring the list of political prisoners and have a special human rights working group where important cases are discussed.

Prison conditions, according to human rights defenders and testimonies of political prisoners and their families, are far below the United Nations' standard minimum rules for treatment of prisoners. Some prisoners are in very bad health, according to their families, and do not have access to adequate medical care. There have been a number of reports of cruel and degrading treatment, including beatings of prisoners, denial of appropriate health care and psychological pressure. Still, however, there are no reports of prison guards or police being prosecuted for abuse.

The Cuban Government denies the existence of political prisoners and regrettably continues to reject international scrutiny of human rights from independent human rights organisations. The Council approach

towards Cuba was set out in the common position of 1996, which has since been evaluated by the Council on an annual basis. In October 2008, the EU and Cuba agreed on the resumption of a comprehensive political dialogue. This dialogue, in accordance with EU policies, not only includes the Cuban authorities but also civil society and the democratic opposition. The Council pays special attention to the principles of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms in the 2009 annual evaluation of the common position.

In the conclusions from June this year, we made clear that these issues will remain one of the EU's key priorities in the relationship with Cuba. The Council particularly urged the Cuban Government to release unconditionally all political prisoners, including those who were detained in 2003, and we expressed our concerns for the prisoners and their health condition.

Furthermore, the Council called upon the Cuban authorities to facilitate immediate access of international humanitarian organisations to Cuban prisons. Since the initiation of the political dialogue with Cuba last year, the EU side has brought up the issue of political prisoners at each and every meeting. As stated in the last Council conclusions, human rights should always be addressed on these high-level visits and, when appropriate, meetings with the peaceful pro-democracy opposition will be part of these visits.

The Council decided to pursue the dialogue with Cuba because it provides an opportunity to discuss open issues of mutual interest and concern, including the human rights situation, but we remain seriously concerned about the situation in Cuba and we will continue to follow individual cases, particularly prisoners with serious health conditions.

Regarding the particular situation of one of the prisoners mentioned by the honourable Member, the European Union has made a manifestation of solidarity initiated by the Swedish Presidency in Havana in August. The manifestation was held to show the family of the arrested Dr Darsi Ferrer that the Union is concerned that national criminal procedural law is not being observed by the Cuban authorities. Equally the case of the other prisoner, Mr Alfredo Domínguez, is also being watched by the Presidency and raised in the dialogues with Cuba, and we do have contact with his family.

Bernd Posselt (PPE). – (DE) Madam President, I would like to thank Mrs Malmström for her excellent, detailed answer.

Mr Brechtmann from the International Commission for Human Rights has given me comprehensive information about the conditions in prisons. I would just like to ask whether the Council can attempt to investigate the conditions in which individual prisoners are held and how does it evaluate the developments in Cuba as far as relationships with the European Union are concerned?

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – We do not have access to this information formally but, via international organisations, NGOs, contacts, political parties and so on, we do get information – which is a bit fragmented – about the situation of the political prisoners. We know that in some cases, their state of health is very serious. We try to liaise with families and those NGOs to facilitate the situation but of course, one of the problems is that we have little concrete and confirmed information.

Another problem is that very many of these prisoners are held in prison without proceedings and without being charged with anything. This is contrary to Cuban laws. They have the right to know why they are in prison and what they are accused of – a basic human right in all societies, but one that does not exist in Cuba, as we know.

The Cuban dialogue is, of course, fraught with difficulties, but we think for the moment that it is important to have the dialogue in place in accordance with our decision, because it gives us a chance to try and liaise with the authorities, to be very strict and firm in our criticism, but also to liaise with civil society and the peaceful dissidents. We are trying to do this and, for the moment, this is an approach we think could work. I do not see any dramatic change to this in the foreseeable future.

Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL). – (EL) Madam President, Minister, because I believe that, in the field of human rights, as these are the issues being raised by Mr Posselt in his question, we can cooperate better with countries with which we have political and diplomatic relations as well as financial transactions, it is surprising that the European Union and its Member States are maintaining a passive to negative stance towards the logical and permanent request by the Republic of Cuba for the US embargo on them to be lifted.

My question, therefore, is how does the Presidency view this matter and how do you think the matter should be addressed by the Member States, in light of the fact that, as we all know, Cuba tabled a motion before the UN General Assembly on 28 October for the US embargo to be lifted?

Krisztina Morvai (NI). – Here I am, a peaceful dissident from one of the Member States of the European Union, Hungary. I would like to ask for your advice. How can we achieve the same level of interest in the human rights situation in Hungary as you have in the human rights situation in Cuba?

In Hungary, ever since the autumn of 2006, there has been mass police brutality against peaceful demonstrators, and many political prisoners have been tortured in prison.

I would like to ask Cuban politicians to please negotiate on our behalf on the basis of all the...

(The President cut off the speaker)

President. – I am sorry but your speaking time is 30 seconds, and the question is about human rights in Cuba.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – The whole European Union has, on several occasions, said that we are against the American embargo and that we think it does not facilitate a future solution on Cuba.

The European Union has also said that we are willing to enter into a closer cooperation with Cuba, including trade, depending on their progress on human rights.

For the moment, however, in view of the lack of progress on human rights and respect for democracy and of the number of political prisoners, it is not possible for us to make any progress on this situation. It is up to the Cuban authorities to show whether they want this relation with us to show concrete progress. Unfortunately, there has been very little progress so far.

President. – I would be grateful if Members would abide by the rules of Question Time, which involve giving a supplementary question of 30 seconds and keeping to the subject of the stated question.

Question No 2 by **Marian Harkin** (H-0305/09)

Subject: Elder abuse

Given that it has already been estimated that more than 10% of older people experience some form of physical, psychological, financial or mental abuse, both in domestic settings and care institutions and that, as a result of our ageing society, this figure is set to rise, what steps will the Swedish Presidency take in order to fulfil its commitment to improve cooperation and efforts at European level in order to increase the quality of care services for the elderly and prevent elder abuse?

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) Mrs Harkin raises an issue that is very relevant today with an increasing proportion of our population getting progressively older. Measures in this area fall primarily within national competence and the Community can only support and complement the work done by the Member States.

However, the Swedish Presidency would like to give this matter some attention and we will do everything we can to increase the quality of care for the elderly and combat the problems relating to the abuse of elderly people. In this regard, I would like to remind you of a conference that was held in Stockholm a month ago on the subject of Healthy and Dignified Ageing. The conference brought together 160 people from 27 countries. There was a high level of participation. The Commission was there, as were the Member States, officials from ministries of health and social affairs and many voluntary organisations.

The aim was to highlight precisely the problems brought up by the honourable Member: how can we deal with the need for increased cooperation between the health and care sectors to meet the needs of our elderly citizens? It is the intention of the Presidency that the Council should adopt conclusions on this matter on 30 November at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council. In the draft conclusions, we are seeking deeper and closer cooperation within the area of healthy and dignified ageing, including through the exchange of information between the Member States. The Commission is also urged to draw up an action plan for the dignity, health and quality of life of elderly people.

I would also like to point out that the Council adopted conclusions in June of this year entitled 'Equal opportunities for women and men: active and dignified ageing' precisely to facilitate the provision of quality care services in connection with home care for elderly people, taking into account the particular needs of older men and women.

With regard to the issue of the abuse of elderly people in particular, Council Directive 2000/78/EC already prohibits discrimination in the workplace on account of age. The Commission proposed that the protection provided by this directive should be extended to a number of other areas such as social security, health care, social benefits, education, access to goods and services, housing and so on.

This proposal contains many elements that are relevant to the abuse of elderly people. It includes care in the home, institutional care and health care services. It prohibits harassment, which is a form of discrimination, defined as unwanted conduct with the effect of 'violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment'.

This proposal is currently being debated in the Council, and the European Parliament has already issued an opinion. Unanimity in the Council is required for the proposal to be approved. Of course, we cannot pre-empt the result of the debate in the Council, but I would nevertheless like to say that we are doing all we can to introduce legislation that will help to eliminate all forms of abuse and maltreatment of elderly people, which is fully in line with the opinion issued by the European Parliament.

It is, of course, our firm view that no one should have to suffer harassment or abuse, least of all elderly people, who are so dependent on care.

Marian Harkin (ALDE). – Thank you, President-in-Office Malmström, for your considered reply. According to the communication from the Commission in 2008, the right conditions have to be put in place in terms of resources, training and support for carers. I absolutely agree that this is so, and I also understand that this is a national competence.

There are, however, some areas where the EU can help. One of them is in the whole area of the cross-border dimension. I just wanted to know your opinion on the setting up of a formal structure for exchange of information with regard to health professionals, in this case, care-givers, who cross borders.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – I thank the Member for that proposal. It is the first time I have heard about this. It sounds like a good initiative, but I will have to refer it back to the ministers concerned and feed it into the discussion process. Perhaps we could come back to this at a later stage.

Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D). – (RO) The European Union has an ageing population. Elderly people need special conditions in terms of both medical services and arranging suitable facilities for them in buildings and on public transport. Sweden has a long tradition in social policy. What proposals are you discussing with other Member States so that living conditions for the elderly can be improved throughout the whole of the European Union?

Seán Kelly (PPE). – President-in-Office, Ms Harkin has asked a very important question and you have answered it very well but, broadening out the scope of the question, ageism is generally regarded nowadays as 65-plus. Would you consider recommending, on a Union-wide basis, increasing, or being more flexible with, the retirement age and having gradual retirement rather than permanent retirement, which seems to happen for most people now? That would help enormously in improving the quality of life and ensuring more respect for the elderly.

President. – I would say that seems to go a little beyond the title of the question, but I leave it to the Minister whether she wishes to deal with it or not.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – The answer to the first question by the honourable Member is 'yes', particularly because we need to discuss these issues.

The Trio – the French, Czech and Swedish Presidencies – agreed to reinforce dialogue on issues relating to health and elderly people. For instance, there was a conference on Alzheimer's, and the conference I referred to, held a month ago, referred to dignified treatment of elderly people. So it was an opportunity to discuss this issue, and the conclusions will be discussed in EPSCO at the end of November, where we will also, of course, consider the report by the European Parliament.

Concerning the retirement age, this is something that every Member State decides itself, but in the discussions we have on the Lisbon strategy – not the Treaty, for once – on how to increase growth, development and employability and the demographic challenge that we will face, this is, of course, an issue to take into consideration – how to use the competence and experience of elderly people also and to find ways of letting them stay in the workforce. It is not up to the Council to decide exactly the age this should happen, but rather to encourage all Member States to make full use of their labour force.

President. – Question No 3 by **Olle Schmidt** (H-0310/09)

Subject: Swedish journalist Dawit Isaak imprisoned in Eritrea

According to reports in the Swedish media, Swedish citizen Dawit Isaak, imprisoned in Eritrea since 2001, has been transferred to a new prison in Eritrea. No one, apparently, has left this prison alive. Dawit Isaak has been held in prison under appalling conditions by a rogue regime for almost eight years without being informed why he was so brutally thrown into prison, and separated from his family, friends and work. So far, all attempts to have Dawit Isaak freed have been unsuccessful. The EU should do more. Isaak is also an EU citizen. If nothing is done, there is a risk that Isaak will die without either Sweden or the EU managing to persuade the Eritrean President even to discuss his case seriously.

What does the Swedish Presidency intend to do to raise the case of Dawit Isaak at the highest EU level?

Is it reasonable for Eritrea to receive aid from the EU when that country is so flagrantly violating fundamental human rights?

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (SV) It was eight years ago that the Swedish-Eritrean journalist, Dawit Isaak, was captured and imprisoned in Eritrea. He is being held in prison without trial and without charges. Neither his family nor the Swedish authorities or international human rights organisations are permitted to visit him.

Unfortunately, there have been no signs whatsoever of any improvement in the human rights situation in Eritrea over the last few years. Responsibility for this situation rests entirely with the Eritrean Government. Eritrea's continued breach of its obligations with regard to human rights under national and international law is causing considerable concern in the EU.

We are particularly concerned about the issue of political prisoners and the lack of freedom of expression. The EU has several times demanded the unconditional release of all political prisoners in Eritrea, including, of course, Dawit Isaak. On 18 September 2009, the Presidency, acting on behalf of the European Union, issued a very clear statement in which we reiterated our demand for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and stated that Eritrea's actions are in clear breach of the obligations laid down in the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Eritrea has ratified.

Regrettably, Dawit Isaak's case has not been resolved, but it continues to be a top priority for the EU, the Swedish Presidency and the Swedish Government. We will not cease in our efforts until he has been released on humanitarian grounds and can be reunited with his family. I can assure you that we will continue to take his case and the situation of his fellow prisoners to the highest level in Asmara.

Human rights are a key element in relations between the EU and Eritrea. We are prepared to help the Eritrean Government to improve the human rights situation. In terms of aid, this is governed by and dependent on the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement. This agreement deals both with human rights and with the political dialogue to exert pressure to bring about changes. It is an ongoing process that is progressing desperately slowly, but we hope that this can be a tool we can use to make progress.

Olle Schmidt (ALDE). – (SV) I do not need to give you any further details of the terrible case of Dawit Isaak. I also know that Mrs Malmström is extremely committed to this matter.

As far as I know, Dawit Isaak is the only EU citizen imprisoned for exercising his right to free expression. Should the EU, then, not get together to issue a special joint statement on Dawit Isaak? Should the question of a special statement not be taken up in the Council? Perhaps Mrs Malmström or someone else should also go to Eritrea and try to meet with Dawit Isaak and also with President Isaias Afewerki. I hope this will happen, because I think that it is totally unreasonable for an EU citizen to remain imprisoned without trial year after year, apparently seriously ill and possibly at risk of dying in prison.

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (SV) To Mr Schmidt, I would like to say that I really do share your enormous concern and frustration that this situation is continuing year after year and that there is no possibility of getting through to the Eritrean authorities. I am certain that both Mr Schmidt and other Members have seen the reports from Eritrea and listened to interviews with its president. He is not an easy person to deal with and abuse in Eritrea is widespread.

We are continuing to work with all the channels we know of, but we do not have access to the prison. We have not been able to visit him and we do not know how he is. Of course, we will not rule out going there if we believe that it could result in progress on this matter, but for the time being, there is no possibility of

obtaining any kind of promise that we would be able to visit him or hold talks about him or to meet his family, who are there in Eritrea. It is extremely frustrating. We have made a very clear statement. As Mr Schmidt said, Dawit Isaak is, as far as I am aware, the only political prisoner of EU origin currently in prison and we are working in various ways to increase the pressure on the Eritrean authorities and to make them understand that Dawit Isaak and his fellow prisoners must be released, if nothing else then in accordance with the conventions that the country itself has ratified, but it is very difficult to have any normal dialogue with this country.

President. – There are no other supplementaries on that question, so we will move on to the next question. Question No 4 by **Anna Hedh** (H-0312/09)

Subject: The EU's alcohol strategy

It is nearly three years since we adopted the EU's alcohol strategy. The intention was that it should be assessed by the summer of 2009. Unfortunately, the assessment seems to have been postponed. For Sweden, alcohol policy has always been an important issue and one to which it assigns priority in EU cooperation.

Will the Swedish Presidency therefore seek to ensure that the strategy is assessed without delay? If so, when exactly?

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) Thank you, Mrs Hedh. I would like to begin by reminding Mrs Hedh that the Swedish Presidency has put alcohol and health high on the agenda as an important aspect in implementing the EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm.

Against this background, we have already held three major events. The first was the informal meeting of health ministers in Jönköping in July, where the sale and marketing of alcoholic drinks and how they influence the alcohol consumption of young people were given particular attention. The second event was an Expert Conference on Alcohol and Health in Stockholm on 21–22 September aimed at supporting a sustainable, long-term and comprehensive strategy within the EU with regard to alcohol. More than 450 people participated from, in principle, all of the EU Member States and the participants lent very strong support to the Swedish priorities in the area of alcohol and health.

The third event was the Global Expert Meeting on Alcohol, Health and Social Development held on 23 September. This event was organised by the Swedish Presidency in cooperation with Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services and was sponsored by the World Health Organisation. The aim was to contribute to a global strategy when the World Health Assembly meets in May next year. At this meeting, new findings were presented concerning the link between the harmful use of alcohol, social development and the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, an important link that is worth taking note of.

Thus, with regard to the question 'will the Swedish Presidency seek to ensure that the strategy is assessed without delay?' the answer is yes; adoption of a strategy within the EU in 2006 was an important step. Through its adoption, the Commission recognised alcohol as one of the key factors for determining health within the EU and also the fact that the EU is responsible for tackling risky and harmful alcohol consumption. This was reinforced further by support from all of the EU's health ministers in conclusions reached in November 2006.

Since 1 January 2007, the Commission has been following the trends in alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm as well as the changes in policy within the EU. Even though we have seen progress in many areas, there has been far too little time to assess the full scale of the impact on health of alcohol policy and drinking habits. The first report from the Commission, which was tabled at the expert conference a few weeks ago, was a status report in respect of the EU's alcohol strategy. It is an interim report ahead of the final report that is to be tabled in 2012.

The Presidency will, of course, go through this status report and consider the results of the Expert Conference on Alcohol and Health. We will monitor progress. We have also funded a number of new studies with a view to ensuring that alcohol remains high on the EU's agenda. One of the studies we are funding will examine the effect that the marketing of alcohol has on young people, another will look at the impact of alcohol on elderly people in 10 different EU Member States and yet another will investigate the effect that cross-border trade has on national alcohol policy.

In our draft conclusions on alcohol and health, which are currently under discussion in the Council's working group, we propose that the Commission should be urged to start to analyse and seek out priorities for the next phase of the work on alcohol and health, to emphasise the fact that we need to look at the period beyond 2012 when the assessment and the current alcohol strategy will be concluded. Based on this debate, the Presidency aims to adopt Council conclusions to support an alcohol strategy in December 2009.

Anna Hedh (S&D). – (SV) Mrs Malmström, I know that the Presidency has held several constructive conferences and has spent a lot of time on this matter.

My question was about the alcohol strategy, in particular, because I have asked the same question before, about six months ago. At that time, I was told that the alcohol strategy would be assessed before the summer. That is why I raised this question, as the matter has not appeared on the agenda.

A lot has happened since the Swedish Presidency proposed an alcohol strategy for the EU in 2001. The alcohol strategy was adopted in 2006 and a lot has happened since then. Some Member States have raised the age restrictions, some have increased taxes on alcohol and some have lowered the blood alcohol concentration limits, for example. I am very pleased about this. I would have liked to have seen the Swedish Presidency go a bit further, perhaps, with regard to advertising, but I am nevertheless pleased that a study has now been carried out on advertising, alcohol and young people.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) Thank you for your support on this matter. We have indeed tried to highlight this issue, which is, of course, the framework that the EU affords to work within: holding conferences, producing studies, setting out timetables to ensure that everything continues to move forward, as well as securing the involvement of future presidencies. I am pleased that we were able to clear up the misunderstanding that clearly arose. The intention was for there to be an interim report, which of course is just as important and which we will look at and analyse, but that the final assessment would come in 2012. In the meantime, there is a tremendous amount to do and I can also confirm that many Member States are doing a tremendous amount, as everyone in all the Member States has been made aware of the effects that alcohol consumption has on health.

Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D). – (LT) Minister, at EU level, the number of road accident fatalities is falling, but the ambitious goals will not be achieved next year. The main cause is alcohol. In some countries, there is an appallingly high suicide rate, and again alcohol is to blame for this.

Do you not think that on an EU scale, we should strengthen the already strict measures on alcohol consumption, following Scandinavia's example? In particular, consumption should be restricted for young people. Would Sweden like to initiate this?

Catherine Stihler (S&D). – I want to bring the Minister's attention to the fact that in Scotland, the constituency which I represent, a debate on a minimum pricing of alcohol products is currently happening. I wanted to take this opportunity to ask the Minister whether there is any discussion in the Council over the issue of minimum pricing of alcohol products. There is a big debate happening in Scotland and I was wondering what the Council's perspective is, and whether it is discussing this at all.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – One of the five priority themes in the EC alcohol strategy is precisely the reduction of injuries and death from alcohol-related road accidents. This is, as the honourable Member said, a very big problem and it causes enormous suffering and has economic costs as well.

The Commission has recommended the adoption of a lower maximum limit for inexperienced and professional drivers, while countries who already apply limits should not decrease them. There is a recommendation on this, and we are working with the Member States.

Many States have already applied those recommendations and there are a lot of awareness-raising activities going on to discuss this issue.

I am not aware of any ongoing discussion on prices. There might be. I will check with my colleague, the Minister for Health, who is responsible for that, but I do not think that particular issue is being discussed.

There are many other alcohol-related issues that are being followed up right now, but probably not this one for the moment, because it is, of course, not an EU competence.

President. – Question No 5 by **Justas Vincas Paleckis** (H-0316/09)

Subject: Environmental aspect of gas pipelines

In the European Union, much attention is being paid to the environmental aspects of the new pipelines being constructed to transport gas to the EU (Nabucco, Nord Stream and South Stream). The Nord Stream gas pipeline, which runs along the floor of the Baltic Sea, is an exceptional project on account of its size and its potential environmental impact on the Baltic region.

In the opinion of the Swedish Presidency, what dangers does the construction of gas pipelines pose to the environment, and what measures can be taken to eliminate those dangers?

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (SV) Nord Stream is a unique project for the Baltic Sea area on account of its size and possible consequences. The Council is aware of the misgivings that exist with regard to the environmental aspects of the Nord Stream gas pipeline project and has taken careful note of the European Parliament's resolution on the environmental impact of the planned gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea linking Russia and Germany, which was adopted in July last year.

All of the EU Member States and the European Community are party to the United Nations Espoo Convention of 1991. This is the Convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context. This Convention contains a number of relevant obligations that are binding on the parties, with the particular aim of ensuring that an environmental impact assessment is carried out which includes consultation with other parties affected by a particular project.

The impact of the Nord Stream project on the sensitive Baltic Sea environment is of the utmost importance and must be examined carefully. Natura 2000 areas could be affected, as well as areas where there are mines and where chemical ammunition has been dumped. The spread of sediment could affect the marine flora and fauna and also have an impact on the fishing industry. The fact that the gas pipeline is close to important shipping routes could also entail a risk to the environment and to safety.

All of the states around the Baltic Sea have worked together now for more than three years within the framework of the Espoo Convention to determine how these obligations relate to how this project is to be executed.

The Council would nevertheless like to stress that the Nord Stream project is a private undertaking. It is therefore the parties responsible for the project who must provide information demonstrating that the project observes the relevant legislation, under the scrutiny of the Member States affected.

Thus, the Council cannot comment on the Nord Stream project in any way that could be construed as interference in national legal processes.

Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D). – (LT) Thank you Minister, for your truly comprehensive answer. Evidently, this matter does concern Sweden greatly, all the more so because Sweden is a Baltic Sea country. I would just like to underline one thing, that we can never devote too much attention to such matters. I would also like you to say that this probably is the case and that during its Presidency, Sweden will continually follow this matter intently and will take appropriate steps.

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (SV) I can guarantee, honourable Members, that Sweden is doing that. We are very vigilant when it comes to the sensitive environment in the Baltic Sea, which is, of course, at risk from any type of project that is to be carried out, and therefore we have imposed very stringent environmental requirements on precisely this project, and it is now in the process of being examined and scrutinised by various relevant authorities. It is not Swedish territory that is affected by this, but Sweden's economic zone, and therefore we have been very careful to point out that it is international conventions, like the Espoo Convention, that form the basis for the positions we are to adopt. We must not make any political or economic judgments. This is what the Swedish State can look at and that is indeed what we are doing.

President. – Question No 6 by **Silvia-Adriana Ticau** (H-0318/09)

Subject: Elimination of barriers to the free movement of labour between Member States

The Swedish Presidency of the Council has recognised that, in the current economic crisis, the key priority is that Member States must be able to respond jointly to challenges and find solutions for overcoming the economic and financial crisis and, above all, reducing unemployment and its adverse social consequences.

The barriers to the free movement of workers from the Member States which joined the Union on or after 1 May 2004 are limiting the rights of those countries' citizens and could result in clandestine employment and social dumping. To remove those barriers means protecting migrant workers on the same basis as nationals. Given the Swedish Presidency's commitment to an active policy for the EU labour market and to improving adaptability and mobility, can the Council state what concrete measures it has in mind with a view to eliminating the barriers to the free movement of workers from the Member States which joined the Union on or after 1 May 2004?

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) The Council would like to point out that the free movement of people is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed in Community legislation and includes the right of EU citizens to live and work in another Member State.

At its meeting on 9 March 2009, the Council directed an invitation to those Member States that were still applying transitional rules restricting free movement. At the time, based on the information available, the Council said that these Member States should consider whether to continue applying these restrictions. The Member States were also urged to lift the restrictions during the third phase if no serious disturbances, or risk of serious disturbances, to the labour markets could be identified in the Member States concerned.

The Council also pointed out to the Member States that priority must be given to citizens from Member States over labour from outside the EU, and that the protection of citizens from new Member States who were already resident and employed in a Member State will remain during the transitional periods. The rights of family members have also been taken into account in accordance with the practice in connection with previous accessions.

The Council emphasised the strong elements of differentiation and flexibility in the rules on the free movement of workers. The Member States have declared that they will endeavour to grant increased access to the labour market to citizens from the new Member States concerned in accordance with national legislation, with a view to speeding up the approximation of their legislation in line with Community legislation.

In November 2008, the Commission put forward a communication on the impact of free movement of workers in the context of EU enlargement. The Commission points out that workers from Bulgaria, Romania and the EU-10 Member States helped to meet a higher demand for labour in the receiving countries and thus made a significant contribution to sustained economic growth. Evidence at hand suggests that post-enlargement intra-EU mobility has not led – and is unlikely to lead – to serious labour market disturbances.

The Commission also notes that the volume and direction of mobility flows within the EU are driven by general labour supply and demand rather than by rules restricting labour market access. The Commission concludes that restrictions applied by the Member States may delay labour market adjustments and even exacerbate the incidence of undeclared work.

The free movement of labour is an important priority for the European Union. The movement of labour helps to create more jobs, so that the economy can be adjusted even during an economic crisis. The movement of workers also helps to reduce social marginalisation and poverty.

With regard to the transitional period for free movement that the honourable Member asked about, the Member States have the right to retain their restrictions up to the end of the third phase of the transitional period. However, the Council believes that the economic crisis that Europe is currently experiencing should not be used as grounds for continuing to apply the transitional rules. Even during periods when demand for labour is low, it can be difficult for employers to fill vacancies with applicants from their own country.

The Council regularly reviews the question of transitional arrangements. The most recent review was at its meeting in June 2009, when the Council took note of the Commission's information on the impact of free movement in the context of EU enlargement. The Commission informed the Council that three of the EU-15 Member States had, prior to 1 May 2009, notified the Commission of serious labour market disruptions or the risk of such disruptions. Germany and Austria continued to apply restrictions on labour market access by retaining the requirement for a work permit, while the United Kingdom applies a system of *ex post* registration, which allows workers to start work but requires them to register within 30 days.

In the information it provided to the Council, the Commission also stated that it would ensure that the provisions of the Accession Treaty are complied with and it reserved the right to request clarification from those Member States continuing to apply restrictions.

Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D). – (RO) I would like to ask you whether, as part of the Swedish Presidency's agenda, you have in your timetable any action aimed at trying to continue to persuade Member States which maintain these barriers to the free movement of labour to lift them. My second question is whether you wish to include such a proposal on lifting the barriers to free movement of labour as part of the Swedish Presidency's conclusions.

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) I would like to thank the honourable Member. All of the present Trio, the French, Czech and Swedish Presidencies, confirmed in their conclusions that enlargement has brought great advantages to the EU, it has led to economic growth and there is nothing to indicate that serious economic disturbances have occurred.

We have mechanisms in place for the regular review of the transitional rules together with the Commission. Between these reviews, we can, of course, call on the Member States to take the measures necessary to eliminate discriminatory legislation and ensure that the skilled labour force within the whole of the EU is utilised, but the purely legal aspects are dealt with together with the Commission. As I said previously, we carried out such a review earlier this year.

Franz Obermayr (NI). – (DE) Madam President, the fellow Member who asked the question naturally focused in her remarks on the situation in those Member States where parts of the population are emigrating to look for work elsewhere. I can understand this.

However, in contrast, Austria, like Germany, is a country with massive immigration and it could obtain an extension of the transitional period until the labour market is fully opened. The reasons for this are clear. Negative displacement and distribution effects resulting from major differences in income, in particular, against the background of the current problems on the labour market, and increased immigration could have resulted in the labour market being significantly overburdened, leading to social tensions that everyone wants to avoid.

Therefore, my question is: will these problems which are affecting Austria and Germany be recognised and are appropriate solutions being planned?

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) All EU Member States have, of course, been badly affected by the economic crises and unemployment. The figures look slightly different, but all of them have been hit hard. A country is entitled to put in place the transitional rules, which Austria, for example, has done, and the opportunity exists to apply to extend these rules under special procedures if justification is provided to the Commission. I am not sufficiently informed about the precise situation in Austria. I do not know if the problems are greater there than anywhere else. As I said, all Member States have huge problems in connection with the labour market.

The Commission states in its report that there is nothing to indicate that free movement has led to disturbances in any Member State. In my country, Sweden, which is also experiencing very high unemployment, we have not seen any link at all between free movement and unemployment. The people who have come from other EU Member States have been welcome and have been absorbed into the labour market.

President. – Question No 7 by **Nikolaos Chountis** (H-0319/09)

Subject: Harassment by Turkey of aircraft operated by the European Union agency for external border security (Frontex)

Since May 2009, six incidents have been recorded in which aircraft operated by the European Union agency for external border security (Frontex) have been subjected to harassment, either by Turkish aircraft or through radio communications. The most recent incident occurred on 8 September 2009 when a Frontex helicopter flown by two Latvian pilots was en route from the island of Kos to Samos. While flying over the island of Farmakonisi, the helicopter received radio interference from Turkish radar at Datça, demanding that it withdraw from the area and submit a flight plan.

Is the Council aware of this incident? What are its comments? What measures will it take against Turkey?

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) Yes, the Council is aware of the incidents that the Member refers to. The Presidency would like to say that, as a candidate country, Turkey has to share the European Union's values and goals in accordance with the treaties. A clear commitment to good neighbourly relations and peaceful solutions to conflicts is a crucial and important requirement for EU membership. In accordance with the framework for the negotiations and relevant Council conclusions, the EU has urged

Turkey to avoid any kind of threats, sources of conflict or measures that could harm good relations and the possibility of resolving disputes in a peaceful manner.

I would like to assure the honourable Member that the issue of good neighbourly relations is brought up by the EU on a systematic basis, most recently at the Association Council meeting on 19 May and at the meeting between the EU troika and Turkey's political leaders in Stockholm in July this year.

As regards the particular point about aircraft operated by Frontex, I would like to mention that Frontex is coordinating several joint operations and pilot projects. These are an important contribution to the protection of the Union's sea, land and external air borders.

One of the operations is Poseidon 2009, for which Greece is the host. It is aimed at preventing impermissible border crossings by persons coming from or transiting Turkey and countries in North Africa and trying to reach the Greek coast. The honourable Member is, of course, aware of this. Poseidon also includes the stationing of technical facilities in European airspace along the borders of the Greek islands. Turkey has, of course, been informed of the operation.

With regard to operational cooperation between Frontex and the competent Turkish authorities, negotiations are currently being conducted concerning working methods. That is very positive. An agreement would cover information exchange and opportunities for the Turkish authorities to take part in Frontex joint operations. This sort of work could be an important part of the work to prevent illegal immigration and could help to improve neighbourly relations.

Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL). – (EL) Madam President, Minister, I should like to reiterate once again my appreciation of your honest efforts to answer our questions, but may I say that, from what you have said, you are obviously aware of this incident. We are cooperating with Turkey, but you have not given me a clear reply, which is why I wish to focus on and repeat my question as to whether Turkish airspace was, in fact, violated during the Frontex mission, as it claims.

The reason I say this is that, under this procedure, we are investigating if Turkey is contesting Greek sovereign rights. Additionally, may I remind you that, during a recent visit to Greece, the Deputy Executive Director of Frontex, Mr Fernandez, claimed that no such violations were taking place and referred to the pilots' reports on the matter. So to come back to my question: did the Frontex mission commit the violations alleged by Turkey or not and what are you doing about this?

Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council. – (SV) It is very difficult for the Swedish Presidency to determine exactly when a violation takes place and when not. We have been informed on several occasions of the concern that many of my Greek colleagues feel. We have discussed this and we have also called for, and held, talks about this with the Turkish authorities and our Turkish counterparts and urged them to work to improve neighbourly relations. It is very difficult for a presidency to determine exactly whether a violation is taking place or not. This is, of course, based on international conventions and is a bilateral issue between the two Member States.

President. – Mrs Morvai, you indicated you wanted the floor again. If it is for a supplementary on this issue, for 30 seconds you have the floor.

Krisztina Morvai (NI). – Madam President, you are probably reading my thoughts because I did not indicate that I wanted the floor, but I wanted to apologise for taking an extra 20 seconds from this extremely lively, huge democratic debate for such an irrelevant question as mass police brutality and political prisoners in a Member State. I do apologise.

President. – If you have a question, you should submit it in the normal way in writing and then it may, if it is appropriate, be answered. There are many Members who want questions answered tonight and out of respect for them, we would like to conduct this in an orderly manner.

(Question 8 fell as the questioner was absent)

Question No 9 by **Mairead McGuinness** (H-0325/09)

Subject: Revision of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005

Can the Council outline the views of the Presidency with regard to the review of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport? Is the Presidency sensitive to all aspects of the potential impact of the revision?

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) Thank you for your question. The Council naturally shares the Member's concern regarding animal welfare. The Presidency responded to a similar question from Mrs Harkin in September and stated then that one of the aims of the Swedish Presidency is to encourage the debate on animal welfare, and this is listed as one of the priorities of our Presidency.

At the meeting on 7 September this year, the Council received news from the Commission that a draft proposal for a review of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport will be tabled as soon as possible. At the same meeting, the Council obtained the views of the delegations on the need for new instruments to improve the control and inspection of the international transport of live animals, for example, satellite navigation systems. An appropriate satellite navigation system could facilitate supervision by the Member States' authorities, as it is currently very difficult to prove a lack of compliance using the instruments we have today.

Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 is a more forceful piece of legislation on the protection of animals during commercial transport, as it ascertains the parties concerned and assigns them areas of responsibility and it introduces tighter measures in the form of permits and inspections, as well as more stringent rules for transport.

Certain aspects of animal transport are not covered by the provisions, namely the maximum number of journeys and spatial requirements for animals. In accordance with Article 32 of the Regulation, these aspects are to be included in a report that is to be presented within four years and may be accompanied by a new proposal.

The Presidency can confirm that we intend to start examining the Commission's proposal on the review of the regulation as soon as the Commission submits it. This has not happened yet, but as soon as it arrives, the examination will begin, as we share the Member's interest in the review of this regulation.

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Thank you for your comprehensive answer.

I share the concerns about animal welfare, but I want realistic regulation that also allows trade in animals which is legitimate and properly policed and I would suggest that we do not need additional regulation. We need absolutely proper implementation of existing regulations and I think your comments about navigation, etc. are helpful in this debate. Please let science dictate.

I would ask you to concentrate, perhaps, on horse transport. That is a particular problem, and there the regulations are not being implemented. Perhaps you would have a comment on that.

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – I am not an expert in the horse sector of animal transport but I listened to your proposal and I will take it with me.

I agree with you that normally, it is quite often the case that it is the implementation that is lacking, and there is not always necessarily a need for new regulation. Once the Commission proposal comes, we will look at it, evaluate it and see if there is a need for additional measures or, as you imply, only a need to reinforce implementation. So we will come back to that as soon as we have the proposal from the Commission.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Following on from my colleague Mrs McGuinness's question: Ireland being an island nation is very dependent on transport of animals overseas and the restrictions that are being implemented and being proposed to be implemented are regarded by many people in the industry as cost-prohibitive. So would you take that into consideration when you are doing the review? Otherwise, if we do not have live transport, you will have a cosy cartel amongst the factories, which will pull down prices further and drive more and more people out of farming.

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – I realise the difficulties regarding Ireland's situation, because it is an island and because of its dependence as regards transport.

I think in all legislation it is important, in particular, that we have a great concern. We know that there is pressure from our citizens to look at the well-being of the animals but, of course, doing this in an appropriate way and evaluating what has been done. Are the provisions sufficient? Are they needed? Is there additional need? Do we need implementation? We must take all that into consideration before we move on to further regulation.

I am sure that, during the discussion that we will have with Member States, all Member States will have the opportunity to set out their specific situation as input into the discussion.

(Question 10 fell as the questioner was absent)

Question No 19 by **Seán Kelly** (H-0357/09)

Subject: A Commission portfolio for sport

Given, on the one hand, the growing child obesity rates in the EU 27, and on the other hand, the importance of life-long health as the EU population ages, the inclusion of sport as an EU competence under Lisbon is to be welcomed. To reflect the Treaty's strengthened recognition of the importance of sport, would the Council be supportive of any initiative to include sport explicitly in the portfolio of one of the incoming Commissioners?

Cecilia Malmström, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Sport activity is subject to the application of EU law today and, as the honourable Member rightly points out, when the Lisbon Treaty enters into force, it will provide the EU with a legal basis allowing it to contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues while taking into account the specific nature of sport, its structures, based on voluntary activities, and its social and educational function.

However, the Council cannot take a view on the internal organisation of the next Commission which, in line with the Treaty, is a matter for the President of the Commission.

I agree that sport and health go hand in hand. Sport activities also promote social cohesion, democracy and personal development. Sport is certainly also entertainment, both when the local football club is playing and when there are international competitions.

It is my belief that a free and independent sports movement also has a responsibility in societal matters such as public health and safeguarding democratic values.

The Swedish Presidency regards sports policy first and foremost as a national issue. One also has to be cautious with new suggestions and programmes which expand policies at EU level in a way which could damage already well-functioning systems such as the ones civic society has built up over the years.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Thank you very much firstly for taking my question: I appreciate it very much. Thank you also for your answer, which was comprehensive. I think you have outlined very clearly the value of sport, especially the health value of it, and I am quite sure that, when the Lisbon Treaty comes into being, we can walk hand in hand to ensure that sport, as a competence of the European Union, can get its fair share of promotion and publicity.

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Thank you for taking the question, because Mr Kelly is very shy and he has not said that he was a former President of the Gaelic Athletic Association, the most important sporting movement in Ireland, and that is why his interest is in sport. He has been very coy about that, but I thought you should know.

President. – Thank you very much for that point of information.

That concludes Question Time.

Questions which have not been answered for lack of time will be answered in writing (see Annex).

11. Parliamentary immunity: see Minutes

12. Composition of committees and delegations: see Minutes

13. State of play as regards SIS II and VIS (motions for resolutions tabled): see Minutes

14. Agenda of the next sitting: see Minutes

15. Closure of the sitting

(The sitting was closed at 19.05)