

WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2010

IN THE CHAIR: JERZY BUZEK

President

1. Opening of the sitting

(The sitting was opened at 09:05)

2. Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (motions for resolutions tabled): see Minutes

3. Implementing measures (Rule 88): see Minutes

4. Conclusions of the European Council meeting (28-29 October) and economic governance (debate)

President. – The next item is the key debate on the conclusions of the European Council meeting (28-29 October) and economic governance [2010/2654(RSP)].

I would like to welcome to the Chamber the President of the Council, Mr Van Rompuy, and the President of the Commission, Mr Barroso. Also present with us are representatives of the Belgian Presidency and the Commission. We will begin with the information which will be given to us by the President of the Council, Mr Van Rompuy.

Herman Van Rompuy, *President of the European Council.* – Mr President, the European Council meeting of 28/29 October focused on the economic governance of our Union, in particular with the report of the Task force on economic governance. The report which it endorsed and the events since then, and I refer in particular to Ireland, have illustrated the importance of the subject in general and of the need for the rapidly deployable financial mechanism we decided on in May, in particular.

I pay tribute to the speed of the action of the Finance Ministers over the last week and I underline that this illustrates the level of determination of our concern to safeguard the stability of the euro.

‘EU and euro-area financial support will be provided under a strong policy programme which will be negotiated with the Irish authorities by the Commission and the IMF, in liaison with the European Central Bank. [...] Given the strong fundamentals of the Irish economy, decisive implementation of the programme should allow a return to a robust and sustainable growth, safeguarding the economic and social cohesion.’ I am here quoting the Eurogroup and ECOFIN Ministers.

The task force was not an intergovernmental conference, but it was a review of our working methods, priorities and procedures in this field. We sought to get the right balance between, on the one hand, laying down an overall European framework regarding the need to avoid excessive fiscal deficits and economic imbalances inside the Union and, on the other hand, allowing national governments freely to choose what they want to tax and how they want to spend, in accordance with their national political procedures and European law.

We want to ensure that each Member State fully takes into account the impact of economic and fiscal decisions on its partners and on the stability of the European Union as a whole.

At the same time, we want to strengthen the capacity of the Union level to react when policies in a Member State present a risk to the rest of the Union.

These recommendations, like the others by the task force, are also extremely close to the Commission proposals. I also discussed these issues twice with the group leaders in the European Parliament and with the chairs of the competent committees, in accordance with the format you requested.

One clarification. Some people claim to be disappointed that there is not more automaticity in the decision making. Well, more automaticity is exactly what we propose. The Council – and it was the Council under the treaty – will decide on sanctions on the basis of a so-called ‘reversed majority’. This means a Commission proposal for sanctions stands unless a qualified majority vote against, whereas until now a majority had to approve the sanctions.

Only a few weeks ago, some Member States were very reluctant about the reversed majority. It really is a breakthrough; and furthermore the task force proposed a whole series of other measures aimed at strengthening the Stability Pact, such as more policy coordination – the European semester – sound statistics and independent fiscal councils.

Member States should feel that their policy decisions affect all their partners and the Union as a whole. This is the big lesson from the crisis. A general remark: the task force was a political framework aimed at rapidly generating consensus. All the breakthroughs we achieved now need to be translated into legislative texts. The work needs to be done by the Commission, the Council and Parliament. I trust all the institutions will keep up the momentum. It is a vital responsibility.

Regarding the third and final main element of the task force, this also brings me to the follow-up of the task force. We recommend a robust and credible permanent crisis mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area as a whole. All the Heads of State or Government agreed on that need and on the fact that it requires a limited treaty change.

Before concluding on this point, I would like to underline that the work on the Stability Pact is not simply about being punitive to Member States or about rectifying past mistakes. It is important to look at it in a wider context. We must not lose sight of the wider challenge of improving Europe’s structure and sustainable growth rates and a general economic performance.

This was the focus of the EU 2020 strategy agreed by the European Council earlier this year. The answer to those who fear that fiscal retrenchment will cut economic growth rates is to focus better on the underlying structural factors that hinder our economic performance and to remedy them. That will be the main objective of the European Council meetings of February and March next year.

The European Council also had a brief discussion on EU budgetary matters, stimulated, among other things, by the speech of your President at the opening of our meeting. We agreed to return to this in December.

In the meantime, our conclusions simply said, and I quote, ‘It is essential that the European Union budget and the forthcoming Multiannual Financial Framework reflect the consolidation efforts being made by Member States to bring deficit and debt into a more sustainable path. Respecting’ – and I stress this – ‘respecting the role of the different institutions and the need to meet Europe’s objectives, the European Council will discuss

at its next meeting how to ensure that spending at the European level can make an appropriate contribution to this work'.

Let me reassure you that we acknowledge the new role of Parliament in line with the Treaty of Lisbon. We did not, of course, take a position as the European Council on the 2011 budgetary procedure, as this is a matter for the Council of Ministers and Parliament.

As President of the European Council, I appeal to all parties concerned to continue their consultations in order to reach a compromise on the 2011 budget with the shortest delay possible. In a compromise the various concerns have to be taken on board, while of course respecting the treaties.

This European Council also served – as will be the case for all European Councils – to prepare common positions for the European Union ahead of major international events. In this case, our attention focused on the preparation of the G20, the Cancún climate change conference and a number of bilateral summits.

On the G20, which has, of course, now taken place, we agreed on the priorities, which were then promoted by the representatives of the Union and by the EU Member States that are members of the G20. These included securing approval of the Basel III Accords on capital requirements and on the reform of the IMF. Concerning the latter, I would like to emphasise that this landmark reform was made possible by the open and constructive approach by the Europeans. We gave up two seats in order to reach the final agreement, thus bearing a large part of the adjustment effort.

Concerning the question of imbalances in the global economy and exchange rate policy, discussions were tense in the run-up to the G20 meeting. The summit made a right analysis and agreed on a process. We welcome the decisions to establish a set of indicators on imbalances and the assessment that will be made in 2011. What is now crucial is to agree on policy conclusions and, if need be, corrective action on the basis of this assessment.

On Cancún, the European Council also prepared the EU position for the negotiations starting at the end of this month. Since Copenhagen last year, numerous talks have taken place – formal or informal – but they are slow and remain very difficult. Cancún will probably only be an intermediate step towards a global framework on tackling climate change. The European Union regrets this of course.

Finally, regarding our bilateral summits, the European Council discussed our priorities and strategies for the forthcoming summits, namely those with the United States, Russia, Ukraine, India and Africa. This is extremely useful for President Barroso and myself and ensures that on such occasions we are speaking not just for the Brussels institutions, but for the 27 as a whole. I intend to make this a regular feature of the European Council meetings.

Colleagues, that concludes my summary of the most recent meeting of the European Council, which took place nearly a month ago. I will, in any case, continue my practice of briefing the leaders of your political groups immediately, within a couple of hours after the end of each European Council meeting. I am looking forward to hearing your views.

José Manuel Barroso, *President of the Commission*. – Mr President, honourable Members, if a week is a long time in politics, a month can seem an eternity. A lot has happened since the last European Council, not least the recent events in Ireland. The action intended is a further, crucial step to safeguard the financial stability of Ireland, the euro area, and the

European Union as a whole. The two instruments we set up in May are effective tools that can do the job they are designed to do. Ireland has very specific issues to address, and these instruments are able to respond to that. This intervention should now allow the Irish economy to get back on the path to sustainable growth, drawing on its fundamental strengths.

The past few months have been a challenge. We have come a very long way, but the work is not yet complete. Our economic governance is being transformed. The Task Force chaired by President Van Rompuy has presented its results, which are very positive. Benefiting from significant inputs from the Commission, it has managed to achieve broad convergence on the Commission's legislative proposals, and also covered some other very important aspects of economic governance.

Crucially, stricter fiscal rules and broader economic surveillance – both cornerstones of the Commission package – have been preserved. I have stressed many times before the importance of having the new framework operational as soon as possible, so I was pleased that the European Council backed our idea for a 'fast track' approach, and set itself the objective of agreement on the Commission's legislative proposals by summer 2011.

It is notable that the questions voiced last September about the Commission putting legislative proposals on the table have now turned into a desire to fast-track those proposals. Now the normal legislative procedure must run its course over the coming months. I count on the Community method to work as well as it has always done, and help us strengthen economic governance in the euro area and in Europe.

It is my belief that we will end up with tough rules, based on adequate incentives for compliance, semi-automatic implementation and an effective framework to deal with broader macro-economic imbalances. We need reinforced and rigorous economic governance to achieve stable and sustainable growth, which is critical for the employment and welfare of our citizens.

A permanent crisis resolution mechanism for the euro area is an essential piece of this jigsaw. The temporary mechanism currently in force will expire in 2013, so it is vital that something credible, robust, lasting, and grounded in the essential technical realities is put in place by then. That is why the Commission has already started its preparatory work on the general features of a future new mechanism for the euro area. This mechanism, which we are preparing in close consultation with the President of the European Council, should be seen in the context of the overall effort to reinforce economic governance in the European Union and euro area.

I would like to make clear that even if the mechanism is funded from national budgets, it will remain a 'European' initiative, and will of course be able to draw on the expertise, independence and impartiality of the Commission to make it function. The mechanism will have three main components: a macro-economic adjustment programme, a financing arrangement, and private sector involvement. The latter can take many forms, but first and foremost I want to make clear that, whatever is decided on private sector involvement, it will only apply after 2013.

The Heads of State or Government decided unanimously that treaty change is required to establish this mechanism. When we concluded the Treaty of Lisbon last year, nobody imagined someone would be proposing new changes so soon. We all know that this is never an easy process, and we all understand the risks. That is one of the reasons why I

explained – during the European Council and even before – that we should not accept a revision of the treaty that calls into question the voting rights of Member States. I am happy that this argument was accepted, and that any revision will be a limited – indeed a surgical – one.

It also makes sense for us to have as straightforward a process as possible. That is why I would caution against the temptation to start linking this to other, unconnected subjects.

All this action is not taking place in a vacuum. The European Council, the G20 summit, the EU/US Summit in Lisbon last weekend: all are staging posts, part of our larger plan to restore Europe to stability and growth. We will speak about the G20 summit in the next debate in this House, so let me for now concentrate very briefly on the very important EU/US Summit in Lisbon.

The atmosphere at the summit was intimate, friendly, and focused. Together with President Van Rompuy, we agreed with President Obama on the need for a transatlantic agenda for growth and jobs, including regulatory convergence and early consultations on issues like competitiveness and global reform. We have tasked the Ministers and Commissioners with moving this concrete work forward, notably through the Transatlantic Economic Forum.

The global economy, the G20 and emerging economies were also very much on the agenda. My point is this: the European Union will only be able to achieve its objectives if we activate all policy areas; if we capitalise on the relationship we have with all our key partners; if we use the leverage available to us in an integrated way at all levels – at national, European and global level. One thing is clear: we will have more influence on the outside if we are capable of reaching agreement among ourselves, within the European Union. In this respect, I am concerned that some of the more recent positioning has not contributed to the focus and coherence of our joint action.

I think that the progress that we have achieved so far on economic governance is an indication that we can, with sufficient political will on all sides, make Europe a stronger force in the world for the benefit of our citizens, but for this let us be clear that we need political will and we need a sense of common purpose, not only from the European institutions, but from all our Member States. That is an appeal I want to make today: more coherence, more convergence, more common purpose.

Joseph Daul, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, an opinion poll I read yesterday in a newspaper states that 70% of French people believe that they are still in the midst of a crisis and that it has not yet been resolved. I am sure that a broader survey in Europe would generate the same results.

We must therefore address our citizens' valid concerns. They are living in difficult times and cannot tolerate the slow and complex decision-making process at European and global level. Many of these people have also asked me what we are doing and what Europe is doing for them and their family. People are scared. At the same time, I see that more and more politicians and more and more countries, even in this House, are using, manipulating and exploiting this fear and this anxiety and do not have any proposals.

This populist approach, which is corrupting our policy, is serious, and I should like to mention here that this is not the way to resolve the real and serious problems facing our countries and Europe in the world. I believe that it is up to the political parties and the parliamentary groups that are against such populism and demagoguery to speak out more.

No, the answer to the crisis is not to shy away from it or resort to protectionism. No, there is no fast or easy solution to the crisis we are facing. No, it is not possible to turn our back on solidarity or on efforts to strengthen all our countries in the face of globalisation and then realise, in the end, that we need partners when times are tough.

We must learn some lessons from what is happening in Ireland, and this is not a criticism of Ireland, President of the Council, President of the Commission. We must learn lessons, because the difficulties that that country is facing are due not only to the banks but also to the current government's fiscal and economic policy over the years. The Celtic Tiger, which was solely responsible for its own growth, with an atypical tax system, minimal banking regulation and an investment code unlike that of any other country in the European Union, is today witnessing a collapse of its property bubble, household debt, record unemployment and a crippled banking sector. The Irish Government has guaranteed the whole banking system, committing EUR 480 billion, or three times its GDP, which increases its public deficit to 32%.

Today, the Irish Government has called for and rightly obtained European solidarity. I welcome this and, as Commissioner Rehn said in this very Parliament on Monday, the aid Ireland should soon receive will safeguard the stability of the whole euro area. Yet has this European solidarity, which Dublin is rightly receiving today, as it did when it joined the EU, been shown over the years by the Irish Government itself?

How many times have Member States tried to align taxation – a prerequisite, as is all too evident today, for good governance of the euro? And every time the same few countries oppose it.

I am not pointing the finger at anyone, but I believe that it is time for us to learn from such behaviour for the future. As I have said several times in this House, a crisis signifies an opportunity for change, and we must not be afraid to change some of our customs, which have not had the positive effect we were counting on.

Ladies and gentlemen, the measures adopted by the European Council a few weeks ago and the guidelines agreed at the G20 in Seoul represent a step in the right direction, but they do not go far enough. In other words, there needs to be an awareness of the need for cooperation in Europe and among major regional blocs in order to address the instability of financial markets and trade imbalances and also to avoid a currency war.

We all know that, on all these issues, our countries alone will be unable to find a viable long-term solution to meet the expectations of the 500 million Europeans, who, as I said at the beginning, are expecting their politicians – that is to say all of us here and back home in our capitals – to make forward-looking decisions.

President of the Council, if the crisis has taught us anything, it is that yesterday's solutions are not necessarily those of tomorrow. We are paying a high price realising this in a time of crisis, but we will pay an even higher price if we continue to ignore it. I call on the European institutions and the governments of our Member States to change, to learn political lessons from the crisis, and to stop seeking solidarity only when it is too late.

Mr President, I would like to add one last thing. This is not a question of the Council and Parliament fighting against one another; it is a question of implementing the treaties, of showing solidarity, and of working hand in hand. This is the message I should like to get across to you so that we might overcome the crisis for the sake of our fellow citizens.

Martin Schulz, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (DE) Mr President, as I listened to the President of the European Council, I heard a different tone to that of the President of the Commission. The President of the Council has given us a report, and Mr Van Rompuy, if I allow myself to succumb to its spell then I can really only come to the conclusion that everything is hunky dory. If I listen to Mr Barroso, however, I get more of an impression that – and I quote – ‘some of the more recent positioning has not contributed to coherence’. That is what the President of the Commission said about the Council, which you are telling us is in complete harmony.

No, the reality in Europe is somewhat different. The reality in Europe is that the EU is divided into three parts: the German-French decision makers, the rest of the euro area and the remainder that does not belong to the euro area, with a special position for the United Kingdom. That is the reality in Europe.

The United Kingdom’s special position also needs to be looked at in particular. The German-French Merkel-Sarkozy decision-making partnership has done a deal with Mr Cameron. Everyone knows that and it also needs to be said openly. The deal goes like this: ‘I need a revision of the treaty for the Stability Pact’. ‘OK’, says Mr Cameron, ‘that is not easy for me because I have backbenchers in the House of Commons who do not want this, but then I will get a different budget’. Mrs Merkel and Mr Sarkozy then say ‘good, let us do that’.

That is the reality in Europe. Not only does that have nothing to do with Community spirit, it is an approach that will destroy the coherence of the European Union, and in the long term it will also destroy the European Union. I fear that there are some people who want that to happen. They applaud this enthusiastically. These Members are sitting over there.

(Applause)

If we do not want these people to call the shots on this continent in future, we must take Europe in a different direction.

(Heckling)

I will attempt to continue. Mr Langen is always very excitable. The reform of the Stability Pact in the EU is being made dependent on the agreement of a country that does not even belong to the euro area. Mrs Merkel is consenting to a revision of the treaty at a time when no one in this House can predict what will happen in Ireland. Moreover, I do not know whether the revision of the EU Treaty will be accepted in Ireland as smoothly as it would seem from your report on the European Council.

Mrs Merkel says that the private sector must be included. I would just like to put a question to you, Mr Rehn, regarding the private sector in Ireland. How was it actually possible for the Irish banks to pass the stress tests? Could you explain that to us?

What Mrs Merkel is doing constitutes a stress test for the euro. I will tell you what is going on: the involvement of the private sector is a good thing, and it is right for it to be involved. In the European Parliament – and I stand by this – we decided, with broad consensus, on a way of involving the private sector, namely the introduction of a Europe-wide financial transaction tax.

(Applause)

This was briefly discussed at the G8 summit, and then they said: 'no, we do not want a financial transaction tax'. We then said 'OK, we will forget about it then'. In the afternoon over coffee, the financial transaction tax was buried. If there was a way of involving the private sector that would actually have an effect on this private sector then this would be it. People are now saying that the United Kingdom does not want it. Does the United Kingdom actually decide everything in Europe? What if we started with a financial transaction tax in the euro area first, for example, and said that we would collect dues from the private financial sector within the euro area in this way.

(Heckling)

I will just repeat what he said so that the interpreter can say it: 'one people, one empire, one leader'. That was what this man said.

I am almost finished. It is just that when this Member walks through the Chamber and shouts 'one people, one empire, one leader', I have only one thing to say: the people who said that in Germany are people whose way of thinking is one that I am fighting to combat, but I believe that this gentleman's views are closer to this way of thinking than mine are.

Joseph Daul (PPE). – *(FR) (addressing Mr Bloom)* I cannot accept what you said. We live in a democratic age and under a democratic system. I would ask you to make an official apology, or else we are going to make a formal complaint. There are people who have said less than that – it is not right.

(Applause)

He very nearly added that concentration camps were being set up to resolve the issue.

President. – Dear colleagues, we must go ahead. I will take it into account. Let me read you Rule 152(1) of the Rules of Procedure: 'The President shall call to order any Member who disrupts the smooth conduct of the proceedings or whose conduct fails to comply with the relevant provisions of Rule 9'. I will ask you, colleague, to apologise to the Chamber.

Godfrey Bloom (EFD). – The views expressed by Herr Schulz meet the case. He is an undemocratic fascist.

President. – Colleagues, we expected something quite different. We do not want our discussion to be disturbed in such a way. I will call you, colleague, to a meeting with me and we must take a decision on the next steps.

It is impossible to hold our discussions in such an atmosphere. Colleague, as you see, the Chamber is protesting very deeply against your behaviour. I shall read Article 152(3) in my mother tongue.

'Should the disturbance continue, or if a further offence is committed, the offender may be denied the right to speak and may be excluded from the Chamber for the remainder of the sitting by the President. The President may also resort to the latter measure immediately and without a second call to order in cases of exceptional seriousness. The Secretary-General shall, without delay, see to it that such disciplinary measures are carried out, with the assistance of the ushers and, if necessary, of Parliament's security service.'

Mr Bloom, as you see, the majority of Members in the Chamber find your behaviour completely unacceptable. Your behaviour is also unacceptable to me. In view of this, I must ask you to leave the Chamber.

As you know, you can discuss and you can express your opinion, but not so as to disturb each other. Otherwise we cannot keep order in our Chamber.

Guy Verhofstadt, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, firstly I believe that what has happened is very serious. I also believe that the political groups must respond today with a common position on this issue and I hope that all the political groups, excluding, of course, the group of the Member concerned, are very clear in supporting the steps that you have taken to prevent this from ever happening again.

(Applause)

I believe that what Mr Daul said about Ireland – because he has fully analysed Ireland's situation – is completely true, but I should nonetheless like to say to him that, if at the beginning of the financial crisis we had established a European rescue plan for the banks in October 2008, as was tabled by the Commission but rejected by the Member States, Ireland would never have faced the problems it is facing today. That proposal was rejected in October 2008 with the words, 'No, it is unnecessary. We in Germany have enough money to resolve our problems ourselves.' Well, we saw what the outcome of that was.

Secondly, I should like to address the current issue, because there is still tension surrounding it. As far as I am concerned, I hope that the euro will stabilise again tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, because it has yet to do so. I therefore believe that what the President of the European Central Bank and Mr Rehn said yesterday must be taken very seriously.

I believe that what Mr Trichet said during yesterday's debate – there were not many people present during the debate – is very significant. He said that the package was not enough to restore stability in the euro area. We in Parliament therefore have a special responsibility because we are joint decision makers in all these areas. This must be taken seriously. In fact, what exactly is the problem? Nowhere in the world is there a currency that is not supported by a government, a single economic policy, a strategy, and a single bond market. We believe, in the euro area, that it is possible to act with 16 governments, 16 bond markets, and 16 different economic policies; I believe that this is the basis on which we must act and the conclusion that we must reach. We must go beyond the Council's decisions. Mr Rehn, I even believe that we must go beyond the Commission's proposals, and we must support Mr Trichet.

If Mr Trichet, who is, after all, responsible for the stability of the euro, calls on Parliament and the other European authorities to strengthen the package, the only decision we can make for the financial markets is to strengthen the package, communitise, introduce fully automatic sanctions – which are not in place at the moment – and create a bond market in euros. The differences between Greece and Germany and between Ireland and Germany are not going to disappear if there is no single bond market. A truly effective additional sanction could also be introduced for countries failing to adhere to the stability pact.

Finally, I should like to say that we need the kind of real economic governance that stimulates investment, and if the German Government calls for Article 136 of the treaty to be changed for this purpose, then let us change it, but let us also do what is necessary and include real economic governance and fully automatic sanctions in Article 136 in the future. Let us turn these changes to the treaty before us into a real opportunity to prepare the euro for the future, that is to say by establishing economic governance in the euro area and in the European Union.

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

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD). – Mr President, in the event that the Commission gets the economic governance which it is seeking and which you are seeking for it, is it then your contention, Mr Verhofstadt, that the Commission would always make the right decisions?

Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE). – Mr President, I think I have more confidence in the intention of the European Commission to take measures against countries that do not apply the Stability Pact than in the Council itself where the Heads of Governments are. I spent nine years in the Council, and I have never seen a country pointing the finger at another country and saying ‘you are not applying the Stability Pact’.

We saw it in 2004 and 2005 with France and Germany. They did not apply the Stability Pact, and there was no sanction against either country. That is the reason why the European Commission, which is the communitarian institution and really follows the method of Monnet and Schuman, has to take the lead in this.

Barry Madlener (NI). – (NL) Mr President, that is right. I was unable to intervene when you excluded from the Chamber our fellow Member from the UK Independence Party (UKIP), but I should nevertheless like to object to the biased implementation of the rules. Mr Schulz called my colleague, Mr van der Stoep, a fascist here in this Chamber and you did nothing; no apologies were forthcoming. No action was taken against Mr Schulz. What Mr Schulz is doing now is exactly the same ...

(The speaker continued but his microphone was switched off)

President. – I must bring this conversation to an end. If you have any doubts about what has taken place, you can come to me about it. I am willing to talk with you. We will talk about it together.

Mr Farage, as you know, I asked you also to discuss some very important points and I used my personal intervention for you. I expressed to you my point of view and you knew everything about my point of view. From this point of view, I also asked you if you had any doubt on my decision.

Rebecca Harms, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group.* – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it is rather difficult to speak in this highly-charged atmosphere. It is also to some extent a demonstration of the situation in which the European Union could find itself if we do not once again formulate European policy in a more careful and more resolute way. My view, Mr Schulz, is that the problem is not the small changes to the treaty that Germany wants and needs – because the financial crisis is not a natural disaster. Rather, the problem is that, in this crisis, the European Council, and in particular the representatives of the large countries in the European Council, are no longer in a position to ensure that a positive spark from the Brussels meeting spreads out into society within the Member States of the European Union. I find it truly bizarre how quickly this pro-European spirit has been lost. I also find it bizarre that Germany of all countries, which benefited so much from solidarity in our distant and more recent common past, is no longer able to lead us away from a debate that is today characterised by egotism and small-mindedness and towards a discussion of why it is right that the Member States in Europe have linked their fate so closely with one another and why the Council and you too, Mr Van Rompuy, no longer succeed in explaining to citizens, whose uncertainty Mr Daul described so well, why it will only be possible to overcome this crisis if we work together rather than competing against one another. The complete absence of this spirit is one of our problems.

The second is that there has been no honest political statement about the fact that we are not rescuing all the Greeks or all the Irish people, we are rescuing the banks in each case, and that Ireland is not only an Irish crisis, it is also a German crisis and a British crisis, even if this is a message you may not necessarily want to hear. I believe that this honesty will provide the basis for persuading citizens to actually support what is decided in Brussels during these times of crisis.

My third point is that I think Mr Verhofstadt is absolutely right. Economic governance is what needs to take shape now. We all know that. No matter how often the Council or the Commission declare that they want to take the necessary steps as soon as possible, alarm bells ring with me, because it is precisely this lack of a pro-European spirit of solidarity that will mean that these necessary and logical steps for integration will not be taken. It is one thing to talk now about tax dumping in Ireland. Something needs to change here. How this is to be done is another question. When, and within what timeframe, is yet another one. Overall, however, the Member States need to coordinate their tax policies, otherwise things will not continue to go well in the European Union.

There is one discussion that we should take seriously because it has also been given prominence: the involvement of creditors, the restructuring of debt, including among those who were the direct cause of the crisis. I have to tell you, it is extremely difficult for me to judge what is right and what is wrong in this regard. We know that the countdown has begun for Spain and Portugal. We know that it is only a matter of time until they will also be looking for solidarity and crisis management. I do not know whether we would be doing ourselves a favour if we now involve the creditors or whether it would not now be better in fact to say that we want this economic governance, we want strict regulation of the banking sector, we want the financial transaction tax or capital levies for those who are profiting from the crisis. This is something that we need to weigh up together. There is absolutely no point in acting as if no decision needs to be made here. Thank you for your attention.

(The President cut off the speaker)

Kay Swinburne, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, for once the two main topics being discussed by the European Council and the media back in my Welsh constituency are one and the same. Firstly, how will the EU cope with the situation in Ireland and secondly, how to resolve the impasse of the EU budget. In Wales we fully appreciate the EU funds received and all my constituents appreciate the need for a stable eurozone. However, the differences between the way the two topics are discussed in Cardiff and in Brussels are pronounced.

In Brussels within the European Parliament, we take the two issues and discuss them separately. The European Parliament's response and that of the Council to save the euro is that we need improved economic governance, more rules for national governments and enforcement via fines and sanctions.

In Cardiff, my capital city – and I am sure in Dublin – while for the budget we conclude that there is a need for Member States to stop being selfish and put more Europe over the needs of their own countries, it all comes back to how and where taxpayers' money should be spent. People know that austerity packages are necessary. They are told just how indebted their countries are every day. They know tough decisions have to be made, but they also want to decide how their hard earned money gets spent. Being asked to give up even more money to funding EU projects through an increased EU budget at a time when they are

being asked to give up a slice of their public sector pensions, or even in some cases basic welfare provisions that they have come to depend on, is for many constituents a step too far.

When the EU itself recognises that it has not done a good enough job at enforcing its own rules and standards within the eurozone, it hardly gives citizens much incentive to give it even more money. During these times of strict public spending, and as we review rules on economic governance for Member States, we within the European Parliament need to respect the pressures that Member States are under and accept that all non-urgent projects of EU institutions should be deferred to allow the setting of an EU budget that reflects our troubled economic times.

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

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD). – Mr President, does the speaker appreciate that the so-called EU funds which she referred to as having been received by her constituents are simply the UK's own money being returned, but being returned only in part and after the European Union has skimmed off its croupier's share? Does the lady appreciate or understand that?

Kay Swinburne (ECR). – Mr President, as the gentleman knows, I fully appreciate where the money comes from and who the net payers are to the EU budget. However, my constituents in Wales just see that they get investment in crucial projects when they actually have a GDP lower than any other region in the UK. So I will defend the EU's spend in my constituency every day.

Lothar Bisky, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (DE) Mr President, if the Heads of State or Government have agreed to create a permanent crisis mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area, I can only welcome that. The results of the work, lasting several months, of Mr Van Rompuy's Task Force on economic governance leave a great deal to be desired – although my views on them vary. The attempt is being made to carry out as stringent a control on the budgets as possible in order to avoid long-term deficits, but the cautious recovery from the crisis will immediately be put at risk again by the radical cutting of public expenditure. That is not only completely counterproductive, I also think it is absurd. It seems that we have learnt nothing from our past experience with the Stability and Growth Pact. You cannot impose additional monetary penalties on a country that is already heavily in debt. The bail-out ban and the Stability and Growth Pact destroy the solidarity between the States in the monetary union.

Does the economy dictate our policies? Once again, the consequences of the crisis will be borne by the people. We can expect wage dumping and social dumping, cuts in the education sector and a rise in unemployment. This will further increase the burden of the countries affected and make their recovery more difficult. It makes absolutely no sense to increase the pressure on countries like Ireland, Greece or Portugal. Rather, the large economic disparities in Europe should be reduced, in other words we need economic governance. We want a social and fair Europe, built on the principle of solidarity. The precedence of policy over economy must be retained or restored.

Nigel Farage, *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – Mr President, Mr Van Rompuy has been in office for one year, and in that time the whole edifice is beginning to crumble. There is chaos. The money is running out. I should thank Mr Van Rompuy. He should perhaps be the pin-up boy of the Eurosceptic movement.

But just look around this Chamber this morning, Mr Van Rompuy. Just look at these faces. Look at the fear. Look at the anger. Poor old Barroso here looks like he has seen a ghost. You know, they are beginning to understand that the game is up and yet, in their desperation to preserve their dream, they want to remove any remaining traces of democracy from the system. It is pretty clear that none of you have learned anything. When you yourself, Mr Van Rompuy, say that the euro has brought us stability, I suppose I could applaud you for having a sense of humour. But is this not really just the bunker mentality?

Your fanaticism is out in the open. You talked about the fact that it was a lie to believe that the nation state could exist in the 21st-century globalised world. Well, that may be true in the case of Belgium – which has not had a government for six months – but for the rest of us, right across every Member State in this Union (and perhaps this is why we see the fear in the faces), people are increasingly saying: ‘We don’t want that flag, we don’t want the anthem, we don’t want this political class, we want the whole thing consigned to the dustbin of history’.

We had the Greek tragedy earlier on this year, and now we have the situation in Ireland. I know that the stupidity and greed of Irish politicians has a lot to do with this. They should never have joined the euro. They suffered with low interest rates, a false boom and a massive bust. But look at your response to them. What they are being told, as their government is collapsing, is that it would be inappropriate for them to have a general election. In fact, Commissioner Rehn here said they had to agree their budget first before they would be allowed to have a general election.

Just who the hell do you people think you are? You are very dangerous people indeed. Your obsession with creating this euro-state means that you are happy to destroy democracy. You appear to be happy for millions of people to be unemployed and to be poor. Untold millions must suffer so that your euro-dream can continue.

Well it will not work, because it is Portugal next. With their debt levels of 325% of GDP, they are the next ones on the list. After that, I suspect it will be Spain. The bailout for Spain would be seven times the size of Ireland’s, and at that moment, all the bailout money will have gone. There will not be any more.

But it is even more serious than economics, because if you rob people of their identity, if you rob them of their democracy, then all they are left with is nationalism and violence. I can only hope and pray that the euro project is destroyed by the markets before that really happens.

Angelika Werthmann (NI). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, in order to overcome the present financial crisis we need fundamental changes to economic responsibility in Europe: an increase in financial discipline, monitoring of economic policy and an improvement in the coordination of crisis management. Strengthening the Stability and Growth Pact would inevitably lead to an increase in economic responsibility.

Successive sanctions could come into play at an early stage in the budgetary surveillance process and account would be taken of the deficit criterion and public debt. Finally, a new crisis mechanism means, among other things, that banks and insurance providers, for example, can be held accountable. I call on these institutions to be more responsible towards taxpayers.

I would just like to say one more thing regarding Cancún. The EU wants to speak with one voice. These difficult times in particular provide an opportunity to invest in renewable energies and energy efficiency, for example, and in so doing improve the environment as well as our growth policy.

Marianne Thyssen (PPE). – (NL) Mr President, Mr Van Rompuy, Mr Barroso, ladies and gentlemen, what with the banking crisis, the economic crisis and the crisis situations in public finances, we have really learned, and experienced more than ever, what crises are in the last two-and-a-half years. To date, the reactions by the authorities, especially at European level, have been good. The existence and resistance of the euro and also the precise action of the European Central Bank have prevented the situation escalating. ‘Strength in unity’, we have learned in Europe, and solidarity works. However, the current state of affairs proves that we must continue to make structural adjustments and that we really need to move towards economic governance. Even if the euro lulled us to sleep quite a bit, President of the European Council, let us see the seriousness of this crisis as a wake-up call to make full use of our European strength in future. Strict rules and sufficient enforcement mechanisms are needed for the financial sector, the public budgets and the debt, and also for the correction of macro-economic imbalances. They are needed in order to restore confidence, boost competitiveness, promote economic growth and increase opportunities for jobs and prosperity. I hope that no one is deterred by stringent measures for fear of the European Union being depicted as the bogeyman by the Member States, as the truth is that Member States need external pressure, possibly even a bogeyman, because they cannot cope with the task alone in the age of globalisation. President of the European Council, the conclusions we have read, which are the work of your task force to a very great extent, will put the Union on the path towards the necessary structural adjustments, and in that respect we welcome them. I have two questions, however. The first is that more than half of the governance package must be decided on using codecision, yet you are asking for fast-track procedures to be used in the decision making. I wonder, then, whether you are leaving the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Ecofin) sufficient scope to negotiate with Parliament and to allow Parliament to play its role to the full, as that is what we want. Secondly, and finally, the European Council opposes automatism in the system of sanctions: no treaty amendment, no opening of Pandora’s box. On the other hand, however, you yourself are proposing to amend the treaty to enable the creation of the permanent crisis mechanism, a mechanism we need. Where does that leave Pandora, I ask myself. Thank you in advance for your answers.

IN THE CHAIR: LIBOR ROUČEK

Vice-President

Stephen Hughes (S&D). – Mr President, I am sure one thing we can all agree on is that Heads of State or Government are extremely busy men and women. I find it extremely puzzling, therefore, that they come together every three months or so and waste a tremendous amount of time and money to decide very little in the face of a crisis which is doubly underlined by what has just happened in Ireland.

Just look at the idea of a financial transaction tax. It was on the agenda of the March summit, the June Summit and the October Summit, with each Council batting it on to the next Council. It has now been batted on to the December Council and presumably beyond that, way on into the future. We urgently need a leap forward in economic governance; we need vision and action, mutual solidarity and close coordination. But instead, all we are getting

is confusion, hesitation and mutual mistrust, which leads to permanent instability instead of stability.

Some things are clear. First, a further tightening of the Stability and Growth Pact will not be enough. Worse still, there is a considerable danger that the new system as proposed will end up being procyclical and therefore counterproductive for growth and jobs. Second, economic and monetary union needs to be made far more effective through truly balanced and effective economic policy coordination, not just surveillance and sanctioning. Third, in one way or another, there needs to be a system of common debt management for at least a share of public debt – maybe up to 60% of GDP.

The economic benefits of such a system of eurobonds are huge and clear. President van Rompuy, you are on record as having said that you are not fond of politicians with a vision. I think you prefer practical action: I understand that. But I think you can now begin to move to bring the two together. I hope the path is clear and that the FTT and a balanced system of economic policy coordination are beyond mere surveillance and common debt management. I think it is time, President van Rompuy, for vision and action.

Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE). – (DE) Mr President, there is one thing that it is important for citizens, too, to understand: the European Union is not in debt. We are talking here about a debt crisis in our Member States. The European Union is the only political level in Europe that is debt free. I would also like it to remain that way. However, we are joined together in a shared destiny by the euro. In this regard, Mrs Harms and Mr Schulz rightly lamented the lack of European spirit. Deauville was a mistake. Germany and France have been blackmailed by the United Kingdom. The Commission must impose the sanctions, not the finance ministers. Mr Van Rompuy, the automatic nature of the sanctions during the preventive phase was sacrificed in Deauville. The finance ministers must take the decision again here. These are the ones who were previously responsible for triggering the financial crisis and the debt crisis in the Member States.

What is economic governance? Everyone is talking about economic governance, but what does it actually mean in specific terms? Do we really want the European Union to interfere in the details of our labour market and social policy? There is a big question mark here. Setting the legal framework for entrepreneurship, stimulating growth, they are all well and good, but above all putting public finances in order once again in the Member States – that is the challenge. That is why the European Semester is so important, and that is why it must be implemented.

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

Martin Schulz (S&D). – (DE) Mr Graf Lambsdorff, you are, of course, a member of the Federal Executive Committee of the Free Democratic Party. Is your assertion that Deauville was a mistake also the opinion of the leader of your party and the Vice-Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, or is it your personal opinion? May we take that as the opinion of the FDP or just as the opinion of Mr Graf Lambsdorff?

Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE). – (DE) Mr President, of course I am happy to answer that. Mr Schulz is, of course, also a member of the Bureau of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and will also occasionally make statements here which are probably not entirely congruent. There is, however, one thing I would like to say, and it is that, if Mr Schulz can show me who from the FDP was present in Deauville, I would be grateful to him. We made a relatively clear statement on this at the end of the summit.

I believe that the key point, namely actually relinquishing the automatic nature of the sanctions in the preventive phase, was criticised by us in no uncertain terms. If we get the change to the treaty, this will be rectified retrospectively. However, the decision made in Deauville was clearly a mistake.

Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE). – (FR) Mr President, for the past 25 years, too many Member States have been living with an economic growth model that is essentially based on debt – both public and private debt. The problem is that this debt primarily funded financial speculation and consumption rather than investment, at the very time when the rest of the world, such as China, Brazil and India, was beginning to invest. Perhaps history books will describe this as the moment when Europe really lost its way.

It does not have to be like this, however. Of course, we need strong European economic governance, but first we need to deal with the havoc caused by this debt. If we believe that we can resolve the problem by simply cutting back on public spending, then we are not facing up to reality. We will not overcome this crisis without restructuring and rescheduling the debt where it has exceeded sustainable levels and the debtors cannot realistically pay it back.

We need to be clear here. The debtors and the creditors are both responsible for the accumulation of debt. Indeed, the debtors borrowed beyond their means, but the creditors loaned irresponsibly in the hope of making substantial, risk-free profits, since the taxpayer would, of course, always be there to see them through.

Thus, the debtors and creditors alike will have to participate in these efforts, and if we do not ensure that this happens, we will condemn ourselves to a Japanese-type scenario, that is to say a slump in the European Union. I believe that the citizens of this continent deserve much better than that.

Vicky Ford (ECR). – Mr President, this is a debate about economic governance. Across Europe many countries, including my own, face difficult economic times. This weekend, the EU and the UK extended support to our friends across the Irish Sea. This is not a time for the European Parliament to indulge in name-calling or finger-pointing, but it is a time for learning from our mistakes and making better decisions in the future.

Last week, in the middle of November, Greece amended its December year-end accounts for the third time. I hope we have finally drawn a line under those accounts. If there was ever a good reason for countries to ensure better accounting and forecasting, that was it.

The European Council has gone a long way in their detailed plans for sharing of information during the European Semester. It needs to be put into practice. Yes, we should share good practice between different countries, but also recognise that not all countries are the same and good economic governance can be achieved in different ways but for the benefit of all.

Bairbre de Brún (GUE/NGL). – (GA) Mr President, with the IMF, the European Central Bank and the Commission introducing onerous conditions, it is clear that billions of euros of cutbacks are being introduced in Ireland. Jobs will be lost, public services will be significantly curtailed, and income tax will be raised for people on low wages. The banks will keep their profits while the poor, the sick, pensioners and other vulnerable groups will be the losers in all of this. Aid from Europe this is not, and therefore we strongly oppose it.

Instead of seeking a mandate to introduce these cuts, after the IMF and the EU had examined the account books, the Irish Government decided that there would be no election until this budget had been enacted. There was another way to go, and the Irish Government chose not to go that way. They decided to act for the benefit of their friends in the banks and not for that of the plain people of Ireland.

Mario Borghezio (EFD). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the ears of the President of the European Central Bank, Mr Trichet, must really be burning as this debate continues. If we were in the ancient Roman senate, a senator would surely stand up in his toga and say to Mr Trichet: *‘Quousque tandem abutere, Trichete, patientia nostra?’* – how long are you going to try our patience, Mr Trichet?

In effect, we must ask ourselves whether the right road is to avoid the dissolution of the euro – a very difficult task – or instead prevent the rescue of the euro from ruining the economies of our Member States after the europhile policies of Mr Prodi and so on have destroyed our industries, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, in Padania for example, bringing only redundancies and unemployment benefit.

Why should the countries which are surviving the crisis be bled dry to the tune of almost EUR 100 billion to save Ireland which, with its policy of 12.5% business tax, has until now been competing unfairly with the other countries?

Where was European governance if, one month after passing its stress tests, the Anglo Irish Bank plunged to a deficit of EUR 8 billion? Where was Mr Trichet? Are we sure that the Irish bailout does not violate the Treaty of Maastricht? Fortunately there is a constitutional court in Germany that will declare that the absorption of another country's deficit onto Germany's books is unconstitutional. So it is time to say bye-bye euro, bye-bye euro.

Werner Langen (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, I have heard a lot of criticism of the Deauville decision here, but everyone knows that, at the start of the last meeting of your Task Force, Mr Van Rompuy there were still 20 items outstanding. As they are subject to the principle of unanimity, a solution had to be found. Everyone knows that. Everyone also knows that the two largest Member States, Germany and France, are the ones who sinned against the Stability and Growth Pact in 2004, although at that time, as we also know, there was a Social Democrat/Green federal government in Germany. Mr Schulz's scolding is therefore completely uncalled for.

If we are saying today that the Stability and Growth Pact should have more bite, the first prerequisite for this is that the Member States finally abide by this Pact. What is the point of it having more bite if no one sticks to it? There has been a lack of compliance here. We have six legislative proposals, two of which are Council regulations and four are joint regulations of the Council and the European Parliament. I just do not understand some of this complaining. We will have our say in the codecision procedure. On behalf of my group, I can say that we will support the Commission's proposals in this area. Then we will negotiate on this matter again with the Council. This is the reality. Why are we so unassuming and insult third parties who are part of this legislative process instead of exercising our own rights.

Allow me to say something about the necessity of amendments to the treaty. In my opinion, the treaty was stretched to its limits on 9 May. A justification of the rescue package in accordance with Article 122 is required. The fact that the Member States do not want this

because the Commission and Parliament could then possibly get involved is, in my opinion, a mistake. It will not be sufficient to amend Article 136; rather we need a solid legal basis for the rescue package and then all the other issues will resolve themselves.

Elisa Ferreira (S&D). – *(PT)* Mr President, let us be frank. The solidarity mechanism for sovereign debt has not worked and does not work, the price of Greek debt has not fallen, Ireland is in economic turmoil and contagion has not been contained. When a process was set up it was done too late. It is intergovernmental and should have existed in another format from the time that the euro was initially created.

The President of the Commission is now proposing a consolidation of this system. However, the involvement of the private sector is suggested for a third of the instruments that are proposed. We had already heard that proposal made to Chancellor Merkel, and the markets soared as a result of that premature and untimely announcement. Parliament will use all its powers and the greatest responsibility and spirit of cooperation in the codecision process accompanying the legislative package on economic governance, but it will not do so by sacrificing urgency and speed, putting quality in second place. To be clear, therefore, Parliament will actively participate, but a matter as serious as resolving sovereign debt cannot be decided as a marginal issue or without the involvement of the European public and its representatives; the two elements go hand in hand.

Lastly, we Europeans need a clear European vision in this time of crisis. There needs to be a European mechanism for consolidating sovereign debt. Eurobonds need to be issued and the euro area must be protected in a sustainable way through European, not intergovernmental, systems. The European budget needs to be strengthened, as we cannot continue with 1% of the level of the European budget, and growth and real convergence should be at the heart of Europe's political priorities. The Commission and the new President must uphold this agenda. The President of the Commission cannot be beholden to the Ecofin Council. This is what we need to show the European public.

Mirosław Piotrowski (ECR). – *(PL)* Mr President, the crisis in the euro area is a fact. Testimony to the seriousness of the situation are the efforts which are even being made to change the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, which was adopted amid such great opposition. On the one hand, it is easy to understand the position of Germany and France, which do not want to pay for the crisis in Greece or Ireland and perhaps other countries. On the other hand, attention should be drawn to the precedent related to the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. In principle, it was supposed to improve the operation of the European Union. Quite clearly, the exact opposite has happened.

Since, however, we are forced to amend the Treaty of Lisbon, this should concern not only issues related to the euro area, but also issues related to other institutional mechanisms which are experiencing difficulties. Many economists are saying that the Greek crisis would not exist on a European scale if Greece had retained its own currency, whose exchange rate would then have been reduced significantly. This shows that national currencies would have given the Union more stability than the euro area has done.

Mario Mauro (PPE). – *(IT)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to make a political assessment of what has been said during this debate.

Quite rightly, we the members of the main European political families criticise Eurosceptics because they do not believe in Europe. However, I believe that the real problem is that perhaps we do not believe in Europe ourselves, so we cannot blame the Eurosceptics for

what is really our own responsibility. We are the main European political families and we have always held strong, ambitious European ideals. It is a fact, however, that all the governments that are an expression of our political families put spanners in the works every day, so that these grand political projects can be realised. In many cases, then, what they say they want to do in the daytime is undone overnight.

This places further responsibility upon us, because if we are incapable of steering the implementation of particular projects through debate, from Eurobonds – to be specific – to issuing European Union bonds, it will be very difficult to explain to our citizens that we are the same parties that back at home blame Europe for everything and say that we will only be able to emerge from the crisis when Europe has cut back its expenditure.

I believe that this is a principle of basic responsibility, which, if forgotten, results in the very nature of the European project being lost, and we will lose credibility in exchange for only empty chambers and deserted ballot boxes until only 40% of our citizens take part.

Anni Podimata (S&D). – (EL) Mr President, if there is one basic conclusion to be drawn from the decisions taken by the last European Council, it is that they failed to persuade the markets, they failed to appease the markets. With the markets nowadays having the first and the last word, we need to ask ourselves why.

Is it perhaps because, over and above the very stringent rules of budgetary discipline, the markets understand that we are widening rather than addressing the economic and political cohesion gap within the euro area?

Is it perhaps because the treatment which one group of states reserved for what was, all other things being equal, the right idea of creating a permanent crisis management mechanism appeared to cancel out the added value of such a mechanism in practice, thereby sending the wrong message to the markets and putting us at risk of ending up with a mechanism that was a self-fulfilling prophecy of controlled bankruptcy?

If we really are determined to involve the private sector, to apportion the burden, why do we doggedly refuse to go ahead and adopt a transaction tax at European level?

Finally, why can we not understand that there is an important gap between tightening up the rules of budgetary discipline and a permanent crisis management mechanism? A gap that we could plug if we were to decide to seriously consider the creation of a joint mechanism to manage part of the Member States' debt by issuing Eurobonds.

Danuta Maria Hübner (PPE). – Mr President, to start, let me say that long-term conditions of competitiveness in individual Member States will differ for years to come. Structural causes of imbalances will therefore continue while economic governance will still be rather weak as a process in the making.

In this context, it is of the utmost importance that the Commission urgently tests, with the first annual growth survey at the launch of the European semester 2011, as many elements of new economic governance as possible, in particular the relevance of the scoreboard and its operational ability.

Second, I understand that a system of fully automatic sanctions would require a treaty change and the proposed system can take us only as far as we can go within the confines of the treaty. That is why I trust that the Commission and the Council will do their utmost to avoid additional stages in the treatment that would unnecessarily delay the procedure.

Third, the EU's economic health is not a simple sum of national situations. Additionally, as the system is based on identifying individual Member States who do not behave, fixing their poor behaviour can have negative externalities.

In particular, the treatment of imbalances can have an impact on other Member States of the eurozone and the rest of the Union. These potential effects should be accounted for in individual treatments so that the economic health of the Union as a whole improves.

Last, I understand that a complete and in-depth impact assessment of the economic governance blueprint would require time we do not have. What helps here is that over the last two years the Commission has acquired substantial and in-depth knowledge and understanding of the 27 economies, so I would like to ask for two actions now. Ensure comparability of all elements and relations between internal and external imbalances.

(The President cut off the speaker)

(The debate is suspended)

5. Welcome

President. – Colleagues, I welcome the delegation from the EEA-EFTA Parliaments, that is our colleagues from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as the observers from the Swiss Federal Assembly, who are in the official gallery.

It is a pleasure for me to welcome this delegation to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, where they will participate in the 35th EEA JPC meeting today and tomorrow. I hope that the well-established work of the EEA JPC this week will be productive and will contribute to enhanced parliamentary cooperation, as well as to ensuring democratic parliamentary supervision within the EEA. Welcome, colleagues.

6. Conclusions of the European Council meeting (28-29 October) and economic governance (continuation of debate)

President. – We now continue with the debate on the Conclusions of the European Council meeting (28-29 October) and economic governance.

Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D). – *(NL)* Mr President, listening to today's debate one thing stands out, and that is the big issue – important to almost all the political groups – of economic governance. The consensus is only superficial, as there is a huge difference in interpretation regarding this economic governance. Looking at the Council's interpretation, which can also be seen from its conclusions, one sees a one-sided focus on what the Council considers necessary, namely savings, savings and more savings. It is almost an ideology that has been made into an economic law: one only need save enough and everything will be all right again. That is not our interpretation of economic governance. On the contrary, something completely different will be needed, and our group is not the only one saying this. Look at the economists, look at yesterday's *De Tijd* – not exactly a socialist propaganda newspaper – which says, and I paraphrase, 'saving on its own undermines already ailing economies and makes it increasingly difficult to repay debts'. Investment is also needed. A very nice, obvious, example of what is needed is an increase in the employment rate. This would enable the repayment of debts, in all our Member States. Yet this requires the courage to invest in education and training, the courage to invest in the balance between work and family life. Looking at the savings in the various Member States, we see that it is

precisely this kind of investment that is suffering cutbacks. A vision is needed – a perspective on economic policy – as a basis for mobilising the resources to do this. Only then should we take a look at how best to give shape to the Stability and Growth Pact. I believe that that is the major difference between our perspective on economic governance and the Council's.

Paulo Rangel (PPE). – (PT) Mr President, Mr Van Rompuy, Mr Barroso, obviously I would like to say that the position of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) is clear: it takes the view that the resolution of the serious crisis that Europe is experiencing is only possible through expanding economic governance and the Community method. We have no doubt that the only way to confront and tackle this crisis is through more Community method, through more economic governance and through the instruments appropriate to a true single currency in the euro area. However, this means that every single one of the institutions – the Council, the Commission and Parliament – must show the public that they are committed to their responsibilities. It must be said that it is clear that the largest groups in Parliament, at least, are willing to openly cooperate by increasing the Community method, by introducing economic governance, and by giving the single currency the necessary conditions for it to overcome the crisis in Europe. It is also clear today that the same applies to the Commission and its President, who has demonstrated that he is not beholden to the Council or Parliament, but is working for European interests, contrary to the claims of the socialists and Mrs Ferreira.

It remains for the Council to take on its responsibilities this December. We are counting on this, and on their unequivocal commitment to European dialogue, Mr Van Rompuy.

Marietta Giannakou (PPE). – (EL) Mr President, obviously, the permanent support mechanism adopted is, without doubt, a positive step. However, there is still a lack of strategic planning, which needs to include economic union and, obviously, economic governance.

The European Union was created thanks to the strong governments at the time. The economic crisis was able to take hold thanks to weak governments, which allowed the economic automatisms of economic globalization to replace the political decisions which the Community needs if it is to continue to function.

Europe has safeguarded 50 years of prosperity and we have a duty today to continue to safeguard this prosperity for our citizens. It is obvious, therefore, that growth needs to continue. The question is, what sort of growth do we mean, in an age in which the entire global system is changing? What is Europe now? What will it be in the future? An area of industry, small and medium-sized enterprises and services, an export catalyst? We therefore need a stronger Europe, instead of the suspicions and intergovernmentalism that have recently been the order of the day.

Certain countries have blatantly failed to adhere to the Stability Pact but, as Mr Reinfeldt told me in answer to a question last December, only one country adhered to the Stability Pact to the letter; all the others failed to honour their obligations.

Consequently, we must all pull together and support the countries which are currently weathering the storm of the crisis because, in the final analysis, where does the strength of the large countries lie? I think that it lies in the joint presence of the small countries via a European system. Besides, the cost of not having Europe would be unbearable for all of us.

Tunne Kelam (PPE). – Mr President, the key to overcoming the economic crisis is to draw binding conclusions from it, because this is, first of all, a crisis of trust and responsibility. Trust is based on a reasonable balance of incomes and expenditures.

For more than 20 years, most of Europe has been used to living and consuming today, at the expense of tomorrow, and even the day after tomorrow – at the expense of the next generations, whose numbers are dramatically dwindling. Secondly, we have been used to treating stability-backed rules in a very liberal way. If the large states can do it in case of domestic need, it is easier for the others to follow suit. Therefore, to enforce the principle of fiscal discipline and restore it in all seriousness, the policies of a balanced budget will be the test case of Europe's credibility.

Thirdly, there is an obvious need for check and balance mechanisms. I can only welcome the Council's approval of the conclusions about European economic governance, the activation of the debt criteria and the chance of an early intervention mechanism. But what we really need – and I can only support the conclusions of my colleague Mr Verhofstadt – is real economic governance and real automatic sanctions – sanctions that bite. We look forward to the Commission's framework proposals on the future crisis mechanisms next month.

Elena Bănescu (PPE). – (RO) Mr President, I would like to welcome the new package of measures on increasing budgetary discipline and broadening economic surveillance. I feel that the measures proposed were necessary due to the disparities noted between Member States with regard to compliance with fiscal and budgetary policies. As a result, the economic crisis has produced a worrying perception of several countries, including Romania.

I think that the key innovation is the creation of a new macro-economic surveillance framework. It will facilitate the detection of emerging imbalances and risks.

The adoption of the report on economic governance produced by the Task Force headed by Mr Van Rompuy marked an important step. Its implementation will therefore create a new robust crisis management framework.

I would also like to mention the importance of the regulation on ensuring national budgets' compliance with EU fiscal standards. In practice, this means that national budgets will no longer be able to avoid EU fiscal regulations.

Csaba Sándor Tabajdi (S&D). – (HU) Mr President, the forthcoming Hungarian Presidency will have to face the considerable challenge of implementing the amendment of the Treaty of Lisbon and introducing economic governance as soon as possible. Member States outside the euro area watch in astonishment as the euro area cracks on all fronts. We are bound by the Accession Treaty, and our ability to further catch up hinges on whether Europe's richer half stabilises, and whether Community solidarity is able to supersede national self-interest.

We watch the Irish crisis and the problems of Greece, Portugal and Spain with concern and sympathy, and wait to see whether the euro area crumbles. The Council's decision, while late, as usual, was in the end the correct one. The introduction of economic governance may well signal a new era in the history of European integration, but its implementation could also be treacherous and full of complications. I am confident that the Hungarian Presidency will do everything in its power to guarantee success.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL). – (PT) Mr President, Portugal is experiencing the biggest general strike of the last 20 years. This protest follows equally significant ones in several EU countries, including Greece and France. What is the response of the leaders of the Council and the Commission? They are ignoring the protests against their antisocial policies and are insisting on the very policies that contributed to the current situation. They are glossing over the fact that the vulnerability of the euro is the direct result of the policies they are practising: liberalisation of capital markets, unlimited financial speculation and the requirement of nominal convergence through the Stability and Growth Pact. All the while, real divergence between economies is worsening, unemployment and poverty are reaching unbearable levels and social tensions are increasing. How long are they going to insist on going down this route? What needs to be done in order to break with these policies and make a greater commitment to production, to jobs and to valuing labour?

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – (SK) Mr President, the European Council negotiations at the end of October took place under difficult circumstances. All countries are currently amending their economic policies with the aim of getting out of the unfavourable economic situation as quickly as possible, and into at least some level of economic growth.

After Greece and Ireland, other euro area countries, too, face the risk of insolvency. We should therefore be clear that in such a difficult situation, Heads of Government find it very hard to adopt decisions through which they would surrender their ability to shape and regulate the economic governance of their states, and hand over some powers of economic governance at the level of European institutions.

We must therefore discuss very sensitively our common ideas on how to get Europe as safely and as quickly as possible out of the current difficult situation, while not undervaluing the effort of individual government representatives to solve the problems of their countries through their own powers and their own abilities, in order to avoid coming into conflict with European interests.

Andrew Henry William Brons (NI). – Mr President, the European Council repeated the tired old slogan of the need to avoid all forms of protectionism and to avoid exchange rate moves aimed at competitive advantage.

The embrace by the European Union of globalism has made European countries prey to competition from emerging economies, especially China, with which we cannot compete. These economies show contempt for international patents and copyrights, they employ workers at subsistence, and sometimes slave labour, rates. China has set its currency at an artificially low level to make its goods cheaper still.

European countries must individually – my preference – or collectively protect their employers and employees from this unfair competition. While exchange rates should not be pegged at an artificially low level for competitive advantage, nor should they be kept at an artificially common level – the euro – to the collective disadvantage of eurozone countries. If currencies of failing countries had been allowed to fall in value, recovery would have followed.

Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, Mr Van Rompuy, Mr Barroso, I should like to begin by addressing the issue of public spending at European level.

I wonder if the time has not come, given the significant challenges that lie ahead of us, to have a major debate with our national colleagues and the European Parliament on the communitisation and pooling of our public spending. I shall use Mr Lamassoure's example:

we have 27 armies, and no enemies; one Customs Union, and 27 administrations; research programmes that have been funded 15 to 20 times without any coordination; trans-European networks, which should be interlinked; energy networks; and the list goes on.

I suggest that we entrust an independent auditor with the public spending audit at the following three levels: European, national and local executive. This audit would be issued to MPs and MEPs to allow for a major debate on public spending and could be entrusted to the European Court of Auditors and to the 27 national courts of auditors.

This is an idea I should like to propose in order to ensure that our public spending is scrutinised and managed better at European level.

Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D). – (SK) Mr President, the European Council meeting was marked by expectations of how Europe's leaders would deal with the problems presented to them by the economic recession. As I have said many times now, it is not enough to focus only on budgets. The structural imbalances which the crisis has only exacerbated go beyond debts. Unless a mechanism is adopted which will be capable of affecting the other aspects as well, there must be serious doubts as to its success.

Another topic was the debate over whether the budget fallout caused by pension reforms would lead to a deficit. On the one hand we are talking about tightening up the rules and making them more systematic, but then we immediately make exemptions. Also, if pension reforms are as essential as they are made out to be, which I personally do not believe they are, other examples of successful programmes could also be found. Who will then assess which is more and which is less important, and why?

I firmly believe that we must not launch a debate on exemptions at the same time as talking about system changes.

John Bufton (EFD). – Mr President, I would just like to make a few comments regarding what was said this morning by both President Van Rompuy and President Barroso. It would appear that they are both in denial – denial of the fact that the eurozone is in crisis and we are now on the brink of collapse. There are many people over there also in denial. For goodness sake, wake up.

People are watching this from their homelands and they realise that there are not many people in this Chamber anyway. This is the biggest crisis that you have ever had, and I am telling you now that this is serious. I will ask Mr Barroso and Mr Van Rompuy to tell me please – you are speaking in a couple of minutes – what is your plan B? There must be a plan B, or are you just going to let this go until it goes into ruin? I believe this is the biggest crisis that we have had. Member States have been affected across the spectrum. You owe it to the people to have a plan B. Please tell us if you have got one.

Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (PPE). – (HU) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to express my delight with the fact that the importance of system-wide pension reforms was acknowledged in the course of the consultation. However, the reforms within the scope of the Stability and Growth Pact do not provide equal opportunities to every player.

Hungary also speaks out against discrimination, and calls upon the EU to consider the cost of pension reforms when calculating national deficits. I believe that unless you want to discriminate against countries that exercise their freedom of choice, payments made into private pension funds must be taken into consideration when determining the budget

deficit. Solving this issue is a matter of urgency. It is good news that the opportunity for finding a satisfactory solution will already be presented at the December Council meeting. I ask you to make a non-discriminatory political decision and forward it to the Commission as soon as possible, so that the legislative process can start as soon as possible, and eventually conclude with a satisfactory outcome for every affected party.

Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D). – (EL) Mr President, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain are suffering the consequences of the economic crisis. The horse has already bolted. There is no going back, measures must be taken. Suspicion and euro-scepticism will not help us to recover from the international economic crisis.

On the contrary, what we need are Community solidarity, political will, vision, trust in the dynamism of Europe and, above all, coordinated actions, actions to bring about structural change at both national level and in the European Union. We need more employment, more growth, fast-tracking, more jobs, the implementation of the EU strategy, rationalisation and restructuring in corporate governance, transparency in economic governance, verification of national statistics and a permanent joint crisis management mechanism in the European Union, but solely for the benefit of European citizens.

The crisis concerns everyone, not just the countries which are suffering from it. We need both community solidarity and coordinated action.

Barry Madlener (NI). – (NL) Mr President, the euro area is now collapsing, and President Barroso has to oversee this collapse. After all, the billions in aid provided to countries such as Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland for years have not resulted in those weak economies being able to compete with the strong economies of Germany and the Netherlands; instead, those billions in aid have resulted in unacceptable behaviour on the part of socialists. For example, one in three Greek workers is a civil servant; the tsunami of non-Western immigrants to Europe has also cost each country billions, and those immigrants are now at home without jobs. This is the behaviour of what are mainly socialists. Do you remember? Spain, which legalised one million illegal immigrants a couple of years ago, is now left with a 20% unemployment rate. Now we, the stronger economies, must once more offer these countries billions in aid, but this will be a mere sticking plaster for the short term. In the long term, the question will be whether we are prepared to continue to support the weak countries structurally with billions in taxpayers' money. The answer to this is 'no'. Thus, I should like to ask President Barroso the following: is the reintroduction of Greece's own currency, the drachma, and also Ireland's, not the only long-term solution that will get us out of these problems? Is this solution under serious discussion with these countries?

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Mr President, as an Irish MEP, it gives me no great pleasure to come in here this morning and hear almost every speaker refer to Ireland because of our economic situation, particularly when a few years ago we were seen as almost the pin-up boys of economic success in the European Union.

Nevertheless, I think there is a determination in Ireland to put things right, and I think the vast majority of people would welcome the support of our European friends and colleagues.

There are a few lessons to be learned. I think Mr Farage was not far wrong when he said that it was due to the stupidity and greed of Irish politicians, who were part of the crony capitalism with the banks and regulators that brought a lot of this about. We have to learn lessons. But another thing that is going to be very important is that the supervisory

architecture being put in place from 1 January must work, so that the stress tests and so forth are sufficient to recognise what is happening in the future and people are brought to heel if they are getting out of hand.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D). – (LT) Mr President, it is really very good that we are now beginning to talk about very important matters, that is, the joint management of the future economy. I believe that soon we will also be discussing a possible common fiscal system. Furthermore, today we can see the significant negative impact the strengthened euro exchange rate is having together with many other factors. Today I was disappointed by the fact that a bank test was carried out six months ago and its results have not been confirmed. This demonstrates that once again in the European Union we lack reliable information. If we do not have it we cannot find ways of exiting a rather complicated situation. In conclusion I would therefore like to call on the European Commission to offer its proposals much more actively in future, because the situation is complex and it will require huge efforts, huge financial resources and perhaps a completely different understanding of economic, financial and other types of monitoring.

Milan Zver (PPE). – (SL) Mr President, Mr Van Rompuy, Mr Barroso, allow me to join this debate briefly. For me, the situation is relatively clear: who is to blame for the major crisis we are facing? That part of the banking sector which did business without real cover and took on too many risks. But others too – some European governments which encouraged excessive consumption and a sort of distributive mentality amongst people.

We have heard two lines of reasoning here today: we have members who are calling for greater solidarity, as if to say 'Please help us!', and we have those who are trying to appeal above all for greater responsibility now that we are emerging from the crisis. It would not be right if those who caused this major crisis were now looking for formulas for its resolution, the way out of this crisis. Those who are critical of significant economising are certainly on the wrong path.

Under these circumstances, it is only right that taxpayers from those countries that are dealing with the current situation are not silenced.

Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE). – (RO) Mr President, I welcome the fact that the report on economic governance provides a new basis for setting up a viable system for how we function in this respect.

I think that the recommendations made in the report on more robust institutions for much more effective economic governance, such as the creation at national level of a public institution which will provide independent analyses, assessments and forecasts for internal fiscal policy issues, form the basis for creating a transparent European system.

I consider it vital to offer each Member State the opportunity to prove the basis used for analysing and assessing each domestic fiscal measure proposed so that an approach evolves based on trust and mutual awareness.

I reaffirm the need to adopt specific measures which will facilitate economic governance, based on in-depth, transparent knowledge, and open debate about any domestic measures adopted in Member States which may produce an impact at EU level.

Elisa Ferreira (S&D). (*Question addressed to Mr Rangel under the blue card procedure, Rule 149(8) of the Rules of Procedure*) – (PT) Mr President, thank you for giving me the floor, but

I asked to speak under the blue card rule because I was directly challenged by Mr Rangel and I would therefore have liked to have been given the floor earlier.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask Mr Rangel to explain to all of us what he sees as the concrete differences, with respect to sovereign debt management, between Chancellor Merkel's proposals and those of the Commission, and to tell us why the Commission's first proposal, which was actually European, on sovereign debt management, was discarded without any discussion or public debate when it was realised that it did not tally with the interests of Germany.

Paulo Rangel (PPE). *(Response to the question by Mrs Ferreira, under the blue card procedure, Rule 149(8) of the Rules of Procedure) – (PT)* I would like to say very quickly that there is no doubt whatsoever that in the European process there is, of course, constant negotiation between the institutions, but that the Commission's position has consistently been to uphold the Community method and advocate going further with the single currency. Of course, there are Members who like to come and conduct national politics in Parliament, as is the case with Mrs Ferreira.

Diogo Feio (PPE). – *(PT)* Mr President, the European Union is facing a time of major reforms. It therefore needs to provide a response to the crisis and to uphold a single currency which needs rules of its own, applied to all Member States. Parliament has already taken a leading position in relation to economic governance, whereby it is advocating greater cooperation on growth between the 27 Member States, a firm stance on the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact and solidarity between the Member States, having been the first institution, as such, to draw attention to the need for a fund for the debt of the different countries that make up the EU. We will therefore continue to cooperate with the Commission, extending a welcome to its President, and we hope also to continue to cooperate with the Council. Six reports are being discussed at this very moment, and we will take a very clear position on them.

José Manuel Barroso, *President of the Commission.* – Mr President, I will answer two concrete questions and also make a general remark after the debate that took place this morning.

First of all, a question raised by Mr Schulz: an important one about the Irish stress tests. Let me say the following. The common methodology of the stress tests was agreed at European level; it was very rigorous, with adverse macro-economic scenarios. However, the implementation of the tests was carried out under the responsibility of the national supervisory authorities. It was coordinated at European Union level by the CEBS, but there were no European Union competences for that. I want to underline that, until recently, the European Union as such did not have this kind of responsibility. This is going to change next January. We will have the new architecture of financial regulation and supervision in place by then, following Commission proposals and agreement with the Council and in Parliament.

We will have the three European micro-prudential supervisors for banking, securities and insurance, and the European Systemic Risk Board for macro-financial stability and the risks associated with it. And that will provide much stronger tools and infrastructure to carry out the tests next time in a more unified, rigorous and coherent manner. So I want to underline this point. Before the crisis we did not have the instruments that we are creating now.

Then I come to the second issue concerning the way we are now dealing with some sensitive issues like the permanent crisis mechanism. I want to make it clear that it was not my intention to raise the point but, since there was a concrete question, I have to reply.

Unanimously – and I repeat unanimously – the Heads of State or Government decided to ask for a permanent crisis mechanism with the intervention of the private sector. I was one of those who warned the European Council about the risks of raising this issue without proper preparation and communication. But the issue was raised and decided and now we have to deal with it in the most responsible way. That is why I believe some of the comments made here today were really not helpful.

We are still living in very difficult conditions. I think what we need now is action and not more comments. We are dealing with very sensitive global financial markets. Some of the comments sometimes have a self-fulfilling prophecy effect. So it is not helpful to start speculating about countries that may be at risk. What we have to ask those countries is to implement all the measures that are necessary for achieving financial and budgetary stability.

That is why I am not going to speculate about Plan B. We, together with President Van Rompuy, are doing our work, discussing the issues with responsibility with our Member States. Regarding the role of the Commission, I want to be extremely clear once again. The Commission – and this was acknowledged by most of you – has always been putting forward ambitious proposals. We are for ambitious economic governance for Europe.

But in the end, we have to be realistic. Together we cannot go beyond what is established by common agreement with our Member States. When there is an agreement – an agreement that anyhow represents progress compared to the previous situation – it is not helpful to speak about ideal solutions that you very well know will not come into effect.

So the Commission is fulfilling its role, and will fulfil its role, asking for more ambition in terms of common purpose, economic governance, stability of the euro area – and not only of the euro area.

I want to make that point very clearly because I think it was not made during this debate today. Some of you said the problems are in the euro area. I am sorry to say they are not only in the euro area. The euro has not been the problem. I am absolutely convinced that the situation would be much worse if we did not have the euro.

(Applause)

Some of you tend to forget that some countries that are not in the euro area have exactly the same problems, in some cases even worse problems of sovereign debt, and that a country that is not even in the European Union and that is now asking to join the European Union – Iceland – went bankrupt, and they do not have the euro. The reality is that the euro was not the cause of the problem. It is intellectually and politically dishonest to suggest that the problem is with the euro.

(Applause)

What we have to do now is recognise the specificities of the situation in the euro area, to address the problems and ask all the Member States to give a commitment to work collectively: those who are in the euro area and those who are not. I think they have all understood that there is a common interest in a common approach to resolve this crisis. That is what the Commission will do, in a responsible way, pushing of course for the highest level of ambition, but in the end working in good, loyal cooperation with all the institutions,

with this Parliament, as we have done, and with the Council and European Council. That is the responsible method that we have to follow.

In a period where markets are extremely nervous, we should keep cool heads and we should keep a strong sense of responsibility, also of course with a strong sense of common European purpose.

(Applause)

Herman Van Rompuy, *President of the European Council*. – (FR) Mr President, honourable Members, earlier on we said that the analysis made by the President of the Commission differed from mine, but this is the first time, Mr Schulz, that I have been accused of pretending everything is fine when it is not. It is the very first time in my career.

I can assure you that I do not underestimate the crisis in any way, and that we are experiencing difficult times. Unless some of my comments are taken out of context, I am usually a very prudent man, and I believe that far too many statements, inflammatory or otherwise, are made in the European context – not in Parliament. We must now calm things down, and not keep mentioning the seriousness of the crisis. We already know about that. It is time to take action.

Some of you have said that we should learn lessons. There is a French proverb that says ‘our acts follow us’. Honourable Members, when I took office there was the Stability and Growth Pact, which was made a little more flexible a few years ago and was not applied. When I took office, I inherited the Treaty of Lisbon, which provides for certain procedures relating to, among others, sanctions and the decision to be taken when a country is subject to the excessive deficit procedure. The Council makes these decisions, according to the Treaty of Lisbon. When I took office, there was no crisis mechanism, and we had to rectify that.

We are therefore going to strengthen the Stability and Growth Pact and introduce a system of macro-economic supervision for the first time. I can assure you that if we had had that mechanism a few years ago, the problems some countries have experienced would never have surfaced. We would have discovered the property bubbles. We would have discovered the problems of competitiveness in certain countries. So we are going to introduce it now. It is new and innovative. It fully takes into account the lessons learned from the crisis.

As far as the Treaty of Lisbon is concerned, we intend to change it in order to give it a legal basis in some constitutional courts – a legal basis for a permanent crisis mechanism. That is the only reason. I hope we are not going to run the risk of starting another major debate on the institutions, for that, in my opinion, would lead us nowhere in the current climate, and would divert our attention even further away from resolving the crisis.

We had no crisis mechanism before. When we faced the problem of Greece, we had to invent a mechanism, because there was none. When we brought in another measure, the EUR 750 billion rescue package, we had to be creative in our interpretation of the Treaty of Lisbon so as to be able to apply it.

We are therefore learning lessons from the crisis, and I repeat, our acts follow us. We had a stability pact that was weak and had not been applied; we had nothing in the area of macro-economic supervision; and there was no crisis mechanism.

Have Member States assumed their responsibilities? Many of them have. They are implementing reforms that have often gone against the major tides of public opinion. They

have taken steps that have often shown great courage, not only in those countries with problems but also in others. We are assuming our responsibilities.

Honourable Members, let us not always target the wrong enemy. I often have the impression that we focus too much on governments and Member States' own parliaments. Let us not get our enemy wrong.

Today, some people are talking not just about Ireland but also about Portugal. Allow me to give you the figures. Portugal's public deficit was 9.3% in 2009; in 2010 it will be 7.3% and in 2011 it will be 4.6%. The interest rate on the Portuguese public debt is 3.6% on average. That is extremely low. Portugal is not experiencing a property crisis or a property bubble. Its financial sector is not too high for the country. Its banks are well capitalised. Let us not target the wrong enemy. Some people are saying that the crisis situation is contagious, but they do not have the economic justification or a rational basis to do so. I insist on this point: let us not target the wrong enemy.

I can assure those who have called for greater cooperation between institutions that the Presidencies are doing all they can to work together. The report issued by the Task Force has been adopted by its members, including the European Commission representative, Commissioner Rehn. We are also working side by side in other areas, such as the permanent crisis mechanism.

I hope we will see the same spirit of cooperation when we draw up the 2011 budget. I regret the fact that we have not managed to reach an agreement.

On the subject of cooperation, however, allow me to make a comment. You are all Members of the European Parliament and belong to particular political groups. I should like to mention that there are sometimes major differences between what I hear in the European Council, from prime ministers and different individuals, and what I hear in this Chamber from the same members of the same political group. I am not making a criticism. One does not have to be in complete agreement with one's political party. During my career, I have often seen conflicts within my party. However, I do everything within my power to achieve consistency and cooperation between the institutions. I would therefore say that we need to cooperate at all political levels in order to achieve a more consistent position than we have at the moment.

I agree with those who say we have a strict policy in place, but that we cannot emerge from the crisis with that alone. They are right, but we must go through that stage first. If we had been more cautious both in terms of the macro-economy and budget planning, we would not be in this situation today. However, we do need a positive policy for growth and employment. Despite all the negative aspects to consider, I am pleased that economic growth in Europe has returned after eleven months of recession. I have said as much on other occasions in Parliament: the crisis of the 1930s, which also started with a financial crisis, was never fully resolved.

We re-established positive growth eleven months after the financial crisis erupted. This year, the average growth figure will stand at around 1.5%. In some countries – not those facing the problems already mentioned – growth will stand at around 2%, and in other countries it will be as high as 3% or 3.5%. On average, employment levels within the EU will rise once again from 2011. Of course, the unemployment rate is too high, but I am very pleased that, compared with six months ago, our growth predictions are much better than anticipated and that growth is more stable than we thought. This is not only growth

based on restocking, recovery programmes and exports. It is also growth that is also fed by internal demand.

Finally, I would like to say that despite all the problems we are indeed experiencing in some countries, I am convinced that, once again, we will overcome the crisis we are facing today.

President. – The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Bruno Gollnisch (NI), *in writing.* – (FR) The European Council meeting of 28-29 October 2010 took a new step towards subjugating countries and stripping them of their sovereignty. First of all, through pseudo-economic governance, which really means taking control of their economies: forcing Member States to have their budget pre-approved by Brussels officials; supervising all of their economic policies; establishing automatic preventive sanctions, even before the authorised limits for debts and deficits have been exceeded; being able to suspend the guilty Member State's voting rights. All of this is granted as compensation to Germany for perpetuating the financial stabilisation fund. However, that mechanism merely constitutes the right of Member States and the EU Commission to get into debt, or to provide borrowing guarantees on the markets, in favour of Member States in difficulty, because they are victims of market speculation against their national debt. And what is more, because they belong to the euro area. It is beyond belief. Furthermore, the European Council has also decided on a reform of the treaties in order to implement the crisis management mechanism. The simplified revision procedure is going to be used for the first time: that anti-democratic method which makes no provision for parliamentary debate. This is not governance; it is totalitarianism.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing.* – (DE) Until 2007, the rest of Europe was amazed at the economic development of Ireland, the 'Celtic Tiger', which achieved dream economic data with low corporation taxes and little regulation. But now reality has hit. The Celtic Tiger has shown itself to be a lame duck that the rest of Europe has to lend a helping hand and take by its limp wings. EUR 90 billion from the euro rescue package – that is EUR 300 per Austrian citizen – is now to go to Ireland. This is not only theoretical state guarantees that, after the black sheep Greece, are now going to Ireland and then perhaps to Spain and Portugal, too; it is genuine taxpayers' money. It is also taking the European monetary union a step further towards a transfer union in which euro states which manage their economies well have to keep their purses open to pay for the mismanagement of others. The EU has addressed this issue far too late and it remains to be seen whether the decisions taken by the European Council will actually be followed by action. We must stop wasting billions in taxpayers' money on speculative banks and on states which manage their economies poorly. There must be an end to the transfer union. We need a mechanism that enables bankrupt states to have genuine insolvency and then also removes these states from the euro area. We cannot keep patching up a sickly monetary union. Instead we need a strong, core European monetary union.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) Both Greece and Ireland have had to turn to the European Union for assistance. However, there are some distinctions to be drawn between the two cases: The Irish deficit exploded because the country had to stem the problems in the banking sector, which was in crisis due to the repercussions of the global financial crisis, exacerbated by the bursting of the property bubble. This intervention, at a time of structural crisis, meant that the public finances could no longer sustain such a situation. In Greece, on the other hand, the reason for the intervention is the somewhat reckless

management of public expenditure, which made a cash infusion from the sale of government bonds necessary. In the light of the reform of economic governance, the following observation needs to be made. We must certainly implement rigorous budgetary policies to monitor and ensure that similar situations do not arise in the future. Anyway, these two cases demonstrate how essential it is to be mindful of all the factors relating to the finances and solidity of a country, and not only structured public debt. Indeed, this can only represent the final figure, but we need to check the elements and the causes behind it and find out how the situation came to be.

Monika Smolková (S&D), *in writing.* – (SK) The Stability and Growth Pact has thus far included sanctions, but imposing them requires the consent of 2/3 of ministers and there has never been the political will for this. I am sceptical about the anti-crisis mechanism. Council President Rompuy should not amend Article 125 of the Treaty of Lisbon, which states that every country shall be liable for its own obligations. On the other hand, he should consider expanding Article 122, which talks about solidarity – establishing mutual assistance in natural disasters or energy crises. An amendment of this article might negate a fundamental principle of the functioning of the EU, in other words solidarity, and this might lead to a loss of solidarity. If the anti-crisis mechanism operated under Article 122 on the provision of funding to individual states, the Council would decide on the basis of a Commission proposal, and they would only inform the European Parliament. There is a risk of a situation where responsible states will pay for the irresponsibility of particular states.

7. Results of the G20 summit (debate)

President. – The next item is the Council and Commission statements on the results of the G20 summit.

Olivier Chastel, *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (FR) Mr President, honourable Members, the Presidency of the Council and the European Parliament already had the opportunity to discuss the G20 on 20 October 2010; at the time we were on the eve of the ministerial meeting of the G20 and were waiting to see how things would develop in Seoul.

As Europeans, we were well prepared for these meetings, both at ministerial level and at the level of Heads of State or Government. We realised that the lack of cohesion among Europeans would rapidly lead us to exhaust the European Union's credibility on the international stage. It has to be said that the Seoul Summit received mixed reactions from around the world. For my part, I believe that we should continue to be optimistic despite everything, even if the results were not as impressive as we would have hoped.

Before the Seoul Summit, we were convinced that the toughest and most important test was going to be maintaining our momentum. We should not make the mistake of thinking that we no longer need global cooperation, with the excuse that we are no longer in the critical situation we were in 18 months ago, or even six months ago. We still believe that political leaders are responsible for making decisions. They are, and that is indeed the essence of politics. However, I think they also have another, even more important responsibility: making sure that decisions do not remain on paper, but have concrete results and are fully implemented.

The Seoul Summit showed that the real challenge for the G20, and therefore for all of us, is understanding how we should continue with and indeed accelerate implementation. We

have to turn good intentions into practical results, and all of that is important for at least two reasons. First of all, the markets are not satisfied with statements alone. They are observing the developments that take place two days, ten days and thirty days after the summit, once the media have gone home. The state of the European economy needs to be understood as a whole; it is not merely the result of progress made during the two-day summit. The progress we are aiming for can only be made through continuous, daily work and, as Members of the European Parliament, you know this better than anyone.

The second reason is just as important as the first, and concerns you all directly. I think that Parliament and the national parliaments can carry out the task of scrutinising, but also of providing political incentives for the European and international economic agenda, making sure that we have proper implementation between one summit and the next and that the G20 increasingly becomes a process rather than merely a series of meetings.

In terms of substance, the Union's contribution to strong, lasting, balanced growth is now clear, and is based on a certain number of principles: fiscal consolidation plans aimed at sustainable, differentiated growth; the Europe 2020 strategy for the structural reforms needed in order to sustain job creation in particular; the programme of reforms to the financial sector and markets, and, finally, the strengthening of economic governance in the EU. I would add that the Union is very interested in the peer review process in the context of the G20. As Europeans, we are used to this and we know how useful that type of exercise can be. Clearly, everyone has to pull their weight and show renewed will to make a contribution to action for growth.

Once again, and in the spirit of my earlier comments, I would like to say that the battle against protectionism cannot be won outright, but only by maintaining the necessary level of global alert on a daily basis.

Otherwise, I should like to highlight three important developments in the past month. The first one is the reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for the EU clearly showed that it was prepared to do its share so that the new IMF could be more representative of the new international economic reality and, therefore, so that the emerging economies could make their voice heard and play a greater role. We agreed to reduce our presence in the IMF's executive committee and we made considerable concessions in terms of shares. I think we have kept what was dearest to our heart and that the international community as a whole has benefited.

The second development concerns the Basel III agreement. I think that, with regard to banks' capital requirements, we are going in the right direction and it is, of course, vital that all Member States concerned should maintain their commitment to implement Basel III. Obviously this question of implementation will remain on the political agenda of both the EU and the G20.

Taking note of what has happened in recent weeks regarding the so-called currency war, I think the European Union has done a good job and has been able to defend a balanced position, which means that exchange rates should reflect the economic fundamentals and that we do not need to have recourse to competitive devaluation.

Finally, since Seoul, France has assumed responsibility for the Presidency of the G20 and I think this is a unique opportunity for Europeans and the European Union as such. It will be very important for us to work together in a coordinated way so as to make sure that throughout the coming year – and with a view to the Cannes G20 summit in

November 2011 and beyond that – the G20 will be commensurate with the expectations it has created.

The real challenge that lies before us is to show that a forum created in order to deal with the crisis is also able to provide the contribution and incentive needed to achieve medium-term objectives, such as stronger, more sustained and more balanced global growth; clear, fair rules for the international financial market; and international organisations that are more representative of the world today and which are more capable of helping national governments and European institutions to deal with globalisation. Mr President, I believe it is up to the G20 to show in the coming years that the globalisation process is not only economic but also, indeed primarily, political.

José Manuel Barroso, *President of the Commission*. – Mr President, before this month's Seoul Summit there was concern that once the pressure of the crisis which brought G20 countries together was receding, the G20 would find it impossible to fulfil its role as the primary forum for global economic coordination. After this month's Seoul Summit I can reassure you that that negative scenario was not confirmed. We have seen the G20 move from crisis mode to a more stable approach to global governance.

Despite difficult issues under discussion and the fact that some other issues like the taxation of the financial sector were not agreed, the G20 once again delivered an important message of global determination; it made real and steady progress on addressing global economic challenges. I know the results were received with some scepticism because there was no spectacular, last-minute breakthrough perfectly timed for the evening news. But what the sceptics fail to understand is that the G20 process itself is spectacular news; it is not like our European, more integrated process where everyone round the table shares a common culture of negotiation and compromise.

Apart from the European Union and some of its Member States, the G20 includes countries as diverse as the US and China, Russia, Brazil and Japan, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Korea, South Africa. The very fact that they are engaged in a joint process of addressing global imbalance and agreeing, for example, on financial regulation, should be recognised for what it is: enormous progress that would simply have not been possible some years ago, and the Seoul Summit was an important further step in that process and the launching of a new agenda, not a one-off spectacular event.

So, yes, it was a success and I think the European Union, represented by myself and the President of the European Council, can be satisfied with the Summit conclusions. In fact, we made a very important contribution also at finance minister level where the European Union was represented by Olli Rehn, the Commissioner responsible for that area. On the whole, the conclusions reflect the priorities the European Union set out ahead of Seoul and the European Union should be proud of the very important contribution it is making to this process.

Let me highlight some of the key achievements: first and foremost, the European Union wanted this Summit to make progress on joint action to boost global growth and jobs and to give answers on how to address global imbalances and currency tensions. We all knew it would be an uphill struggle to find a commonly agreed way to tackle global imbalances, but the G20 after long, hard negotiations opted for a cooperative solution setting in place a mechanism and a timeline which brings our economies together to address this issue.

The G20 partners committed to reducing excessive imbalances and to maintaining current account imbalances at sustainable levels. Do not underestimate the significance of this. The G20 discussion on how to address imbalances showed that the EU is ahead of the curve. The results of our own thinking on European Union internal imbalances inspired G20 leaders as the best way to tackle global imbalances. Our method of using indicators to trigger an assessment of macro-economic imbalances and their root causes is at the basis of the new G20 mechanism. It will be set up by mid-2011, with the first assessment before the next Summit in November 2011.

Our focus now will be on strengthening this mechanism as much as possible and ensuring it is properly applied during the French G20 Presidency in 2011. So, the conclusions were important but I agree that now we have to see how they will be implemented.

The second achievement relates to currency rates. There will be no success in rebalancing growth without addressing currency tensions. Once again the European Union helped to build a G20 consensus on cooperative solutions. We have agreed to move towards more market-determined exchange rate systems that reflect underlying economic fundamentals. We also agreed to refrain from comparing the evaluations and to be vigilant against excess volatility and disorderly movements in exchange rates.

This resolve provides political momentum for the French G20 Presidency that will take up a comprehensive reform of the international monetary system. I am also happy to see that the G20 summit endorsed the historic reform of the IMF. Indeed, we have exceeded the Pittsburgh expectations on the quota shift and on the representation of emerging economies. Thanks to the open and cooperative approach of EU Member States, our significant concessions and our ability to share responsibility means that the Fund now has the legitimacy it needs to take on the challenging tasks ahead, particularly addressing imbalances and currency tensions. Emerging economies now have to prove that in return for increased representation, they are willing to shoulder increased responsibility for global economic governance.

A fourth achievement at the Summit was keeping up the momentum for global financial regulatory reform, with a clear focus on implementation. We welcome the endorsement of the Basel III reform and the fact that the G20 will continue to work on systemically important financial institutions. The G20's financial reform efforts will continue in areas like macro-prudential policy frameworks, shadow banking, commodity derivative markets and market integrity and efficiency.

The European Union is in the lead on many of these points and our internal work will feed into the G20 process. It is now important to ensure strict and consistent implementation of all these commitments according to the agreed timetable, to ensure a global level playing field. We have received strong assurances from the United States that they share our determination on this. The Seoul Summit also created new momentum to conclude the Doha Round and reiterated the G20 commitment to fight protectionism in all its forms.

An achievement which gives me personal satisfaction is that with the Seoul Development Consensus interlocking development, trade and investment, we have firmly placed development on the G20 agenda. This new growth-oriented approach will complement existing donor focus activities and the United Nations system. It will boost our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and it is perfectly in line with the Commission's recent proposals in its Green Paper on the future of development policy. This Green Paper is now open for consultation and I look forward to input from this House.

Finally, I strongly welcome the G20's commitment to the G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan, to future work on energy-related issues and to sparing no effort in reaching a balanced and successful outcome at the climate negotiations in Cancún.

(FR) Mr President, honourable Members, the growing interest shown by representatives of companies and trade unions is clear proof that the G20 process has now established itself as the major forum for global economic coordination. I took part in the G20 business summit as well, where I highlighted the importance of companies' social responsibility. I also welcomed delegations of trade unionists from Europe, North and South America, and Asia. I agreed with those delegations, brought by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), that employment must take priority, and I underlined the fact that Europe was indeed proposing that employment and the social dimension should be included in the conclusions.

Since the Seoul Summit, we have begun to focus our attention on the next G20 Presidency and the Cannes Summit in November 2011. We should make the most of this opportunity to have one of our Member States in the driving seat. We should establish our position without delay and actively help to shape the G20 agenda in a coordinated way.

The Commission is ready to lend its full support to all of the French Presidency's priorities. One of those is reforming the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for which we will need to establish a series of consistent proposals, particularly in order to improve stability and reduce the volatility of exchange rates.

Another priority concerns the volatility of the prices of raw materials. The Commission will be making an assessment of the primary markets of all raw materials in the coming months.

We should see the French Presidency as a unique opportunity for Europe to make its mark on the worldwide G20 agenda. If we continue to act together at G20 level, Europe will consolidate its position at the centre of the global economic and financial debate and will play a key role in shaping our response to global challenges.

Jean-Paul Gauzès, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, I believe that I have one minute if what I have been told is correct.

President-in-Office of the Belgian Presidency, President of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, I should first like to say, Minister, how much I appreciated your lucid assessment of the latest G20 and how supportive I am of your proposals for the future.

I think it really must be said that the results have been fairly poor, even though Basel III and the IMF reform were approved. We can only hope, like the President of the Commission, that the Seoul summit paves the way for the implementation of the French Presidency's ambitious proposals, which are justified by immediate need and the ongoing difficult circumstances. The European Union will need to be consistent if it is to carry the weight it deserves.

Concrete results are essential, and I agree with you, President of the Commission, when you say that our fellow citizens are expecting action and not mere words or statements. The globalisation of the economy and finance require us to make real progress in the international harmonisation of regulations. Markets react much quicker than politicians. Europe must not be naive and must ensure that there is reciprocity.

Udo Bullmann, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, in her speech this morning, Mrs Harms posed the question of why the spark is no longer being passed from the summits to the people and why new courage and new confidence is not emanating from the summit discussions. As I listened to you this morning and also just now, Mr Barroso, and to Mr Van Rompuy or the Council, too, I got an idea of why the spark is not being passed on. The spark is not even passing into the Chamber here – just look around you. Of course, it is important for more Members to be here. Why are they not here? It is wrong for them not to be here. However, they are not really hearing anything new anyway. You are telling us things that have already been said in the newspapers many times and you are not providing answers to the very pointed questions that have been asked. What is happening with regard to the financial transaction tax? Mr Schulz has asked about this many times. Where is the answer? It is not on the agenda of the G20 summit in Seoul. I would like an explanation.

I would also like to know why the European Council, the Belgian Presidency, said that it is in favour of this, but why the European Council at its last three summits merely said that it recommended a feasibility study at global level but not at European level. Why ever not? Does the Council not see the dead end into which you are directing this matter? I will ask you once again, Mr Barroso: when will Mr Šemeta comply with the demand made by this Parliament at the beginning of this year, namely that we want a feasibility study for Europe, too? If you present an opinion on this subject, this Chamber will actually be full and we will listen to you. However, do not avoid the issue any longer. For Europe alone we are talking about EUR 200 billion per year. Ask the Members who belong to the Committee on Budgets what trivial, small amounts they are currently arguing about with the Council. With an initiative we would make progress. We need to breathe life into the roles, then the spark will once again be passed on. That is what we expect from you.

Marielle De Sarnez, *on behalf of the ALDE Group.* – (FR) Mr President, we could have any number of summits and meetings, but if Europe does not adopt a common offensive approach, it will carry no weight, and the next G20 will simply be a standoff between China and the United States, from which we shall inevitably emerge the losers. However, there is no shortage of issues.

While the euro area is experiencing its own difficulties, which require strong responses internally, the international monetary system is going through a very critical period, which is adding to our difficulties and creating competition for Europe that is as destabilising as it is unjust. That is the first point. The Europeans should table at the G20 plans for a new world monetary order that is based on a unit of account founded on a basket of currencies including, in particular, the dollar, the euro and the yuan.

Similarly, we shall have to revisit the issue of financial regulation. The commitments to fight against tax havens have still not been honoured in practice, and the activity of credit rating agencies has still not been controlled. This is all the more regrettable as there are other challenges, such as the regulation of the commodities markets: in fossils, minerals and agricultural produce. In this respect, I shall offer you a suggestion. I think that, on this issue, the Europeans should propose the setting up of a world commodities organisation.

Indeed, there is a real risk to the world economy with the shortages engineered by certain producer countries, and here I am thinking of China. Moreover, speculation on agricultural commodities is profoundly immoral as it adds to the hazards of climate change an additional risk of famine for developing countries.

On all these major issues, which clearly relate to the global balance, I believe one thing. I believe that the French Presidency will only be of real use if it is situated, from the outset, within a European framework.

Patrick Le Hyaric, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the extent of the world crisis, and social and environmental imperatives call for resolute action from the European Union at the G20, on the basis of declarations of intent on the regulation of international finance.

Firstly, the World Trade Organisation negotiations must not turn the world into a capitalist jungle but must apply social, environmental and job creation standards to the trading system. They must tackle the scourge of unemployment, which currently affects more than 250 million people on the planet, by putting an end to the current austerity policies.

From the opposite perspective, tax havens must be closed down and a mechanism invented for taxing capital movements; an international fund must be created to stabilise commodity prices, starting with the prices of agricultural commodities; the international monetary system must be overhauled, with a new role for the International Monetary Fund in the areas of employment and sustainable human development, and with the creation of a universal world currency to challenge the rule of the dollar.

Similarly, this scandalous state of affairs that sees credit rating agencies be the judges in their own case, for the sole benefit of the banks, must be stopped. The people must be able to have their say on all these issues, which affect them.

Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE). – (EL) Mr President, the announcements of the results of the G20 summit were important, there can be no doubt of that; however, a second reading raises important questions on certain points.

To be precise, twenty developed countries sent a strict warning to every country which is applying uncoordinated economic policies, and all this is at a time when one economic policy is being applied by the United States, with quantitative easing, another is being applied by the Member States of the European Union, opting for austerity at the moment, and yet another is being applied by China, which has chosen to keep its currency undervalued.

What I am trying to understand, therefore, is this: what is the point of such a statement and for whom is it ultimately intended? I find it very hard to believe that this message is addressed at countries of little importance to the global economy. If, however, the G20 made such a statement for their own benefit, then we really do need to consider that there is a very serious issue of political conspiracy at a time in the economy when instant reaction is needed.

Charles Goerens (ALDE). – (FR) Mr President, my question was initially addressed to Mr Barroso, but as he is not here, I should like to put it to the Belgian Presidency.

Nowadays, it is possible to practise trade dumping without infringing the anti-dumping rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Indeed, with a currency that is chronically undervalued, you arrive at the same result. Even if we start to tackle, albeit timidly, the subject of competitive currency devaluations, there is still the question of what is acceptable to the European Union.

My question to the Belgian Presidency is this: if the G20 were to fail to put an end to the monetary disorder, do you believe that the WTO negotiations could emerge unscathed?

Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD). – (EL) Mr President, the G20 summit in November did not, in my opinion, have substantial results. It proved once again that the United States are in a prominent position and that China is attempting to secure a place on the international stage.

As we all know, the global economic crisis which started in 2007 broke out when, one by one, the investment banks in the United States hit liquidity problems. As we have seen – and as the whole world knows – the US administration was forced to print more money, USD 700 billion in the first stage and a further USD 600 billion in the very recent second stage.

In contrast to this response to monetary issues on the part of the United States, Europe in general and the euro area in particular remained faithful to the principle of budgetary discipline, to a strictly controlled monetary policy, thereby leaving room for the markets to play speculative games at the expense of the less robust economies of Europe in general and the euro area in particular.

I propose that consideration should be given to the question of issuing new money in Europe, either in the form of banknotes or the form of a Eurobond.

Michel Dantin (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, our fellow citizens have expectations of us, they have expectations of Europe on the issue of world governance. We must be a proactive force, we must be a decisive force. Several speakers this morning have made the point that the French Presidency of the G20 could represent an opportunity for Europe. I clearly share this view, and I believe that our Parliament ought to be regularly informed of the progress of the G20's work by the Presidency itself. I understand that the President of the French Republic would be willing to come and address us. Mr President, I think that you should invite him to do so.

Andris Piebalgs, *Member of the Commission.* – Mr President, the G20 is definitely a very particular formation, where all decisions should be taken by consensus. But, as our President of the Commission and the Belgian President emphasised, the process is moving on and I will just address one of the issues, namely the taxation of the financial sector.

Even if there has not been a breakthrough, it was agreed to undertake further work on innovative financing under the French Presidency. The European Union stands ready to support work in the G20 to explore and develop a financial transaction tax at global level. As I said, the G20 works by consensus and many G20 partners do not, at this stage, share our view on the issue, but we will continue to work towards a consensus.

In the meantime, we need to work on other ways of ensuring that the financial sector makes an equitable contribution through measures such as the financial activities tax. On 7 October 2010, the Commission outlined its view on this issue and it will pursue the following objectives. Firstly, we must ensure that the financial sector makes a fair contribution to public finances. This is particularly important given the support it received during the crisis. Secondly, we must make sure that any tax we put forward offers real benefits and that it will raise substantial revenues without undermining EU competitiveness. Thirdly, we must ensure that the patchwork of divergent national financial sector taxes does not create new obstacles to the single market.

On this basis, the Commission has set out a two-pronged approach to financial sector taxation. A financial activities tax appears the best way to deal with the issue in the EU. Taxing the profits and wages of the financial sector could ensure that it is taxed fairly, while

also generating much-needed revenues. In addition, a financial activities tax could be less prone to the risks to EU competitiveness that other taxation tools would pose if introduced unilaterally.

A financial transaction tax should be promoted at global level. An international transaction tax on the globalised financial sector is the best way to fund international objectives in areas such as development aid and climate change. With the right choice of tax and its proper implementation, we could have an important new source of revenues while still maintaining our competitiveness.

The Commission aims to continue to work on these options in order to bring forward policy initiatives in 2011. The first step will be an impact assessment on financial sector taxation covering the ideas we have set out. In this respect, we will also take account of Member States' analysis. The assessment of the cumulative impact on the financial sector institutions of new regulation, possible bank levies and taxes will be important before launching any proposal.

From my side, I would also mention something that is very important: the G20 very clearly took development policy objectives into its agenda. I believe it is a good sign that the G20 process, with proper determination on the part of the European Union, could deliver benefits in the interest of citizens.

Olivier Chastel, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, to conclude this debate, I would like to begin, in general terms, by saying once again that, on the eve of the G20 meetings, we were really very clear on the fact that it was important for the Union to reach a satisfactory outcome on a large number of issues, and that we had to work to ensure that the G20 remained, first and foremost, a credible and legitimate forum, capable of producing concrete results, as I was saying just now, and of giving a coordinated political impetus to globalisation, so that the Union, in particular, can make its voice heard in this context. I think, without glossing over the difficulties – and many of you have referred to those difficulties – that the Union has fulfilled its obligations and that the work of the European institutions and of the countries of the Union, which participate in these G20 discussions, can be judged to have been satisfactory.

Seoul was the fifth summit in two years, and a large number of collective commitments were put on the table. Many of these have had positive results in terms of economic growth and world financial stability, even though this work is clearly far from complete.

Within the Union and following on from what the Commission has just told us about banking levies and the tax on financial transactions, the conclusions of the European Council of 29 October clearly state that work on these two issues should continue, both within the Union and on international issues. On the issue of levies, there is a growing consensus on the basis and the spirit of such levies. There is still no consensus on either the objective or the use of the revenue.

Meanwhile, Member States are in the process of setting up national systems which differ from each other significantly. Therefore, in the short term, we will have to introduce a minimum level of coordination and, in the medium term, move towards a resolution framework that harmonises to a much greater extent the crisis resolution arrangements, in particular on the basis of the Commission's legislative proposals. On this basis, the October European Council concluded that the different systems of levies that exist at

present should be coordinated to a greater extent, and the ECOFIN Council was invited to return to the December European Council with conclusions.

Finally, as regards the tax on financial transactions mentioned just now by the Commission, the European Council called on the Council, and consequently ECOFIN, to examine ways in which we could consider today the various options for preventing tax havens and tax evasion, and the ECOFIN Council tasked the Council's high-level group on fiscal matters with looking into these difficult issues.

President. – The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Ioan Mircea Pașcu (S&D), *in writing.* – Our international institutional economic and financial architecture – dating from the end of the war – is currently under strong pressure. A profoundly changing international system and the world crisis are stretching it to the limit, forcing it to adapt itself to the new circumstances. Moreover, new institutions such as the G20 are being created to respond to these. However, this is essentially an intergovernmental organism whose decisions, which affect us all, have to be implemented nationally. This is why it is important that its decisions take into account the interests not only of its members but of us all.

From that perspective, it is encouraging to see that the Seoul Summit stressed cooperation and collaboration between members, thus guaranteeing the implementation of decisions, and that there was an indication of resolution in making fundamental structural alterations and encouragement of growth through job creation, without losing sight of the needs of the developing world. Let us hope that the EU as such will benefit from the decisions of a body in which only some of its members are participating and that those which are outside the eurozone will benefit too.

(The sitting was suspended at 11:55)

(From 11:55 to 12:10, Members gathered for the award of the LUX prize)

(The sitting resumed at 12:05)

IN THE CHAIR: Edward McMILLAN-SCOTT

Vice-President

8. Voting time

President. – First of all, following an incident this morning in the Chamber, Mr Schulz wishes to make a personal statement.

Martin Schulz (S&D). – *(DE)* Mr President, during the debate on the European Council here this morning there was an incident that I do not wish to go into again, because I was the target of an insult. However, I will say this: there are levels at which I cannot be insulted and where I do not see it as an insult either, because in order to insult me, someone must have a certain degree of sincerity. However, I would like to express my sincere thanks for the numerous signs of solidarity that I have since received in this House. I would very much like to thank my fellow Members from all groups. That is a sign of the common, democratic and pro-European conviction that the overwhelming majority of this House shares. I would like to thank you very sincerely for this.

(Sustained applause)

President. – The incident referred to was a protest by Mr Bloom, in which he addressed wartime allusions to Mr Schulz. The President said this was unacceptable and invited Mr Bloom to apologise. Mr Bloom did not apologise then. I call on him now to do so. If he does not do so, he must leave the Chamber.

(Loud applause)

Godfrey Bloom (EFD). – Mr President, yet again there is one rule for Herr Schulz and one rule for everybody else. This is a disgrace. I have been elected – re-elected – to vote in this Chamber by the people of Yorkshire (your own constituency, I might add), with a democratic mandate which you yourself do not enjoy, Mr President, because you switched parties and they voted for the Conservatives. I have no intention of apologising, I have no intention of leaving this Chamber: you must have me escorted out, Sir!

President. – Mr Bloom, first of all, I was expelled by the Conservative Party for making a stand on a point of principle closely related to the issues you raised this morning.

(Applause)

Secondly, you have not apologised for language which was wholly inappropriate to the European Parliament, and I ask you to leave.

(Loud applause, and also shouts of 'Point of order' and 'You are wrong')

Mr Bloom, I am sorry but I am not taking any points of order on this.

I have a proposal to make. I can ask the security services to remove Mr Bloom, but I intend to put it to the vote. Is it the wish of the House that Mr Bloom should leave? Those in favour please raise your hands.

(Loud protests and cries of 'No!' from the EFD)

Those who wish Mr Bloom to stay please raise your hands. Those abstaining.

(Further loud protests from the EFD and replies of 'Be quiet!' Further prolonged noise and whistles)

I will accept one statement from Mr Farage, the leader of this Group.

Nigel Farage (EFD). – Mr President, the reason for the anger and the noise is because we are not actually applying the rules of this place evenly. Mr Schulz has repeatedly thrown insults not just at me, but at many Members of this House: he said that the Eurosceptics and the no-voters open the door to fascism. We have had Danny Cohn-Bendit calling us mentally ill.

Mr President, if the rules are that something is deemed to be an insult and a Member is asked to leave, that is fair enough. But the anger – and I share that anger – is because these rules are not applied evenly. Mr Schulz regularly calls other people fascists, and when he is called one, the Member in question is asked to leave. That is not right. That is not fair.

President. – Mr Farage, I do not want to prolong this, but can I just make the observation that this is incorrect. Mr Bloom's two interventions – one from the floor and one from his place – were both heard by many people and were both unacceptable in parliamentary terms. The House wants Mr Bloom to leave. That is its expression. If he does not do so, people will infer from that his attitude towards the democratic process.

Mr Bloom, I am going to invoke Rule 152. If you will not leave, I will have you removed. I have discussed this with the President, and I have his support for this.

(Interjection from Mr Bloom: 'Do your damnedest!')

Joseph Daul (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, if I may, what I said this morning is that Mr Bloom has behaved unacceptably.

Secondly, we are in a democratic parliament. We have decided democratically, Mr Bloom, that you should leave this Parliament. I hereby ask you, in the name of democracy and of all this Parliament stands for, to leave this Parliament today. I ask you to do so out of respect for democratic rights.

Mr Gollnisch, you do not need to challenge me. We know your methods. They are unacceptable, anti-democratic. That is all I have to say to you.

(Applause)

President. – Under Rule 152(4) I regret that this incident is obstructing the good business of the House. I therefore intend to suspend the sitting for five minutes.

(The sitting was suspended for five minutes)

President. – Point of order? *(inaudible off-microphone comments and shouts of 'Point of order!')*

Christian Ehler (PPE). – Mr President, as the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the Korean Peninsula, I ask the plenary to strongly condemn yesterday's artillery attack by the DPRK on a south Korean island.

(Applause)

There have been severe casualties among the South Korean military and especially among the civilian population of that island. Villages were burning and the population had to be evacuated.

We welcome the announcement by the ROK President Lee Myung-bak that despite this violent act he intends to avoid escalation on the Korean island.

We welcome that Baroness Ashton, the High Representative, has acted in a concerned manner with other international actors, our allies and our strategic partner, the Republic of Korea, in condemning this clear violation of the UN Korean Armistice Agreement. We also expect China to clearly condemn this act.

We call upon the DPRK to avoid any further escalation and to undertake all necessary efforts to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. We would like to convey our condolences to the families of the victims.

(Applause)

President. – Thank you, Mr Ehler. Now just a minute please. Just quieten down please. At the risk of being described myself as a fascist dictator, I have taken certain actions this morning. But Mr Schulz has suggested I take one speaker from those who opposed Mr Bloom's removal from the Chamber. The first person to ask for the floor this morning was Mr Madlener. I have said to Mr Madlener that if he takes the floor I will repeat the remarks that Mr Bloom made directly to Mr Schulz. Mr Madlener you have the floor.

Barry Madlener (NI). – (NL) Mr President, many thanks for still allowing me to raise my point of order, as the important thing here, of course, is that the rules be implemented consistently and equally for everyone. I should like to point out the inconsistency shown by the Presidency of Parliament: you have just ejected Mr Bloom on account of his remarks to Mr Schulz, even though Mr Schulz called my colleague, Mr van der Stoep, a fascist here in this Chamber and the Presidency did nothing about it. Mr Schulz has not even apologised as yet, and so it would do Mr Schulz honour if, like Mr Bloom, he were to leave the Chamber now.

President. – Now – thank you. As I said, by agreement with Mr Schulz and Mr Madlener, I will now repeat the remarks made very audibly by Mr Bloom which were directed at Mr Schulz this morning and to which the President objected, and I object, and most of the House objects, when asked.

Mr Bloom said to Mr Schulz: ‘Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer’. Those are unacceptable terms to use, by one Member to another. They go far beyond what we would regard as acceptable in this House. That is an end to the matter. We will deal with it through the Bureau. Now I want to move to the vote, because I want to finish by 13:00.

Bruno Gollnisch (NI). – (FR) Mr President, I shall be very brief. I shall speak about Rule 152.

President. – No, sorry. Please do not give the microphone to Mr Gollnisch. I have said to Mr Gollnisch that he can have the floor the next time the President is in the Chair. Thank you very much. Mr Salatto has asked for the floor.

Potito Salatto (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, aside from this issue, I should like to submit a problem to the Presidency.

I think some people have not yet fully understood the role of the European Parliament after the Treaty of Lisbon. I feel I must point out an underlying problem here: the Commissioner for Transport, Mr Kallas, has repeatedly refused to meet with the board of the Sky and Space Intergroup to discuss the Cost-Effective Small Aircraft (CESAR) project, which affects everyone in terms of the economy, the environment and security. I would urge the Presidency to call Commissioner Kallas to this Chamber to explain the programme he intends to move ahead with in this sector, which is extremely sensitive and important for the European Parliament.

President. – The next item is the vote.

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

8.1. Draft amending budget No 8/2010: Section III - Commission - European Solidarity Fund: floods in Ireland - completion of ESF - Objective 1 (2000 to 2006) (A7-0327/2010, László Surján) (vote)

8.2. Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EC and Moldova (A7-0300/2010, Graham Watson) (vote)

8.3. Information on medicinal products (Community code relating to medicinal products) (A7-0290/2010, Christofer Fjellner) (vote)

8.4. Information on medicinal products (Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products) (A7-0289/2010, Christofer Fjellner) (vote)

– *Before the vote on Amendment 13:*

Christofer Fjellner, *rapporteur*. – Mr President, I have a small oral amendment as the result of a last-minute compromise among groups and that is to Amendment 13 where the text as it stands right now is ‘within 60 days after receipt of the notification’. That should be changed to ‘within 90 days after receipt of the notification’.

This has been agreed among all the political groups.

(The oral amendment was accepted)

8.5. Hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (A7-0196/2010, Jill Evans) (vote)

8.6. Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) (B7-0617/2010) (vote)

9. Explanations of vote

Oral explanations of vote

Report: Christofer Fjellner (A7-0290/2010)

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE). – *(PL)* Mr President, to protect public health effectively, it is essential to ensure patients have extensive access to high quality information about medicines. Harmonisation of the law in this field will allow us to ensure a high level of awareness among European patients and will help to even out differences in the health situation in all Member States. In addition, making legislation more detailed, and in particular the obligation to ensure that patients have access to information, will allow us to prevent pharmaceutical companies from unfairly promoting their own products. Currently, this procedure is not adequately supervised. It is also necessary to introduce particular legislation concerning pharmaceutical agents and to enforce its implementation effectively in all Member States. I endorsed the report.

Jens Rohde (ALDE). – *(DA)* Mr President, first of all, I would like to congratulate Mr Fjellner on a splendid result. The Danish Liberals have chosen to vote in favour of the directive concerning information on medicinal products subject to medical prescription. It is important for the EU's citizens to have access to sound information on these medicinal products, and we therefore think that this is a good report that puts the patient first.

That being said, we felt obliged not to vote on the regulation itself. That is not because we are not in favour of EU citizens having access to sound information on these medicinal products subject to medical prescription, but because parts of the proposal contravene a number of national constitutions. Even before the medicinal products package was presented, several countries had already made the Commission aware of the fact that there is a legal problem in relation to their national constitutions. Prior checking by the authorities of information that is disseminated to the general public contravenes the definition of freedom of expression in several countries. Therefore, we cannot vote in favour of the European Medicines Agency checking certain kinds of information before it is disseminated

to the general public. However, we expect both the Council and the Commission to seek ways to solve this problem before the second reading, and therefore we hope that we will then be able to vote in favour of the regulation itself.

Licia Ronzulli (PPE). – *(IT)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the legislative proposal voted on today, which I supported, outlines the importance of pharmaceutical industries in their delicate role as sources of non-promotional information on their products.

Making patients better informed must give the pharmaceutical industry a sense of responsibility, and it must carry out this task clearly and rigorously, contributing to avoiding the excessive consumption of medicinal products caused by commercial motives. Indeed, this vote emphasises the importance of how information on medicinal products must also be available on the Internet or in hard copy, following specific rules which are the same in all Member States.

However, this does not relieve healthcare professionals of their fundamental role as the primary and irreplaceable source of information for citizens on health and treatment. The agency-style relationship between doctor and patient remains unique and irreplaceable, and verbal communication is affirmed as the basis of any medical treatment. Furthermore, it allows patients to be better informed about the medicinal products they are taking, and it involves them in the treatments they have to undergo, making them active participants in their own recovery.

Paolo Bartolozzi (PPE). – *(IT)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the reports by Mr Fjellner aim to integrate and complete the existing European Union regulations on the subject, bringing them up to date and making them capable of tackling the challenges that technological development has created and poses for public health.

In our opinion, at its centre is the patient and his or her right to be informed and have access to scientific information, which has now become both qualitatively and quantitatively better and must be monitored, starting with a more precise and accurate distinction between scientific information and advertising.

Indeed, the reports use precise and standardised criteria to establish the types of information to be provided, which data are optional or not, as well as the channels through which they may be made available, thereby setting out the obligations of pharmaceutical companies and Member States.

Based on this understanding, we express our support for this report, recognising its merits not only in terms of health but also in social terms.

Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE). – *(SK)* Mr President, I naturally voted in favour of Mr Fjellner's report, which, in addition to talking about information for patients on product leaflets and the individual packaging of medicines, mainly focuses on the behaviour of pharmaceutical companies. Until recently many of them combined information on the medicine with their own advertising. In my opinion, they were influencing patients in a non-objective way to take note of a particular product.

I am in favour of patients having the best, and most up-to-date information, which is approved at the same time as a new medicine is approved, for example, and I believe we have made a major contribution to this. High quality information must also be provided, of course, in the mother-tongue on the Internet, which is the modern medium of communication. I am pleased that, by adopting this report, we have actually reduced the

disparity between EU countries that are less developed in this area, and I am pleased that doctor-patient relationships have not been impaired in any way. That is the main source of information.

Hannu Takkula (ALDE). – (FI) Mr President, firstly, I wish to thank Mr Fjellner for an excellent report. It has to be said that it really is important to amend the existing legislation and bring it up to date. If we are talking specifically about medicines and researched data on what the drugs contain, it is also very important for patient safety.

Now that advertising has assumed an even greater role, it is essential that we determine the criteria that enable consumers and patients to be fully aware of, and certain about, what sort of effects these medicines have. This information must be based on researched data, and not on fantasy or the ways and means of advertising. Such legislation, which is up to date and good for patient safety, is needed more generally in the European Union.

Sonia Alfano (ALDE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the issue of information about prescription-only medicinal products is a sensitive subject because it has an important effect on the protection of the right to health and welfare of all citizens.

The European Commission sent us a proposal on the revision of the directive that risked opening a loophole in the legislation, which would have allowed pharmaceutical companies to exploit an unclear distinction between the definitions of information and advertising to promote their prescription-only medicinal products, to the detriment of the people.

Of course, there is still much to do with regard to a suitable strategy for information on medicinal products, but fortunately this time the European Parliament has reacted as it always should. Parliament has taken a stand to protect citizens and defend a patient's right to better information, and it has not given in to pressure from pharmaceutical companies.

Daniel Hannan (ECR). – Mr President, the restriction and, in some cases the prescribing of alternative medicines, herbal remedies, higher-dose vitamin and mineral supplements has been one of great scandals of European regulation.

I have no idea what the efficacy of these cures is. My wife swears by them, I am a little bit more sceptical but, as King Solomon wisely says, it is better to have a dish of bitter herbs in a house where there is love than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. Rarely could the proverb about the bitter herbs have applied quite so aptly as in this case.

But whether they are useless or whether they are helpful, they are certainly not deleterious to health. So why did the European Union criminalise an activity harmlessly pursued by some 20 million Europeans? Answer: lobbying by some large pharmaceutical corporations, which saw the opportunity to put small herbalists out of business – something that has now happened all over my constituency. They could never have got these rules through the national parliaments. Once again, we see the way in which the Brussels machinery has become a racket open to the big corporations.

Philip Claeys (NI). – (NL) Mr President, I should like to take this opportunity to object to your decision to deny Mr Bloom access to the Chamber. It is true that he used unparliamentary language. This time it was Mr Schulz himself who was on the receiving end of this kind of term. He very often uses the word 'fascist' himself ...

(The President cut off the speaker)

President. – Mr Claeys, this is not a point of order on the Fjellner report and I am not going to allow you to carry on. I have said to Mr Gollnisch that he can make his point of order when the President is next in the chair, and that is what will happen.

Report: Christofer Fjellner (A7-0289/2010)

Anna Rosbach (EFD). – (DA) Mr President, I would actually like to talk about Mr Fjellner's report (A7-0289/2010) on establishing a European Medicines Agency, which contains a number of good and important initiatives. That is why I voted in favour of it. I actually found that quite difficult to do, because I am in fact opposed to the setting up of yet more EU agencies. However, one overall agency for the evaluation of medicinal products and for providing information to the general public concerning medicinal products subject to medical prescription for both humans and animals makes perfect sense to me, particularly as medicines these days are increasingly produced both within and outside the EU's borders.

Daniel Hannan (ECR). – Mr President, last year, when some of us held up placards saying 'referendums', Mr Watson said that our behaviour reminded him of National Socialists in the German Reichstag. Mr Schulz himself said that our behaviour put him in mind of Adolf Hitler. I see you are in a difficult...

(The President cut off the speaker)

President. – Mr Hannan, I can see where you are going with this. I have said that on these questions Mr Gollnisch has asked for a point of order. He will make that point of order when the President is present. That I think is the appropriate way of dealing with this. If you have nothing to say on the Fjellner report I will move on to Mr Březina.

I heard what you said. You said Mr Gollnisch does not speak for you. I shall report that to the House. Mr Gollnisch is a Member of the Non-Attached Group. The Non-Attached Group is not a group, but he does speak for a significant component of it. I accept that, and that is why I have suggested that Mr Gollnisch makes his point of order when the President is present.

I do not propose to allow you to speak, Mr Hannan, because if I allow you then everybody will want to have a say on this sensitive and important question, so I am sorry. We shall now move on to the explanations of vote on the Evans report.

Report: Jill Evans (A7-0196/2010)

Jan Březina (PPE). – (CS) Mr President, this directive undoubtedly represents a step forwards on the path to preventing the creation of waste, and limiting the use of hazardous materials. However, I consider it somewhat contentious to include PVC within the scope of the directive among the materials designated for a priority review. Neither PVC, in other words polyvinyl chloride, nor waste from PVC are classified as hazardous under EU law. Even if we accepted the objection that the legislation on hazardous materials and the studies are now 10 years old, and may therefore be outdated in some aspects, it is clear from the earlier research that PVC can be recycled and that there might be a negative impact on the environment if it was replaced with alternative materials. It is therefore impossible to agree with the frequently-heard argument that discouraging the use of PVC in electrical and electronic equipment is justified because of dioxin emissions when it is burned outdoors. This argument totally ignores the fact that the burning of any kind of waste is undesirable.

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE). – (LT) Mr President, sooner or later, electronic equipment becomes waste which, unfortunately, still consists of certain hazardous substances. The Member States sometimes have difficulty dealing with such waste electronic equipment, so it is essential to gradually move towards the so-called principle that ‘prevention is better than cure’. By unifying chemicals through the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation with the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) Directive at least we are going some way towards unifying other hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. Clearly this does not harmonise all systems entirely and leaves the Member States some room for interpretation, but this harmonisation at least stops the significant differences that currently exist among the Member States. The restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electronic equipment and the measures adopted today must not exceed two limits. Firstly, they must not cause disproportionate difficulties for small business. Secondly, the list of forbidden substances must not halt the development of technologies. We must not be prejudiced against substances that are currently only being tested, and which may in future bring breakthroughs in the world of technology and electronics.

Sonia Alfano (ALDE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I voted in favour of the report by Mrs Evans on the recast of the directive because I really regret the fact that in the compromise text, which was adopted due to strong pressure from industrial lobbies, all references to PVC and halogenated fire retardants have disappeared, even though all the studies carried out by the Commission have demonstrated since as far back as 2000 that the disposal of these substances poses serious risks for human health and the environment.

Transferring the costs of industry to the environment and to citizens is an approach that we absolutely cannot support because, in addition to distorting the free market, it represents an unacceptable trade-off between peoples’ quality of life and the profits of business.

I hope the next time the directive is updated, in three years’ time, that citizens’ right to health and environmental protection will be placed right at the forefront.

Daniel Hannan (ECR). – Mr President, perhaps you would allow me to make the general point that in an open society, the right to free speech trumps the right not to be offended and in a democracy, the only people who should determine whether or not we sit and legislate in a chamber are our constituents.

The removal of a Member can materially affect the outcome.

Now, if we are going to be disinterested in our application of the rules, then we ought to censure obnoxious allusions whichever side they come from, but I think there is something arbitrary and unfair about allowing Eurosceptics to be called Nazis ...

(The President cut off the speaker)

President. – No, Mr Hannan, you strayed from the general to the particular. Mr Kamall, on the Evans report or else I will cut you off.

Syed Kamall (ECR). – Mr President, I have no doubt that you will try to cut me off, as usual when it comes to freedom of speech, but I really want to talk about the hazardous substances and toxicity. I think we all agree and, as a former electronic engineer, I know about the level of hazardous and toxic substances within this equipment. It is absolutely right that we are trying to tackle this issue. But I would also like to talk about the toxicity

that has permeated the debate and democracy here in the European Parliament today. Surely when a German national, a socialist talks ...

(The President cut off the speaker)

Zuzana Roithová (PPE). – (CS) Mr President, I was happy to vote for the compromise version of the Directive on Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment. We are all committed to the protection of nature and public health, but it is also necessary to maintain some sense of balance. Today, in the middle of an economic crisis, it is not wise to increase the financial burden on small firms and consumers through very stringent provisions. I therefore appreciated the fact that the inter-institutional team charged the Commission with reviewing the original list of hazardous substances rather than immediately banning them, which would have a negative impact on SMEs and on the social and economic situation of the EU.

Motion for a resolution B7-0617/2010 (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement)

Clemente Mastella (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution because it represents the outcome of extremely difficult negotiations between the European Commission and several third countries, including Canada, Japan, the United States, Australia and Mexico.

The fight against counterfeiting must be one of our priorities and an objective of all national and international policies. Consequently, cooperation between Member States is essential in order to achieve effective results.

The agreement reached will definitely not be able to resolve the complex situation on international markets, but it represents a step in the right direction. Our task now is to continue working for the civil and customs protection of our geographical indications, which are damaged by competition which is at the very least unfair, due to the constant use of names and acronyms that reference the best-known European brands. The most obvious damages are destined to build up for our industries and producers in the agro-food, design, fashion and luxury products sectors.

I believe that the Commission has made an effort to keep the European Parliament fully informed during all the phases of the negotiations on the international agreements. I should like to reiterate here our request to give the public and the European Parliament access to the texts. In conclusion, I urge the European Commission to continue to keep Parliament fully and punctually informed regarding all the future initiatives it intends to adopt on this matter.

Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE). – (SK) Mr President, in the area of intellectual property rights protection, I believe that special attention should be paid to ensuring the right to health, which is closely connected to the actual right to life.

I find totally unacceptable a situation where, under the pretext of robust protection for intellectual property rights - which in some cases appears almost exaggerated - access to basic medicines is denied to whole swathes of the population, particularly in developing countries. I therefore call on the Commission to promote the fundamental principles of public health protection and access to medicines when negotiating the technical particulars of the anti-counterfeiting trade agreement.

Peter Jahr (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, anti-counterfeiting is an extremely important issue. Twenty years ago we could still laugh if someone bought a 'Rolex watch' for USD 10. The market in this premium price bracket was not put at risk by this. Today the situation is completely different. In particular, products in the lower and middle price brackets are also counterfeited. T-shirts, toys and protective clothing are counterfeited, as well as intellectual property. In this case, it is not only a question of financial interests, but also of safety at work, environmental protection and protection of health, as well as social standards. Anyone who wants a fair world must fight hard to combat counterfeiting.

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, the situation in which unfair competition is flooding the European market with counterfeit goods from around the world is unfair and obviously unacceptable. I would also like to draw attention to the insufficiently clear wording concerning the imposition of an obligation to monitor Internet service providers. This contravenes the right to privacy and looks like an attempt at censorship. It also works against *e-commerce*, which is a part of the economy which on the one hand we want to develop very dynamically by the use of increasingly innovative methods, while on the other hand we continue to impose restrictions in this area. The decisions made on this matter, today, slightly improve the situation.

Zuzana Roithová (PPE). – (CS) Mr President, I supported the joint resolution on ACTA, even though I voted differently to my political group, because I too believe that we must encourage the Commission to draw up studies which will remove the final question marks over the impact of ACTA on European citizens, and confront the information gap from the past caused by an unwillingness to provide the negotiated texts. This mainly involves the opinion of the European Data Protection Supervisor, the impact studies on existing European legislation and assurances that exemptions for providers of Internet connections will not be affected. However, I find it quite outrageous that the agreement retains the option of examining the computers and other personal items of individual travellers at borders.

I was also pleased to support the PPE resolution, which offered a version that was balanced and of a very high standard, of course without the important pressure on the Commission before the important negotiations on the final form of the agreement.

Syed Kamall (ECR). – Mr President, I assume that your finger will be hovering over the button. Many people ask me what ACTA stands for, and I was one of the shadow rapporteurs on the Anti-Counterfeit Trading Agreement.

I know after today some will wonder about our level of transparency, democracy and freedom of speech, but I want to focus on the five reasons why we disagreed with the resolution. I was very grateful to get the joint PPE/ECR resolution. Firstly, it goes no further than the *acquis communautaire*. Secondly, the Commission has been transparent. Thirdly, this is not negotiated at WTO level, because China and India were against the agreement in the first place. Fourthly, this does not affect generic medicines in transit across the EU, and finally, developing countries are free to join the ACTA agreement if they want to. They just have not chosen to do so. It is an open mechanism that countries can join if they want to. It is only a shame that we do not keep to the same principles of freedom of speech when it comes to this Chamber.

Written explanations of vote

Report: László Surján (A7-0327/2010)

Sophie Auconie (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) Following the 2002 floods, which caused great human and material damage in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and France, the Council of the European Union created an instrument to allow funds to be released rapidly to assist regions affected by natural disasters. Today it is Ireland, itself affected by floods, that will benefit from these funds. I voted in favour of this amendment to the EU budget, as it allows this aid to be paid to our Irish friends. This vote symbolises European solidarity in the face of natural disasters. This solidarity is being shown today in Ireland and tomorrow in France. Indeed, our country will soon receive substantial financial aid to deal with the consequences of storm Xynthia in February 2010.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) The floods that took place in November 2009 seriously affected Ireland and caused severe damage estimated at more than EUR 520 million. The amending budget provides for the mobilisation of the Solidarity Fund to cover the losses suffered, to a total of EUR 13 022 500 in commitment and payment appropriations. As I had the opportunity to say yesterday, I feel that the mobilisation of the fund is fully justified as it helps those who have suffered the most due to this natural disaster, and thus the amendment is in line with the EU budget.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) On 24 September 2010, the European Commission put forward a proposal on a decision by the European Parliament and the Council relating to the mobilisation of the Solidarity Fund, on the basis of the provisions of item 26 of the interinstitutional agreement (IIA) of 17 May 2006. This was the first proposal for mobilisation of the Solidarity Fund within the 2010 financial period. The IIA allows for mobilisation of the Solidarity Fund up to a maximum annual limit of EUR 1 billion. It is important to note that the purpose of the Fund is not to provide compensation for private losses, but to repair infrastructure, and the Fund is a re-financing instrument.

The Irish authorities estimate total losses caused directly by the disaster to be EUR 520.9 million. The Commission proposes the mobilisation of EUR 13 022 500 of the maximum limit of EUR 1 billion in commitment and payment appropriations relating to the effects of the flooding in Ireland. The legal requirements having been fulfilled, I agree with this amending budget.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), *in writing.* – (PT) We voted in favour of the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund for Ireland, following the floods that hit that country last November. Once again, however, we would like to criticise the delays in mobilising the fund. Many long months elapse between the time of the disaster and the point at which the Member State actually receives the aid: in this case it has been more than a year. This fund, and potentially others, depending on the circumstances of each case, need to be mobilised more rapidly in order to hasten an effective and swift response to emergency situations. There should be a cohesion dimension to the ability to deal with the consequences of disasters, reducing disparities between the EU's different regions and Member States. Once again, we would stress that it is also important to strengthen disaster prevention, putting into practice the recommendations recently adopted by Parliament.

Giovanni La Via (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) I voted to approve draft amending budget No 8/2010 because it is essential if we are to allocate EUR 13 022 500 for the mobilisation of the Solidarity Fund in favour of Ireland, with reference to the heavy rainfall that caused serious flooding in November 2009.

I believe that the Solidarity Fund is a valuable tool for enabling the EU to show solidarity with the populations of regions affected by natural disasters, by providing financial support to help ensure a swift return to living conditions that are as normal as possible. The overall annual budget available for the Solidarity Fund is EUR 1 billion. No amount has yet been allocated in 2010 for previous applications, and so the entire sum of EUR 1 billion is still available.

David Martin (S&D), *in writing*. – I voted for this proposal to transfer EUR 1 3 022 500 from the ESF to a budget line to give support to Ireland following the severe flooding it suffered in November 2009.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) This draft amending budget makes complete sense, given the purpose of the funds mobilised through the Solidarity Fund. The floods in Ireland during November 2009 caused severe damage, particularly to the agricultural sector, homes and businesses, the road network and other infrastructure. However, I would like to point to the delay in the mobilisation of this type of support. The process needs to be made less bureaucratic and quicker in order to respond to future disaster situations in a timely manner.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), *in writing*. – (LV) I voted in favour, as I consider that every EU nation must feel itself to be part of the system of a united European Union. Nevertheless, it would be desirable if, next time, the rapporteur were not only to publicise the allocation of resources but also to make it crystal clear on which specific works and measures such vast financial resources (EUR 1 3 022 500) were being spent. Otherwise the misuse of resources and other offences are inevitable. The amount must be made specific and justifiable.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) EUR 1 billion per year is available to the European Solidarity Fund. In the current calendar year, there has as yet been no request for the mobilisation of this Fund. The rules for the mobilisation of this Fund, which under no circumstances serves to provide compensation for private losses, but rather to restore infrastructures, are laid down precisely. Ireland has now requested aid that is intended to be used to repair damage caused by floods. I am voting in favour of the report, as there has not yet been a mobilisation of the Fund this year and the budget really ought to be used in a beneficial way. Furthermore, Ireland fulfils all of the criteria.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of this report. As I already stated yesterday during the vote in favour of Mr Böge's report, I believe it is the European Union's duty to provide help and support to certain regions affected by natural disasters and catastrophes. I believe that the concept of solidarity is connected to the idea and values underpinning the European Union. It is one of the core values that brought the Union into being and ensured that it prospered and enlarged over time. This is the reason why this allocation is not only justified and well founded but practically a duty. I therefore hope that such assistance will also be provided to the Italian regions severely affected by the recent floods, which brought local economies to their knees.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Given that draft amending budget No 8/2010 to the general budget for 2010 covers mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund in the sum of EUR 1 3 022 500 in commitment and payment appropriations, following the floods that wreaked havoc in Ireland, and the corresponding reduction in payment appropriations of EUR 1 3 022 500 from line 04 02 01 – Completion of European Social Fund (ESF) – Objective No 1 (2000-2006), I voted in favour of agreeing with the Council's position on draft amending budget No 8/2010.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I would like to thank Mr Surján for his excellent work. I voted in favour and agree with the approval of draft amending budget No 8/2010, which grants aid amounts to the Solidarity Fund and the European Union Solidarity Fund – Member States, and redeploys EUR 1 3 022 500 in payment appropriations from policy area 4 ‘Employment and Social Affairs’.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) I welcome this draft amending budget, which provides for the mobilisation of the European Solidarity Fund (ESF) in the sum of EUR 1 3 022 500 in commitment and payment appropriations, in order to assist Ireland following the floods that occurred during November 2009, which caused substantial losses to the agricultural and business sectors and to infrastructure, particularly the road and water supply networks, as well as in residential areas, amounting to a total of over EUR 520 million.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – According to Article 37(1) of the Financial Regulation, the Commission may present draft amending budgets if there are ‘unavoidable, exceptional or unforeseen circumstances’. Concerning the different points of draft amending budget No 8/2010, the report that we adopted refers to the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund. The European Commission proposed on 24 September 2010 a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the Solidarity Fund, which is based on the provisions of point 26 of the interinstitutional agreement of 17 May 2006. The conditions of the eligibility to the Fund are detailed here and as well as in Council Regulation No 2012/2002 establishing the EUSF. It is important to note that the objective of the Fund is not the compensation for private damage but to repair infrastructure and it is a tool of refinancing.

Recommendation: Graham Watson (A7-0300/2010)

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), *in writing*. – (LT) The European Commission is initiating discussions on a review of the European Neighbourhood Policy in order to define the future relations of the EU and its southern and eastern neighbours. The objective of the EU Eastern Partnership initiative being pursued should be the promotion of common European values, with an emphasis on the functioning of democratic institutions and respect for human rights and freedoms. I supported this report which lays down the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Moldova in Community programmes and agencies. I feel that the conclusion of the Protocol would permit the gradual opening of or reinforced participation in certain Community programmes for Moldova, offering an opportunity to promote further cultural, educational, environmental, technical and scientific links and to reinforce political relations. It is essential for Moldova to proceed with the implementation of the ENP Action Plan and reforms in order to achieve the objectives of political stability and democratic development.

Elena Băsescu (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for Mr Watson’s recommendation because concluding a protocol provides the Republic of Moldova with new opportunities for getting involved in the Community programmes it is interested in. The gradual opening up of the EU’s programmes and agencies to the countries belonging to the European Neighbourhood Policy will encourage these countries in their efforts to carry out reform and modernisation. This will help promote cooperation with the EU in important areas such as customs, transport or competitiveness. I think that the Republic of Moldova’s involvement in the relevant initiatives will help establish a link between its domestic and European policies. At the same time, it will give some impetus to the negotiation process for signing the new

Association Agreement. Satisfactory progress has already been made towards this. I also welcome the Council's intention to continue to grant macro-financial assistance to the Republic of Moldova and to provide expert advice to the government in Chişinău.

As the progress report compiled by the European Commission has also highlighted, the Republic of Moldova has made significant efforts to implement efficiently the structural reforms, in line with EU recommendations. Furthermore, the European integration platform of the current administration has contributed to unprecedented dynamic development in relations with the EU. Therefore, increasing the Republic of Moldova's involvement in Community programmes and agencies is a natural step in the process of alignment with European standards.

Corina Creţu (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) I voted in favour of concluding the protocol which will enable the Republic of Moldova to have greater involvement in certain Community programmes, offering the opportunity to promote cooperation in the fields of culture, education, media, science and technology, as well as consolidate political relations through the Eastern Partnership and speed up negotiations on the new Association Agreement. Political stability and democratic development are essential to the comprehensive implementation of the protocol and to facilitating the conclusion of all the necessary MoUs. The current constitutional stalemate in the Republic of Moldova is therefore a concern that must be addressed promptly and efficiently. It is crucial for the Republic of Moldova to continue with the implementation of the ENP Action Plan and the reforms it has set out in the document 'Rethink Moldova'. The holding of elections, as required by the constitution, is vital to the Republic of Moldova's future stability and prosperity and to the development of its relations with the EU.

Vasîlica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) The Republic of Moldova's aspirations for pursuing a path towards Europe as part of the Union and its preparation for this are made possible through the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, included in the European Neighbourhood Policy. I welcome the Republic of Moldova's involvement in certain Community programmes, helping to promote cooperation in the fields of culture, education, media, science and technology, as well as consolidate political relations through the Eastern Partnership and speed up negotiations on the new Association Agreement.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The low turnout for the recent referendum on how to elect the President of the Republic of Moldova and the fact that the country is being led by an interim president demonstrate the difficulties in the country's governance and the disillusionment among the public. The Transdniestria situation is getting worse, putting particular strain on the authorities and the Moldovan public. This country still has a long way to go towards institutional stabilisation and the establishment of the full rule of law. It is therefore worthy of particular support and attention by the European Union. Moldovan involvement in EU programmes is an important step along that path.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Communities was signed on 28 November 1994, and since 2004 Moldova has been covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The subject of the draft recommendation is the participation of the Republic of Moldova in Union programmes. On 18 June 2007, the Council issued guidelines to the Commission on negotiating framework agreements relating to the general

principles of participation in Union programmes with thirteen neighbouring countries. Negotiations with the Republic of Moldova began in March 2008.

The Republic of Moldova will contribute financially to the specific programmes in which it participates. This financial contribution varies from programme to programme, and is set out within the Memorandum of Understanding. The signing of the Protocol will enable Moldova to open up gradually or to increase its participation in certain Union programmes, to the extent that it will provide an opportunity to promote greater cultural, educational, environmental, technical and scientific links, as well as strengthening political relations through the Eastern Partnership and supporting negotiations for a new association agreement. Political stability and democracy are essential for the full application of the Protocol.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), *in writing.* – (PT) The EC-Moldova Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed on 28 November 1994, and since 2004 Moldova has been covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy.

On 18 June 2007, the Council issued guidelines to the Commission on negotiating framework agreements on the general principles of participation in EU programmes with 13 neighbouring countries, and, in March 2008, negotiations began with the Republic of Moldova.

The protocol includes a framework agreement on the general principles governing the Republic of Moldova's participation in EU programmes and agencies. The Republic of Moldova has contributed financially to the specific programmes in which it participates. This varies from programme to programme, and is set out in the Memorandum of Understanding.

However, the issue that arises is the demand that the EU makes in the name of 'political stability and democracy', seeking to interfere in a country's internal affairs, openly siding with forces in Moldova that are championing the interests of the EU's economic groups, and attacking the country's independence and sovereignty, as well as the wishes of its people. That is why we disagree with the adopted resolution.

Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE), *in writing.* – I supported Mr Watson's recommendation and welcome the continuing cooperation between the EU and Moldova.

Cătălin Sorin Ivan (S&D), *in writing.* – I have always sustained and encouraged the European goals of the Republic of Moldova. I believe in strong cooperation with a country that proved recently that is ready to follow a European path. Participation in certain Community programmes for Moldova will encourage this neighbour country to implement its reforms, offering an opportunity to promote further cultural, educational, environmental, technical and scientific links, in addition to the reinforcing of political relations through the Eastern Partnership and the negotiation of the new Association Agreement. I endorse the recommendation of Graham Watson, because it promotes Moldova's participation in several European Community programmes and agencies, to support the neighbouring country's efforts to reform and modernise.

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), *in writing.* – (PL) The Republic of Moldova is one of the poorest countries of Europe. Research has shown that the decided majority of the country's population lives in extreme poverty. Internal reforms which could help the economy are usually blocked by political or ethnic conflicts. Therefore, the European Union should help

Moldova and bring about an improvement in the country's situation in terms of stability, security and prosperity.

A European policy could solve the constitutional problem being faced by the Republic of Moldova, and this could, in turn, result in further beneficial changes. The Republic of Moldova is expressing a desire to participate in the programmes of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and its financial contributions are proof of this. The European Union should support such countries with even greater commitment, and so a strengthening of cooperation with the Republic of Moldova is most definitely justified.

Alan Kelly (S&D), *in writing*. – The conclusion of this Protocol would permit reinforced cooperation on certain programmes with Moldova. It will lead to closer integration between Moldova and the EU. Considering the amount of Moldovans who live and work in Ireland and contribute to Ireland's society, this is a welcome step for the future of Europe.

Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) The main measure for promoting reforms, modernising and facilitating transition in the countries immediately neighbouring the European Union, including the Republic of Moldova, is to open up gradually certain Community programmes, institutions and agencies to participation from European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries. I voted for this report as I think that the European Union must support the Republic of Moldova and facilitate its access to certain Community programmes. This will help promote good cooperation between the Union and the Republic of Moldova in different areas such as the economy, science, culture and education.

David Martin (S&D), *in writing*. – I voted for this report on the Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EC and Moldova. Although I have serious concerns about human rights in Moldova, I was encouraged by recent Amnesty International comments, in particular with regard to Moldova's October ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which is a very positive step.

Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (CS) As a member of the delegation to the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, I welcome every step that leads or may lead to a consolidation of the political situation in Moldova and to a better standard of living for its inhabitants. The recommendations which we are voting on today and the implementation of which might be a strengthening of an appropriately integrational European Neighbourhood Policy could be regarded as just such a step. I agree with the opinion of the rapporteur that the current crisis in Moldova is a problem that must be resolved rapidly and above all by lawful means. The completely opaque and misleading expression 'a European solution' must be taken out. The rapporteur clearly has in mind a solution corresponding to the agreements and document of the Council of Europe and generally accepted democratic rules. In any case, we must jointly and emphatically reject any form of deliberate external meddling in the internal affairs of the Moldovan Republic. Any other approach will simply lead to an escalation of tension in Moldova, and not to a positive solution of problems that were partly caused by the EU through its uneven approach in the past.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (FR) Moldova's human development index is one of the lowest in the region. The fast-track liberalisation policies designed to benefit the financial elites of the European Union are to a large extent responsible for this. The stranglehold by the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund, promised by the macro-financial assistance to come, will only make the situation worse.

In conditions such as these, to allow the Moldovan Government to force its population to finance such uncertain European programmes and agencies as the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme or the Single European Sky ATM Research Programme (SESAR), when Moldova is not even a Member of the European Union, smacks of cynicism. I am voting against this report.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Moldova has been making efforts in recent years to move ever closer towards European standards of freedom, democracy and good governance. The efforts described have been consistent with and have demonstrated Moldova's concern with continuing on the route towards possible enlargement.

The recent elections did not pass off in the best way possible, and the fact that the country currently has an interim president is not the best sign that the degree of consolidation of its democratic culture is on the right path. To this must be added the question of Transnistria, which could cause some kind of instability. The EU should continue making every effort so that the reforms that need to be implemented in Moldova continue along the right path, which is the direction of this partnership and cooperation protocol.

Louis Michel (ALDE), *in writing*. – (FR) Increasing Moldova's involvement in Community programmes will offer an opportunity to promote further cultural, educational, environmental, technical and scientific links and, in addition, to reinforce political relations through the Eastern Partnership and the negotiations on the new association agreement. Political stability and democratic development in Moldova are, however, essential for the implementation of the protocol. The failure of the constitutional referendum of 5 September 2010 is regrettable. It is essential for Moldova to proceed with the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan and of the reforms it has set out in the document 'Rethink Moldova'. The organisation of legislative elections on 28 November is essential for the future stability and prosperity of Moldova and the development of its relations with the European Union. These elections must help the country to make progress along these lines and must comply fully with international standards on the holding of free and fair elections.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), *in writing*. – (LV) Unfortunately, Moldova finds itself today in a wholly unstable zone of economic and political change. The protocol to the European Union-Moldova Partnership and Cooperation Agreement on the participation of the Republic of Moldova in EU programmes gives the people of Moldova the hope of positive change. The conclusion of the Protocol encourages the strengthening of cooperation in the cultural, educational and other fields. I voted in favour, since I hope that the partnership will assist Moldova's integration with the European Union.

Rareș-Lucian Niculescu (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) I voted, like the majority in Parliament, in favour of the recommendation, which I welcome, as it gives a strong indication of support and encouragement for the Republic of Moldova's pro-European tendency. This state, at the European Union's border, will not be able to get through the current deadlock without such messages which inspire the belief in Moldova's citizens that Europe is the right option. It could not be a more appropriate time either at the moment, just a few days before the early parliamentary elections take place in this country.

Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D), *in writing*. – (LT) I support the Protocol which lays down the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Moldova in Community programmes and agencies. It offers Moldova new opportunities to promote further cultural, educational, environmental, technical and scientific links with EU Member States. I am

convinced that political relations between the EU and Moldova will be reinforced through the Eastern Partnership and the negotiations of the new Association Agreement. Political stability and democratic development in Moldova are essential for full participation in Community programmes, therefore it is very important for the prolonged period of unrest and instability to end following the parliamentary elections.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) There has been a preferential channel for relations with Moldova since 1994, the date of the signing of the EC-Moldova Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. In 2004, Moldova was included within the European Neighbourhood Policy. Institutional cooperation between the EU and neighbouring countries may or may not lead to a procedure for the accession of a country to the EU. Irrespective of this outcome, the EU, as a supra-national entity, is governed by a collection of values based on peace, freedom and democracy, which it considers fundamental to the prosperity of the European continent.

It is essential that cooperation with neighbouring countries is accompanied by special attention on the part of the Union being paid to the stability of these countries, without interference, supporting institutions on the path towards the effective implementation of the rule of law and complete respect for human rights. The ratification by Moldova in October of this year of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court is a very positive step in this direction.

Within this context, I voted in favour of this legislative resolution relating to the signing of an additional protocol to the EU-Moldova Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and an EU-Moldova Framework Agreement on the general principles governing the participation of Moldova in Union programmes.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I would like to thank Mr Watson for his excellent work. I voted in favour because I agree it is essential for Moldova to proceed with the implementation of the ENP Action Plan and of the reforms it has set out in the document 'Rethink Moldova'.

Holding of elections, as required by the constitution, is essential for the future stability and prosperity of Moldova and the development of its relations with the EU. All parties should unite to find a solution and reflect the confidence of the Moldovan people for a European solution. The EU and Council of Europe have provided significant assistance and should continue to do so to overcome this impasse in a timely manner.

Mario Pirillo (S&D), *in writing*. – (IT) The adoption of the protocol on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Moldova in European Union programmes is fundamentally important for continuing down the road of a more structured collaboration, which should reasonably conclude in future with an association agreement.

The current constitutional impasse in Moldova could affect the comprehensive implementation of the protocol and the related memoranda of understanding. After the failure of last September's referendum, it is very important that all political forces act responsibly ahead of the forthcoming elections of 28 November 2010. Political stability is a *conditio sine qua non* for greater involvement in EU programmes. Equally, a decisively pro-European choice could contribute to smoothing the path of both economic and democratic development in Moldova.

That, Mr President, is why I voted in favour of this resolution of the European Parliament today, in the hope that all the processes activated in Moldova are accompanied by technical and scientific support from Europe.

Rovana Plumb (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) As part of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the initiative of gradually opening up certain EU programmes and agencies to participation from ENP partner countries is one of the numerous measures intended to promote reform, modernisation and transition in the countries neighbouring the European Union. The decision was taken in March 2008 to initiate negotiations with the Republic of Moldova, which have now been completed. This draft protocol contains a Framework Agreement on the general principles for the Republic of Moldova's participation in a number of Community programmes and agencies in areas such as transport, food security, customs, air safety and others. I voted for this report as this initiative supports the efforts being made by the Republic of Moldova, a state neighbouring the EU, to carry out reform and modernisation.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the signing of this Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Moldova because I understand that the assistance that the EU has provided to Moldova is essential for that country to be able to implement necessary reforms and to achieve the desired political stability, with complete respect for the principles of the democratic rule of law.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – This report refers to the draft Council decision on the conclusion of a Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part, on a Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Moldova in Union programmes. By voting in favour, the EP consents to the conclusion of the Protocol.

Traian Ungureanu (PPE), *in writing*. – In my capacity as EPP shadow rapporteur on the EU-Republic of Moldova Agreements, I warmly welcome the vote with an overwhelming majority in favour of the conclusion of the Protocol to the EU-Republic of Moldova Partnership and Cooperation Agreement on the participation of the Republic of Moldova in the Union's programmes. Even before the conclusion of an Association Agreement with the Republic of Moldova, the country is already being offered the legal opportunity to participate in EU internal programmes and agencies and thus continue its approximation to EU standards, particularly in such fields as transport, food safety, customs and aviation safety. On the eve of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova, the European Parliament is sending a strong signal of support for the pro-European reforms in this neighbouring country and for the need to firmly pursue them. I am glad to conclude that the European Parliament expressed cross-party unanimity at every stage of the examination of the issue in this House, thus shaping a single position on the need to conclude this Protocol as soon as possible and hence offer the Republic of Moldova all possible opportunities to benefit from the advantages of its relations with the EU.

Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE), *in writing*. – (LT) The European Union, including the new Member States like Lithuania, is responsible for observing the interests of our eastern neighbours. The strengthening of cooperation between the EU and Moldova and the inclusion of Moldova in Community programmes will help bring this country closer to EU standards and norms. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement would enable the

promotion of new close links between the EU and Moldova in the fields of culture, education and technology. It is particularly important for the EU to demonstrate to Moldova's young people the benefits of future EU membership. Last year, Moldovan emigrants working in other European countries, sometimes illegally, were responsible for 19% of Moldova's GDP. Poverty, corruption and human trafficking are problems that we must solve together. As it prepares for EU accession, Moldova faces numerous serious structural reforms.

The EU must continue to support the efforts Moldova has made. It is particularly important to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. The Transnistria conflict is a problem for Europe, but it is also an opportunity for the EU to cooperate more closely with Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. We must not ignore that. I hope that the parliamentary elections on 28 November will enable Moldova to move forward.

Report: Christofer Fjellner (A7-0290/2010)

Damien Abad (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) Parliament today adopted two legislative reports at first reading: a regulation relating to aspects specific to the European Union and a directive on the rules to be applied by Member States at national level. Member States will be responsible for national legislation to ensure that objective and impartial information is available to the general public. This includes information on packaging, a product assessment report, and information on disease prevention. Patients should have better access to good quality information on prescription-only medicines. This involves information on the characteristics of the medicine and the diseases it treats. We have a duty to protect consumers and to keep them informed in a transparent manner. Our work as MEPs is also to make a Europe that protects and informs, and that is why I voted in favour of these two texts.

Sophie Auconie (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) Directive 2001/83/EC establishes a Community code relating to medicinal products for human use. It lays down rules on the information to be annexed to medicinal products concerning their characteristics and use. Nonetheless, it does not provide a harmonised framework on the contents and the quality of non-promotional information for patients. Furthermore, experience has shown that different interpretations of the texts could lead to situations where the general public is exposed to disguised advertising, especially on the Internet. The Commission has proposed a directive which amends the current legislation in order to improve the way in which information relating to prescription-only medicines is disseminated to the general public. It aims to establish a legal framework governing the dissemination of specific information on medicinal products from marketing authorisation holders to the general public. The European Parliament has drafted a legislative resolution which is more ambitious than the Commission's proposal. I voted for this text as it improves the information made available to patients and makes it a little safer still.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), *in writing*. – (LT) I voted for this important resolution which aims to enable patients to be better informed on the medicines they are prescribed. There are considerable problems with the current legal framework and the situation within Europe when it comes to patients' access to information on prescription-only medicine. The differences in interpretations of the directive by the Member States give patients in different parts of Europe different access to high quality and comprehensive information on pharmaceuticals. In some Member States, patients lack easy access to even the most basic information about the pharmaceuticals they are prescribed. Given the different interpretation of the directive in the Member States, I feel there needs to be increased clarity

in the provisions so that all EU citizens are able to receive the information they require in connection with pharmaceuticals. The amendments adopted by the European Parliament also ensure that information on prescribed medicine is only given to the public through specific communication channels, including specialised and certified websites safeguarding patients' interests and aiming to limit advertisement opportunities for the pharmaceutical companies.

Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE), *in writing.* – (RO) Providing patients with better access to quality information about the treatment being administered to them increases the chances of them understanding the decision directly affecting them. There is therefore a very good intention behind this; however, it must be part of a more comprehensive health education strategy, which focuses on the patient and not on the pharmaceutical company. There are many problems with the current legal framework and the situation within Europe when it comes to patients' access to information about prescription-only medicines. The differences in interpretations of the directive by Member States give patients in different parts of Europe different access to high quality information on the relevant drugs. In some Member States it is difficult to access even the most basic information about the drugs which are prescribed. This creates health inequalities. Patients have unlimited access via the Internet to uncontrolled and frequently incorrect information about prescription-only medicines in a few seconds. However, they need to have access to controlled, safe information so as not to complicate matters even more. Therefore, the provisions regarding information about prescribed drugs need to be updated.

Vito Bonsignore (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) I should like to congratulate the rapporteur, my colleague Mr Fjellner, on his work on this report. I voted in favour as I believe it is essential to guarantee patients access to information on prescription-only medicinal products.

Both the European Parliament and patients' organisations have for some time been asking for an adjustment to the current regulations which, as they stand, do not guarantee the necessary information. Indeed, technical development and the easy availability on the Internet of information on the use of medicinal products are too often shown to be illusory and untrue.

I agree with the underlying spirit of this report, which aims to put the 'patient's right to know' into the centre of the legislation and, consequently, recommends that pharmaceutical companies give patients some basic information.

I therefore hope for greater certainty in the law, which often falls short, partly due to the different degrees to which the Member States have implemented the previous directive. The provisions relating to information on prescription-only medicinal products therefore need to be updated and new rules need to be adopted, promoting greater health literacy and involving the health industry to a greater extent in carrying out a fundamental role to improve public health.

Alain Cadec (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) In the area of health, access to comprehensive, good quality information guarantees better results, insofar as patients are more likely to follow a treatment that they are able to understand. I join with the rapporteur in emphasising the difficulty in accessing this kind of information in some European countries, due to different interpretations by the Member States of the directive on information relating to medicinal products, as well as the unreliable and unclear nature of that information. We need to make it more accessible, in accordance with patients' right to information. Nonetheless, in order

to avoid creating any imbalance between Member States, it is vital to identify the means by which to disseminate this information, and not favour one at the expense of the others. Finally, it is essential to clearly distinguish between information and advertising and to prevent pharmaceutical companies from exploiting these information campaigns in order to promote their products.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) The amendments that the European Parliament put forward to a proposal by the Commission relating to information on medicines warranted my vote in favour, as I believe it to be essential for the general public to have easy access to knowledge concerning medicines, in particular through information being made available on the Internet in all European languages.

Françoise Castex (S&D), *in writing.* – (FR) I voted against this text, as we cannot allow pharmaceutical companies and the Commission to turn health into a commodity like any other. The link between the pharmaceutical industry in Europe and pharmacovigilance is yet again at the heart of the debate. We cannot let pharmaceutical firms inform the public as they please nor authorise direct advertising to the general public for prescription-only drugs. Indeed, the commercial concerns of these firms are incompatible with the objectives of general interest pursued by our health policies, and it would be dangerous to turn a blind eye.

Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL), *in writing.* – (EL) The European Commission's initial proposal for a directive on information to the general public on medicinal products subject to medical prescription has thrown the doors open for pharmaceutical companies to advertise their drugs. Today plenary amended the Commission's initial proposal, which was tailored to the pharmaceutical industry. I voted in favour of all the amendments which significantly improved the original text, by shifting the focus of the legislation away from the right of the pharmaceutical industry to advertise their products to the right of patients to have reliable, objective and independent information. I also voted in favour of the amendments which prohibit the provision of information on drugs both on television and radio and in the press. However, despite the improvements which we made, the dividing line between information and advertising is still blurred and the text still has a number of weaknesses and loopholes. I abstained in the final vote, because I consider that the best solution would be for the Commission to review its proposal for a directive on the basis of the guidelines which we have given it today. Nor is it a coincidence that the Member States took an almost unanimously dismissive stand on this dossier in the Council.

Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D), *in writing.* – (RO) I think that patients must have access to better information about medicinal products subject to medical prescription. This entails providing objective information about the medicines' characteristics and the diseases for which they are recommended, as well as preventing the provision of unsolicited information or disguised advertising.

Christine De Veyrac (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) Making a distinction between information and advertising concerning medicines is essential for the protection of the public. That is why I voted in favour of Mr Fjellner's report, which requires that an objective description for patients' use be included on the packaging of medicines. Furthermore, access to clear and reliable information will be strengthened, by making it available in all the languages of the European Union on approved websites and in official brochures. I welcome the adoption of this proposal, which marks real progress towards greater transparency in health matters.

Anne Delvaux (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted against this report, to which I have always expressed my strong opposition. While I approve of the idea of providing better information to patients, I disapprove of the means used to do so. The pharmaceutical industry's goal will never be one of philanthropy. Moreover, there is a very fine line between information and advertising. It is true that the text, which was adopted almost unanimously, has nothing to do with the Commission's initial idea. The latter would have simply opened the door to advertising disguised under the label 'Information'. That proposal corresponded, moreover, to the pharmaceutical sector's clear expectation of being able to get out of the legal ban on advertising of medicines. The report, as adopted today, includes many more guarantees: that the information provided by pharmaceutical companies for dissemination will, in particular, be checked beforehand, and will not be disseminated by the media. Nevertheless, the authorisation to publish package leaflet summaries means that there will be items that must be highlighted and others, such as adverse reactions, which may well be regularly excluded from the summaries, as they do not 'sell' well. Is that not already a promotional move? Was that really the aim? Was the game really worth the candle?

Edite Estrela (S&D), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the report on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending, as regards information to the general public on medicinal products subject to medical prescription, Directive 2001/83/EC. This directive sets out a Community code relating to medicinal products for human use and helps ensure the right of patients to reliable, accessible and independent information, validated by the competent authorities, on the medicinal products available.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (ES) Directive 2001/83/EC, which sets out a Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, provides for a harmonised framework for the advertising of medicines at a Community level, the application of which continues to be a responsibility of the Member States. This legislation prohibits advertising to the general public of medicines subject to medical prescription.

However, provisions relating to information on medicines are not regulated, since it only stipulates that information relating to certain supply activities is exempt from the advertising provisions. Therefore, Union legislation does not prevent Member States from establishing their own approaches to the provision of information on medicines, provided that the above-mentioned rules on advertising are complied with. I agree with the rapporteur's proposal to rule out the possibility of making information from pharmaceutical companies available in newspapers, magazines and similar publications, or on the television or radio.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (PT) This proposal for a directive amends the earlier directive as regards information to the general public on medicinal products subject to medical prescription. In general terms it concentrates, firstly, on the responsibility of the pharmaceutical companies to inform the public, ensuring that this information is not of an advertising nature. Secondly, the Commission is given the role of monitoring and decision making through delegated acts on the definition of what constitutes information and what constitutes advertising. We believe that this approach means that too many roles for providing information are concentrated in the hands of pharmaceutical companies and within the Commission, and that these roles should be carried out on a sovereign basis, coordinated and approved by specific national authorities in order to improve the information given to patients and the public, and to safeguard their rights.

Elisabetta Gardini (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) Approval of the new legislation on information on medicinal products represents a further step toward guaranteeing patients clearer and more effective information on the drugs they take and are prescribed.

We need a harmonised legal framework at European level that not only maintains the ban on advertising medicinal products subject to medical prescription but also takes into account the patient's right to information. This is no small matter, because the sometimes blurred boundary between 'product promotion' and 'product information' is liable to confuse patients.

We must remember that patients are playing a more and more active role in the health sector throughout the European Union. Better access to non-promotional information may therefore help the public to gain a better understanding of the treatments prescribed to them and help their recovery, all naturally in the interests of their health.

To conclude, I would like to underscore the importance of defining in a transparent way the types of information on drugs and the channels through which such information may be disseminated. We must reduce the risk of disguised advertising and, where necessary, the risk of a surfeit of uncontrolled and misleading information.

Giovanni La Via (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) I voted in favour of the proposal for a directive as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription because I believe that harmonising the laws in this sector is a fundamental means of safeguarding the knowledge of European patients. This is actually a very sensitive issue because it relates to health protection, which is a fundamental human right. I fully support this House's call for a clear distinction to be made between therapeutic information and advertising. Pharmaceutical companies, in fact, must not use patients' right to information as a vehicle for disguising their promotional aims but instead must use it to guarantee European consumers a real understanding of products, through the scientific indication of their characteristics, labelling and assessment reports. It should also be noted that greater access to information both in electronic form, available over the Internet, and in printed form can also contribute to the achievement of better medical results, because a patient who is informed about prescribed medicines is one who can play an active and more knowledgeable role in the therapeutic recovery process.

David Martin (S&D), *in writing.* – I voted for this report, which is part of a package which will amend the current 2001 directive on medicinal products for human use. It specifically focuses on the provision of information to the public on prescription-only medicines. The stated aims of the directive are to allow for better access to information for patients and to clarify the rules, which are currently interpreted differently across the EU, leading to health inequalities. It also deals with information on the Internet, which is not covered at present and is a particularly difficult topic, as it is so hard to regulate.

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), *in writing.* – (PT) This proposal, adopted today by a large majority in Parliament, is a great improvement on the initial proposal presented by the Commission, as it better advocates patients' rights to information. However, despite the clear improvements in Parliament's report, I abstained because some of the guarantees that would be necessary in order for people to have access to clear and independent information on medicinal products are still weak.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), *in writing.* – (FR) Not all the amendments made by this House to the proposal by the Commission and the Council are along the right lines.

They adhere strictly to the principle of a single market in medicinal products and still view products available over the counter as goods like any others; the authors even end up talking of 'consumers' rather than patients. The amendments do not propose preventing pharmaceutical companies from producing information about their medicines for the general public.

They do, however, have the virtue of seeking to enable the Member States to regulate as far as possible the dissemination of information published by those companies. In particular, they grant them the right to publicly condemn companies that publish information which is not in line with official State data or that disseminate it in a misleading fashion. That is better than nothing. I cannot, however, vote for such a weak text. I will therefore abstain.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Access to quality information relating to medicinal products that are subject to medical prescription will contribute to achieving better results in terms of patient health, in that the better informed they are, the more likely they will be to better understand decisions related to their treatment. Therefore, the objective of this proposal cannot be limited to harmonising European legislation, but should also promote health, through the improvement of knowledge in the area of health. The pharmaceutical industry has an important role to play in the promotion of literacy in the area of health, but this role should be clearly defined, and participation by the sector strictly regulated, in order to prevent commercial considerations from leading to an excessive consumption of medicines.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) Elderly people and the chronically ill in particular have a multitude of medicines prescribed to them, which could adversely affect each other – because, of course, one doctor does not know what his colleague has prescribed. Meanwhile ever more products, from aspirin to cold remedies right through to sleeping remedies are sold without a prescription. Does anyone actually consider the possibility that even natural plant-based products could interact with various medicinal products? Patients also contribute to the confusion: nothing is said about prescribed medicinal products that we have taken at the wrong time, or medication that we have taken it upon ourselves to stop taking or to change, and so on. The economic damages arising as a result of insufficient compliance with treatment instructions run into billions. Therefore, the clear distinction between advertising and information called for by the rapporteur is important. This will hopefully result in better clarification of the fact that non-prescription medicines can also interact with prescription medicines. The prescribing doctor must remain the primary source of information, as only he selects a medicine that is tailored to the patient's age, gender, weight, known intolerances and so on. In view of these considerations, I abstained from the vote.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of Mr Fjellner's report, inasmuch as I believe that the message and guidelines provided are extremely important. European consumers are often lost when faced with medicinal product package leaflets because they find them complicated and they contain information that is often confusing.

The very aim of the proposal for a directive as regards information to the general public on medicinal products subject to medical prescription is to provide simple information that is easy to understand and use, but that avoids forms of advertising. It is also important for information to be accessible via other channels, in addition to package leaflets, and I therefore welcome publication on the Internet.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) I believe the establishment of the distinction between information and advertising that is made with regard to medicines to be fundamental for the protection of citizens. My vote in favour of the Fjellner Report was a result of the clear improvements that were introduced into Directive 2001/83/EC. The large majority that approved this document were convinced about the defence of the patient's right to information. The work carried out by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety in improving the proposal initially presented by the European Commission deserves to be emphasised.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) I would like to thank Mr Fjellner for his excellent work. I voted in favour because I agree that non-promotional information on medicinal products must be made available to patients and the general public by marketing authorisation holders according to the 'pull principle' whereby patients/the public have access to information if they need it, contrary to the 'push principle' whereby the marketing authorisation holders disseminate information among patients and the general public.

Rovana Plumb (S&D), *in writing.* – (RO) The information supplied to patients should fulfil the following main characteristics:

- Reliability: information to patients should be based on the latest scientific knowledge with clear references made to the sources this knowledge comes from;
- Independence: it has to be clear who provides and who finances the information so that consumers can identify potential conflicts of interest;
- Information should be easily accessible to consumers and patient-oriented: it should be comprehensible and easily available, taking into account the particular needs of consumers such as age, cultural differences and availability in all European languages. Information supplied to patients about prescription-only medicines should be part of a wider 'information to patients' strategy and a broader health education strategy.

Patients and anyone interested should be able to find accurate, unbiased information about having a healthy lifestyle, the prevention of illness and specific diseases and on the various treatment options. This is why I think that this proposal must be supplemented with a code of conduct concerning the information supplied to patients and drafted in cooperation with patients' organisations. This will allow the 'patients' voice' to be heard.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of this report since I welcome the fact that the compromise changes introduced into the proposal initially presented by the Commission will have contributed decisively to guaranteeing patient access to reliable and independent information on prescription-only medicines that are available on the market.

Frédérique Ries (ALDE), *in writing.* – (FR) Advertising of prescription-only medicines is banned within the European Union, and remains so. Pharmaceutical companies must comply with clear rules on objectivity in the non-promotional information that they disseminate. These are the two important messages sent this lunchtime with the adoption of the legislative package on information for patients. A consensual vote by Parliament (558 votes to 48) that merely confirms the unanimous vote, less one vote from the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. Numerous safeguards have been put in place. The European Commission proposed a ban on information about prescription-only medicines broadcast on television or radio, and the European Parliament has decided to extend this to the written press. Manufacturers are subject to numerous obligations: descriptions of product characteristics, strengthened labelling, and prior

authorisation by health authorities. I do not understand all the 'commotion' that the issue has caused, especially in French-speaking Belgium, amongst consumers' associations and mutual societies, supported by certain MEPs who, even before the discussions had started, had already condemned these two laws. This is facile political posturing that I find regrettable, given the high expectations of patients when faced with illness and given that, without these laws, the public would be at the mercy of the cowboys on the Internet.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – We decided we would vote in favour or abstain depending on the result of the third part of Amendment 31, which ensures that pharmaceutical companies can only provide information material to health professionals for their own use, not for patients via healthcare professionals. This was key for the Greens/EFA. As it was finally adopted, we decided to support the report in the final vote.

Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) Our vote in favour of this measure is a consequence of the formal distinction that has been made between information on medicinal products and advertising.

We support the greater dissemination of information on medicinal products, if this improves patients' awareness. We do not, and shall never, agree with any measure that clearly or surreptitiously attempts to introduce forms of advertising, turning an ethical medicinal product into a commercial product. The fact that the information on drugs will not be allowed to be published in newspapers or magazines, nor much less broadcast on the radio or television, is therefore appreciated.

It is also a good thing that this proposal for a directive clarifies which and how much information can and must be divulged, including scientific information and clearly excluding advertising material.

The amendment that introduces certification and monitoring of Internet sites that publish said information further assures us that the information will not constitute advertising. The pharmacy is and must remain a basic healthcare facility, and as such a protected area with regard to the rules of trade and competition. We believe that this rule helps pharmacies carry out their difficult role in pharmacovigilance and education on the correct use of medicinal products.

Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – (NL) In an age when people search for information themselves, patients must be informed clearly, objectively, reliably and well about the effects of medicinal products. Although advertising of medicinal products is banned in the Union, the Commission has created an opening. Its proposal – which I did not endorse – lacked such a strategy, and the distinction from advertising was too vague. In addition, the Commission gave too many rights and too much responsibility to the pharmaceutical industry. Now that Parliament has made major changes, however, I can support the proposal. Companies' use of official documents (summarised product information, evaluation reports) and the channels through which they make the information available are restricted: health newspapers and magazines, websites and letters to patients are no longer permitted. All guidance on the medicinal products must be screened and approved in advance by the competent authorities. This precludes self-regulation, which the original proposal did not do. I still have my doubts about the feasibility of this proposal, as a mandatory government information strategy would still be stronger than the government monitoring companies' policies. I nevertheless voted in favour of the legislative proposal as, at the end of the day, it does ensure better information for patients.

Marc Tarabella (S&D), *in writing.* – (FR) The Fjellner report on information on medicinal products raises legitimate concerns regarding the possibilities for pharmaceutical companies to advertise to patients. My colleagues in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety have certainly improved the text by refusing to support several kinds of disguised advertising and by proposing that Member States' health authorities check communications from pharmaceutical companies to the general public on their prescription-only medicines. Nevertheless, I remain very cautious about the extremely fuzzy line between information and advertising.

I am fiercely opposed, for example, to the idea of authorising companies to advertise their medicines to patients via medical personnel. I do not want doctors to be put under pressure and to become salesmen and -women for the pharmaceutical industry. That is why, despite the strict supervision laid down by my colleagues, I abstained on a text which I found truly problematic.

Thomas Ulmer (PPE), *in writing.* – (DE) I voted in favour of the report because it provides a clear and sustainable improvement to patient information on medicinal products. The advertising of medicinal products continues to be prohibited. The doctor-patient relationship will not be adversely affected by the directive and the authority of the service provider to prescribe medicinal products remains clear. Overall, we have a very successful proposal for a directive from the pharmaceutical package for second reading.

Angelika Werthmann (NI), *in writing.* – (DE) This directive will introduce for the first time uniform regulations on the provision of certain information to the general public on medicinal products subject to medical prescription. The necessary information is to explain to patients the benefits and risks associated with prescription-only medicinal products to enable them to make informed decisions. Following consultation with patient organisations and healthcare professionals, among others, the Commission will adopt quality criteria for information. These criteria will ensure the reliability of the data provided – including on websites and on Internet portals – and will hold the pharmaceutical industry accountable for the information it provides.

Mr Fjellner's amendments also recommend information campaigns to raise awareness among the general public of the risks of falsified medicines, which have already had fatal consequences in Member States such as the United Kingdom. For years, the EU customs authorities have been noticing a rapid increase in the import of falsified medicines, in particular antibiotics, painkillers and even cancer medicines. Contrary to some reports in the media, the directive relates only to medicinal products subject to medical prescription. No one need fear for their herbal tea.

Report: Christofer Fjellner (A7-0289/2010)

Sophie Auconie (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 lays down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishes a European Medicines Agency. The amendment to Directive 2001/83/EC emphasises better information for patients, especially in relation to the distinction between information and advertising. Following this amendment, the regulation, for its part, should be amended so that certain items of information on the products it covers can also be subjected to prior monitoring by the European Medicines Agency. With this aim in mind, the European Commission has tabled a proposal to amend the regulation, concerning the dissemination to the general public of information on prescription-only medicinal products for human use. The European Parliament, called on

to express an opinion on the proposal, has tabled a number of amendments to the European Commission's text. These are the reasons that have led me to vote in favour of the resolution amending Directive 2001/83/EC. These two sets of legislation work hand in hand to improve information to patients on the medicines that are issued to them.

Charalampos Angourakis (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (EL) The Greek Communist Party voted against both proposals for a regulation and the corresponding European Parliament reports, because they shift the responsibility for responsible, reliable and accurate information for patients from government departments to the multinational pharmaceutical companies. Information for patients is a government, not an individual responsibility. The profits made by monopoly pharmaceutical groups and protection for public health are mutually exclusive. The recent vaccination scam in connection with the supposed 'new flu' pandemic is a typical example of how targeted information translates into profits of billions for the international drug companies. We maintain that the responsibility for informing citizens about drugs in general, not just drugs available on prescription as provided for in the regulation, should rest solely with the State. That is the very least that is required in order to protect patients and workers. Drugs, drug research and the means for disseminating knowledge and information are in the hands of the multinationals, whose only criterion is profit. Workers and health professionals cannot be certain of the quality and efficacy of drugs and of the knowledge and information which they receive. This policy needs to be combated, in order to eliminate business from health and drugs. We need government drug agencies and free national health services.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report which strives to ensure the key EU objective of ensuring the proper functioning of the internal market for medicinal products for human use and of better protecting the health of EU citizens. The document adopted today will create the conditions to plan a clear framework for information on prescription-only medicines to consumers with a view to promoting more informed consumer choices and will ensure that the direct advertising of prescribed medicines to consumers continues to be prohibited. According to the European Parliament's proposal, a publicly accessible pharmaceutical database must be established in the EU in all the official languages of the Union with assurances that it will be updated and administered independently of the business interests of pharmaceutical companies. The establishment of the database will simplify information searches and will allow information to be understood by the non-expert public.

Anne Delvaux (PPE), in writing. – (FR) I voted against this report, to which I have always expressed my strong opposition. While I approve of the idea of providing better information to patients, I disapprove of the means used to do so. The pharmaceutical industry's goal will never be one of philanthropy. Moreover, there is a very fine line between information and advertising. It is true that the text, which was adopted almost unanimously, has nothing to do with the Commission's initial idea. The latter would have simply opened the door to advertising disguised under the label 'Information'. That proposal corresponded, moreover, to the pharmaceutical sector's clear expectation of being able to get out of the legal ban on advertising of medicines. The report, as adopted today, includes many more guarantees: that the information provided by pharmaceutical companies for dissemination will, in particular, be checked beforehand, and will not be disseminated by the media. Nevertheless, the authorisation to publish package leaflet summaries means that there will be items that must be highlighted and others, such as adverse reactions, which may well be regularly

excluded from the summaries, as they do not 'sell' well. Is that not already a promotional move? Was that really the aim? Was the game really worth the candle?

Edite Estrela (S&D), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the report on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on amending, as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription, Regulation (EC) No 726/2004. This regulation sets out Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use, establishes a European Medicines Agency and helps to ensure the right of patients to reliable, accessible and independent information, validated by the competent authorities, on the medicinal products available.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Given how important patient compliance and the correct administration of medicinal products are for successful treatment, it is vital that the public, that is, the patients, have access to good quality, non-advertising information that is true, current and not misleading, in line with the Summary of Product Characteristics. The best-placed body to provide current and accurate information for each medicinal product is its marketing authorisation holder. Parliament has rightly decided to focus on and protect the interests of patients. I could not agree more with this approach, although I do not believe that there is any need to limit the possibilities afforded by the Commission's proposal on disclosure of information by the pharmaceutical industry, under the 'push principle'. This was a balanced proposal that took the interests of all parties into account, involving health professionals and protecting the public from advertising about medicinal products subject to medical prescription, which quite rightly remains banned. I do not believe the text that has just been adopted will actually change the reality of patient's access to information much, which I think is a missed opportunity.

Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – It is important for patients to be better informed about any medications they are taking. It is important too that any information they receive is objective and that the pharmaceutical industry does not blur the line between information and advertising. The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) has done a good job in amending this proposal and I was able to support this report.

Alan Kelly (S&D), *in writing*. – I do not agree with direct-to-consumer advertising in relation to pharmaceutical products. It is important for patients to have access to information on the medicine that they are taking but I feel that this type of advertising would undermine the doctor's role as gatekeeper and may damage their responsibility to patients.

Giovanni La Via (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I congratulate Mr Fjellner on his important work as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription and more particularly on EU procedures for medicinal product authorisation and monitoring.

The current EU legal framework on the scientific information provided to European consumers presents many problems, particularly as regards the different interpretations of the directive by individual Member States.

The report approved today aims to improve the level of harmonisation of the regulations in the sector in an attempt to close the gaps and eliminate the disparities that exist today with regard to safeguarding the right to health. This is all situated within a broader strategy

of health literacy, aimed at ensuring that the European public can, in fact, easily access scientific information on prescription-only medicines.

Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE), *in writing.* – (RO) I voted in favour of this report as I am particularly interested in health-related topics, especially concerning equal access for patients to medical care and information. At the moment, the level of information about the medicines available on the market varies hugely in Europe, which I could say is even unfair to patients. Patients must have the right to obtain complete, correct information about medicines. The proposals from my colleague Christofer Fjellner have gone precisely in this direction, thereby giving priority to the patient. The amendments made by the European Parliament to the European Commission's legislative proposal highlight that manufacturers of medicinal products must provide basic information such as product characteristics, a label, patient information leaflet and a publicly available version of the assessment report. However, so that we can ensure that the information is reliable, I think that national authorities must monitor stringently the specialist sites which supply such details.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), *in writing.* – (FR) This report consists of a reminder of what the European Medicines Agency should be. One cannot oppose a draft that states obvious facts such as the need to 'place emphasis on the rights and interests of patients', the need to oblige companies to publicly list the adverse reactions of their medicines and the need to publish information in all the official languages of the European Union.

One can, however, be taken aback by the fact that such commonplaces have to be pointed out 15 years after that Agency was created. Parliament should denounce the Agency's lack of transparency and say loud and clear that it should be reformed in everyone's interests.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) Access to quality information relating to medicinal products that are subject to medical prescription will contribute to achieving better results in terms of patient health, because the better informed they are, the more likely they will be to better understand decisions related to their treatment. Therefore, the objective of this proposal cannot be limited to harmonising European legislation, but should also promote health, through the improvement of knowledge in the area of health.

The pharmaceutical industry has an important role to play in the promotion of literacy in the area of health, but this role should be clearly defined, and participation by the sector strictly regulated, in order to prevent commercial considerations from leading to an excessive consumption of medicines. It is also necessary to avoid misleading advertising and to try to provide better information to the consumer (patient), who has access to a variety of uncontrolled information through the Internet, which is not the case with regard to the reliable information provided by pharmaceutical laboratories.

Louis Michel (ALDE), *in writing.* – (FR) In order to safeguard the rights and interests of patients, the latter should be able to avail themselves of good quality, objective, reliable and non-promotional information on medicines. If we wish to protect health, pharmaceutical leaflets must be as clear and comprehensive as possible, and must satisfy basic quality criteria. With this same concern to protect patients and provide information to the general public, we must promote the easiest possible access to information, in particular by summarising the characteristics of the product and providing a leaflet for these in both electronic and printed form. That is why we will have to ensure the availability of certified and registered websites offering considerable amounts of independent, objective and non-promotional information.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), *in writing.* – (LV) Mr Fjellner's report is very timely. The veiled advertising of medicines is unacceptable. Doctors must be able to give their patients recommendations on medicines. Doctors must regulate and prescribe medicines to patients, in order to avoid speculation and competition between drug manufacturers. Pharmaceutical companies should be limited to providing support in the form of information, but in no event must they be allowed to try and foist their products on patients. Doctors are responsible for treatment; they must also decide which medicines should be administered to the patient in the course of that treatment.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing.* – (DE) In view of the fact that, in Germany alone, around 25 000 people die each year as a result of adverse reactions and interactions and 3% of accidents can be attributed to prescription-only medicines, it is clear that we must provide patients with better information. For instance, we could take France as an example, where any functional impairment is clearly indicated on the packet. We need to provide patients with information, but we also need to help them through the medicinal product jungle, for example by agreeing on the daily routine, package designs or special labelling. This will save the public purse billions and spare the patients the adverse reactions and interactions. This proposal contains a couple of initiatives intended to enable patients to be better informed about the medicines they have been prescribed and the use of these medicines. Whether patients will actually make use of this improved access to high quality information is questionable given the behaviour of many patients. Nevertheless, it is of course important for the information to be made available throughout the EU. For this reason, I voted in favour of the report.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) Since it focuses on the patient's right to information, I fully support the report, which includes some important innovations.

The first concerns the Internet: Parliament intends to make consumers aware of the risks of buying drugs online while also pushing for the proposal of ad hoc legislation on this selling method.

The second concerns the ban on advertising prescription-only drugs, because it is important to draw a distinction between generic and non-generic drugs, not only from the viewpoint of information to be given to patients but above all with regard to compliance with good practice in the manufacturing of active substances, particularly outside Europe.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) The report on the proposed regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription, introduces new rules with regard to the transparency and effectiveness of the information, placing the emphasis on the interests of patients, protecting them, a fact on which I based my vote in favour. Important points are the establishment of a European Medicines Agency, and clear contributions towards guaranteeing the right of patients to reliable, accessible and independent information, validated by the relevant authorities for the available medicines.

Rovana Plumb (S&D), *in writing.* – (RO) There are many sources of independent and evidence-based information on treatment options available within the European Union. These resources take into account cultural specificities and contexts for the population, including health determinants. Increased access to quality information will help achieve better health outcomes for patients as better informed patients are much more likely to continue necessary treatments and have far more chance of understanding the decisions

related to their treatment. Consequently, if properly phrased and implemented, the proposal will generate added value.

The regulation being discussed fails to take into account technical developments, as well as the opportunities and challenges created by the Internet. Patients in Europe already have unlimited access via the Internet to uncontrolled and frequently incorrect information about prescription-only medicines in a few seconds. However, access via the Internet to controlled and safe drug information is very limited for most patients. This is especially a problem for those who need information in their own language. Therefore, the objective of the proposal can not only be to harmonise European legislation but also to improve health through improved health-related knowledge.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the report on the proposed regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending, as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription, Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 laying down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Medicines Agency. I believe that it is essential to guarantee patient access to reliable and independent information on medicines subject to medical prescription that are available on the market.

Crescenzo Rivellini (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) In today's sitting, we voted at first reading on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council as regards information on medicinal products (EU procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products). Parliament and patient organisations have been asking for such a proposal for a long time, in order to enable patients to better informed on the medicines they are prescribed and taking.

The current regulation is not in line with technical development or the possibilities and challenges created by Internet. Patients in Europe already have infinite access to uncontrolled and often incorrect information about prescription-only pharmaceutical products in a few seconds.

The rapporteur proposed to shift the focus of the proposal and to mandate pharmaceutical companies to provide certain information to the patients and thus, to put the 'patients' right to know' at the centre of the legislation. Increased access to quality information will contribute to achieving better health outcomes for patients as better informed patients are more likely to continue necessary treatments and better understand decisions related to their treatment. The proposal will therefore bring an added value.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – This report welcomes the proposal by the Commission on information to patients on prescription-only medicines (COM(2008)0662-0663). Parliament and patient organizations have been asking for such a proposal for a long time, in order to enable patients to better informed on the medicines they are prescribed and taking. Increased access to quality information will contribute to achieving better health outcome for patients as better informed patients are more likely to continue necessary treatments and better understand decisions related to their treatment; so the proposal, if properly phrased and implemented, will bring an added value. Therefore the objective of the proposal can not only be harmonisation of European legislation but also to improve health through improved health literacy. The pharmaceutical industry has an important role to play in promoting health literacy and good health, but their role must

be clearly defined and their involvement strictly regulated, in order to avoid commercially driven overconsumption of pharmaceuticals.

Christel Schaldemose (S&D), *in writing.* – (DA) We, the Danish Social Democrats in the European Parliament (Dan Jørgensen, Christel Schaldemose, Britta Thomsen and Ole Christensen), have abstained from voting on the report on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on amending, as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription, Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 laying down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Medicines Agency. Even though the report contains a number of good proposals, we do not believe that we can vote for a proposal that runs counter to the Danish constitution.

Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D), *in writing.* – (RO) I voted in favour of the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on amending, as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription, Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 laying down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Medicines Agency so that it will guarantee in future a legal EU framework enabling European citizens to have equal access to correct and clear information about medicinal products.

The report presented by the Commission on 20 December 2007 concerning ‘current practices with regard to the provision of information to patients on medicinal products’ indicates that Member States have adopted divergent rules and practices with regard to the provision of information on medicinal products, resulting in a situation where patients and the general public have unequal access to this information. Europe’s citizens are entitled to have access to correct and clear information about medicinal products. I think that it is important that the regulation safeguards the interests of patients and ensures that the latest communication media are used to provide the general public with information that is correct, accessible and easy to understand, in a transparent way, independently of the commercial interests of the pharmaceutical companies.

Report: Christofer Fjellner (A7-0290/2010), (A7-0289/2010)

Göran Färm (S&D), *in writing.* – (SV) In view of the fact that, in a former job, I acted as a consultant for one of the interested parties in this matter, I have today abstained from voting on these reports, in other words, A7-0289/2010 and A7-0290/2010.

Report: Jill Evans (A7-0196/2010)

Sophie Auconie (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) Every year, in Europe, there is an estimated 9.3 million tonnes of electronic equipment waste. The fact is that this equipment often contains a substantial amount of highly polluting materials. This waste presents a considerable environmental challenge. Reprocessing aside, it would appear vital to restrict, from the outset, the use of these hazardous substances. Large industrial groups have already started to restrict their use. Nonetheless, we need clear rules in order to provide a common framework for this essential task. I therefore voted for the European Parliament legislative resolution on the adoption of a directive restricting the use of these substances. However, this has not been an easy vote. Indeed, the proposal contains a number of derogations, particularly as concerns photovoltaic panels. As they allow for a reduction in greenhouse

gas emissions, we saw fit to tolerate the substances that they contain. However, this became an issue for debate, naturally, on the priorities of the Union's environmental policy, which unfortunately faces mutually contradictory issues.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), *in writing.* – (LT) I supported this report. Every year, in the EU alone, an estimated 9.3 million tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) are sold annually, the biggest share of which are large household appliances and IT and telecommunication equipment. As the market continues to grow and innovation cycles become even shorter, the replacement of equipment accelerates, making waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) the fastest growing waste stream. WEEE arisings are estimated to grow to 12.3 million tonnes by 2020. WEEE includes several hazardous substances, which can be released into the environment and damage human health and the environment, especially if not treated appropriately. These problems have not been solved with RoHS 1.0.

I support the document's proposals that the European Commission should strengthen the prevention of the use of harmful substances and periodically examine the prohibition of other hazardous substances and their replacement with more environmentally friendly alternative substances or technologies which would ensure an appropriate level of protection of human health and the environment.

Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE), *in writing.* – (FR) The European Parliament has ratified the agreement with the Council under the ordinary legislative procedure by adopting, at first reading, the recast of the directive restricting the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. This is good news for European consumers: electrical and electronic equipment sold in the European Union make up a substantial proportion of consumer goods sold. The quantity of electrical and electronic equipment sold each year in the European Union alone is estimated at 9.3 million tonnes. The increasingly frequent replacement of these various items of equipment presents the issue of waste and of the hazardous substances present in that waste. It is necessary, for safety and public health reasons, to restrict their use. The idea behind the recast of the current directive, which dates back to 2003, is to progress even further in restricting the use of hazardous substances. The Commission is also due to revise its legislation in three years' time, in order to adapt the legislation still further to future innovations.

Vito Bonsignore (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) I should like to congratulate the rapporteur, Mrs Evans, on her work and the good compromise that she managed to reach amongst our political groups.

The text adopted, a recast of the directive currently in force, aims to set more ambitious parameters for the use of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE). It should be noted that in recent years the European institutions have, with great effort, made notable progress in making the disposal and production of electronic equipment more respectful of the environment and human health.

I voted in favour of this measure, which fits into this context and certainly represents both a burden and an opportunity for companies and small and medium-sized enterprises. In fact, the ability to offer consumers less polluting products is a good chance for enterprises to improve their business processes and their global competitiveness. Finally, the new parameters examined in this report will guarantee both greater protection for European consumers and greater respect for the environment.

Edite Estrela (S&D), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the report on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (recast), as I believe that the agreement reached with the Council meets the objective of contributing to the protection of human health and the environment, simplifying and giving greater coherence to existing legislation.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) According to the Commission, 9.3 million tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) are sold every year in the EU alone, most of which comprises large household appliances and IT and telecommunications equipment. As the market continues to grow and innovation cycles become shorter, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) is seen as the fastest growing waste stream. It is estimated that WEEE will increase to 12.3 million tonnes by 2020. The recasting of the directive on the restriction on the use of certain hazardous substances is aimed at broadening the scope of the directive and strengthening its preventative part, so that environmental damage can be corrected at the source as a priority, in line with Article 174.2 of the treaty. However, this directive essentially focuses on large distributors, neglecting the budgetary impact that it may have on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) producing EEE, and it does not offer solutions in the wake of the COM(2008)0809 proposal and the report on BioIntelligence, which stated that under this new scheme, SMEs that produce medical supervision and monitoring equipment are likely to face problems.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) This recast relating to the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS) is necessary, according to the Commission, because of uncertainty with regard to scope, a lack of clarity with regard to legal provisions, and disparities among Member States with regard to the conformity of the products in question.

Prior to the vote, I received several calls to reject the inclusion of PVC on the list of substances identified for priority review within Annex III of the RoHS Directive. I would like to state that I disagree with this inclusion, as the listing of a series of suspect products, including PVC, not based on any criteria, does not make sense. Considering a product to be susceptible *a priori* of being banned in the future without any scientific basis gives rise to an unacceptable situation of a lack of legislative definition. In the case of PVC, an initial assessment carried out under the terms of the REACH Regulation concluded that it is not very hazardous, and is not a priority substance for inclusion in Annex III. I voted in favour of this report because, during the negotiations that preceded the plenary vote, this list was withdrawn. The Commission should now carry out a reassessment, three years after this legislation came into force.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (PT) The amount of sales of electrical and electronic equipment in the EU and the inevitable increase in waste from this equipment means that there is a need to replace certain hazardous substances in them, so as to minimise their impact on the environment and ensure the protection of consumers and public health. We realise that this is necessary, and see the search for solutions that could provide an answer as valuable. We therefore voted for this report. Over the course of the discussion process that has taken place over recent months, the Council has reached agreement with Parliament, following negotiations on certain more controversial and troubling issues. We regard the fact that the proposed final text excluded polyvinylchloride from the scope of the directive, which allows production in certain industrial sectors to be maintained, as a

positive factor, as these sectors could have been seriously hit had this been included, as was proposed.

Robert Goebbels (S&D), *in writing*. – (FR) I abstained on the Evans report on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment because I find Parliament's approach strange. On the one hand, the report relentlessly opposes, without any scientific proof, nanoparticles, which, because they are small, must necessarily be hazardous. On the other hand, the proposal for a directive, by claiming to want to encourage the development of renewable energy technologies, excludes wastes from solar panels. Either electrical substances are hazardous, or they are not. If the aim is to impose the 'precautionary principle', then it should be applied to solar technology, too.

Matthias Groote (S&D), *in writing*. – (DE) I voted in favour of the report on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS), because the extension of the area of application to cover all electronic equipment represents a definite improvement. However, I find the fact that there are so many exceptions problematic. In particular in the area of renewable energies, photovoltaic modules, which consist in part of cadmium telluride compounds, are not covered by this directive. This substance is not only harmful to health, it is also hazardous and therefore really ought to be placed within the scope of the RoHS Directive. The danger that, as a result, photovoltaic installations would have to completely disappear from roofs would not arise. Rather, there are numerous cadmium telluride-free alternatives on the market. I therefore disagree in this regard with the decision of the majority in Parliament and the Council.

Françoise Grossetête (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) Waste electrical and electronic equipment is increasing all the time, and it brings together several hazardous substances. These substances may be discharged into the environment and harm human health if they are not treated properly.

This directive will enable numerous companies to make even more progress in designing new and safer electrical and electronic equipment by encouraging technological innovation. The reduction in hazardous substances, upstream, will also lead to a reduction in recycling costs. Finally, and critically, we have obtained an exemption for solar panels in order to encourage the development of renewable energy technologies within Europe.

Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) Poland is one of the largest producers of television, radio and domestic electrical appliances in Europe. It is also a country in which sales of this type of appliance are rising year by year. The development of technology and the growth in demand for goods of this type are also causing an increase in the quantities of what is known as e-waste, and there is a problem with processing this waste and with the effect of this process on environmental pollution. Therefore, the new provisions of the Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive are extremely important for the producers of this type of appliance. They are required to eliminate harmful substances and to raise safety standards for appliances which are intended for everyday use. This is also good news for consumers, because the new rules introduce the obligation to use substances which are safe for health and the environment, and this applies to all producers of electrical appliances throughout the European Union.

Jutta Haug (S&D), *in writing*. – Though not very ambitious, the first reading compromise improves the current legislation – I therefore voted in favour. Besides the new methodology for substance restrictions, one key improvement is the open scope: all electric and electronic equipment, including equipment for the generation of electric currents, will in the medium

term fall under the RoHS legislation. A major drawback, however, is the long list of exclusions, including photovoltaic panels. Excluding this decisive 'clean' technology from environmental legislation will send the wrong signal, EU-wide and globally. This is about setting the right regulatory framework for coherent sustainable investments! Even if the production of photovoltaic panels with hazardous substances like cadmium telluride might be more cost-efficient, less problematic alternatives have existed for a long time and have proved to function excellently. I do not see any need, therefore, to cover our roofs and fields with potentially hazardous waste, shifting the disposal challenge to future generations. On this point, I strongly disagree with the position and decision of the EP's and Council's majority.

Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – The compromise negotiated by my colleague Jill Evans marks progress in this area of law. The legal certainty it provides will lead to improvements in environmental protection and I accordingly voted in favour of the report.

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) The constantly rising production of television, radio and domestic electrical appliances is the result of the development of modern technologies and the increase in demand for this type of product. As consumers, we expect functionality and ergonomics from these appliances, but above all we should require that different types of product comply with appropriate norms which regulate safety standards both for the user and the environment. We exchange used appliances for new ones, producing alarming amounts of waste, and the dangerous substances used in their production are causing irreversible damage to the ecosystem.

Therefore, it is indispensable to introduce legislative regulations which will limit the use of harmful substances in the production of appliances which come into our homes, and which at the same time will support producers in the introduction of innovative, ecological measures.

Alan Kelly (S&D), *in writing*. – The current RoHS restricts the use of six hazardous materials that were once contained in certain electrical and electronic equipment. It is being recast in order to simplify it and to make it easier for producers to tell which substances are banned, so as to avoid any unnecessary mix-ups that could be dangerous to the consumer and waste companies' resources.

Giovanni La Via (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) The European Union needed a detailed set of rules on the use of certain substances considered hazardous in electrical and electronic equipment. This requirement is made clear from Commission data, which shows that, every year, in the EU alone, an estimated 9.3 million tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) are sold.

As the market continues to grow and innovation cycles become even shorter, the replacement of equipment accelerates, making waste electrical and electronic equipment the fastest growing waste stream. After a short transitional phase to allow companies to adjust to the new legislation, the use of hazardous substances will be banned from all electrical and electronic equipment, albeit with some exceptions such as photovoltaic panels. The measure will also require competing third-country industries to observe the same obligations imposed on our own businesses, with the express requirement that imported products must comply with the same safety standards guaranteed by EU rules.

I therefore ultimately believe it is a priority to safeguard certain primary assets such as public health and the environment, albeit in the knowledge that we are operating in

conditions that are very much defined by the severe economic crisis that has affected Europe and the world.

David Martin (S&D), *in writing*. – I voted for this report on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. The current Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive restricts the use of six hazardous materials in the manufacturing of certain electronic and electrical equipment. It is intended to avoid toxic waste once this equipment is thrown away, to ensure that Europe's unwanted mobile phones, computers and fridges do not damage the environment or human health by the seepage of chemicals in landfills or by giving off toxic fumes at incineration. The directive is being simplified.

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (PT) The use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment is a major problem for public health, for the environment and for waste management. These risks are even greater in recycling and recovery operations under poor conditions in developing countries, especially in the case of illegal exporting for disposal in dumps in poorer countries. With this draft legislation, all the material in question will be included under this directive. In future, therefore, all materials will have to comply with the provisions of the directive if this is deemed necessary in an environmental assessment.

This directive contributes to the setting out of clear rules in the Member States as regards placing these substances on the market, and subsequently reusing them. This directive will lead to a significant improvement to the present situation, which is why I voted in favour. However, I believe that some hazardous substances that were left out of the directive should be included within the next three years, following a review and assessment of their impact.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The increased use of electrical and electronic equipment, combined with their considerable technological development, has led to an ever shortening life cycle. This, in turn, has led to serious problems with regard to the use of dangerous substances in this equipment, as well as difficulties in the management of the ever larger quantity of waste. Therefore, this directive relating to the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances (RoHS) is aimed at broadening its scope and strengthening its preventative part, so that environmental damage may be corrected at source as a priority, in line with Article 174(2) of the treaty. This recast is essential for there to be a successful reduction of hazardous substances in this type of equipment.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), *in writing*. – (LV) I fully support Mrs Evans's report. However, I should like to add that this issue should be paid more attention. The use of lead, magnesium, mercury and rare-earth metals in electronics and industrial technology is unavoidable. Our task is to compel manufacturers to move over to less harmful materials. Where that is not possible, it is essential that the public be informed of the potentially deleterious effect on consumers of all the harmful substances that have been used.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) The directive on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS) governs the use of hazardous substances in devices and components. It is also an important instrument for setting a European, as well as global, standard for manufacturers. The extension of the scope of the directive is intended to also take account of the waste treatment of hazardous substances. I abstained from voting, as the report does not yet completely resolve all of the problems associated with the handling of hazardous substances.

Franz Obermayr (NI), *in writing.* – (DE) There has certainly been a rapid growth in the market for electrical equipment, in particular in the areas of IT and telecommunications. This and the ever shorter innovation cycles are also resulting in ever increasing amounts of electrical waste. The recast of the RoHS Directive is aimed at preventing the use of hazardous substances that could harm the environment or human health. Some of the proposals are controversial: on the one hand, large computer manufacturers like HP, ACER or Sony Ericsson have pronounced themselves in favour of a ban on all brominated flame retardants in electrical and electronic equipment. On the other hand, the results of the Commission's studies are clearly not very conclusive, at least as regards the potential damage to the environment. In addition, there are concerns being expressed by the industry with regard to the ban on PVC, particularly in the area of the cables industry. The negative properties of PVC are disputed and there is a fear that costs will increase if there is a ban on PVC-covered cables. These arguments need to be weighed up before specific bans are laid down. I have therefore abstained from voting.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) I voted in favour of the report for a variety of reasons. I agree that fixed installations and photovoltaic panels should be excluded from the scope of the directive. I was also pleased at the adoption of a methodology for reviewing the hazardous substances contained in Annex IV, as it means that the list of substances to be examined by the Commission (Annex III) can be removed. I also believe that the not overly broad definition of 'dependency' to mean needing electricity for equipment operation is correct. I also believe it premature for the legislation to cover the evaluation of nanomaterials, which are currently being examined by the Commission. Lastly, I applaud the fact that the scope is 'open' to include all electrical and electronic equipment.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) My vote in favour of the report on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (recast) was due to the improvements introduced by mutual agreement with the Council, which should contribute to major improvements in the protection of public health and the environment, and waste management. I would highlight the simplification and increased consistency of the new legislation. The reorganisation and restriction of the use of hazardous materials was imperative in view of the substantial increase in sales of electrical and electronic equipment within the EU.

With this legislation, we are contributing to preventing the waste that we produce with electrical and electronic equipment, such as mobile phones, computers and refrigerators, from harming the environment and human health through the introduction of chemical products into the environment, either from landfill or through the release of toxic gases from incineration.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) I would like to thank Mrs Evans for her excellent work. I voted in favour because I agree that the RoHS recast needs to be put into the context of the EU's international obligations to reduce total releases of dioxins and furans, with the goal of their continuing minimisation and, where feasible, ultimate elimination.

The final destiny of large quantities of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) remains unclear. High-temperature incineration remains the exception. Sub-standard treatment of WEEE – in the EU or in third countries – risks remaining a reality for significant amounts. Emissions of dioxins and furans can only be addressed via material choices at design stage.

Rovana Plumb (S&D), *in writing.* – (RO) In the EU alone, an estimated 9.3 million tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) are sold annually, the biggest share of which are large household appliances and IT and telecommunication equipment. As the market continues to grow and innovation cycles become increasingly shorter, the replacement of equipment accelerates, making waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) the fastest growing waste stream. The volume of WEEE items is estimated to grow to 12.3 million tonnes by 2020.

The key aspects of this recast of the directive are as follows:

- open scope
- differentiation between RoHS and REACH
- modification of the exemption criteria
- criteria for deciding on the duration of exemption/grace periods
- codecision for future restrictions instead of comitology
- specific provisions on nanomaterials.

I welcome that agreement was reached on first reading. I voted for this report as the new proposal for a directive is simpler and will offer manufacturers an easier instrument to use for classifying their products in the categories envisaged by the directive. It also takes into account the socio-economic impact linked to the protection of health and the environment when amending the exception criteria.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) According to the Commission, it is advisable to reformulate the current directive relating to the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment, adopted in 2003, on the grounds of clarity and legal certainty. This recast naturally requires the expansion of the directive's scope, so as to contribute to the protection of human health and the ecologically correct recycling and disposal of waste from electrical and electronic equipment. With regard to this question, it is now crucial to take into consideration the potential impact of the recommended solutions on small and medium-sized enterprises.

Frédérique Ries (ALDE), *in writing.* – (FR) Nearly eight years ago, the European Parliament adopted a directive on the restriction of hazardous substances (the RoHS Directive), and thereby responded to a strong demand by consumers for safe and non-harmful everyday consumer products. This safety approach was implemented mainly through a ban on the use of lead, mercury and cadmium in products as diverse as domestic appliances, radio and television sets, electric trains and video games. I welcome the revision adopted today, which extends the scope of the directive to other products, but without prejudging substances as important as PVC. Similarly, it was important to reconsider the restrictive position on nanomaterials adopted by the Committee on the Environment in June. This revolution in the infinitely small deserves better than a simplistic position: for or against, as in the case of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). It is also essential for the RoHS Directive to be workable and, in this respect, I welcome the account that has been taken of the potential effects of these substances on health and the environment, the establishment of a methodology and the guaranteed complementarity with the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical Substances (REACH) Regulation.

Crescenzo Rivellini (PPE), *in writing.* – (IT) At today's sitting, I voted in favour of the revision of the directive on the use of hazardous substances in electric or electronic equipment.

Partly as a result of new scientific knowledge on the subject, the text – a recast of the 2003 directive – seeks to introduce restrictions on the use of materials such as cadmium, chlorine, mercury and polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which have been shown to endanger human health.

Despite being aware of the strong opposition from the manufacturers of the sector, in particular against the limitations on the use of PVC, I believe it is a primary duty of politics, and consequently of democratically elected politicians, to try to control the use of substances that, even if only potentially, can damage human health. At the same time, we need to encourage the use of alternative and replacement substances within the limits of the available technology.

I believe that the final outcome for electric and electronic equipment waste is of particular importance, particularly in cases in which these contain materials later recognised as dangerous. In such cases, in fact, disposal must be even more rigorous and careful.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing.* – According to the Commission, every year, in the EU alone, an estimated 9.3 million tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) are sold annually, the biggest share of which are large household appliances and IT and telecommunication equipment. As the market continues to grow and innovation cycles become even shorter, the replacement of equipment accelerates, making waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) the fastest growing waste stream. WEEE arisings are estimated to grow to 12.3 million tonnes by 2020. WEEE is a complex waste stream, including several hazardous substances. These substances, or their transformation products, can be released into the environment and damage human health, especially if not treated appropriately. Risks for human health and the environment are further increased by sub-standard recycling/recovery operations in developing countries. According to Article 174(2) of the treaty, environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source. The waste hierarchy in the waste framework directive gives first priority to prevention, which is defined *inter alia* as setting out waste prevention measures that reduce the content of harmful substances in materials and products. I really hope this report will help to solve those problems.

Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D), *in writing.* – Electronic equipment produces the fastest growing waste stream in Europe, and reducing the carcinogenic and toxic substances from this waste stream must be a top priority. The open scope of the legislation, as recommended by the Environment Committee, is a much better approach than that proposed by the Commission. A definitive list of specific products could exclude new products from the regulation, and we need to ensure that the legislation not only facilitates – but also keeps up with – innovation by industry. It is encouraging to see that several companies are now phasing out the use of some of these potentially harmful substances from their products. But we still need to adopt ambitious legislation which will encourage the rest of industry to follow the lead of others and to innovate in order to ensure better environmental protection.

Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), *in writing.* – (NL) I have endorsed the report on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. This report is a step in the right direction. It extends the category of equipment to, *inter alia*, medical apparatus. In addition to heavy metals such as mercury and lead, a number of

brominated flame retardants are banned. Moreover, the report provides an open scope, enabling all electronic equipment, with a number of specifically defined exceptions, and also other hazardous substances to be covered by this directive in the future. Clear criteria are laid down for this. However, I regret that a ban on PVC has not been included in this directive as the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance had proposed. It is very important to achieve a reduction in hazardous substances in electronic waste. Even though European legislation prohibits the export of hazardous waste for recycling, studies have shown that more than two thirds of European electronic waste is exported. Often, this e-waste is dumped illegally in places such as West Africa, where waste treatment is very substandard and causes tremendous health problems and environmental pollution. There is much money to be made from this fast-growing market in waste, and so sound supervision and monitoring are necessary to curb the illegal export of electronic waste.

Marianne Thyssen (PPE), *in writing.* – (NL) It has become impossible to imagine our daily life without electrical and electronic equipment. The European Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) system that regulates the use of hazardous substances in this electronic equipment has in fact become a universal system that is used in no less than 28 non-EU countries. To date, restrictions have already been imposed on mercury, lead, cadmium and a number of flame retardants on the basis of the current RoHS Directive. Rapid technological progress and better scientific knowledge have compelled us to recast this legislation. The recast of the directive is also necessary in order to make RoHS an efficient, flexible instrument. Indeed, from now on, it will be possible to exclude hazardous substances more quickly, which will benefit humans and the environment. The relationship between the Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and the RoHS Directive is also laid down, and thus double regulation avoided. For these reasons, I have endorsed with conviction today the agreement that Parliament was able to conclude with the Council. I hope that an agreement can also be reached quickly regarding the Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). After all, the two legislative instruments are inextricably interlinked.

Thomas Ulmer (PPE), *in writing.* – (DE) This is a good report, which takes most of the concerns of the industry and environmental protection concerns into account in a balanced manner. Although it will surely not be possible to achieve complete satisfaction in relation to such a complex matter, this provides a very close approximation.

Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D), *in writing.* – (NL) I have voted in favour of the Evans report because the overall balance of the agreement reached with the Council is positive. Nevertheless, as shadow rapporteur, I would like to express my displeasure at the fact that solar panels have been excluded from the scope of the directive after intense lobbying from the sector. As a result, cadmium will be allowed to remain in solar panels placed on the European market for (at least) another ten years, whereas that will not be allowed for any other electrical or electronic equipment. I expressly disapprove of a situation where a sector which ought to be a driving force in our evolution towards a green economy has been anxious to evade this important environmental legislation and where a majority in Parliament and the Council have given in to the interests of one type of technology in particular (the use of cadmium telluride thin-film solar panels).

Artur Zasada (PPE), *in writing.* – (PL) In today's vote, I endorsed the report on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. Recently, we have been able to see the significance of the problem addressed by the legislation we have adopted, as several million households around the European Union

have exchanged their CRT television sets for modern LCD screens. Today, those same households are thinking about changing their LCD televisions for LCD-LED ones.

The experts say that used electrical and electronic equipment is becoming the fastest growing source of waste. In addition, analyses carried out by the research institute *Öko-Institut* have demonstrated the adverse effect of PVC and halogenated flame retardants on the environment and human health. I am sure the document adopted today will contribute to a reduction in the amounts of hazardous substances of this kind.

Motion for a resolution B7-0617/2010 (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement)

Damien Abad (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) Parliament today adopted the motion for a resolution on the international Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), to ensure better international application of anti-counterfeiting measures. ACTA is a tool for making the existing regulations more effective and for providing better protection against violations of copyright, trademarks, patents, designs and geographical indications. I voted in favour of this resolution, tabled by my political group, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), as I believe that ACTA provides a protective shield for European industry. Hence, we will be able to ensure the protection of copyright, as well as creativity and innovation in cultural and scientific matters. Indeed, we should stop and reflect today on how better to combat piracy, and this international agreement is a step in the direction of the more effective application of anti-counterfeiting measures.

Sophie Auconie (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of the joint motion for a resolution tabled by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and the European Conservatives and Reformists on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement, known as 'ACTA'. This agreement aims to combat the proliferation of counterfeiting and the increased piracy of 'copyrighted' products by establishing a new international governance structure. I think it is crucial to protect creativity from theft, for that is what piracy and counterfeiting really is. The Union, which aims to become the world's most competitive knowledge-based economy, cannot remain indifferent to this major problem. That is why I welcome the adoption of this resolution. It is a strong text which should have united all MEPs. Unfortunately, it was only adopted by a slim majority. While the European Commission was offering strong guarantees as regards respect for fundamental rights, the left in Parliament preferred to cling onto groundless protest slogans. In my view, the European Union must spearhead this fight against negligence and lack of commitment of which China and Russia are frequently guilty in this area. Our competitiveness in the globalised economy is at stake.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), *in writing*. – (LT) Combating counterfeiting is an essential element of EU political strategy, aimed at ensuring fairness, uniform conditions for our manufacturers, employment for our citizens and respect for the principles of the rule of law. With the emergence of digital technologies, counterfeiting took on an uncontrollable international dimension, and so international cooperation is the main tool for combating this problem. I supported this motion for a resolution which sets out the European Parliament's objectives and priorities in the multilateral negotiations on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement, which aims, for the first time, to establish a comprehensive international framework to combat infringements of intellectual property rights more effectively. I feel that it is important to ensure that IPR enforcement measures are not an obstacle to innovations and competition and that there is no damage to IPR

restrictions and the protection of personal data, or that the free flow of information is restricted or legitimate trade unjustifiably impeded.

Françoise Castex (S&D), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted against this text: the European right has given in to the demands of certain governments and to the pressure of the cultural industries, at the expense of the fundamental rights of European citizens. All the safeguards which we asked of the Commission have been dismissed out of hand by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats). That sends a bad signal to the Commission ahead of the Sydney negotiations next week. Furthermore, the vague definition of the term 'commercial scale', relating to the increase in criminal sanctions in the area of on-line copyright infringements, could encourage States to adopt legislation leading to the criminalisation of private users and technical intermediaries. ACTA must not have the effect of enabling the European Union to carry out investigations into individuals or to introduce flexible response systems or the like. Finally, the Commission must carry out an impact assessment quickly – before rather than after ACTA has been implemented – regarding its application and its consequences for fundamental rights, data protection and the E-Commerce Directive.

Carlos Coelho (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) This will allow the strengthening of international cooperation in combating counterfeiting, creating a tool to protect intellectual property rights (IPRs) effectively. It is not intended to create new rights, but to ensure respect for existing rights through repressive measures and the creation of a comprehensive international framework of assistance to the parties. This is a difficult agreement, with conflicting interests that leave room for controversial interpretations as to its effects. Protecting IPRs is essential, but, on the other hand, it is vital to ensure a balance so that freedom of expression and innovation are not threatened, and so that the ability of individual to exercise his or her civil and fundamental freedoms is not constrained. Counterfeiting is a very serious problem that carries enormous risks for European industry, the economy and innovation.

I hope that this agreement will be a step in the right direction, and that in forthcoming negotiations it will be possible to resolve the ambiguities and omissions that still plague the text, such as in the reference to false geographical locations. I could like to congratulate the Commission for its efforts in increasing the transparency of the negotiations, and I hope that it will maintain this stance, keeping Parliament fully informed of the progress of negotiations.

George Sabin Cutaş (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for the joint motion for a resolution on the 'Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement' proposed by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, along with another three political groups from the European legislative. The intention behind this resolution was both to respect fundamental freedoms and individual rights and keep free access to the Internet. The resolution also endeavoured to guarantee access to medicines in developing countries. It is deplorable that this resolution failed to win the vote of the House as the socialist position supported the interests of European citizens.

Mário David (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) I agree on the whole with this motion for a resolution, which concerns the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), approved after long months of debate and efforts to find a compromise solution between the various political groups, which was unfortunately not achieved. For the sake of the healthy functioning of the markets, the protection of the single market, the competitiveness of European companies

within a global economy, and the creation and maintenance of jobs within the EU, it is important that the Union makes action against counterfeiting in its various forms a priority of its internal and international policy. Aware that ACTA does not recommend a solution to a complex and multi-dimensional problem such as counterfeiting, as expressed in paragraph 3, I still believe that ACTA constitutes a valid tool for making existing standards more effective, thus benefiting exports from the EU and protecting rights-holders when they operate within the global market, where various holders of industrial and intellectual property rights are currently the victims of systematic and widespread violation of copyright, trademarks, patents, designs and geographical indications.

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D), in writing. – I voted against this resolution, which states the position of the European Parliament ahead of the initialling of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), because the conservative majority in this House refused to raise the need for basic safeguards for our citizens vis-à-vis this global copyright agreement. Parliament has yet to see evidence that the legal basis for this negotiation is consistent with the Treaty of Lisbon prior to the initialling of the agreement. The Commission must also demonstrate to us that cooperation between service providers and copyright holders will not impinge on citizens' fundamental rights, especially the right to privacy, the right to freedom of expression and the right to due process. This requires an assessment of the impact of ACTA on data protection and fundamental rights. We need a guarantee by the Council and the Commission that ACTA will not necessitate any changes to EU law as far as criminal measures relating to the enforcement of intellectual property rights are concerned. Civil enforcement provisions on patents could also negatively impact access to generic medicines, and the Commission should address this concern. We should withhold our consent to ACTA until we receive written guarantees on these critical issues.

Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) A question remains over the content of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). The main aim of this agreement, which has been negotiated for years in the utmost secrecy between 10 or so countries, is to combat counterfeiting and to protect intellectual property rights. Nonetheless, it should be noted that neither China nor Brazil nor India has participated in these negotiations. Furthermore, while counterfeiting must be combated, the well-known provisions in the treaty in question imply the establishment of measures that might be considered to be attacks on individual freedoms: supervision of Internet access providers, strengthening of border controls, and greater difficulties in transporting low cost generic medicines to developing countries. These are all concerns that have been relayed by many MEPs, who do not wish to place 'blind' confidence in the negotiations conducted by the European Commission. The resolution, which was adopted by a slim majority – and only just – cannot actually be regarded as support, as doubts remain over whether the text complies with the *acquis communautaire* and whether it is compatible with respect for fundamental rights.

Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I abstained from voting on the resolution on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) because I believe that, although the text has some important points, it is excessively critical of the agreement under consideration. Overall, I believe that the ACTA is favourable to the economic interests of the EU, and that it strikes a balance between protecting intellectual property rights and ensuring fundamental rights.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) After much insistence by Parliament, there has been a substantial increase in the degree of transparency in the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) negotiations, and since the round of negotiations in New Zealand

Parliament has been kept fully informed. The negotiated text reflects the main concerns expressed by Parliament, especially on issues such as respect for fundamental rights, privacy and data protection, respect for the importance of a free Internet, the usefulness of safeguarding the role of service providers and the need to safeguard access to medicines. The fight against counterfeiting is a priority, and international cooperation is fundamental to achieving this objective. With the possibility of new emerging and developing countries acceding to the agreement, thus promoting widespread protection of intellectual property rights, the ACTA will be able to achieve the required multilateralism.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The agreement negotiated is an important step in the fight against counterfeiting, and is a key element in the EU's political strategy for ensuring justice, a level playing-field for European producers, the preservation of jobs for citizens, and respect for the rule of law. The fight against counterfeiting should be one of the priorities of internal and international political strategy, and international cooperation is fundamental to the achievement of this objective.

ACTA is a tool that makes existing standards more effective, thus benefiting exports from the EU and protecting rights-holders when they operate within the global market. I would stress the importance for European companies and jobs within the EU of protecting geographical indications, and I welcome the efforts made by the Commission to include the protection of geographical indications within the scope of ACTA. Finally, I would emphasise the importance of the Commission confirming that the application of ACTA will not have any impact on fundamental rights and data protection, or on the efforts that the EU is currently making to harmonise implementation measures for intellectual property rights.

Bruno Gollnisch (NI), *in writing*. – (FR) Had I not decided to boycott the sitting after the lamentable episode of Social-Eurocratic totalitarianism that we have just experienced, I would have voted in favour of the joint motion for a resolution of the left-wing groups on the counterfeiting agreement. I would have done so not because I have changed political persuasion, but because I believe that this agreement is insufficient to protect our industries from counterfeiting, that it fails to guarantee respect for geographical indications, that it serves little purpose if it does not involve China, the biggest counterfeiter in the world, and that it endangers the rights and freedoms of citizens as it concerns 'intangible' property rights. I am also in favour of all the requests for prior information, impact assessments and so on set out in this resolution. In short, this agreement is, as it stands, pointless and potentially harmful. It should not even be under negotiation, and even less so, given the issues it covers, by the European Commission alone.

Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted against the motion for a resolution on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement tabled by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and the European Conservatives and Reformists because that text is by no means sufficient to protect individual freedoms. MEPs have regularly expressed their many concerns about the negotiation of this international agreement and before the agreement was definitively ratified by the Member States and the European Union, it was important to raise a number of problems, particularly those relating to access to medicines, the responsibility of Internet access providers, and searches of travellers' personal luggage at borders. Unfortunately, the joint motion for a resolution tabled by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe and the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left, for

which I voted, and which expressed these concerns, could not be adopted, as it was just short of the number of votes required.

Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – I am disappointed that the resolution supported by my own group today was not adopted. The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) has the potential to have an extremely negative effect on civil liberties and today's vote does nothing to diminish those fears.

Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE), *in writing*. – (DE) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution tabled by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and the European Conservatives and Reformists on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). The resolution expresses the same concerns as those expressed by EU citizens with regard to data protection. It expressly rejects a 'three-strikes' regulation, which has been discussed as a measure to be used in the event of copyright infringements. The resolution also points out that the agreement must be in line with the *acquis communautaire*, in other words the common body of EU law. Counterfeit products and international copyright infringements damage the European economy, thereby putting European jobs at risk too. Decisive measures must be taken to counter this.

Edvard Kožušník (ECR), *in writing*. – (CS) I applaud the fact that the most controversial provisions have been removed from the final form of this international agreement, such as the responsibility of third parties, mandatory checks on computer memories when crossing borders and the mandatory application of the 'digital guillotine'. Although I welcome the effort made here to provide greater protection for intellectual property rights, I am not convinced that the form of the agreement presented to us here is entirely optimal. I am very concerned that countries such as China and Russia are not signatories. The fact that the agreement places greater emphasis on protecting the holders of rights, and not the actual authors, makes me concerned as to whether the agreement will really serve to protect general intellectual property rights, and not just to protect the rights of a narrow group of entities based mainly in the US.

Moreover, the fact that it was not possible to include geographical indications in the agreement only confirms my fears. It is perhaps not necessary to comment again on the method of negotiating the agreement, but I do believe that a similarly non-transparent form of negotiation to that chosen for ACTA will not be repeated and Parliament will in future be informed in good time over the negotiation procedure for similar agreements and the content of the agreements.

Giovanni La Via (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) has increased and continues to increase the effectiveness of the rules that promote European Union exports and protect those people who are increasingly subject to widespread infringements of their intellectual property rights when they operate on the global market.

As is emphasised effectively in the joint motion for a resolution, the fight against counterfeiting at global level represents a key aspect of European Union political strategy, with the aim of being able to offer standard conditions of competition for all European producers. I believe that in this sector, as in others, the essential nature of cooperation between States has now been clearly accepted. The protection of copyright, trademarks, patents, designs and geographical indications is certainly a sensitive issue because it is concerned with fundamental human rights, but today's motion constitutes a serious appeal to continue in the right direction. The Commission must, in fact, commit itself to

guaranteeing the inclusion of effective methods for actually enforcing the protection of geographical indications, because this is essential for companies and the employment of European citizens.

Constance Le Grip (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement tabled by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and the European Conservatives and Reformists. This PPE/ECR resolution points out that the fight against counterfeiting is a priority within the Union's internal and international political strategy and that international cooperation is a key element in the global pursuit of this goal. In taking up the concerns of the European Parliament and of our fellow citizens, such as respect for fundamental rights, the protection of privacy and personal data, the recognition of the vital role of unrestricted Internet access, the importance of protecting the role of service providers, and the need to safeguard access to medicines, the act makes the current rules more effective. It aims to provide better protection against all violations of intellectual property rights, trademarks, designs and patents in the interests of Community exports and the holders of these rights. Contrary to what has been said by its detractors, the agreement is fully compatible with the *acquis communautaire*. It does not introduce, for example, the so-called 'three-strikes' procedure.

Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for the motion for a resolution on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) as it: 1. is fully in keeping with the *acquis communautaire*; 2. will result in a positive impact on the measures for protecting intellectual property rights globally and for protection against other territories such as Asia, Australia, the Pacific region and so on; 3. will protect competition at EU level and cultural diversity, as well as contribute to job creation.

David Martin (S&D), *in writing*. – I voted for this resolution on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). ACTA is concerned with the enforcement of IP law at international level and concerns commercial copyright violations. This is a very delicate subject where we need to give rights holders adequate protection and a reasonable return on their investments without, on the other hand, infringing civil liberties, restricting access to medicine or criminalising individuals for trivial breaches of copyright. The right place to carry out this assessment is in the Trade Committee when it considers whether or not to give Parliamentary assent to ACTA.

Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (CS) Protection against counterfeiting and the protection of intellectual property are undoubtedly an important element on an international scale. However, no clear significance emerges from the proposed ACTA agreement in terms of high quality and especially balanced protection of the interests of all EU Member State citizens. This agreement, which has taken a long time to draw up, has lacked transparency at various levels in the preparatory stages, and is geared in its context more to the interests of one group. Although the agreement also declares, among other things, a strengthening of the monitoring by relevant bodies of goods in transit and the export regime or ex officio negotiations, a question arises here as to scope and other possibilities for enforcing the agreement, as its effect seems debatable without the agreed ratification by a large number of important countries worldwide.

In relation to actually ensuring the protection of intellectual property, it can be said that on a global scale there is now a whole range of recognised, functioning and sufficiently proven instruments, institutions and contractual arrangements which currently ensure protection against counterfeits. At the same time, the assurance that it is not necessary to

change the *acquis communautaire* would, for a document of such importance and such a character, merit the submission of a more thorough legal analysis.

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), *in writing.* – (PT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution as it represents an important step in combating counterfeiting without calling into question issues such as the transportation of generic medicines, and it ensures fundamental rights such as the right to privacy and data protection.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL), *in writing.* – (FR) The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) was negotiated behind the backs of our citizens and in opposition to UNO and its World Intellectual Property Organisation, the sole body that can legitimately establish such an agreement. In the case of ACTA, a handful of countries have negotiated among themselves the rules that are to prevail in the area of intellectual property rights. This misappropriation of international law to the benefit of the richest countries and their closest allies is wholly intolerable.

What is more, given that there is uncertainty over a possible patenting of living beings and potential obstacles to the circulation of generic medicines, what is imperative is not to be concerned about this point or regret that point, while accepting that we have been faced with a *fait accompli*. I am voting against this text.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) The introduction of the draft Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement on 2 October 2010, following the Tokyo round of negotiations, is very important. There is also a need for the Commission to make available to Parliament and the public the definitive text of the ACTA agreement following the meeting to negotiate technical aspects that took place in Sydney between 30 November and 3 December 2010.

Combating counterfeiting is one of the main priorities of internal and international political strategy, and international cooperation is fundamental to the achievement of this objective. We are perfectly well aware that the agreement negotiated will not solve the complex and multi-dimensional problem of counterfeiting, but it is a step in the right direction towards putting an end to this serious problem, which is responsible for severe losses to the EU economy and the gross domestic product of Member States.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D), *in writing.* – (LV) It is essential that this agreement come into effect as soon as possible. Any delay will open the gates to the plain theft of intellectual property. Manufacturers' costs exceed all imaginable amounts. Piracy on the Internet is an extremely topical issue these days. Many Internet service providers and European Union citizens are involved in unethical activities. In this context, we must regulate all operations associated with the downloading and so-called exchange of information. Inaction as regards the prevention of counterfeiting promotes impunity and appears cynical. I fully support this motion for a resolution.

Vital Moreira (S&D), *in writing.* – (PT) I abstained from voting on the joint motion for a resolution tabled by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, and the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement as I believe that the text in question is overly critical and that it should be more balanced. In the tabled version there is a clear indication that our final position will be opposed to the adoption of the agreement. I believe that the agreement is generally favourable to the economic

interests of the European Union, especially given the fact that we want our economy to be based on innovation, research and development, or 'smart growth'.

I therefore believe that enhanced protection of industrial property rights, including patents, is essential for European competitiveness. On the other hand, I believe that initial concerns about generic medicines, protection of the right to Internet access and the protection of geographical indications, or designations of origin, were satisfactorily overcome in the final negotiations. We cannot ignore the progress that has been made. Obviously, not everything is satisfactory, but an international agreement must be judged in overall terms.

Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution from the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)/European Conservatives and Reformists and against the others because the international ACTA makes it possible to combat counterfeiting more effectively, which will lead to better copyright protection and, by extension, help protect European industry. Furthermore, the ACTA will help protect consumers against counterfeit products, which are becoming increasingly prevalent on European markets.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) on ACTA, inasmuch as I believe that it is essential for the agreement to be implemented. This must be done quickly without any more delays or time-wasting, otherwise we risk an impasse in negotiations to the detriment of both manufacturers and European consumers alike.

Europe has an obligation to continue concentrating its efforts on two issues. The first issue is that it must be compulsory for European geographical indications to be protected in both civil and customs terms, as these are today suffering damage that affects not only the agri-food industry, the counterfeited products of which suffer unfair competition typically involving the use of names that copy and evoke familiar European brands, but also industries operating in the design and fashion sectors. The second issue is the obligatory need for common rules to control online sales. This sector has seen an increase in the sale of books, films, music and millions of counterfeit goods, which harms not only consumers but also European manufacturers.

Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE), *in writing*. – (EL) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution tabled by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and the European Conservatives and Reformists on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), as this is an agreement designed to safeguard justice and healthy competition. The agreement introduces a full international framework to strengthen the fight against infringements of intellectual property rights. It promotes the accession of other developing countries to the agreement, as participation in ACTA is not restricted.

Negotiations on the agreement now take account of the EU's main concerns, including: respect for fundamental rights and privacy; data protection; respect for the role of the free Internet; defence of the role of service providers and the need to safeguard access to drugs and protect public health.

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) I am convinced that this motion for a resolution represents an important step in combating counterfeiting, while maintaining the necessary balance between conflicting values. It does not call into question freedom of expression and innovation, and guarantees fundamental rights, such as the right to privacy and data protection.

There are opposing interests that make consensus difficult, but what has been achieved here with some success is an agreement that is essentially a meeting of common desires. The transparency adopted by the Commission during these negotiations in keeping the EP informed is to be applauded, and I hope that it will be possible during forthcoming negotiations to resolve the ambiguities and omissions that are still pointed to by all parties. I believe that the agreement reached will strengthen international cooperation in the fight against counterfeiting, creating a tool for the effective protection of Intellectual Property Rights and the guaranteeing of fundamental rights. It is also essential to ensure respect for existing rights through repressive measures and the creation of a comprehensive international framework of assistance to the parties involved.

Miguel Portas (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution as it represents an important step in combating counterfeiting without calling into question issues such as the transport of generic medicines, and it ensures fundamental rights such as the right to privacy and data protection.

Paulo Rangel (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The fight against counterfeiting, which is a global phenomenon, requires a multilateral approach, based on the strengthening of cooperation between the major parties involved globally. Consequently, although I am aware that the agreement negotiated will not solve the complex problem of counterfeiting, I am convinced that it constitutes a step in the right direction.

Crescenzo Rivellini (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) Today, I voted for the recently finalised international Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA).

The aim of the new multilateral ACTA between the European Union, the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and Switzerland is to strengthen the protection of intellectual property and contribute to the fight against counterfeiting and piracy of products such as big-name clothing brands, music and films.

I am aware that the agreement negotiated will not resolve the complex and multidimensional problem of counterfeiting, but I believe it constitutes a step in the right direction. In any case, I call on the European Commission to confirm that the text does not have any repercussions on fundamental freedoms and European Union legislation. I would also note that Parliament has the right to veto international agreements.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – The European Parliament just narrowly failed to adopt a resolution demanding that the Commission clarify and assess the consequences of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement ACTA. The numbers were 306 in favour, 322 against, with 26 abstentions. The resolution had been put forward by the Green Group (including the Pirate Party), the Social Democrats, the Liberals and the left. Instead, an alternative resolution by the Christian Democrat group EPP and the Conservative group was carried. This resolution basically welcomes what the negotiators have been doing so far, without placing any specific demands on the Commission for further clarifications or assessments. This was a defeat, but it is far from the final word on the issue. The resolution has no formal effect at all, but is merely an expression of how Parliament feels. The deciding vote will (probably) be some time early next year, when Parliament will be asked to give its consent to the agreement. If we get a No vote then, the agreement will be scrapped. The vote today was a reminder that we will have to continue working hard to get more information on the effects of ACTA so that the European Parliament can make an informed decision in the final consent vote.

Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) is an agreement that protects our citizens, our creators, our artists and our businesses, and that is why I support it. Indeed, it helps clarify the means of redress available in the event of flagrant breaches of intellectual property rights in one of the countries party to the agreement. The Commission has been transparent, ACTA cannot go beyond the *acquis communautaire*, cannot exceed any of the measures taken within the framework of the European directives, and cannot under any circumstances violate fundamental rights. It has been negotiated outside the traditional international institutions (the World Trade Organisation and so on) because China and India opposed any agreement. Finally, ACTA is an open agreement, and all those States that wish to participate freely in it can join with us, so that together we can provide legal, and also physical, protection to our fellow citizens against the damage caused by counterfeiting. I therefore voted for this motion for a resolution.

Olle Schmidt (ALDE), *in writing.* – (SV) The European Parliament has expressed its opinion on the ACTA agreement on numerous occasions. For example, I voted in favour of Parliament's motion for a resolution in March 2010 with regard to the lack of public scrutiny and transparency in the negotiations and I have signed Parliament's written declaration concerning ACTA. At that time, the Commission deserved criticism, as it does now, for the lack of transparency in the negotiations for both Members of this Parliament and for the citizens of Europe. I think that, as things currently stand, Parliament's previous opinions are adequate, and I voted against all of the proposals in the resolution. It is important that Parliament takes its responsibility for international agreements very seriously. The Commission negotiates and signs the agreements. Parliament has the right to be fully and immediately informed during the process and, after the Commission has signed the agreement, it has the right to approve or reject it. It is reasonable for Parliament to make its position clear, which we have done in many ways, to ensure that the Commission does not negotiate agreements that lack Parliament's support. The joint motion for a resolution required the Commission to present a number of time-consuming analyses before it was to sign the agreement, which would run the risk of creating a situation in which other parties would start to doubt whether Europe really is a serious party with which to conclude international trade agreements. This would damage Europe's chance of participating in negotiations on international free trade agreements in the future.

Bogusław Sonik (PPE), *in writing.* – (PL) I endorsed the European Parliament motion for a resolution on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), because I think that as part of the fight against piracy it is necessary to establish common principles for the enforcement of intellectual property rights. The problem of the counterfeiting of goods and the unauthorised use of other people's intellectual property is still widespread. It is particularly difficult in the case of intangible property, such as the copyright to musical and literary works and patents. ACTA will be a good tool for establishing a common legal platform whose objective will be to fight counterfeiting and piracy.

Thomas Ulmer (PPE), *in writing.* – (DE) I am very pleased that the report by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and the European Conservatives and Reformists has been adopted. As a result, the poisoned, demagogic work of the opposition did not have a chance. Congratulations to the authors, our coordinator, Mr Caspary, and the whole group for showing unity here on this important matter.

Dominique Vlasto (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) I voted in favour of my group's motion for a resolution because the fight against counterfeiting is crucial and must be worldwide to

be effective. Counterfeiting is a growing parallel economy and one that allows for large-scale money laundering. Furthermore, our industries, already penalised in export terms by the undervaluation of the yuan and the weakness of the dollar, cannot in addition tolerate seeing counterfeits produced outside the EU unfairly compete with their products on the internal market. This globally organised theft has a serious effect on creativity and innovation and disastrous consequences for our jobs and for the safety of misled consumers. Our development model, focused as it is on the knowledge economy, requires the protection, at international level, of the fundamental right that is intellectual property. This vote henceforth opens the way to the ratification of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement, which will make it easier to bring legal appeals where intellectual property rights have been infringed in one of the signatory countries. In this way, we are laying the foundations of a multilateral strategy which will protect that which makes our economic development dynamic: our inventions, our brands and our artistic works.

10. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes

(The sitting was suspended at 13:20 and resumed at 15:00)

IN THE CHAIR: JERZY BUZEK

President

11. Financial supervision (signing of acts)

President. – Colleagues, let me introduce, in a few words, our Lex signing of the Financial Supervisory Package. This will be done in a few minutes. This package will constitute our financial supervisory activities adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure.

Today we are signing into law a European Systemic Risk Board which will be responsible for the oversight of the financial system within the Union and will contribute to the smooth functioning of the internal market.

Secondly, we are also establishing three other European supervisory authorities to protect the public interest. They will monitor banks, securities and markets, as well as insurance and occupational pensions.

Finally, we are signing an omnibus directive which amends a whole set of 11 directives in order to bring them into line with the European system of financial supervision and the Treaty of Lisbon.

An enormous effort has been made and there has been great cooperation, I found, between the European institutions. The procedure was very fast and effective. Successive presidencies, the Spanish and the Belgian, were very active, and I thank them for their cooperation. The Commission was very active and cooperation was very close. To the Members of the European Parliament, staying in this Chamber while we go and sign, and to the Commissioner I say: it is a great deal. I thank the Commission, which was so active all the time in the preparatory meetings and all the discussions, for its engagement.

But our work of course is not finished. The economic governance package we are shortly debating will be very important as well. We know well that it is under way in our legislative procedure and we hope we will be ready as quickly as possible.

What can I say in conclusion? The whole package which we are signing today will start to apply in the European Union from 1 January 2011, so very soon. This is very important information for all of us, for the markets and for our citizens, because it is intended to help our citizens. We shall now go and sign the legislative package.

(The President signs the acts, together with Olivier Chastel (President-in-Office of the Council), Michel Barnier (Member of the Commission), José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil (rapporteur), Sylvie Goulard (rapporteur), Antolín Sánchez Presedo (rapporteur) and Peter Skinner (rapporteur))

IN THE CHAIR: GIANNI PITTELLA

Vice-President

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

13. A new Energy Strategy for Europe 2011 - 2020 (debate)

President. – The next item is the report by Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska, on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, on ‘Towards a new Energy Strategy for Europe 2011-2020’ (2006/2212(INI)) (A7-0313/2010).

Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, *rapporteur.* – (PL) Mr President, Commissioner, recently, we have talked a lot about the institutional changes which have resulted from the Treaty of Lisbon. These include the External Action Service and the procedures for work on the budget, but the Treaty of Lisbon also has reference to Union policies. Today, we are debating the first post-Lisbon energy strategy, which the Commission has prepared for the years 2011-2020.

It should be emphasised that both the Commission’s strategy and Parliament’s report reflect the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon – what it says about energy solidarity and its concern for energy security and supply. The Commission’s strategy and Parliament’s report also lay emphasis on strengthening energy policy and making it more European in character. We can achieve this by undertaking certain measures.

Firstly, we must speedily implement current European energy legislation in the Member States. Therefore, we fully support the Commission in adopting tough measures against governments and businesses which neglect to take action in this area. Secondly, for our common objectives to be achieved, the common energy market has to work well. This also concerns the need to build a renewable energy market in Europe. In order to achieve our objectives, it is essential, therefore, to extend and modernise the European and cross-border energy infrastructure. This is often opposed by monopolies and the governments which protect them. However, without a Europe-wide network, key objectives of the European Union will not be achieved.

There are two main obstacles to be overcome, here: administration and finance. On questions of administration, we need above all to establish clear priorities and rules for the selection of key projects. Without these criteria and without clear rules, project selection will cause much conflict and discord, and will give rise to suspicion instead of hope. At national level, however, regulatory measures are essential, particularly in the context of cross-border projects.

Let us move, now, to the most important problem – the financing of infrastructure. We know what tensions currently accompany the approval of next year’s budget, but even

greater tensions are going to affect the Financial Framework after 2013. However, the expenditures which we plan must reflect the policy objectives of the European Union, by which I mean the energy security of the citizens. We are also going to have to find new ways to attract investment from businesses and banks. We talk about this in the report.

Energy policy is, today, increasingly related to the foreign policy of the European Union. Our relations with external energy partners should be shaped by the principles of Europe's internal market. Foreign businesses entering the European market must operate in a transparent way and in accordance with the law, and must be managed under transparent agreements. This concerns both pipelines which will arise in the future as well as those which are currently under construction.

Commissioner, I value the help you have given Poland in our negotiations with Russia on the Yamal gas pipeline. I would like, however, to see similar action in the case of other pipelines, including Nord Stream. I would like to stress that transparency must apply to all current and future projects, and not only to some of them.

In summary, Mr President, the Union needs a long-term vision for energy policy. We need a European energy community. If the Commission wants to accelerate action on the part of businesses and Member States, then it, too, must be credible and really bring this very good strategy, and also an infrastructure package, into force. In the future, the European Parliament is going to want to monitor implementation of the strategy, because it is meant to have a real influence on the situation, and not just be an expression of our wishful thinking.

Finally, something which is very important is the attitude of the Member States to the objectives contained in the European Commission's strategy and in my report. Will they be ready to curb national interests in favour of the common, European good? Will they oppose the activity of large interest groups and take into account the security and good of consumers? We, as Members of the European Parliament, insist on this. I congratulate you, Commissioner, on the energy strategy for the next 10 years.

Günther Oettinger, *Member of the Commission.* – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to start by saying that I am impressed by the number and quality of your ideas, critical comments and constructive contributions in respect of what was presented by the Commission as a draft Energy Strategy for 2011 to 2020. I would like to thank Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska for her presentation, for bringing together the contributions from her fellow Members in an intelligent way and for the establishment of priorities, which is something that I personally feel is important. We will be pleased to include your report in our work in the coming weeks, as the next few weeks are going to be very busy as far as energy policy is concerned. The Energy Council on 3 December, followed by the unique opportunity for the Heads of State or Government to address the issue of energy on 4 February, will provide impetus for our common goals and for the Europeanisation of energy policy. As far as I am concerned, Parliament is a crucial partner in this.

The position we are starting from could be described as extremely difficult. We have a single market that is not yet complete. For 12 years it has been the law for electricity and gas, but it has not yet become reality. We have more sub-markets and regional borders, and we must do everything we can to ensure that in the next five years the single market can also be implemented for industry and consumers with the goal of greater competition and transparency.

Secondly, we have a patent lack of infrastructure. If you look at the foundations that exist in the single market for other products, goods and services – roads, railways, airways, airports, the digital world, waterways – you can see that we are still a long way from what we need in terms of infrastructure for the transport of energy, in particular gas and electricity, in order to meet our European energy policy objectives, namely to enhance the security of supply, solidarity, competition and consumer interests. We need to make up some ground in the next two decades in terms of what has been developed in the last two centuries in the case of road and rail and in the last ten years in the case of the digital world. This has to do with acceptance by the people and transparency. We need transparency in order to achieve greater acceptance for the development of infrastructure for electricity and gas, and we need the appropriate financial resources, which have to be provided primarily by consumers via energy prices, but which, where there are European interests involved, are also a public responsibility of the European budget.

Thirdly, we have a largely untapped potential in the area of energy efficiency. Anyone who, like us, is dependent on imports and at the same time wants to make progress in terms of sustainability, climate protection and environmental protection must oppose energy wastage and lead the way with targeted energy initiatives, energy saving and increased energy efficiency in the public, industrial and private sectors. Energy efficiency will therefore be the next item on the agenda for both of us. I await with great interest Parliament's own-initiative report, which is close to completion and on the basis of which our strategy for energy efficiency will be presented to the general public, yourselves and the Council next spring.

Another part of our strategy is the issue of affordable energy. The Belgian Presidency rightly points out that electricity in particular may also cause a division in society as a result of the fact that energy is becoming more expensive and therefore no longer accessible to everyone. This means that we must extend the security of supply in our strategy to include the area of affordable energy for industry and jobs and for private households. Research is another important aspect. Europe cannot take care of everything, but energy research can be a point of focus for the European budget over the next few years and for a partnership between the public authorities and the industry carrying out the research.

Then there is the matter of external relations, the external dimension: Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska has already drawn our attention to this. We need a common, coordinated European strategy in our external energy policy where the major interests of Europe are concerned. We are still the largest market for energy in terms of consumption, ahead of China and the United States. If we focus our purchasing power and our infrastructure strategies, we will have authority. If the old principle of 'divide and rule' comes into play, others will find it easier to oppose us. We do not want that to happen. With that in mind, I would like to thank you for your diverse and intelligent contributions and your report. It will guide me in my continuing work on our strategy, which we will subsequently put to the European Council.

(Applause)

Pilar del Castillo Vera, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (ES) Mr President, Commissioner, I would like to start by congratulating the rapporteur, who has done an excellent job. Her report is, of course, as ambitious as it is extensive, and I must say that it is the result of the tough and successful negotiations that resulted in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopting it practically unanimously.

Continuing with this subject, I would like to point out something of which we are all aware, but which there is no harm in saying: the energy situation in Europe is not exactly an optimum one. Not only are we increasingly dependent on energy imports obtained from outside Europe, but we are also having to deal with the huge investments needed in our energy infrastructures at a time when Europe is still suffering the consequences of the crisis. This is all in the context of not yet having managed to apply our own energy legislation.

Now in this parliamentary term we have an instrument that was not available in the previous one. The Treaty of Lisbon not only provides a series of clear objectives such as the internal energy market, security of supply, energy efficiency and promoting energy networks, but it also gives the European Union a legal framework and a sound legal basis – Article 194 – for acting in the field of energy policy.

In this new context in which we are having this debate, I ask all my fellow Members to support this report, which proposes a series of measures aimed at guaranteeing energy supply and full implementation of the existing legislation and programmes. It also stresses the need to invest in research, promotes the development of pan-European energy grids and gives the creation of the internal energy market the priority it deserves.

Thank you very much, and I ask you all to support this report tomorrow.

Marita Ulvskog, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (SV) Mr President, I would like to thank the rapporteur, Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska, for her excellent and open cooperation. To me as a Social Democrat, it was important to work to achieve an energy policy and energy supply strategy that has a clear consumer perspective and which also provides transparency on the energy trading market and ensures that the climate crisis has consequences for our decisions on the conversion to renewable, sustainable and safe energy sources and energy systems. In this regard, we have also achieved a certain amount of success, which I am pleased about. The wording concerning consumers' rights has been improved and made clearer and, just as the Commissioner says, so has that concerning the right to purchase energy at sensible prices so that households can afford it. Something must be done to tackle energy poverty. The wording concerning the issue of the climate has also been made clearer, even if there still remains a great deal to do in this regard.

I also think it is important that the Member States' responsibility for the energy mix, for example, is clearly indicated in the strategy. The biggest disappointment is that the report does not contain any binding targets for energy saving and increasing efficiency – that is a shame. The Member States will probably not achieve the 20% target, which is a very big failure by our standards, because saving energy is one of the best ways of reducing our dependence on imports, strengthening our competitiveness and creating jobs. We will come back to this issue in Parliament in a different context and then we hope to receive strong support from the whole of this Chamber as well as from the Commission.

Jens Rohde, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, first of all, let me thank and congratulate Ms Kolarska-Bobinska for an excellent report and then let me start with a little story from the real world. Ten years ago, China did not produce one single windmill; today, China houses one of the world's top ten wind-energy companies. In two years, they expect to have two companies in the top five. Ten years ago, there was nothing. Today, China represents 50% of global windmill production. China is moving and they move fast.

In this light, I am sorry to say, the Commission's new energy strategy is discouraging in its lack of ambition for a greener future. We need an ambitious energy strategy for Europe,

not only in a COP-16 resolution that nobody reads anyway. We need to implement ambitious, concrete policy targets in Europe. 'When the time is right we can get ambitious' seems to be the strategy of the Council and Commission. Well, the time is right and we cannot sit back and relax and wait for some grand international binding agreement before we act.

For an energy strategy to deliver on climate, on growth, on jobs, we need a much more ambitious and market-based approach so that we can use the market mechanism to our advantage. It is up to ourselves to create a drive in the market, to show the pioneers where we want to go so that they can take us there. That is why ALDE is calling for the EU to move to a 30% CO₂ reduction target. The carbon market, the main mechanism for our CO₂ reductions and green investments, does not work. It is flooded with quotas and the price is too low, so there are no incentives to invest in green technologies. We believe that the EU needs to make this move for the sake of our economic growth, climate and energy security. Come on Europe, come on Commission; let's walk the talk.

(Applause)

Claude Turmes, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, I would firstly like to give my thanks, and those of my group, for the work achieved by Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, as well as by all the shadows. It was probably not easy to get us all together – like herding sheep – but you did.

My first message is, 'implement, implement, implement'. We do not need a new energy policy. We have to implement the climate package, the third internal market package and the security of gas supply. Then we have to add targeted policies to that. You mentioned energy efficiency. That is crucial and we await Mr Bendtsen's report, which will go into more detail on that.

The second concerns the internal market. Commissioner, I think you have done an excellent job on the infrastructure package, but I hope there will be no relaxation, in a certain sense, on competition policy. We have a good record over the last five years in going against market domination and this must be a key focus of our European energy policy.

Regarding renewables, our report is much more outspoken and your EU strategy and the Energy 2020 strategy are very vague. Jens Rohde is right. Renewables will make up 70% of all power investments in Europe over the next ten years. Renewable technology is our biggest export market in all energy technologies. I do not think that it sends the right message to dilute renewables in the EU 2020 strategy. We would need a specific chapter for what will be the biggest investments of the next ten years.

In our report we are also much more cautious about reopening the discussion about national fit-in systems and other systems. Governments want national support schemes and we should not confuse this debate by reopening that one.

Gas will be important, as will oil in the future. I have two concrete questions for you. One is to ask how you see the gas market in the power sector for the next decade. Secondly, at your press conference you were very clear about peak oil and also the risk of reaching USD 200 a barrel, so how does this link in with the transport policy at Commission level?

Konrad Szymański, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – *(PL)* Mr President, I would, of course, like to add my voice to the thanks being expressed to the rapporteur for her very good cooperation in the preparation of this very difficult report. The report emphasises all the

most important challenges facing European energy policy. I think that, above all, the Union has to deal with the anti-market clauses in agreements with third countries. This is one of the biggest obstacles.

In particular, Russia imposes restrictions in access to gas pipelines, and also bans re-exporting, restricting the property rights of European businesses in relation to gas which has already been purchased. This is what happened in the case of the Polish contract with which the Commissioner is familiar. The purpose of Russian policy is to maintain a monopoly on the gas market for as long as possible. The Gazprom monopoly in Central Europe is being maintained at the cost of the common market, at the cost of competition and, finally, at the cost of consumers' rights. In such cases, the Union must react very decisively, and must not exclude the diplomatic factor and the role of the High Representative for Foreign Policy. Otherwise, our reaction will simply be unbalanced.

Union diplomacy in general should devote more attention to issues related to raw materials. This is a subject which is growing in significance and is a major challenge for our services, taking into account competences in the area of EU trade policy. In our energy policy, we should most certainly give full support to modern technologies, liquefied gas installations, geothermal energy and shale gas. Until we have ensured security and diversity of gas supply, we cannot allow ourselves to abandon coal too suddenly. Otherwise, we will only increase our dependence on gas, particularly in Central Europe, where coal still plays an extremely important role.

There is one final matter: I think a certain institutional problem should be noted. All the matters about which Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska has spoken in her report received very inadequate attention in the European Commission communication, which evidently was drafted without taking account of Parliament's position. This is a very bad coincidence – this process has gone very badly. I do not think we should act like this.

Niki Tzavela, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – (EL) Mr President, I should like to congratulate Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska on her excellent and very hard work. As we have heard a lot of ambitious targets here – and my honourable friend Mr Turmes referred repeatedly to application – I think we should all congratulate the Commission on the recent communication which it issued in November on energy strategy issues. This is the first realistic strategy we have seen. The Commission refers specifically and clearly to the difficulties; it defines them and suggests what the difficulties are and where there is a margin for us to implement the targets we have set.

Commissioner, as you have put a realistic strategic energy policy before us, and I truly welcome that, I should like to propose a practical and realistic solution to the south stream. We have two small pipelines: the ITGI and the TAP. They are ready, they are up to speed. You can move forward. Nabucco is big and it is therefore complicated and there may be delays. Move forward, therefore, with the two small pipelines.

Dimitar Stoyanov (NI). – (BG) Mr President, I wish to voice my support for the report which has been compiled, especially for the last part of it, which calls on citizens' interests to take precedence over political arguments.

The reason is that there is a very simple example of this. Two major projects are currently being developed: South Stream and Nabucco. There are some radical factions in Bulgaria saying that these projects are mutually incompatible. It is almost a case of having either

South Stream or Nabucco. I believe that the competition between both these projects is the only possible way of ensuring secure, cheap energy for Europe's citizens.

Another extremely important issue, which must not be overlooked in any way, is nuclear energy and its development in relation to the politicisation of this issue. The reason for raising this is because the decision to shut down the reactors at the Kozloduy power plant in Bulgaria was political. Instead of generating billions of euros from them, some of which could even be included in the EU budget, Member States now have to pay compensation due to the political decision made to shut down these reactors.

Apart from this, we have been noticing recently a mood of hysteria surrounding the issue of nuclear power plants. I would like to urge you for us to counter those activist organisations adopting impartial measures in order to oppose this issue; most of all because they do not offer any alternative. Nuclear energy is actually the option which can also ensure secure, cheap energy.

Herbert Reul (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, Mr Oettinger, ladies and gentlemen, I, too, would like to thank Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska for her very constructive and intensive work. Since I am expressing my thanks, I also support the report, in contrast to some of my fellow Members who are praising the report but will attempt, by means of some key amendments, to make radical changes to some of the passages tomorrow. I would therefore like to address the demand that has been made many times for us to be more ambitious. I am not sure whether what has been stated in this regard is ambitious or whether it is excessive.

I am very grateful to Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska for presenting a realistic policy, because that is what is called for in times of economic and financial crisis. We do not need to unfold new dreams, but to table something that will make it possible for us in one, two, three or four years' time to demonstrate that we have achieved it.

I am very grateful to her for mentioning the importance of the energy mix and the responsibility of the Member States, which will then decide themselves what they want. We will not insist that there is only one perspective and that is renewable energies. The perspective includes renewable energies, coal, oil, gas and nuclear energy and also nuclear fusion. I would be very pleased if everything that Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska has written and that has received the support of a large majority is actually retained.

She addressed the issue of financial responsibility, the need to develop and to establish infrastructure and not to simply demand this and say that the money must come from somewhere. She also pointed to the responsibility of enterprises.

This brings us to the single market. In this regard, we do not need to call for a new package and new legislation. Rather, we need to demand implementation and a review and to be realistic so that the standards we have established are also put into practice. Last but not least, we must not simply slap new things on top and then in the end be surprised when energy prices are so high that citizens can no longer pay them. Is it ambitious or is it irresponsible to simply pile on new things, increase costs and then complain about energy poverty among citizens?

Sometimes the debate focuses solely on industry, but it will hit citizens with full effect in the next few months and years. In some debates, I would like us to consider at the start what the end result will be.

Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D). – (ES) Mr President, Commissioner, first of all, congratulations to Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska and also to the shadow rapporteur from my group, Mrs Ulvskog and the other rapporteurs on their excellent work.

Given its strategic nature, this is an extensive report, which tackles the different aspects of EU energy policy in detail by constructing the strategy on the basis of the considerable quantity of legislation that we have adopted in recent years. In the short time that I have I would like to highlight two very important aspects of this report: interconnections and taxation.

At this point we now very urgently need to resolutely apply the legislative and financial mechanisms that we have at our disposal in order to strengthen the weak links in the trans-European energy networks within the correct time frame, which is very important.

With regard to taxation, I believe that in order to be developed to market levels, efficiency, saving energy and renewable energy not only need specific taxation measures, but also tax incentives in the form of the appropriate deductions or exemptions.

Lena Ek (ALDE). – Mr President, we have enormous problems with the energy market and the grid in Europe, not to mention that energy production is mainly based on fossil sources. If someone says implementation, implementation, implementation, I would say focus, focus, focus, and I would mention some examples.

We still lack 50% of financing for the SET-Plan. We have budget negotiations that go in a totally different direction from this energy strategy. We had to fight – excuse me, I do not want to be taken out of the Chamber – like hell for the EERP, energy efficiency and alternative fuels, and in research we have the same problem.

The same week as we are discussing what is, I admit, in part a good strategy, Commissioner, we are voting on a coal subsidy report that says that Spain subsidises coal in an uncompetitive coal market to the tune of EUR 50 000 per job, whilst the average is EUR 17 000 per job. How can we be competitive and modern if we take decisions like this? It undermines the whole strategy.

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – (SK) Mr President, experience from previous years, when the breakdown in gas supplies from Ukraine and widespread electricity blackouts in a number of EU countries proved that our energy system lacks the reserves necessary to deal with crisis situations, has shown us that any solution will require extensive investment. Therefore, when deciding on the necessary changes, we will have to proceed in a coordinated and careful manner in order to make the most efficient use of the resources invested.

The submitted report responds to this state of affairs in a very comprehensive way, taking account of practically all the issues that will have to be addressed in order to resolve our energy problems. This includes everything from legislative bases and distribution of powers through to trading rules, network modernisation and financing.

As well as ensuring energy security and support for research and development, the need for greater energy efficiency and the use of renewables has not been forgotten. With its comprehensive and balanced approach, this report is, in my opinion, a good starting point for further work on improving the European energy system.

Bendt Bendtsen (PPE). – (DA) Mr President, first of all, I would like to thank the rapporteur for a splendid piece of work and a well-balanced report. There is no doubt that there is a rapidly increasing need for a new energy strategy for Europe, and European

enterprises are in no doubt about that either. We are becoming more and more dependent on gas from Russia and oil from the Middle East. The energy strategy has become both part of Europe's foreign and security policy and a question of security of supply. Our decisions in Europe are crucial for our competitiveness. There is a need for huge investment in the future to enable us to attain a complete and cohesive internal market, and there is also a need for massive investments in energy efficiency. A penny saved is a penny gained. Energy efficiency is also the cheapest way of reducing CO₂ emissions.

I would like to thank Commissioner Öttinger for his comments today regarding energy efficiency. As far as energy efficiency is concerned – irrespective of whether or not the targets are binding – I am happy with the Commission's communication, which lists a large number of areas where we can do more. I am also open to giving the Commission more power to reject the national action plans if they are not adequate for achieving our 20% objective by 2020.

Moreover, the United States and China are investing heavily in areas that will increase energy efficiency. Everyone is fully aware that the price of energy will increase in future, and Europe is currently suffering from a lack of competitiveness in a global world. By means of sound investments in energy efficiency, infrastructure, smart networks and so on, we therefore need to give our enterprises the opportunity to achieve greater competitiveness. An additional benefit will be new jobs and innovative enterprises in a Europe that is currently losing thousands of jobs.

Ivari Padar (S&D). – (ET) Mr President, I congratulate the rapporteur and colleagues on this successful report. The creation of a pan-European energy market is in the interests of all Europeans. In opening up energy markets, however, we have ignored the issues of market transparency and comprehensiveness.

I am worried about the fact that, while hundreds of billions of euros' worth of electricity, gas and CO₂ emissions quotas are changing hands on the markets, there is a clear supervisory and legislative gap. I therefore welcome the European Commission's initiative to fill the gap. I hope that the Commission's communication, shortly to be adopted, will be centred on consumer protection and define a clear pan-European regulatory framework which establishes unequivocal rules and definitions in order to avoid insider dealing, market manipulation and to increase market liquidity.

I believe that ACER, the European Union's energy market regulator set up by the third internal market package, must eventually carry out supervision of electricity, gas and emissions trading, and I suggest that supervision of these three markets should be brought under the aegis of a single regulator in the Member States.

Fiona Hall (ALDE). – Mr President, I am glad the Commission's 2020 Energy Strategy refers to the ongoing review concerning the impact of indirect land use change. It is vital the Commission meets its obligation to come forward with a proposal on this by the end of this year, both to allay widespread public concern that some biofuels currently on the market may not be producing a net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and also for the sake of industry which is developing innovative processes whose added value deserves to be recognised.

On that question of energy certainty, I would also ask the Commission to rethink its comments on the harmonisation of national support schemes for renewables. I am all for action at a European level when it adds value, but Member States have only recently brought

out their National Renewable Energy Action Plans and are working to implement them; this would be harmonisation too far.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE). – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner, I would like to begin by congratulating the rapporteur on her excellent work on this report. The energy sector is the driving force behind economic growth. Europe has had a strategy for energy and combating climate change since 2008. Implementing this strategy is crucial, but the Treaty of Lisbon allows us to go further, opening the way to create a true energy community within Europe.

We need to deepen the internal energy market, build and forge links between networks, ensure solidarity on energy and put the consumer at the centre of our concerns. There is a need to increase public funding and the development of tools and programmes to encourage energy efficiency. Scientific research and technology play a key role in achieving these objectives.

In view of this, I welcome the launch of various European industrial initiatives under the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan and I call upon the Commission to put the rest of the measures in this plan into practice. The eighth framework programme should also make research and the development of innovative technologies its priority in the field of energy. It is therefore vital that there is adequate funding to support clean and sustainable technologies. This is the only way that we will be able to maintain the competitiveness of our industry, promote economic growth and create jobs.

Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D). – (NL) Mr President, the word we have heard most so far here today is 'strategy'; and rightly so. We welcome the Commission's strategy, therefore. Nevertheless, we find it a little disappointing, Commissioner, as a good strategy entails carrying out a sound assessment – an assessment of the supply problems and, in particular, of the ecological problems and also the social problems – and it is on the basis of this strategy that we set priorities. I attach very great importance to the word 'priority', as that means putting things in rank order. Energy efficiency is top of this rank order. You have mentioned this, but why, if we consider energy efficiency so important, is it so hard to draw up objectives that we mean to enforce in our Member States? This is crucial. We know that it works, and it is a way to get where we need to go. Therefore, I should like to ask the Commissioner to actually take up this priority, and also to really present it in your preparations for the major summit in February.

Romana Jordan Cizelj (PPE). – (SL) Mr President, Commissioner, today we are deciding the course of energy development up to the year 2020, but this period is much too short. It takes many years to get energy facilities up and running. The construction of grids and electric power plants takes its share of time too. The service life of such constructions is several decades. That is why investors need fairly stable political guidelines for a much longer period. If we want to meet our climate change and energy sustainability targets, we must develop a policy framework for much further in the future. We need a strategy document for energy development until at least 2050.

Nuclear energy is increasingly becoming one of the energy sources of the future and I would therefore highlight three tasks that I see facing us at European level in that regard. First of all, we need to take legislative action to ensure safe decommissioning of nuclear power plants and disposal of radioactive waste in accordance with the 'polluter pays' principle.

Secondly, we must ensure, with effective and transparent procedures, that new electric power plants are constructed in accordance with the highest possible safety standards. We can do that by introducing minimum standards for the approval and confirmation of designs of new nuclear power plants. Moreover, we must consider licensing new types of nuclear power plants at European level. That would help us take advantage of combined knowledge and help countries which are only now introducing nuclear energy and those with, in effect, relatively small administrative bodies.

Thirdly, we need to make the decision-making process on nuclear issues more democratic. Nuclear energy is only one of many potential sources of energy and, therefore, decision-making procedures must be the same as those for coal, renewables, gas and oil. The European Parliament must be given codecision powers. We do not need to revisit the Euratom Treaty as this could be done through an inter-institutional agreement.

Adam Gierek (S&D). – (PL) Mr President, energy makes up around 40% of the costs of production, while labour accounts for barely 15%, but obtaining the raw materials for the generation of energy itself requires energy. Therefore, the competitiveness of the economy is going to depend upon energy. The dogma concerning the effect on the global climate and promotion of what is being called a ‘carbon-free’ economy is nonsense. Getting bogged down in binding carbon targets is an example of proposals which are socially and economically irresponsible, just like the CCS technology which has been imposed on coal-fired power stations – but why not on other fuels? Why is the driving force of progress not effectiveness?

I must issue a warning about social discontent in relation to the creation of energy poverty. In the new Member States, energy accounts for around 40% of family expenditure. I must also issue a warning about the loss of energy security due to legislation which has been imposed, and in particular the Climate and Energy Package. One more thing – why can the Member States not decide for themselves about how to reduce their own CO₂ emissions, as they can decide about their energy mix?

Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE). – (NL) Mr President, the new Treaty of Lisbon has made energy the shared responsibility of the EU and the Member States. The Second Energy Package, which actually forms the basis for this strategy, clearly merits additions, and the report provides a good analysis in this regard. Yet the Member States, and their private and public parties, must get on board. The operational programmes between and within Member States are becoming increasingly important. Sufficient percentage targets have been laid down, for both the climate and energy. There is no need for new supplementary binding targets. As has already been said, it is implementation that counts, carrying citizens – consumers – with us. It may also be so that the Commission must improve its assessment of these national programmes, and that our resources, possibly Eurobonds, must be made dependent on this. There is still a gap between words and deeds. The first of two focal points is energy efficiency: a great opportunity. This contributes to the competitiveness of our companies and also to employment – in the installation and construction sectors, for example. Take a look at your own country, too: tens of thousands of jobs have been created in Germany as a result. The second focal point is – yes, you said it – the infrastructure connecting countries and within countries, and smart grids. This is where the Eurobonds are necessary. I have a question for the Commissioner: will progress be made towards these Eurobonds in December? We are talking about new resources – we need money – and I should like you to tell us whether you will indeed be raising money by these means? Action: that is what is needed.

Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D). – (RO) Mr President, the European Union's energy strategy must focus on energy efficiency, reducing the consumption of primary energy and energy poverty, as well as on promoting energy from renewable sources and the Union's energy security. However, it is absolutely imperative for the Union's energy strategy also to be linked to industrial policy, transport policy, research and innovation policy, as well as the policy for combating climate change.

We call on the Commission and Member States to develop the financial and fiscal instruments required for energy efficiency, especially in the construction sector, and to make energy efficiency and the smart energy infrastructure a priority in the future Multiannual Financial Framework.

The Union must attach greater importance to the Eastern Partnership, especially to the Black Sea region, which is of particular geopolitical significance for energy security and diversification of the Union's energy supply routes.

We also call on the Commission and Member States to continue the European Southern Gas Corridor project, especially the Nabucco project, which could significantly increase energy supply security.

Alajos Mészáros (PPE). – (HU) Mr President, both Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska and Commissioner Oettinger deserve praise for this work, which is indeed an important effort. As a result of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union's energy strategy will be built on four new pillars: the single energy market, security of supply, energy efficiency and the interconnection of European energy networks.

When mapping out our new energy strategy, we must bear in mind a few challenges. While our fossil fuel supplies are gradually diminishing, we can increase available supplies by finding new raw material exploration sites and by research and development efforts. Europe's dependency on energy increases proportionally with the increase in its population. By 2030, Europe will be forced to secure 65% of its energy imports from non-EU sources. For natural gas supplies this figure may reach 80%. We must aim to further diversify transport routes and acquisition sources. The refurbishment of power stations currently in operation may also be of key significance.

It is not sufficient to devote significant sums to decommissioning outdated power stations – we must also pay attention to maintaining them. Member States must carry out an overarching review of their stance on nuclear energy. We must continue our efforts in the area of nuclear energy development, otherwise we will not be able to meet our climate change targets. I recommend that we exercise caution in this area, to ensure that our ambitious plans do not pose a threat to our industrial and commercial competitiveness. In this sense, we see a balanced report containing commitments that can be realistically met, which is why I strongly support it.

Mario Pirillo (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, guaranteeing sustainable, safe and accessible energy surely represents one of the major challenges for Europe over the coming years.

The European Union's policy objectives require a series of actions which cannot be ignored. The full realisation of the internal energy market is an objective that can only be achieved if the current legislation relating to the energy package is applied by all Member States.

I believe that in order to fully meet the objectives of the strategy, we cannot flinch from investing in modern and intelligent infrastructure, particularly in the research and use of renewable energies. These very investments not only represent the most economically beneficial solution for reducing the EU's energy dependence, but will also contribute to combating climate change.

IN THE CHAIR: STAVROS LAMBRINIDIS

Vice-President

Hannes Swoboda (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs and to you, Mr Oettinger, because what you have presented in the last few days and weeks is crucial for the development of the European Union. However, like Mrs Van Brempt, Mr Turmes and others, I am of the opinion that we need to go a step further, because – if I may say so – a sensible, environmentally sound energy policy is almost like a launch vehicle for green growth and green jobs.

We discussed this again yesterday with the President of the Commission. Unfortunately, very little has been said about this today. Nevertheless, we must take these extra steps. Of course, a lot of what is involved in environment-oriented energy policy is still more expensive. However, if we consider the environmental benefit, and what it means for European industry to play a leading role, we see that it is also very important for jobs.

Mr Reul is right: we need many energy sources. Perhaps not all of them – in that respect our opinions differ on many points. However, we need to know the direction in which energy efficiency, energy saving and renewable energies are going. These are the engines of a future-oriented European economy.

Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE). – (RO) Mr President, the energy issue is a major priority which cannot afford to be deferred. It is important for the future 2011-2020 action plan to make a significant contribution to strengthening the European Union's common policy.

We require close cooperation, especially in the area of energy infrastructure, as well as appropriate EU funding. I think that, apart from obtaining public and EU funding, in order to develop an EU strategic infrastructure which will involve expanding and integrating all the local, regional and European energy markets, we must focus greater attention on the private sector and investments from there.

I think that a good way to achieve this is to promote public-private partnerships by offering the necessary political and administrative support, a certain level of funding and some public guarantees. This will help us successfully obtain the funding which is so vital to the future of any energy policy.

Arturs Krišjānis Kariņš (PPE). – (LV) Mr President, Commissioner, today I should like to talk briefly about the welfare of our citizens and about islands. Usually, we have pleasant thoughts of islands, we like to go there – the sun, the warmth. The isolation of the southern islands even benefits the welfare of the islanders, since it attracts tourists, but when it comes to energy, isolation or island status is particularly harmful to the population. This is precisely what is not needed. Why? Isolation in the field of energy means some monopoly's normal predominance in this market, and for the people concerned that in turn means both uncertain supply and high prices. This report contains the solution. Infrastructure, infrastructure, infrastructure. Let us build interconnections in the European Union, to

bring all of us together, so that our citizens can enjoy decent prices and security of supply. Thank you.

Francesco De Angelis (S&D). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to express my appreciation for this resolution, which is an excellent piece of work in four respects.

Firstly, it reasserts that energy efficiency and energy saving are economically advantageous priorities to reduce Europe's energy dependence and combat climate change. Secondly, it emphasises intelligent infrastructure. Thirdly, it urges us to fully implement current European legislation. Fourthly, it strives to bring about an energy policy with a robust and consistent international dimension.

Finally, I should like to underline the importance of energy security and investment in research, development and innovation to protect the interests of consumers, businesses and citizens as well as possible.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D). – (LT) Mr President, I really believe that all European Union Member States are now experiencing the greatest headache over their energy and first of all I would really like to thank the rapporteur and the shadow rapporteurs for the fact that practically all of us, the representatives of all of the Member States, had the opportunity to offer our own proposals, and thanks to some intelligent compromises, a very good document was born. I also feel that it is not so important to have ambitious plans as it is to have real plans, that is, real infrastructures, interconnectors, a real opportunity for people to choose the energy supplier they will buy energy from, and of course, a real market price. I believe that if we achieve this we will have accomplished a great deal. I feel that in future we also ought to have better control of Member States' desires and interests, because if we are creating a common energy market, those interests must be reconciled. Commissioner, I would also like to thank you for reacting very promptly to the signing of certain agreements and I am grateful that the principle of solidarity is deeply rooted at EU level.

Sonia Alfano (ALDE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I have read the report carefully and I endorse it overall. However, I was left rather puzzled by various references to the future of coal in the European strategy, in particular in paragraph 52, in which the Commission is asked to draw up legal provisions to facilitate the building of coal-fired electric power plants.

Several years ago in the United States, a political and citizens' movement was started which has *de facto* led to a sort of moratorium on the building of coal-fired power plants. As well as CO₂ emissions, this decision is also based on the problem of dealing with the ash, which contains many toxic substances. Therefore, I absolutely do not support the defence of coal-fired power plants and I would note that so called 'clean coal' is, in many cases, more of a slogan than a reality.

I have also heard several fellow Members fiercely defend nuclear energy, in terms of both costs and safety. Unfortunately, whoever says this shows that they do not know what they are talking about. Alternatives exist, they are renewable, they are genuine, and the European Union must plot its path for the coming decade in that direction.

Oreste Rossi (EFD). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, this report offers some very interesting points in that, starting from the basic concept that Europe must provide itself with common energy policies, it carefully analyses both methods and timescales.

Speaking personally at the European Energy Forum, organised by President Buzek, among representatives of the 27 EU Member States and the European Parliament, I expressed a favourable opinion on a common energy plan that would allow for equal conditions of access to energy for private individuals and businesses, hence eliminating today's sometimes notable cost differences.

I am sorry that the now inevitable references to the European Union's responsibility in combating climate change have been inserted in such a good report. There are specific documents related to that subject and I find it redundant that we continue to add references to it in order to satisfy certain environmental extremists.

As far as we are concerned, a second commitment period to the Kyoto Protocol can only happen in a global context, involving all the main economies with a legally binding agreement.

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE). – (LT) Mr President, I would like to offer my congratulations to the rapporteur and give my thanks to the Commissioner who is considering energy strategy and policy with such goodwill. We have ambitious aims to reduce the climate change process. As far as protection of the environment is concerned, energy can be a partner, but it can also be an enemy. In the European Union we are dependent on fossil fuels, used for energy extraction. With the depletion of the EU's resources, we are increasingly dependent on third countries and so it is not just important to develop renewable energy, but to also invest in research into increasing energy efficiency. In the previous part-session we debated the allocation of additional money for energy under the European Economic Recovery Plan. Perhaps it would also be appropriate to be able to allocate money from other European Union financial mechanisms, earmarked for overall energy efficiency. Renewable energy is important for us not simply because of climate change, but also energy security. The bilateral agreements of some Member States, implementing projects such as 'Nord Stream', causes distrust not just over environmental issues, but also principles of solidarity, and therefore there must be transparency in this area.

Elena Băsescu (PPE). – (RO) Mr President, in my opinion, enhancing the EU's renewable energy potential is one of the report's key elements. This is why I wish to recall that the Dobrogea region in south-eastern Romania will become the largest wind park in Europe in a few years' time. Construction of the 522 turbines will be completed in 2011. This will enable Dobrogea to supply 50% of national energy consumption.

Infrastructure is another key element for an efficient energy market. The EU must choose among those projects which prove their efficiency and economic profitability. The AGRI interconnector, which is one of Romania's main contributions to the development of the energy infrastructure, incurs low costs and offers an alternative.

Diversification of energy supply sources is a must in the oil sector as well. The P8 pipeline is a good example of this. Romania and Serbia have recently resumed the feasibility studies for building the first section of the pipeline between Constanța and Pancevo.

Ioan Enciu (S&D). – (RO) Mr President, diversification of sources, a new energy infrastructure and an increase in the proportion of renewable energy sources are important to the European Union's energy future. At the same time, however, we must not stop using old energy sources either, which can certainly be improved using innovative technologies, according to the possibilities and needs of each Member State.

However, the most important factor in this for me and the citizens whom I represent is that we must retain an affordable price for all consumers, as well as preserve and even create new jobs in this area.

We must not end up in the situation where there will be surplus energy available on the European energy market, because this will not be purchased due to the high prices.

Kyriakos Mavronikolas (S&D). – (EL) Mr President, I would think that, following the Treaty of Lisbon, it goes without saying that the European Parliament will be able to contribute much more to energy policy.

I agree with everything the rapporteur said and I would highlight the fact that, nowadays, energy policy has far more to do, directly and indirectly, with the foreign policy in general both of the Member States and of the Union itself. I would agree that there is a need today for the necessary works, infrastructure works, and that we also need regulations governing how agreements are executed.

Today we are asking for clear contracts, transparency and specific reference to renewable energy sources. However, what we see before us, Commissioner, is the need for a common energy market. That would help the small island states of the Union in particular, so that, in one large market, we can address the major issue of energy with transparency.

Nick Griffin (NI). – Mr President, I should like to say to the Commissioner that the new energy strategy report ignores the elephant in the living room: peak oil. But at least the Commission has at last woken up to this gigantic and immediate threat. The moment one recognises peak oil, the majority of this largely well-meaning report becomes, sadly, incinerator fuel.

The huge energy gap opening up cannot possibly be filled by Mickey Mouse renewables or shale carbons. Coal, nuclear fusion – and in the long term nuclear fusion plus fission – are the only energy sources dense enough to save us as the oil age comes to an end.

Commissioner, now that this has been recognised, can we look forward to a new, serious approach to energy? We must ditch all the nonsense about wind-power grids and global warming and concentrate on real scientific solutions to the peak oil crisis.

Günther Oettinger, *Member of the Commission.* – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we are entering into the debate here, and if I take the points on which your speeches focused, we have a broad energy mix in the European Union, in the Member States and also in Parliament. I have heard talk of everything from 100% renewable energies right up to nuclear fusion, nuclear power and coal. That means that the hot question will be: will we agree on a long-term strategy? Will we get consensus in Europe? If we do, what will the consensus be?

We are currently working on the strategy that comprises the three targets of 20% renewable energies, 20% CO₂ reduction and 20% increase in efficiency. That is the strategy for the new decade. It is right that we need a long-term strategy. The Road Map that we will present to you as a rough draft next spring will provide this. With this Road Map we intend in the next year to consider the next 40 years with you and the Member States and to submit forecasts for energy requirements, the energy mix, environmental targets and the security of supply for four decades. Not an easy undertaking. Imagine for a moment that we were in 1970 before the oil crisis, before the fall of the Wall and with only a few Member States, and we had to use the expertise that we had in 1970 to shed light on 2010 and the current

energy situation. Our estimates would have been completely wrong. Do we know what technical capabilities will emerge in the next 40 years? What new political interests the Member States will have? Nevertheless, I am in favour of the attempt to produce the Road Map 2050.

Then the question of why we need binding CO₂ reduction targets was raised, and why the Member States cannot do this. It is quite simply because that was what was decided. I accept the 20% CO₂ and the 30% if we find other partners worldwide. This is a decision by Parliament, to which you belong, and the Council, and I implement it. If you want something different, let me know. I believe that if there were no binding targets, the Member States would simply not comply with them. If we abandon binding targets, the Member States would do less or nothing at all, particularly in difficult economic times.

The subject of energy efficiency was mentioned. In our strategy we are only creating the headings for this. Details of how this is will be implemented in practice and the instruments, measures and financial corridor will follow in the spring when we will have to present the energy efficiency strategy, which you are currently debating.

There have been questions about the internal market. Please trust me and Mr Almunia. We will ensure full compliance with the second and third internal market packages, we will deal with treaty infringement proceedings and do everything we can to ensure that in the next five years gas and electricity achieve an internal market with competition and transparency. In the last few weeks we have been advising the Member States – the Polish Government in the Jamal case, the Bulgarian Government in the South Stream case and with regard to gas supplies to Bulgaria. In fact, the Member States are not always willing or in a position themselves to ensure compliance with internal market rules in their bilateral agreements. Where our advice is sought we provide it, but the involvement of the Member States is also required. There are also large Member States in which the internal market does not work. One country is not far from here and perhaps it is even the country that we are in right now. Thus, I would ask the Members from France: are you prepared to work with me to create an internal market in France and in other countries? I need your support in this – not at a national level, but at a European level.

In connection with the Southern Corridor, the decision with regard to Nabucco, TAP or ITGI will, I believe, be taken in the first quarter of next year. However, a gas infrastructure requires us to discuss the question of how much gas will we need for heating and electricity conversion in the coming decades? It is currently 500 billion cubic metres per year. Will it be less or will it be more? This will also be addressed in the Road Map 2050.

Mr Rohde mentioned the example of China. In my view, China is always good to use as a comparison, but preferably not as an example to be followed. You are right that there has been a great deal of investment in wind energy in China. That is true, but you failed to mention the fact that China is currently buying up the world's coal and is investing much more in coal. In the last year, China invested more in renewable energies than Germany did, that is true. Nevertheless, the proportion of renewable energies produced in China is falling, because much more is being invested in nuclear power and coal. Moreover, China refers to nuclear power as a form of renewable energy. I do not agree with that. Consequently, a comparison with China is important, but I would seriously advise against holding China up as an example for us to follow in our European work.

Thank you once again. I also need you when it comes to the European budget. Calls have been made for more to be done and for more resources to be provided for research and

infrastructure. I go along with that. I take every euro that you give me, but the budget is decided by the Council and Parliament. On the basis of our good experience with the SET plan, with energy research funding and with the economic recovery plan, I trust that we will produce a good proposal for infrastructure and that you will support it so that, in the next decade, sufficient European funding with added value for appropriate European measures in the areas of infrastructure and research will be provided. With this in mind, we certainly have sufficient opportunity for constructive cooperation.

Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, *rapporteur*. – (PL) Mr President, as can be seen, the subjects of discussion and the opinions expressed in the European Parliament are very varied and different. Therefore, this report is the result of the compromise which we had been seeking. I think it is a very good report, because we have built a consensus.

I would like to express my thanks to the shadow rapporteurs – Mrs Ulvskog, Mr Rohde, Mr Turmes, Mr Szymański and others – for the fact that we have built this consensus in such a nice way. I would also like to thank Mrs Castillo Vera for her cooperation, help and support, Mrs Toth of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) for her help, Mr Hillman and also the Commissioner and staff of the Commission, who answered my numerous questions and responded to my various ideas.

In Brussels, today, a battle is going on between supporters of the idea of intergovernmentalism and those who want to act on the idea of solidarity. Both the European Parliament and the Commission are faced by the necessity to guarantee that solidarity is, however, victorious over individual national interests at future meetings of the European Council. We have worked out a certain consensus. We have a strategy, and, as Mr Turmes has said, in view of this we must implement it, implement it and once again implement it, defending ourselves against various particular interests.

President. – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place at 12 noon tomorrow, Thursday, 25 November.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), *in writing*. – (PT) I believe this new energy strategy to be imperative for putting in place a competitive, sustainable and secure strategy. At a time when Europe finds itself ever more dependent on energy imports, I believe it to be essential that it continues to play its dominant leadership role in energy matters, by focusing on innovation and technology. Making our energy strategy more sustainable will require a continued focus on renewable energy, through the introduction of increased competition within the sector so that we can effectively implement the internal market for energy. That will lead to a reduction in costs and an increase in competitiveness for the economy, and also create wealth and jobs, which are important for a healthy balance of trade. I come from an outermost region, which currently has a level of energy self-sufficiency of around 27%, and aims to achieve 75% by 2012. The Azores have set more ambitious specific targets than the EU, with results that are already recognised at a European level, particularly with regard to geothermal energy, through an ambitious energy policy of partnerships between the region and the best national and international research centres. The Union should look to these examples, and increase its support in the areas of research, innovation and project development.

George Sabin Cutaş (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) It is time for us to talk about a genuine European energy strategy. There are currently gaps in the implementation of EU energy

legislation. The provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon provide the European Union with a sound legal framework for developing an efficient single internal market, which will guarantee supply security, sustainability, interconnection of networks and solidarity. In this context, new Member States, which are much more vulnerable to external disruptions to their energy supply, need the support of the European Union to tackle these challenges.

Furthermore, I would like to urge you to keep the possibility of coal mines being subsidised by Member States, at least until 2018. In a capitalist world the term 'uncompetitive' is synonymous with social scourge. We must take into account the human factor and think about the adverse socio-economic repercussions of closing the coal mines which provide a major source of jobs, before labelling a mine as uncompetitive.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) This report seeks to contribute to a new energy action plan, within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy. In principle, a new plan may prove to be an important initiative provided that the mistakes and shortcomings of previous plans are taken to heart. It is pointless to insist on the very approach and the proposals that have left us lagging behind where we should be.

The strategic shortcomings of European energy policy which should be taken into account include the following points.

Energy policy has been positioned as an appendix to an 'environmental' policy whose ultimate objective is to open up new areas to financial speculation by making greenhouse gas emissions permits profitable. However, the issue of energy merits a tailored approach based on the improvement of specific indicators such as energy intensity or energy deficit.

In the field of energy it is also presumed that by implementing the functioning of markets where private investors operate, everything will be solved as if by magic. Three successive packages of legislation have already been issued, public resources have been spent, and yet we still do not have competitive markets, investment in infrastructure or more accessible energy for consumers. This represents a failure in all aspects of the stated objectives.

The argument that biofuels would bring only environmental benefits and offer major agricultural and industrial development to European countries has collapsed.

András Gyürk (PPE), in writing. – (HU) I am pleased to see that there is an increasingly strong commitment in Europe to realise a single energy market. This is aptly demonstrated by the fact that both the report of Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska and the latest energy strategy and infrastructure priorities of the European Commission are urging structural changes. We are all finally beginning to see that remarkable success requires significant investments, concrete action plans and the removal of administrative burdens. This is the only option for all Member States to achieve the main objectives of the Treaty of Lisbon: the single market, security of supply, energy efficiency and the expansion of renewables.

It is, I believe, a vital step forward that the documents mentioned earlier treat energy development efforts in Central and Eastern Europe as an urgent priority. Last year's gas crisis also made it obvious to Western states that Member States in our region depend heavily on one gas source alone, and that the single market does not function here. Europe has realised that access to alternative gas sources, the creation of the North-South Gas Corridor and the elimination of isolated markets increase regional supply security while also making a significant step towards the achievement of a single market.

At the same time, the strengthening of electricity networks and the regional interconnection of oil pipelines also increase our region's flexibility. The level of commitment, however, cannot stop at creating a strategy alone. I am confident that structural changes supporting the efficient realisation of a single market will soon be implemented, and that we will achieve a speedy and transparent licensing process, create regional initiatives and provide access to new financing instruments.

Tunne Kelam (PPE), *in writing*. – After several dramatic experiences with energy supplies, it has become clear that energy is a key factor of EU security. The need for a long-term strategic vision on energy is obvious. The new proposed energy strategy aims to serve this need. First and foremost, Europe needs a coherent and harmonised internal energy market, which has to integrate different energy networks, linking them with each other. This is an absolute priority for the EU's stability and security. Today there are still isolated regions of the EU that depend almost one hundred per cent on external energy supplies. In the case of imported gas, this is true of the three Baltic Member States. They depend on Russian gas exports, which Moscow is using as its foreign policy tool. The result is that the Baltic nations, being immediate neighbours of Russia, pay 30% more than Germany for the same Russian gas. The new Baltic Sea Strategy should aim at developing integrated grids around the Baltic Sea. I support allocating a higher proportion of the budget for the common energy policy. Developing modern and efficient energy infrastructures will need priority investments. Enhancing energy efficiency means investing more in research and development and in new energy technologies.

Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) The energy strategy being proposed must promote in the long term a diversified combination of energy sources, including not only renewable energy sources but nuclear energy as well. However, it will not be possible for this strategy to be viable as long as the transmission network is not strengthened so that it can support market integration and the development of large-scale sustainable energy production.

Furthermore, consolidation of interconnections and links with third countries is of paramount importance. Distribution networks need to be expanded and modernised as a matter of urgency to be able to integrate the increasingly frequent instances of distributed production. It goes without saying that market integration also requires a better use of existing operational networks, based on the cross-border harmonisation of the market structure and by developing common European models for managing interconnections. Last but not least, another crucially important factor is the setting up of an EU 'smart' network capable of managing, distributing and measuring in real time all the different production and consumption models in order to ensure the safe, efficient operation of the future electricity system.

Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) I would like to welcome this report, especially the references to the development of the potential of the bioenergy sector. The potential of this sector in Europe is untapped. One relevant factor in this context is that some Member States are facing the situation where huge areas of agricultural land are left uncultivated every year. This abandoned land could also be used from a renewable energy perspective. The situation in Romania, which I am most familiar with, provides a clear example of this: approximately 3 million hectares of land remain unused, while the power lost across this area is roughly 187 terawatts per hour. I believe that this issue must be considered during the debates on the future of the common agricultural policy. The request made to the Commission to propose a policy framework and support further promotion

of the deployment of sustainable second-generation biofuels in Europe is timely and I hope that it will be adopted by the EU.

Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D), *in writing*. – (PL) Obtaining energy is one of the most important challenges facing today's world. A long time ago, the European Union backed a policy of obtaining energy using technologies which ensure low CO₂ emissions. The rapporteur's recognition of this idea as a strategic objective is no surprise and has my full support. The second strategic objective – to guarantee energy security to all Member States – also has my complete support. The rapporteur links this objective to the establishment of a low emission economy. This matter is particularly important for Poland. It is no secret that Poland's energy security is based on coal. Therefore, in order to achieve this objective effectively, it is essential to have strong financial support from the EU. Poland – and many other Member States – recognises the need to build a low emission economy, but is not, however, able to achieve this objective without European aid. Finally, I would like to express my satisfaction at the recognition by the rapporteur of the need to ensure energy for the citizens at affordable prices as one of the strategic objectives of the new energy strategy for Europe. In accepting the three main strategic objectives of the new energy strategy for Europe, I would like to express my emphatic support for the motion for a resolution on Towards a new Energy Strategy for Europe 2011-2020.

Indrek Tarand (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – (SV) I am very pleased that, once again, we have the opportunity today to actively debate issues relating to energy security in the European Parliament. Let there be no misunderstanding here – this subject is just as sensitive as the subject of gas. In recent years, the EU as a whole has increased its dependence on energy supplies from particular third countries. There is an inherent risk on the market, not only on account of the economic aspect, but also due to the lack of democratic rights and human rights and the involvement of companies that lack good business concepts. Unfortunately, we have to acknowledge that Mrs Kolarska-Bobińska's report, which is an excellent piece of work, is being debated and voted on a little too late. The European Commission already issued its Energy Strategy for Europe 2011-2020 on 10 November, so it is presumably too late to affect that. Better late than never, however. I will therefore add to today's opinions the fact that France has decided to sell a Mistral class warship to Russia. We assume that it sincerely regrets its decision.

Zbigniew Ziobro (ECR), *in writing*. – (PL) The motion for a resolution which has been tabled still lacks explicit references to two important matters. The first of these is financial support from the European Union budget in the search for alternative sources of fuels such as shale gas. The use of shale gas has now enabled the US to guarantee its independence in terms of energy supply. Scientists and geologists report that, for the European Union too, a similar possibility of energy autonomy is becoming apparent. I think it is important to change Union policy on this matter so that it supports the exploration for and use of shale gas. It is also important to ensure financial support to institutions which are involved in the development of technology for extracting and transporting shale gas – including the use of CO₂ in the process of fracturing shales. The second matter is the lack of explicit reference to making specific investments in fuel transmission projects. This is another document which has no connection with a strategy. The European Parliament must, at last, designate energy projects which are important for its security and the ways in which they will be funded. Despite the declarations which have been made, both in the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy programmes, construction of the Nabucco gas pipeline, which is to connect deposits in Asia with users in Europe, continues to be

postponed. The strategy also lacks reference to the possibility of using deposits in Africa and the Arctic. The last matter which has been omitted is the lack of a clear explanation of the term 'European Union energy security'. What, in fact, does it mean? Is it supposed to refer to the Union as a whole, or to a state of security of supply to the individual Member States which today make up the European Union?

14. Preparations for Cancún Climate Change Conference (29 November-10 December) (debate)

President. – The next item is the Council and Commission statements on preparations for the Cancún Climate Change Conference (29 November-10 December).

Joke Schauvliege, *President-in-Office of the Council.* – (NL) Mr President, honourable Members, following the conference in Copenhagen, the European Union decided quite quickly to proceed via a gradual, pragmatic approach in the future. Focusing on an 'all or nothing' approach is no longer possible. Gradually, the building blocks must be put in place for a post-2012 framework. We realise that progress on the negotiations on the creation of an ambitious regime to combat climate change beyond 2012 has been very slow. The participants have very widely differing perspectives, something that was evident just recently during the latest official negotiating round in Tianjin, at which very limited progress was made.

Honourable Members, it was against this background that the Environment Council and the European Council put the finishing touches to the European Union position for the conference in Cancún. The positions of the other institutions, and naturally also your motion for a resolution, were noted in the process. It has already been established that Cancún will not produce a legally binding post-2012 framework. Given that the contents of the package of measures for Cancún are not yet clear, the European Union position, which will also offer the European negotiators the necessary flexibility, puts forward various elements. It is at all events clear that the package of measures for Cancún must be balanced, which means it must contain elements making it possible to accommodate both the developing and the developed countries. What, then, are the main elements of the EU's position?

First and foremost, there is the need to achieve a balanced result; to balance negotiating rights in the context of the Kyoto Protocol and of the Convention on the one hand, and within the frameworks themselves on the other.

Secondly, there are the conditions for a second commitment period in the context of the Kyoto Protocol.

Thirdly, there are the outlines of essential components of the Bali Action Plan, namely a common vision, mitigation, adaptation, technologies and financing. The EU maintains its view that a single legally binding instrument is the best way to give shape to the post-2012 framework. Given that, last year, this position gave rise to a great deal of misunderstanding and that this is also very important in the international negotiations, the EU intends to adopt a flexible stance: flexible with regard to a second commitment period, but subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions. What are these conditions? All the major economies must be involved in this post-2012 framework. The framework must be ambitious and effective, environmental integrity must be guaranteed and progress must be made on reforming the current market mechanisms and on introducing new mechanisms. In addition, the developed countries must demonstrate that they are indeed meeting their

financial commitments, particularly with regard to the fast-start financing. The European Union and its Member States have presented the first in-depth, transparent report on the implementation of these financial commitments and will have contributed EUR 2.2 billion in 2010. I hope that this report will help restore confidence among parties.

The Belgian Presidency takes the view that tangible, specific measures are needed to meet the expectations of the parties and also to ensure confidence in the multilateral process within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We shall make every effort to contribute to the achievement of the European Union's objectives. In this regard, we shall also be counting on you, as always, honourable Members, to help disseminate and, of course, also reinforce this message.

Connie Hedegaard, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I, of course, share very much what we just heard from the Belgian Presidency. I am also looking forward to working with you in Cancún. It is very clear that the legally-binding deal that the EU was ready for last year and that we are still ready for will, unfortunately, not be the outcome of Cancún – not because of us, but because others are not ready for it. It is true that we are heading for a package which is balanced but, I would also say, substantial and ambitious.

We were actually the first this spring, in February/March, to come forward with the idea of pursuing a stepwise approach in order to build on the Copenhagen Accord and secure the momentum now continuing in Cancún. But although there seems to be agreement that this is what we should bring home from Cancún – a balanced package – it is easy to say that is what every party would like but more difficult to agree on what that then means.

What is a substantial balanced package? Here I would say that, seen from a European perspective, it is clear that we will insist on the need to anchor mitigation pledges, set up an enhanced MRV system and promote the carbon markets. We should, of course, also have decisions on REDD+, adaptation, technology, finance and capacity-building. All these elements will have to be reflected in a package that we consider balanced.

One thing I would like to emphasise is that we, the European Union, must remain clear on our conditions for a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. We must use these conditions to raise the level of ambition and to get others to move. The conditions attached to a possible second commitment period are very important for environmental integrity and the ambition of the future climate regime. The EU alone under a second commitment period is neither sufficient nor credible. Therefore we need to stick to our conditions to lever positive responses from our partners. I must say that it is my clear impression – also from the pre-COP – that there is growing acknowledgement of our arguments on this.

The draft resolution that we have in front of us addresses all the areas that I just mentioned. The Commission welcomes very much the guidance being offered by Parliament, even if not all of it can be taken fully on board.

To mention just one example: some of you suggest that we have another target than the two-degree target. A main priority for us in Cancún will be not to start reopening the Copenhagen Accord and not to start backtracking from what we already have.

I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasise that the EU needs to deliver on our fast-start pledges from Copenhagen. I can tell you honestly today: we are almost there. But we still need EUR 200 million from Member States in order to be exactly where we promised to be in Copenhagen. I take it that you can hear the difference between being able to say,

in Cancún, on behalf of the European Union: 'We have delivered', and saying: 'We have almost delivered'. I really think we should use the remaining days up to Cancún to try to deliver all we pledged in Copenhagen.

I have not mentioned targets: not because they are not important, as they definitely are, and the EU, this year as well as last, would say that we are still ready to go to 30% provided others deliver as well. No change there. If targets are not being debated that much now, I think this is because a lot of other parties are not that ready – for reasons that you know – to discuss targets in Cancún. I think what is important is to anchor the pledges from the Copenhagen Accord into the formal text. From that we can improve things.

But I must also say that, no matter what comes out of Cancún, I think it is crucial for us after Cancún to continue to have an intelligent climate policy with ambitious targets, whilst at the same time handling our energy challenges, as you have just been discussing. We can push for innovation and job creation and we can set ambitious targets.

My final point is that we are working to ensure the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon – obviously – and I can assure you that we will inform Parliament's delegation at every stage of the progress of the negotiations. Of course there will be daily briefings with Parliament's delegation, and we will try to work very closely together.

We strongly welcome the support indicated in the motion for a resolution to ensure that the EU speaks with one voice. I think that this is one of the main challenges in Cancún: whoever speaks on behalf of the European Union, our partners outside Europe can be sure that they will be met with the same kind of priorities and the same kind of messages. That is the way our priorities will best be heard.

Karl-Heinz Florenz, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Schauvliege, Commissioner, if we are to learn anything from Copenhagen, where you, Commissioner, were of course President, then it should be that the European Union must speak with one voice at such conferences in future. We may have different opinions here on one or two points, but if we as Europeans are divided in what we say there, we will not be considered credible, and if we are not credible other people will not follow us. Indeed, why should they? It is therefore right for the figures we decided on under Chancellor Merkel essentially to be retained and form the basis for this negotiation. I share your opinion that the ambitious two-degree targets should not now be seriously questioned and a significantly lower degree figure considered, because that will make the ability to meet these targets very much more difficult and people will shy away from us.

I am very concerned that we are putting our intellectual property at risk. Our industry is investing money and manpower in development. If we now go and slacken the fence around this intellectual property and leave the holes in the fence that currently exist, then we will lose the valuable elements, namely our intellectual property. I am all in favour of the transfer of technology, but our enterprises must also see the sense in investing in it, and therefore the intellectual property must not be watered down.

As regards commitments, I am also inclined to demand serious commitments from our partners worldwide. However, they must be credible and it must be feasible for these countries to fulfil them. Otherwise they will do exactly the opposite of what we want, in other words they will distance themselves from us. Presenting ourselves in a credible manner in Cancún is therefore important. The major decisions will then be taken later in Johannesburg, but we need to prepare the ground in Cancún. I am a farmer by profession.

If the ground is not properly prepared, there will be no harvest. Let us concentrate on preparing good ground.

Marita Ulvskog, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (SV) Mr President, ahead of the Copenhagen summit we had very high expectations. The outcome was not so good. The day we left Copenhagen it was snowing heavily and it was extremely cold in the meeting rooms. It was not only Copenhagen that experienced a chilling of the temperatures, but the whole environment debate. It could be said that the climate is further down the political agenda today than it was prior to Copenhagen. This is regrettable, but the fact is that it is our job to ensure that the Cancún summit achieves better results and to deal with and improve on the outcome of Copenhagen. How are we going to do that? We will do it, as representatives of Europe, by taking a leading role. That was also exactly what the UN climate chief, Christina Figueres, called for when she talked during a video conference with those of us from the European Parliament who will be going to Cancún. We need to show leadership, and we will do this by, among other things, actually implementing everything we promised in Copenhagen – not just almost everything, but absolutely everything.

Then, of course, we need to ensure that we get more people on board. Together with other specific decisions in Cancún on deforestation, technology transfer and on a way forward for a second commitment period under Kyoto, this could prepare the way for an international climate agreement in 2011. I do not think that our expectations should be too low ahead of Cancún.

Chris Davies, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, there is not much enthusiasm for tackling global warming at the moment, rather widespread public scepticism. At the beginning of the year we saw snow on the ground yet, if you look at the figures, you will see that the first six months of this year were the warmest on record across the globe. That is a simple fact.

I want an international agreement in place as soon as possible but I have concerns about the nature of such an agreement. The distinction between developed and developing countries strikes me as odd. I wonder how long it is going to be before some of the developing countries overtake the poorest European countries. I look at the climate change conferences, the enthusiasm with which Saudi Arabia supports the idea of carbon capture and storage being put in the CDM. Saudi Arabia can surely invest a bit of its own money in doing these things. Why should we contribute towards it?

I am worried about the European Union being left behind by the pace of change and I think climate change initiatives and our ability to tackle global warming offer great opportunities. China is planning on reducing its carbon intensity by 45% over the next decade. That means investment in new power stations replacing the old ones; it means improving its energy efficiency. There is a real difficulty here in that, if we cannot compete with the Chinese now, how are we going to compete with a more energy-efficient China in years to come?

I want to see our cap tightened. I want us to move up from 20% to 30%. I want us to see carbon prices rise so we drive forward the low carbon investments in the future. I wish I had more conviction that within the Commission there was agreement that this really should be considered and done. I just do not feel that this is happening at the moment. I know this Commissioner's enthusiasm for the subject. I am not sure she has the full backing of the college. But maybe we need a fallback position?

We do need a fallback position, and fundamentally that must be to drive forward our energy efficiency. Just a few minutes ago we heard Commissioner Oettinger's plans to bring forward some legislation in the New Year. That legislation has got to be ambitious. We have got to save our resources. We have got to become more competitive.

Yannick Jadot, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I could have limited my speech to simply recalling the images of this summer in Russia or southern Asia, to reminding you of the absolutely urgent need to combat climate change and, since we are talking about Europe, to move immediately, or as soon as we possibly can, to a target of 30% by 2020 for greenhouse gas emissions. Today, if we make no changes, we shall reach 19%. We have practically already reached the target that we set ourselves, so we can no longer speak of European ambition if we speak of 20%.

As far as I am concerned, I am not an obvious admirer of the carbon market, but if we stay at 20%, we can be sure that we shall be treating the carbon market as a species in danger of extinction and not as a lever in the fight against climate change. Moving to 30% would potentially raise EUR 8 billion for European budgets by auctioning quotas. We know 30% is possible. In particular, a binding 20% energy efficiency target would mean a million European jobs. This represents savings of EUR 1 000 per household in Europe and, since Commissioner Oettinger mentioned Nabucco, it is the equivalent of 15 Nabuccos.

Are we then going to kill off European businesses if we move to 30%? Obviously not. Every study shows this to be so. Some sectors potentially at risk are affected, but the means exist, and until now, the sectors that threaten Europe with extinction are the sectors that have been the beneficiaries of European energy policy. They have gained billions of euros thanks to European climate policy.

Moving to 30% would mean clearly siding with those who are bringing about change, siding with those who are making tomorrow's world. I should also like to cite some figures. According to the Ernst & Young 2010 Barometer, China and the United States are the most attractive countries for the development of renewable energy. According to a recent study, only three of the 50 businesses identified as world leaders in green technology are located in Europe; the others are in Asia or the United States.

It is therefore absolutely essential to move to 30%, and I shall conclude by echoing the words of Barack Obama when he said that we could abandon the jobs of the future to our competitors or we could seize the opportunity of the century, as they have already begun to do. The nation that pioneers the energy of the future would be the pioneer nation of the 21st century, he said. He lost the elections. Let us take up this leadership in energy transition and the new economy.

Miroslav Ouzký, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – (CS) Mr President, although I am a signatory to the resolution on the forthcoming climate conference, I also have some critical comments and reservations regarding our resolution. You know, I am pleased that the optimism which we always broadcast to the world before every conference in the past, and which was then transformed into enormous scepticism, is not so prevalent this time. I am delighted that we understand that this conference will not produce a global agreement, and everyone in this Chamber knows that without a global agreement, Europe alone, even if it ambitiously increased its own plans by 100%, would not have the slightest influence on global climate change.

The blind tightening up of our standards may have the consequence of putting Europe at risk, and I confess that I totally disagree with the hidden introduction of European taxes under the pretext of combating climate change.

In order to avoid being wholly negative, I see great promise in supporting cooperation with developing countries, and particularly in protecting drinking water, as well as in our effort to ensure access to drinking water for all citizens, particularly in developing countries. Although I have critical reservations, I do not intend to retract my signature, and I hope that the forthcoming conference will, after all, result in some further progress.

Bairbre de Brún, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (GA) Mr President, we cannot make the mistakes we made in Copenhagen last year again. Real leadership and political will are needed to keep the temperature limit to 1.5 °C. This goal is important.

The EU should act unilaterally to raise the emission reduction target for 2020, and to persuade other developed countries to agree an overall emission reduction target of 80% to 95% by 2020. Not only will this help the negotiation in Cancún but we need to do this for our own good.

Developed countries also need to provide adequate climate funding; that and to operate quick start funding along with strong political commitment and full transparency. There is a need for new long-term funding sources as well. Among those options, there should be international tax and financial measures and financing from international aviation and shipping.

I ask you to vote against the amendments that want a weaker message to come from this Parliament. A strong message is needed. The global economic crisis cannot be used as an excuse to do nothing or to deny climate justice. Climate change is a problem that needs to be tackled on a global basis, and to do this it is necessary to build trust between us.

Oreste Rossi, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, despite the fact that, both in committee and in this Chamber, I had predicted the failure of the Copenhagen climate conference and the document tabled by this House, this experience has taught us nothing.

If we persist in making unilateral requests that Europe should reduce its emissions by much greater amounts than those provided for by the Kyoto Protocol, then the next summit in Cancún – the COP16 – will also be a failure and, once again, Parliament will look terrible.

The resolution adopted in committee not only stresses that contributions to emerging countries should not be less than EUR 30 billion per year by 2020, but it also encourages the EU to promote the creation of a green climate fund, setting aside USD 100 billion per year starting from 2020.

The document also tells us how to find the funds, which is by taxing all possible sources such as imposing taxes on financial transactions, trade exchanges and air tickets, essentially taking money straight out of the pockets of citizens and businesses.

The report then launches into utopian requests. It even asks for us to reduce CO₂ emissions in the atmosphere by 30% instead of 20% by 2020 and it urges the Commission to present a proposal so that the EU sets itself these objectives unilaterally.

Asking our people and businesses to make such sacrifices at a time of economic crisis like the present is the latest in a long line of European follies. We have the same position as the

Council, which is that the European Union will only be able to consider a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol if this takes place in an overall framework that involves all the main economies, ahead of a global, legally binding agreement.

Nick Griffin (NI). – Mr President, choosing sunny Mexico for COP 16 was a good move. We should be spared a repeat of last year's embarrassment, when global warmists shivered in the coldest Copenhagen December for decades. Likewise, using the deceitfully ambiguous term 'climate change' rather than 'global warming' may blind a few British taxpayers to the irony of holding it just as an unusually cold summer gives way to an early, icy winter. An even better trick would be to hold these events only in the spring: look, it is getting warmer every day.

How much longer can the fascistic EU impose ever more punitive taxes and controls on ordinary citizens on the pretext of man-made global warming, when an ever-increasing number of real scientists are rejecting the theory as unfounded and demolished? AGW is baseless propaganda, a Josef Goebbels-scale big lie from the green industrial complex because they favour massive transfers of wealth from the little people to carbon-trading crooks, such as Al Gore and Goldman Sachs. And it is being exploited by leftist political elites to complete the deindustrialisation of the west because spineless conservatives are too browbeaten by global warming hysteria to stand up and tell the really inconvenient truth: man-made climate change is the most profitable con trick in history.

This year's Bilderberg conference, held in Spain in June, included a session on the dangers of global cooling. When will the new realism of the people who really shape global politics creep in here, among the people who merely think they do?

Richard Seeber (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I am truly shocked by the ideas that people like Mr Griffin propagate here in the name of climate change. What fascism has to do with climate change is a complete mystery to me. I also think that what he comes out with here is scandalous, and I think that such statements have no place in this House, because the problem really is too serious for that.

I am also concerned that we do indeed have an increased rate of greenhouse gas emissions in our atmosphere. Take a look at the figures produced by the World Meteorological Organisation. I am also shocked at the low level of acceptance among the population. Mr Griffin is also riding this wave, and I also find it shocking that the major emitters like the United States and China are not prepared to enter into an international agreement of this sort.

Recall, if you will, the debate that we had here last year prior to Copenhagen. If we are not too ambitious and enter into these negotiations with realism, then we, as Europe – a less important emitter – can still achieve something.

How can we do that? Commissioner, I value your enthusiasm, but I believe that communicating with citizens is extremely important. The people do not understand the problem. Why is that? It is because the World Meteorological Organisation's figures are clear – they are average figures. It is true that in Europe it is currently colder than it was a few years ago, but, overall, we nevertheless have increasing temperatures throughout the world. This needs to be communicated, and if we do not manage to do that we will not receive support from our citizens, and that will enable people like Mr Griffin to bring fascism into the issue of climate change. That is the problem. Therefore, Commissioner, I would ask you to try to make improvements in this regard.

Secondly, let us achieve the switch to sustainable sources of energy with the incentives that we value. My fellow Member presented the figures. The best enterprises are in China and here in Europe we are not so good. We therefore need to come up with some good ideas to get our enterprises to actually achieve this switch. Are these binding targets really the great cure that they are always hailed to be here?

Of course, we also need to have honesty on the markets. The things that happen in connection with the Clean Development Mechanism – 60% of the money goes to China – should not be permitted. To hide behind purely legal arguments in this regard is not good enough. Let us approach the debate with honesty, because this matter is too important. You have our support, Commissioner.

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

Lucas Hartong (NI). – (NL) Mr President, Mr Seeber said that the public does not understand the climate debate. I should like to ask him the following: could it be that the public does indeed understand it, but simply has a different opinion from my fellow Member?

Richard Seeber (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, I do not know whether I have understood that correctly. What is important is simply that we have this debate with our citizens openly and – as I said – on the basis of the World Meteorological Organisation's figures. These are simply average figures for the world, which indicate that the temperature is increasing by 0.63 degrees, but in Europe our values are different. This is because weather is a local phenomenon and we are talking about climate, which is a long-term global phenomenon. Therefore, let us make this decision. If we say that it is becoming increasingly colder and winters are arriving earlier, then we must also communicate that correctly. Therefore, my appeal for greater communication is important.

Jo Leinen (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Schauvliege, Commissioner, I am concerned that we are going from one extreme to the other. Prior to Copenhagen we were perhaps too ambitious, and now, ahead of Cancún, I am concerned that we are not being ambitious enough. I therefore think it is good that, in its resolution, Parliament addresses all the issues that we believe to be necessary for there to be progress and for us to achieve results even in Cancún.

We have one major demand, and that is that the EU switch its strategy. Prior to Copenhagen, we made ourselves dependent on what was done in the United States and perhaps on what was done in China. That did not work there and it will not work in Cancún either. We should therefore take climate protection measures to protect our own interests. Hence the call by the majority in committee, and I hope in plenary tomorrow too, for us to increase our targets from 20% to 30%. That will be necessary during the course of the process in any case. We need to achieve this target at least before we go to South Africa. I also think that we are still on the wrong track with regard to Kyoto. Here too, we are relying on everyone else. I believe that our offer should be to establish Kyoto II. We will have no problem doing this; we will achieve it.

Finally, with regard to the EU speaking with one voice: I saw how this worked in Nagoya. We had one microphone for the EU. Different people could speak, but they had to convey the same message. That is what I would like to see from the Council and the Commission in Cancún, too.

Corinne Lepage (ALDE). – (FR) Mr President, Mrs Schauvliege, Commissioner, one thing at least is certain after Copenhagen, and that is that the campaign of disinformation that was mounted before Copenhagen has failed, and that the information we were given by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been fully confirmed by all the experts at the disposal of the United Nations. That is the first point I should like to emphasise.

This shows the importance and the urgency of what we must do. We must draw the consequences of the setback that we experienced at Copenhagen and, as a result, it is absolutely essential that the European Union set itself objectives of its own unfettered free will. That is the reason why it is essential, as much for the climate as for our industries and our economy, that the 30% target mentioned in the resolution be voted through tomorrow.

As a fellow Member has just emphasised, the 20% target has already practically been achieved. If we want to give a boost to our industries, if we want to remain the leaders or to become the leaders in new sectors, whether in energy efficiency or renewable energy, it is fundamental that we set ourselves this target in the Union.

The second point is that of credibility. We must stand by our commitments towards the countries of the South, while distinguishing between the different categories of the countries of the South because, effectively, China and Africa cannot be put in the same basket. That is the reason why, to my mind – and this is a personal opinion that I am now voicing, and not necessarily that of my entire group – it is essential that we have a tax on financial transactions that would enable us to obtain the USD 100 billion we have provided for 2020.

Finally, I hope at the very least that the agreement on forests, the Agreement on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), can be concluded at Cancún, because that would already be a great step forward. Let us remember that deforestation amounts to 20% of greenhouse gas emissions.

Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE). – (FI) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I agree with all those who have shown their support for a more stringent reduction in emissions in the EU to 30%. This is not just about the future of the human race: it is in our own interest to remain competitive in the energy technology revolution that has begun.

For the EU to be a credible climate leader, at Cancún it should promote a genuine strategy of climate protection and not create new loopholes. Unfortunately, the EU seems to be operating otherwise where it concerns the accounting rules for forest carbon sinks. It would appear that the EU is giving its approval to future forecasts as a benchmark for forest sinks, which are inevitably arbitrary. This would mean more trouble for the industrialised countries, and in no small measure. The trouble I refer to could be the equivalent of between 3% and 5% of all their emissions, which is to say the same figure as that for the combined emissions reduction obligation for all industrialised countries under the Kyoto Protocol by 2012.

Another drawback with the EU's policy is the outsourcing of emission reductions to developing countries by means of the Clean Development Mechanism. It is short-sighted, but also unwise from the point of view of fair competition, if we use the CDM to support those industrial sectors in China which complain here about the risk of carbon leakage, for example. Projectbased credits should be limited to the poorest developing countries.

Zbigniew Ziobro (ECR). – (PL) Mr President, the fight against global warming has, without doubt, become one of the European Union's most important objectives. A significant factor in this is, I think, a rational policy for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In Parliament's motion for a resolution, which has been drafted before the Cancún conference, there is a part which mentions a significant reduction – by more than 20% – in CO₂ emissions from Member States. It seems that, in proposing a policy of this kind, the Union is not looking at the serious consequences for the economies of its Member States.

While there is such a large reduction on the part of the Union, there is a very feeble statement of the Union's position in relation to a reduction in gas emissions in the United States or the countries of Asia. This is a great mistake. Today, when Europe is experiencing economic decline, we should concentrate more on measures intended to strengthen the Union's economy, and not burden it with additional costs. It is not the Member States of the European Union which are the major emitters, but the rapidly growing economies of developing countries such as China and India, and they do not intend to reduce emissions. Industrial production, and in consequence jobs, might, therefore, be exported to countries outside the European Union. Our economy will become weaker, and emissions will not fall, but rise. This policy is going nowhere. Therefore, this type of policy direction in the field of fighting global warming should be reconsidered.

Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL). – (DE) Mr President, the climate conference in Cancún must exert positive pressure on our states in order to make progress in terms of international cooperation and national climate protection legislation. As part of an alliance of responsibility, the EU must demonstrate political leadership, regardless of what the United States does, and allow itself to be judged by the principle of climate justice. This means that there must be a second commitment period for the industrialised nations under the Kyoto Protocol. Additional funds must be provided for financing climate measures. With regard to long-term financing, the EU must lay its cards on the table in the negotiations. The EU must present ambitious targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases. The global temperature must under no circumstances increase by more than 1.5°C. This target will result in technical innovations and create jobs at a time of economic crisis.

Anna Rosbach (EFD). – (DA) Mr President, in December, everyone – officials, politicians, journalists, activists and many others – will be heading for the summit in Mexico. This Parliament, too, will be taking part, even if there is always chaos surrounding how many MEPs are permitted to travel.

When we go to the climate summit, there is one important thing that we must remember to take with us: realism. I am very well aware that this is not such a popular thing to say, but it is important if the people of the world are to find us credible. The EU ought to be a frontrunner, as it is so splendidly put – in other words it should take the lead and set a good example. That is all well and good, but we must make sure that we do not go so far out in front that no one follows us. It is no good pursuing a policy that only a few countries are willing, or able, to follow. We will only achieve one thing by doing this, and that is to shift our own labour-intensive industries out of Europe to countries with much more relaxed legislation, lower wages and poorer working conditions. We will lose jobs, and that will harm our European economies. We should therefore work towards solutions that rapidly emerging countries such as China, India and the South American continent can go along with. I hope that we will learn from the experience of last year's meeting in Copenhagen and this year aim for achievable objectives instead of setting our sights on the impossible.

Lucas Hartong (NI). – (NL) Mr President, next week will see the United Nations climate change conference in Cancún. It is a complete travesty for the EU to participate in this, as there is not, in fact, anything wrong with our climate. What we are experiencing are normal temperature fluctuations. May I dwell a while on the real facts of this superfluous conference? Next week, hundreds of participants will be boarding planes for Mexico, which will generate CO₂ emissions. What was the objective of the climate change conference, now? Ah, yes, it was the reduction of CO₂ emissions. Currently, 11 000 hectares of mangrove forest are being cleared in Cancún. What was the objective of the climate change conference, again? Oh, yes, it was the protection of forests. Mr President, may I offer the EU some modest advice? Leave climate policy to genuinely independent specialists, as all it does is cost the taxpayer an enormous amount of money; it has delivered nothing in recent decades except for biased reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its charlatan chair Rajendra Pachauri.

Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE). – (ES) Mr President, Mrs Schauvliege, Commissioner, I would like to start by saying that I felt that both speeches by the President-in-Office of the Council and the Commissioner gave a very different perspective on the Cancún conference to their perspective on the Copenhagen conference. It is a more realistic, much more viable perspective, and there is therefore much more potential for it to be effective.

If Copenhagen was the all-or-nothing summit – as the President-in-Office of the Council said – Cancún must be the summit that provides a variety of viable and efficient options.

The battle against climate change has two fundamental features: firstly it has to be global, involving all the major polluters, from the United States to Brazil, China and India. Secondly, it has to be a series of measures that are effective in their impact on climate change, we need to be able to measure that impact, and they must not be detrimental to economic growth.

In this respect we also need to have the humility to recognise that the global challenge of tackling climate change offers a variety of technological and political options.

There are and may be binding agreements, there are sectoral agreements, there is technology transfer and there is support for research. All the options need to be brought into play, along with a radical increase in energy efficiency in all sectors of the economy and of society. This is the only way that we will be able to effectively tackle the problems of climate change. In this respect, if Cancún is the summit that produces a variety of viable and efficient agreements, it will have been a great success.

Kriton Arsenis (S&D). – (EL) Mr President, Commissioner, I would agree with Mr Leinen that we really have gone from one extreme to the other. We had very high expectations in Copenhagen and perhaps we should have very low expectations in Cancún.

Our demands basically concern two issues: the REDD agreement and financing. If we do not achieve progress on these two issues, there is a risk that no progress will be made in the negotiations and they will perhaps be jeopardised. If no progress is made in Cancún, the entire negotiating process will be in danger. That is why we are relying on your efforts, efforts by the European Union, to achieve progress, even if it is only on these two issues, and to keep the negotiations as whole out of danger.

Numerous members said that we actually achieved a 17.3% reduction in emissions in 2009. The 20% target for 2020 is within reach; we could achieve it within the next few

years. There is no reason why we should not move up to 30% or more, if we want to modernise our economy, create new jobs and become competitive once again.

Mrs Hassi also spoke about LULUCF. She is absolutely right. The EU's position, that we should not compare reductions in LULUCF-related emissions with 1990 and should use the line of business as usual, excessive emissions and how much less we are emitting than what the targets would have been, is an absurd position.

We are relying on you in order to achieve results on these two crucial issues during the negotiations in Cancún.

Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE). – (NL) Mr President, many thanks to the Commissioner and the Belgian President-in-Office for their introductory speeches, yet I should also like to remind the Chamber that the Copenhagen Accord was extremely weak, and that even what is stated in it is sometimes forgotten. The 2°C objective, or even the 1.5°C objective, is mentioned in the Copenhagen Accord and, if we wish to achieve it, we must now really get down to business with reducing our own emissions – by more than 20% – and also with providing the funds for the first three years. The Copenhagen Accord states very clearly that these funds must be from new and additional sources. Commissioner Hedegaard, you say that we are almost there, but the funds are not new and additional, and so we are far from being there. Let us be honest about this. Then there is the matter of the EU's role, of leadership. Indeed, this is a question for the Belgian President-in Office: how are we going to do this in Cancún? We have now obtained a mandate from the Council, but negotiations will be necessary in Cancún. If we make adjustments to this, will unanimity of all Member States be required once more, or will the change be made by means of a qualified majority? After all, only then can we truly make this leading role a reality. More ambition, more funds and better negotiations are what is needed.

Peter van Dalen (ECR). – (NL) Mr President, the challenge for Cancún is complex and the urgency great, and yet I do see prospects, as I found the outcome of Nagoya hopeful and heartening. There has been a great deal of discussion on the issue of how to deploy the European Union in this debate. Are we striving for a 20% reduction in CO₂ or even a 30% reduction? As far as I am concerned, less CO₂ is not tantamount to less economic activity, and so we can focus on a reduction target of more than 20%, as that will present opportunities for more green jobs, for innovation and for sustainable economic growth. At the same time, I should like to call on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to really take seriously the criticism of its reports, and create an open scientific discussion platform so that all the relevant information is considered and does not vanish under the table. If it fails to do so, an atmosphere of mistrust will continue to surround the IPCC reports, something I think unnecessary and undesirable.

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL). – (PT) Mr President, I am going to go back over some things that have been said here. It was mentioned that Cancún is expected to be an important midway step in combating climate change, and also that it cannot go further or be more ambitious than Copenhagen was or accept the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit. We know that this was meagre, and yet if there has been no change in the scientific evidence and data at our disposal, it seems to me that there is a change in political will and a lack of courage here, and that we are going to Cancún in fear.

I believe that withdrawal from one of the most severe crises of our times cannot be an option. I would also like to say that we have an opportunity to put ourselves to the test in Cancún on various matters that have been mentioned here, and also to test our abilities in

terms of redistribution and giving support to poorer countries and the poorest people. I believe that responding to the environmental crisis also means responding in a unified and fair way to the economic and social crisis that we are currently experiencing. Now that is being realistic.

Derek Roland Clark (EFD). – Mr President, I am happy to read this speech on behalf of Mr Bloom, who has – in my view – been unfairly debarred from the Chamber this afternoon.

We had a fiasco a year ago in Copenhagen, when 15 000 unqualified people, including MEPs and the whole entourage, descended on the place to double its carbon footprint for a fortnight and got hopelessly embroiled in climategate, which was very neatly timed to scotch the proceedings.

Yes, we all remember the University of East Anglia getting shown for what it is: a centre of bogus science churned out by bought and paid-for scientists who rely on the EU's Research DG and the UN's 'super quango' for research funds and laboratories and on the UK taxpayers for their wages. They were shown up as forgers of data, forgers of climate computer models, hidiers of inconvenient data and conspirators with Obama's green minions.

The taxpaying masses learned in no uncertain terms that the EU and the global green agenda is all about raising our carbon taxes and scaring us into compliance.

Cancún would be not nearly as bad, of course. It is much warmer. It is a jolly winter, and the conspirators will be much more careful to hide their global governance agenda this year. But be warned: we, the people, are onto you.

Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI). – (ES) Mr President, Commissioner, I share this House's aspiration. I want the European delegation's proposals to gain the support that they deserve in Cancún.

In the context of this debate there is a need to highlight the importance of cities in preserving the environment. There is an agreement among more than 1 000 mayors in the European Union that demonstrates that the problem is being acknowledged by those authorities, which need to act in order for us to be successful. Our fine words are worth nothing if we do not have the cooperation of city mayors.

In order to secure that cooperation, it is very important for emissions to be disclosed, as cities produce 80% of greenhouse gases. Emissions are currently not disclosed, and what is even worse is that there is no common standard for measuring them.

There is a non-profit organisation called the 'CO₂ disclosure project', which collects information from thousands of businesses and could, in my view, also be used by local government. Without the cooperation of the local government and mayors, environmental action will come to nothing, which is precisely what we want to avoid.

Theodoros Skylakakis (PPE). – (EL) Mr President, a major environmental scandal is breaking which needs to be addressed at the Cancún conference. Sixty per cent of the CDM rights sold in the ETS are for the destruction of an industrial greenhouse gas, HFC-23, at a cost of 70 times over the real cost, which is being paid for mainly by European electricity users.

To date we have squandered about EUR 1.5 billion and, if this state of affairs continues, we shall squander another 3.5 billion by 2013, compared with the real value of destroying

the gas, which is a mere EUR 80 million. This is generating massive unwarranted profits for a few companies worldwide, for no environmental benefit, given that HFC-23 in the atmosphere has increased over recent years.

This is an unacceptable situation which calls the honesty of our environmental policy and the Kyoto mechanism into question. Europe needs to set this problem within the context of COP-16, because a change in international policy on this issue offers a serious opportunity to drastically limit emissions of greenhouse gases straight away at a very low cost and to ask countries such as China, which is currently pumping huge quantities of HFC-23 into the atmosphere, which could be reduced to zero if China used some of the money it makes in taxes on these unwarranted profits, to become involved more actively in efforts to combat climate change.

Wasting over EUR 4 billion of European taxpayers' money is unacceptable. It is our job in the European Parliament to defend public interests and consumer interests.

Edite Estrela (S&D). – (PT) Mr President, the international background to this conference is not favourable: there is the global economic crisis, the political and administrative uncertainty in the US, and the stalemate in the US-China negotiations. Expectations are therefore low, but in spite of this the Cancún Summit should be seen as an opportunity to restore confidence in the multilateral process and climate change and consolidate the Copenhagen Accord. This is the very least that can be done, and even this requires determination and political leadership during the negotiations, along with ambitiousness in decision making. Above all, progress needs to be made in areas that affect developing countries: funding, technology transfer and capacity building. In terms of mitigation, progress is expected, however, especially in setting ambitious and binding targets for reducing emissions and transferring processes, particularly monitoring, providing information and checking.

Regardless of the outcome of the international agreements, the European Union should pursue the objective of reducing CO₂ emissions by over 20%, with a view to creating 'green' jobs and economic growth. In summary, the results of Cancún should help with definitions for post-2012 in order to achieve an international agreement in 2011 that is legally binding and fulfils the global objective of limiting the global temperature increase to two degrees.

Roger Helmer (ECR). – Mr President, speaking in a personal capacity, let me remind colleagues that the public has lost faith in man-made global warming. Voters are sick of being blamed for climate change and are no longer prepared to pay for it.

More and more scientists are going public to challenge climate orthodoxy. The credibility of the IPCC has been shot to pieces. Recent, minor climate changes are entirely consistent with well-established, long-term natural climate cycles. Copenhagen failed for the same reason that Cancún will fail. The USA, with its new Republican majority in the House, will not buy Cap and Trade. India and China will not forego progress in the name of climate alarmism. Our green policies are probably unnecessary, certainly ineffectual and ruinously expensive.

If Europe acts alone, we will destroy our economies and impoverish our grandchildren, while making no impact on climate. We are embracing poverty by choice in the name of a disputed scientific theory. It is time to change course.

Catherine Soullie (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, Mrs Schauvliege, Commissioner, union and realism will be on show, at least I should like that to be the case, tomorrow when we

vote on our resolution for this Sixteenth Conference of the Parties on Climate Change. I therefore hope that our Commissioner in charge will be able to keep the pragmatic targets that we must meet collectively, but also to defend the absolutely non-negotiable associated conditions that Europe has set.

Neither must we lose sight in these negotiations of the expectations that our fellow citizens and our industries have of a fair balance. It is the world that must fight climate change, and not Europe on its own.

Therefore it will be essential to recognise the importance of intellectual property that is inadequately protected. Green technologies must be of benefit to the greatest number, but that does not mean that we must sell our current and future knowledge on the cheap, even for the sake of this vital battle against climate change.

Similarly, to ask for common methods of calculating emissions as well as verification and publication of data so that all emitting industries are put on the same scale seems to be a most legitimate request and not a negotiating tactic.

Finally, and my fellow Member raised this just now, more controversial are the loopholes in the current Clean Development Mechanism that are also to be put on the table. Ladies and gentlemen, we are all, regretfully, well aware that the real negotiating power does not lie with the European Parliament. However, the willingness of a number of MEPs, myself included, to work and to participate in a positive outcome of this conference must be encouraged and not neglected, as we have felt it to be in the last few days. If Europe wishes to be strong at the heart of international dialogues, so must all its lawmakers be likewise.

Rovana Plumb (S&D). – Mr President, being an optimistic person, I consider that a step forward is now possible at Cancún in the form of a balanced package that will allow countries to take faster, stronger actions across all areas of climate change. It is therefore of high importance to re-establish Europe's leading position within the international climate negotiations by introducing the climate diplomacy principle, and for the European Union and its Member States to define and implement a principle of climate justice, advocating therefore an equity clause in future international climate negotiations.

I stress the importance of establishing the mechanism that regulates the funding of the financial aspects of climate change. New innovative sources of revenue, such as a financial transaction tax, green funds or private sources will be necessary to raise the money required in order to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation projects and to achieve green growth, which contributes to a good life for citizens, and fair growth. Let us also not forget the gender dimension in climate change policies.

Romana Jordan Cizelj (PPE). – (SL) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the gap between the expectations and the results of the Copenhagen conference was unacceptably wide, which is why it was necessary for us to make some changes. This time, we are leaving for Cancún with much more realistic, yet still ambitious, objectives. Commissioner, you deserve credit for having ensured that, this time, the Union will be going to a climate conference much better prepared and I would like to thank you for that.

However, I would like to comment on some of the amendments tabled. The agreement we reached in Copenhagen has produced some significant results, one of them definitely being the decision that we must take action to limit the global increase in temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius. We must persist with this target, and now is not the right time to

change it, even if that were to mean aiming for a lower target. We must remain credible. We cannot change such important decisions from one year to the next.

I would also respond to the proposals that the Union unilaterally reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30%. I believe that we should not distance ourselves again from third countries. We have to raise this target and we will raise it, but only when the circumstances are right. However, we have to ensure that we determine the procedure for reaching that decision in advance and, of course, that the European Parliament is appropriately involved in the decision making.

We also need to encourage the development and use of clean technologies at a global level. While the agreement on the technology transfer is extremely important, we also need to have appropriate arrangements in place for the protection of intellectual property. Only in that way will climate change become an opportunity, rather than a burden.

Finally, on the issue of funding efforts to reduce the impact of climate change in developing countries, let me emphasise that the European Union already has a financial mechanism for that purpose, namely the European Emissions Trading Scheme or the ETS. We have to ensure the proper working and effectiveness of the scheme, as well as transparent and targeted disbursement of funds. I believe that it would be inappropriate to create new financial burdens at a time of financial and economic crisis.

Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D). – (LT) Mr President, soon the world will once again receive good, or as has been the custom of late, bad news on climate change, this time from Cancún. The vast majority of scientists say that time is running out for man to stop climate change, but there has been no fall in the number of people who deny all or refuse to do anything. The European Union was and should remain the driving force for progress in the talks. At Cancún, the EU should better coordinate the positions of the Member States. It is important for us to do our homework, to prove that it is possible to have sustainable economic development and an environmentally friendly way of life. Only by changing ourselves can we urge others to follow our example.

I would really support a unilateral step by the EU to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2020. It is particularly important for the newly formulated principle of climate justice to be taken into account at Cancún. If climate change is not halted or at least limited, the poorest countries and the poorest people will be the first to be burnt by our fast overheating planet.

It would seem that some people, companies and countries are following an old, but modernised, saying: after me – after I have made a massive profit – the flood. This attitude must not win at Cancún.

Elisabetta Gardini (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, Mrs Schaulviège, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, Europe's desire to set ambitious targets ahead of the next conference on climate change is certainly a commitment to pursue with tenacity, the results of which will condition the future of our planet.

However, ladies and gentlemen, this is exactly why we must be realistic and more cautious in our expectations. As far as we know, the preparatory international negotiations for the Cancún conference have not only failed to record appreciable progress towards a global agreement, but they have confirmed wariness and resistance to the commitments assumed at Copenhagen.

It has already been mentioned, but I should like to refer to China at this point. For example, China is allowing itself to increase its CO₂ emissions by 5 billion tonnes by 2020, with consequences that can only be compensated for by reducing Europe's industrial emissions by 100% by the same year, 2020 – and even this may not be enough.

This fact does not only render the proposal for an unconditional 30% reduction unrealistic – and we strongly oppose it – but also leads many independent observers to hypothesise an increase, even a significant increase, of global emissions by that date. In this contradictory situation it would be at the least risky and even demagogical to come up with numbers and sketch out attractive but unrealistic scenarios where the unknown quantities are inevitably reflected in the extent of the costs.

The hope is that the European Union takes a shared, realistic and sustainable proposal to Cancún, because an agreement that gives real, tangible results is always and in any case preferable to expectations which are inevitably destined to fail and make the efforts of governments on major environmental themes even less credible in international opinion, and this would be particularly difficult to repair.

Jolanta Emilia Hibner (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, Mrs Schauvliege, Commissioner, adoption of a resolution for the 16th Conference of the Parties in Mexico is the first step in a global discussion. It is a very difficult compromise for all countries. We should not delude ourselves into thinking we shall achieve immediate success. We must submit a proposal which is as far-reaching as possible, but which also draws together as many as possible of the countries attending the conference.

The main objective included in the resolution is to reach a compromise on the fight against climate change and global warming. If we want to achieve this objective, we must win the support of the largest countries and the biggest emitters. Among these are the United States and China. We must debate this together with them and ask them to consider their economic possibilities. We should also concentrate on achieving the objectives which we have already written into the European Union's ecology package. Some fellow Members are saying it is a modest package, because it talks of a reduction in greenhouse gases of 20%. Let us first make this first step, and then let us talk about the next one.

It is also important to have commitments which all the countries can accept. If we again include commitments which no one will put into effect, they will have no force and will exist only on paper. We must also direct our attention to those countries which are very weak in terms of economic development and have poorly developed economies. However, our aim is that money should certainly go to the poorest countries. They should have access to money from the Union. On behalf of all fellow Members, I would like to say I think all of us are going to keep our fingers crossed for the Commissioner. I, too, declare my readiness to give extensive assistance in the negotiations.

Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE). – Mr President, first of all, I would like to thank Commissioner Hedegaard for her very good and committed work on these climate matters within the EU and at global level.

Knowing that negotiations in the UN framework on all international issues are very difficult at the moment, I think we have to exploit action-based orientation to the full. We know that the challenge is going to be ahead of us globally in all countries, so action to prevent climate change is always profitable, from the environmental and also the business standpoint.

We have quite a range of studies showing that the EU could cut its CO₂ emissions by 30% or even 40% by 2020 in a way that would be economically viable and economically profitable. This would require, first of all, stopping harmful subsidies like the EUR 6 billion yearly in Europe for fossil fuels and more stringent, ETS legislative support, resource efficiency and energy efficiency and tools such as a more stringent eco-design directive.

I think that just by showing the way ourselves, we can convince the others that (a) we are serious, (b) this is profitable and (c) we are doing it for the environment and for the success of the European economy.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – (GA) Mr President, I thank my group for giving me the chance to say a few words on this subject which I am greatly interested in.

Now the outcome of the Cancún conference is important for the European Union from the point of view of optics as well as of results. We have got to be seen to be realistic and we have to speak with one voice. It has to be driven home very strongly that global warming is a global problem that needs a global solution with global binding targets.

For that reason we should stick to our targets of 20% by 2020. Anything else would be counterproductive. It could decimate our economy; make us uncompetitive while the developing world gallops ahead.

If by 2015 or thereabouts we have reached the 20% target, we can change it to 25% or 30%; that then would be seen as a PR success. Anything else – looking for 30% and not achieving it – would be seen as a PR disaster, as we had with the Lisbon Strategy. We have had enough of that. It is time to box clever, to do our part but to ensure that the rest of the world does the same.

Finally, I have heard it mentioned that some Members of the European Parliament may be going to Cancún to protest; they are quite entitled to do so but I hope they do so in a private and personal capacity and not as accredited delegates.

Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, my fellow Members have many times stressed the need for a single internal position on climate policy. I, however, would like to draw attention to the fact that at the coming climate conference we should also use our greatest asset, which, as it turned out last year, is also our greatest weakness. I am thinking of the multilevel negotiations and the attempt at understanding our partners' arguments, and also of the skilful search for a satisfactory compromise. Let us try to bring our EU know-how to bear in climate policy. The isolation of which the Commissioner has spoken depends on the involvement of the United States, China, Brazil, Russia and India. Without this, there will be no point to any of the measures taken by the Union. It should also be said clearly that since rising economic powers want to play a greater international role, they must also accept greater commitments. The BRIC countries cannot always appeal to their need to catch up on development as justification for their disagreement over radical measures to protect the climate. Greater authority involves greater responsibility.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE). – (PT) Mr President, the success of the Cancún conference on climate change is vital to the credibility of the negotiating process under the auspices of the United Nations. It is therefore crucial that concrete commitments are made and realistic objectives set. Reaching an agreement on aspects such as policies for forest protection, technology transfer to developing countries and funding is vital.

If there is a failure to reach a global agreement, Europe should still remain open to considering a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol, but imposing conditions, especially with regard to the environmental integrity of the protocol, the redesigning of the Clean Development Mechanism and the undertaking of commitments by the major polluters worldwide, such as China and the US.

Csaba Sándor Tabajdi (S&D). – (HU) Mr President, in the run-up to the climate conference in Cancún, the European Union and its Member States should finally realise that setting more and more new unilateral target figures will not help exert influence on the United States, China and India, or help include emerging economies in the fight against climate change. In light of this, the commitment for a unilateral 40% carbon dioxide reduction proposed by the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance seems excessive. Even a 30% unilateral commitment makes sense only if there is real action behind it. I agree with Mrs Hedegaard: the Union can regain its leading role only if it shows concrete results, by investing in research and development, creating green jobs, developing an intelligent energy network, and pursuing a policy of sustainable green growth.

Karin Kadenbach (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, Mrs Schauvliege, Commissioner, Parliament has already, and on numerous occasions, made a clear commitment to the climate protection measures. Unfortunately, this attitude would seem to me to be less prevalent among the decision makers in the Member States. The environment ministers, who are often very ambitious, are in many cases left to their own devices. Finance and economic ministers and those with responsibility in respect of the economy hopefully also think in terms of longer timeframes. However, action is taken most often for a very clearly defined space of time, namely the period leading up to the next elections. Nature, however, can take no account of every-day political necessities. It will respond to climate change, with all its associated negative consequences for people, indeed for humanity as a whole. If we do not succeed in communicating the urgency of this matter, and particularly the urgent need to take action, a significant proportion of our funds will have to go towards disaster aid in the not too distant future.

Commissioner, under the motto 'one planet, one voice', I wish you much success in Cancún for the sake of future generations.

Sonia Alfano (ALDE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I greatly appreciate the presence of Commissioner Hedegaard and the stance she has taken. I should like to thank you for your commitment to keeping Parliament continually updated on the developments for Cancún.

The fight against climate change must be conducted on a global level and with everyone's involvement, but the idea that our position must depend on that of other countries is irresponsible and does not do justice to the role that the EU has set itself, namely a leading role in guiding cultural revolutions at a global level, primarily the fight against climate change.

We must set ourselves ever more ambitious targets and ensure that they are reached by the various Member States. I therefore thank the Commissioner for having reminded Italy, a few days ago, to maintain its financial promises of EUR 200 million to combat climate change. Unfortunately, I must inform the Commission that the Italian Government's budget does not seem to provide for these funds at the moment.

I would therefore ask the Commission to use all the powers available to it to make the Member States keep their promises, particularly when it is a matter of such a significant battle for the near future of the people of the world ...

(The President cut off the speaker)

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL). – *(PT)* Mr President, the European Union had a role in the failure of Copenhagen and in halting progress in international negotiations. It is not enough to declare that one is ambitious, setting targets for other developed countries, even if these fall short of the recommendations made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, if there is no focus on the means by which this can be done. The means to achieve these targets matter more than the targets that have been the focus of this discussion, and this is a central issue.

The European Union is insisting on a market approach, using market instruments which have proven to be two things to date: ineffective and perverse. This is manna for financial speculators: it is no longer just food, no longer just the sovereign debt of states, but also the very atmosphere, the air that we breathe, that is going to serve a new billionaire scheme for generating fictitious financial assets.

Commissioner, we can trace the causes of climate change back to the irrationality of this economic and social system. We will find the solution by breaking with this system.

Iosif Matula (PPE). – *(RO)* Mr President, climate change is certainly the biggest challenge facing mankind nowadays.

Unfortunately, the expectations of the Cancún conference are fairly modest due to the failure of Copenhagen. In Copenhagen the developed countries were expected to support by various means the developing countries' action plans for combating the effects of climate change. However, the impact of the economic crisis, which is being felt particularly hard by EU Member States, forces us to focus on other priorities as well.

Reaching an agreement on cutting carbon emissions is vitally important. In Cancún the EU must express its common position on the objectives which have to be achieved and bear in mind that the success of the 2020 strategy is subject to fulfilling the climate change objective. In this respect, I want to highlight the role of partnerships aimed at developing the potential of sustainable energy at regional level and encouraging regions to use renewable energy.

Gilles Pargneaux (S&D). – *(FR)* Mr President, Commissioner, we know how combative you are, and we know your wish that at Cancún Europe should at last speak with one voice. I should therefore like you to be able to give us your opinion on two topics, two actions that appear in our resolution, on which we shall be voting tomorrow. I should like to have your opinion in public on these two propositions before tomorrow's vote.

Firstly, on the creation of a green fund that would finally let us have USD 100 million a year from 2020 to spend on aid to the poorest countries.

Secondly, on the introduction of a 0.01% tax on financial transactions that would result in a fund of EUR 20 billion, also for the purposes of aid to the poorest countries. I believe that this is an important topic of a financial nature which would enable us to move forward more quickly and further.

Angelika Werthmann (NI). – (DE) Mr President, the aim of the climate conference is to establish a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. We urgently need to make progress in combating climate change. Overall, the EU is well on the way, relatively speaking, to meeting its climate targets. However, it would be crucial for us, the EU, together with the United States and China, seek to establish the legal prerequisites for a global climate protection agreement. In these difficult times in particular, the strengthening of environmental policy will also provide a substantial opportunity for economic policy, for example through investment in renewable energies and energy efficiency.

Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D). – (SK) Mr President, for two decades now, talks have been dragging on over climate change at international forums. Despite the increasing awareness of this truly global problem, it can be said from a political perspective that we have wasted these two decades.

The Kyoto Protocol will cease to apply in 2012, and the fiasco of last year's climate conference in Copenhagen gives no hope of an early change for the better. The climate talks in October only confirmed the schism between the so-called advanced world and the so-called developing world, and there will therefore be much to do in Cancún. If we want the Cancún conference to succeed, there will have to be a fundamental shift in the position of the rich countries. In the first place, we need to reduce the volume of domestic emissions dramatically. So-called *carbon offsetting* is no solution in this context. If the rich countries buy permits from the poor countries in order to carry on producing emissions, it will not help the climate in any way.

Kyriakos Mavronikolas (S&D). – (EL) Mr President, the question before us is: will we be able to move forward on climate change in Cancún. It seems to me that our position and our targets really do set the pace in terms of the changes needed in order to pre-empt ecological disaster.

The Union's positions are still the right positions and we must not only clarify them at this conference; we must fight to obtain much better results than we had in Copenhagen.

Unfortunately, Commissioner, we must still expect it to be down to us to persuade the large states, especially the United States and China, to join in these general efforts to combat climate change. I trust that these efforts will be fruitful.

Connie Hedegaard, *Member of the Commission.* – Mr President, I thought I could limit myself to three basic comments after this lively debate, but I find I should firstly respond to a very direct question from Mr Pargneaux: I think that we can make good progress on the architecture for a green fund. However, for many parties, some of the very specific sources of finance will probably need a bit more looking into – as it is only two weeks since the High-Level Panel from the UN came forward with these various inputs.

Realistically, we should make substantial progress. We should know what we want to do with this fund and how to set it up. Then I am sure, soon thereafter, that we can also deliver on the requirements of the fund. I think we will have to progress gradually, but we are very much in favour of progressing on the green fund.

Now my three comments. Firstly, Marita Ulvskog said early in this debate that the climate issue has slid down the international agenda this year. That is of course true, but it is also true that if we compare our current position to two ago – or to five or ten years ago – we can see that climate is very much up on the agenda today.

Were it not for the run-up to the Copenhagen Accord, can you imagine that the issues on climate change, energy efficiency and how to promote green growth would have survived the economic crisis? I would argue probably not. It is something that this is still very much on our agenda in the EU, and it must also stay there.

Mr Ouzký mentioned that Europe is always 'too optimistic'; well maybe it is not always in vain. It is not the pessimists who achieve big things. By setting targets, Europe showed the way in 2008; and in the run-up to Copenhagen, a lot of economies followed.

Two years ago we were more or less alone in setting targets. In the run-up to Copenhagen, big economies such as Indonesia, Mexico, Korea, India, South Africa and others – the list is much longer – set domestic targets. All other things being equal, this is also very important when seen from a European business perspective. That was something we actually gained. Now in a lot of countries, these domestic targets will lead to some kind of paradigm shift. Yes, it is too slow in many ways, but actually we have come quite a long way.

Somebody referred to the emerging economies. This was not an issue for emerging economies before; two years ago the emerging economies would have said that climate change was not for them to deal with. The rich countries would have to deal with it – the developed countries. Today, because of Copenhagen they acknowledge that they have a co-responsibility. We must try to build on that in Cancún, and we will.

There were some questions on the CDM. Yes, it is a problem. We are facing some challenges in that respect, and that is part of our 'to do' list for Cancún: to try to take some steps forward in the reforms that are necessary in the CDM system.

I would like to say to Mr Skylakakis that I am happy to announce that tomorrow the Commission will come forward with our proposal on certain use restrictions on industrial gases. There has been a very fine cooperation with and involvement from Parliament, which is needed in order to reach a successful conclusion with the Member States. We will present our proposal tomorrow and I think that it will accommodate many of the concerns that this Parliament has raised.

My final comment is to Mr Leinen and Mr Arsenis, who both said that they were afraid that Cancún is being downplayed too much. I think that to say that we want an ambitious, substantial and balanced outcome – with all the elements that I mentioned and that the Belgian Presidency has mentioned – is not downplaying things too much. If we really get a decision on forestry, on adaptation, on technology, on the delivery of fast-start finance, on how to measure, report and verify carbon markets, and on the different elements that we have mentioned here, then I think it is substantial progress.

We all know why we cannot get one of the things we would like: the internationally binding deal. One of the reasons is the lack of progress in the American Senate. We all know that that is the reason why. However, I think that if we keep the momentum we are still likely to achieve the European target as soon as possible, namely to have the internationally binding deal.

We will all do our utmost to achieve that kind of progress in Cancún. The alternative is very bad; it is very grim. We must ensure this, and I can assure you that, together, the European delegation will do whatever we can to achieve this, and we will do so in such a way that the world can hear that we are speaking with a now famous 'one voice'. I hope it will be the famous 'one voice' where we are all saying the same thing, where we are coming

up with the same priorities, whether we are ministers, from the Commission, experts, or Members of the European Parliament.

I am also looking forward to working with your delegation when we come to Cancún.

Joke Schauvliege, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (NL) Mr President, honourable Members, naturally, I concur with the Commissioner's words, and I should also like to thank all the Members of this House for their many comments, including the concerns they have expressed. We have in any case taken note of them and shall take them into consideration. I should also like to thank the Commission and its services for their constructive cooperation thus far. I think that we should continue down this path, and that this will also be crucial in the coming days and weeks, both in Cancún and at the climate change conference itself. The Commissioner has answered many of the points, but I should like to mention some more aspects myself.

I have heard many comments about credibility, about 'speaking with one voice', and of course we must do this. I know from personal experience, having attended the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, that the European Union can indeed do this, and also that this is the only right way to achieve a good outcome. We must consider not only the experiences from Nagoya but also last year's bad experiences from Copenhagen, and learn from these. Indeed, the Council has done so; we have adopted a clear position ourselves. We have our Council conclusions, on the basis of which we can proclaim the EU's unambiguous message, including at international level.

Mr Eickhout, it goes without saying that, if the European Union has to return to the Council conclusions, EU coordination will apply, as has always been common practice, and that the message will be further agreed unambiguously there, too. I have also heard a number of comments about the progression to a 30% reduction. As you know, the Council has endorsed the Presidency report on this point, too: the report based on the Commission communication presenting an analysis of the impact of the progression to 30%. In this report – and this has been accepted by the Council – we requested the Commission to further examine the impact on Member States' levels. In that regard, it has also been promised that, in spring – at the Spring Council – a discussion will be held, on the basis of the Commission's further examination, on the progression to a 20% reduction.

Honourable Members, several of you have rightly pointed out the importance of the conference in Nagoya. It is not a matter of adjusting our ambitions. We have to be realistic, but we also have to make every effort to ensure that a good outcome is achieved in Cancún, too – a balanced package of measures. We, the Belgian Presidency, shall do everything in our power to achieve that outcome. We shall do so together with all the Member States, with the European Commission and with your support; we must ensure in this way that, on the strength of the confidence restored in Nagoya – where action at multilateral level succeeded in reaching an agreement once again – we are able to continue in this vein in Cancún and are also able to restore hope for the climate.

IN THE CHAIR: ROBERTA ANGELILLI*Vice-President*

President. – I have received one motion for a resolution ⁽¹⁾ tabled in accordance with Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 25 November 2010.

Written statements (Rule 149)

János Áder (PPE), *in writing.* – (HU) You may have already heard about the HFC-23 scandal announced at yesterday's press conference held by the PPE Group. I too find it completely outrageous that European taxpayers should have to pay approximately 70 times more to destroy a greenhouse gas generated during the production of a refrigerant gas that is already in the process of being phased out, creating enormous extra profits for a few, mostly Chinese and Indian companies. The scandal adds insult to injury as the European Commission, citing investor confidence, is not planning to suspend the trade in these emissions immediately, before 2013, and to change this unsustainable situation.

This is even more outrageous in light of the fact that at international climate negotiations the Commission is doing everything in its power to block new accession states from maintaining Kyoto quotas that form part of their national wealth. It does this in spite of the fact that there are actual emissions reductions behind the quotas that former socialist countries, including Hungary, are entitled to, for which Eastern European countries have paid a considerable price since the regime change. However, the main issue in the scandal revealed yesterday is precisely that while European consumers have paid EUR 1.5 billion so far to destroy HFC-23, the atmospheric concentration of this gas, which is 12 000 times more aggressive than carbon dioxide, has increased considerably in the last two decades. It should therefore come as no surprise to us, ladies and gentlemen, that with such double standards the EU will not have a uniform stance in Cancún, as was the case in Copenhagen.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing.* – (PT) I advocate a binding agreement featuring an international system of sanctions for the climate summit in Cancún that begins next Monday. It is clear that such an agreement will only make sense if it is binding on the major global emitters: the United States, China and India. The EU has been a leader in combating climate change, and should be encouraged to build on this leadership, although without forgetting the tremendous efforts that our industries have already made to respond to the mandatory reductions in emissions within Europe. It should be noted that the EU is responsible for around 15% of global emissions, and it is estimated that this percentage will fall to 10% by 2030, while the US, China and India are responsible for half of global emissions, with this trending upward. As a result, I cannot agree that the EU should unilaterally limit its CO₂ emissions by 30%, rather than the target of 20%, if this is not going to be duly matched by other countries, notably the United States. This does not mean that the EU's ambition should be scaled back. On the contrary, I believe that, even if others do not go along with us, we should continue to focus our efforts on scientific research, technological innovation relating to non-carbon energy sources, energy efficiency and the creation of green jobs, in order to increase our competitiveness.

(1) See Minutes

Alajos Mészáros (PPE), *in writing.* – (HU) Towards a post-Kyoto Protocol ... The 16th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in December in Mexico has even greater significance after the unsuccessful Copenhagen summit. Although at an international level Copenhagen can be considered a step forward, it falls far short of our expectations. The Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012, which is why it is extremely important that we have clearly defined global goals that are plain to everyone. It is not enough that there is relative agreement on the topic within the EU. It is important that the United States and the major Asian powers adopt our targets as well. Even if no agreement can be reached on figures and percentages in Cancún, it is absolutely essential that the Convention states agree on concrete plans and commitments, thus preparing the way for the conclusion of a post-Kyoto Protocol in South Africa in 2011. Agreement must be reached on topics such as financing, monitoring and control mechanisms. The European Union must set a good example by demonstrating a unified position.

Katarína Neveďalová (S&D), *in writing.* – (SK) I would like to start by pointing out that the climate change conference in Cancún is another big chance to do something for future generations, and at least partly make up for what we failed to do in Copenhagen. It is no longer possible to deny global climate change. The planting of vineyards in mountain areas, and the cultivation of crops where they never grew before, are examples of this, as is the more frequent occurrence than before of natural disasters. We must adopt a responsible and long-term solution. I am not an expert on the environment, and the theories differ, but I do believe that it is necessary to do something. We must stop discussing whether or not climate change is a fact, and instead discuss how to combat it. We must stop discussing whether or not climate change can be halted, and instead do something about it. The EU must be a leader in these discussions, as must all of its Member States. We have a responsibility for the future of the whole world. We must support a major reduction in the production of emissions, we must bring together regions, towns and the countryside to protect the environment, we must try to create more green jobs, and we must support investment in research and innovation. I believe that we are the ones who can still save this planet. However, we must stand together firmly and in unity.

Bogusław Sonik (PPE), *in writing.* – (PL) The climate negotiations in Cancún start in only a week. The EU has adopted ambitious plans in the area of emission reductions, funding, forestry and technology transfer. On the one hand, diligence in climate negotiations is important, but this must not obscure the significance of the decisions which will actually be made at the conference. Conclusions should also be drawn from the disappointing results of the Copenhagen conference on climate change, at which no important, specific decisions were made. Therefore, during the 16th Conference of the Parties, the European Union should contribute to a restoration of confidence in international negotiations on climate change. The debate has already gone on long enough. Now in Cancún, specific relevant measures need to be worked out, on the basis of which it will be possible to make a comprehensive international agreement in South Africa in 2011.

15. Future of the Africa/EU strategic partnership on the eve of 3rd Africa/EU summit (debate)

President. – The next item is the statements by the Council and the Commission on the future of the Africa/EU strategic partnership, on the eve of the third Africa/EU summit.

Olivier Chastel, *President-in-Office of the Council, on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – (FR) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I am first of all most grateful to you for offering me the opportunity to speak about the next European Union-Africa summit, which I know is of interest to a great many of you.

If the first summit, held in Cairo in 2000, launched the process of continental cooperation, the second, which took place in Lisbon in 2007, defined the new programme for European Union-Africa relations. The third, in Tripoli, should consolidate our strategic partnership and finally yield concrete results.

It is on the issues of peace and security that the leading role played by the African Union is of the greatest importance. In Sudan, the African Union was the first to deploy a peacekeeping mission. In Darfur, thanks to the panel led by Mr Mbeki, the African Union is taking up a leading global political role. The progress that has recently been made in negotiating a North-South framework agreement is an important step forward towards a peaceful transition. The Union's deployment in the course of an election observation mission, moreover, clearly emphasises our determination to contribute towards ensuring a peaceful transition in Sudan. In Somalia, AMISOM, the African Union Mission in Somalia, is the only actor present on the ground in Mogadishu.

As far as coups d'état are concerned, the strict zero-tolerance rule applied by the African Union provides protection and plays a decisive role in re-establishing constitutional order. The African Union has become the organisation that establishes norms, not only in this sphere but also in that of political governance, on the African continent and in the process of economic integration. It provides the political framework enabling its member states and regional economic communities to encourage intra-African exchange and transnational infrastructure. The whole of the portfolio of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, including its socio-economic development programme, is currently fully integrated with the African Union.

This internal process goes hand in hand with the reforms put into effect in international governance structures as regards African representation. The African Union is well placed on this issue to coordinate African positions in the international arena. On climate change, for example, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia has been mandated by the African Union to speak on behalf of Africa on the international stage.

The African Union has become indispensable to the European Union in a number of cases for which we need solutions and contributions from Africa, whether it is a case of peacekeeping, migration, drug trafficking, climate change or the International Criminal Court. Africa also offers opportunities that the Union should explore, take for example cooperation in the area of energy relations, the Arms Trade Treaty, and the prospects offered by the private sector, to name only a few. A particular challenge in the framework of European Union-African Union cooperation is clearly linked to the International Criminal Court. Our African partners contributed to its establishment and their cooperation remains essential to this political objective, which is of primary importance to the European Union. They have, however, been critical of the manner in which the affair of President al-Bashir of Sudan has been dealt with, and of the fact that the Security Council did not invoke the suspension procedure, which has led the African Union to distance itself from the Court. As for the Union, we obviously remain wholly in favour of the independence of the Court and we can only leave the matter in the hands of the Security Council as far as a possible suspension procedure is concerned. During the next summit, we shall clearly express our

opinion, while knowing perfectly well that the summit will undoubtedly not bring about a change in the position of the African Union, which has also been clearly established.

Europe remains Africa's most important partner. Political, economic, institutional and development cooperation always exceeds that of any other regional partnership or of any relationship with a national government. However, the Union should not underestimate the rapid growth in the participation of emerging partners. The Union should be pleased with this new context, but since it has an effect on European Union-African relations, we are also asking for a renewed focus on the known elements that constitute our trump cards and bring added value, for better coordination to be ensured and for priority to be given to situations that are of advantage to all.

For the Union, we find ourselves in an institutional situation without equal elsewhere in the world: two Unions that have regional integration as their goal and which wish to contribute to the advent of a multilateral system of global governance. The African Union is watching the creation of the new institutions put in place by virtue of the Treaty of Lisbon with interest. An Africa that is at ease, courted by multiple partners offering for the first time, and indeed the first time in a long while, promising perspectives for growth, will clearly wish to be treated as an equal.

Preparation for the summit is therefore proceeding. Discussions with our Libyan hosts and our opposite numbers from the African Union have been useful. A great number of leaders, from both Europe and Africa, have confirmed that they will be taking part at the highest level. The principal discussions at the summit will be on its central theme: investment, economic growth and job creation, as well as on several associated secondary themes. We hope that these discussions will lead to concrete results.

Participants in the political dialogue at ministerial level, which took place in Malawi, were able to finalise the summit communiqué, the declaration of Tripoli, and the joint action plan for 2011-2013. The latter represents a solid foundation for our future efforts by ensuring a good balance between traditional development priorities – infrastructure, the Millennium Development Goals; political themes – peace and security, democratic governance and human rights, migration, mobility, jobs; and new promising spheres of cooperation, such as renewable energy, climate change, information technology and space, to mention only a few.

Finally, I should like to say to you, on behalf of President Van Rompuy, that I warmly welcome Parliament's positive participation in the discussions on the future of relations between Africa and the European Union, and I welcome the meeting between the European Parliament and the Pan-African Parliament, which will be held in Tripoli on 27 November, just before the summit. This meeting will constitute an excellent occasion for drawing up basic recommendations for the debate in plenary which will take place during the summit. I am equally pleased with the tenor of this debate today, and I await your opinions with interest.

Andris Piebalgs, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, it is true that achieving the Millennium Development Goals and overcoming poverty remain at the heart of Europe's partnership with Africa. At the same time, our relations go far beyond that. The cooperation opportunities of the two continents are enormous.

Earlier this month, the Commission presented proposals on how to consolidate our relationship by adding strength to it and focusing on inclusive and sustainable growth in

the long term. The summit in Tripoli will be an excellent occasion to discuss ways of improving our cooperation in this respect.

The Commission believes that there is a need to enhance political and policy dialogue beyond traditional development scenarios. The EU and Africa must cooperate bilaterally and also work together on the international stage to promote our shared interest: tackling climate change, making progress towards the MDGs and promoting peace and security, democratic governance and human rights.

This aim is to ensure that both sides can jointly address the global challenges that will dominate the summit agenda and prepare the ground for a more effective and mutually-beneficial cooperation.

Given the summit's focus on investment, growth and job creation, we also need to agree on how to work together to overcome the repercussions of the economic and financial crisis. This will notably require promoting a more business- and investment-friendly environment. It will be the occasion to look into promising areas such as renewable energies, information and communication technologies, science and others. These are the areas where African demands are huge and where, at the same time, Europe has a lot to offer. We can also build on joint successes so far: peace and security, and regional integration.

This ambitious agenda requires building on the success of the Lisbon Summit in 2007 and on the results achieved since then by the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and its first action plan. Drawing from the lessons learned, the communication also calls for both sides to do more to overcome the current fragmentation of policy frameworks and financial instruments. Better synergies between EU policies, notably with sub-Saharan Africa and the Mediterranean region, should be found to ensure real coherence and increased effectiveness and visibility. Better internal coordination with Member States and the active involvement of all stakeholders – Parliament, civil society, the private sector – are also needed.

In order to deliver better results, the action plan for 2011-2013 should give priority to activities that have a clear regional, continental or global added value. The summit will be an excellent opportunity to plot our way forward. It will also require changes on the European side, and that will require us to improve the way the EU steers its relations with Africa.

I believe we will need to continue this debate after the summit, but I am very much looking forward to the debate today so that we will be well prepared for the summit.

Filip Kaczmarek, *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (PL) Madam President, the common challenges which stand before Africa and the European Union are clear and unequivocal. Both Mr Chastel and Mr Piebalgs have spoken about this. Without doubt, we can include, here, the eradication of poverty, peace and security, democracy and human rights, global governance and climate change. We have also established specific objectives at international level – the Millennium Development Goals. I agree with Mr Piebalgs that reaching the Millennium Development Goals will be crucial, in fact, for cooperation on development and for the future of Africa.

We have also formulated certain additional goals, which are very important for mutual relations between the European Union and Africa. These are: improving the good quality of political governance, and effective, honest and sustainable governance of natural and economic resources. We hope the partnership between the European Union and Africa, as well as common strategies and measures, will produce definite effects. We hope, for

example, that the economic growth being observed in many African countries will foster social inclusion and that it will reduce the level of poverty and social inequalities. Therefore, we want, in fact, to create the conditions for investment and trade, and, in consequence, for the creation of new jobs. We are hoping, too, that this development will be sustainable, which means that it will lead to the building of an effective, ecological and competitive economy.

An aspect which will also certainly be emphasised strongly at the summit is the huge, currently unused potential of Africa in the field of renewable energy, including hydro, solar, wind, geothermal and biomass energy. This is something which represents a certain potential which up till now has not been fully used, and just like other aspects of Africa's potential, it does not always work for the good of the people who live there. Concentrating on good governance and on the use of this potential will lead, or may lead, to a qualitative change.

Monika Flašíková Beňová, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (SK) Madam President, the only intercontinental partnership which the European Union has established is the strategic partnership with Africa.

After reading the text which the Commission published ahead of the forthcoming summit, I could not help feeling that it sounded almost too positive. As if it were written by somebody wearing rose-tinted spectacles.

The reality is, however, far from rosy. If we want to overcome problems, we must talk about them quite openly. On the African side, disintegration still prevails. The political mandate of the African Union is weak and the African continent is still divided, including economically.

The economic partnership agreements between the EU and African countries do not work, and the African regional economic communities make the whole situation even more confused.

In short, it is hard to talk about Africa as one unit. On the other hand, the Union and its Member States do not have coherent policies on Africa, and they often take a utilitarian or paternalistic approach to partnership. It would therefore be a good thing if the Commission also took account of these aspects in its report.

Charles Goerens, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (FR) Madam President, the present time, marked by the crisis, should leave little room for tried and tested methods and for what has been heard before. If the EU–Africa summit is not to be in vain, it should succeed in confronting real problems. What is more, and this is by far the most important aspect, it should open up the prospect of the considerable potential enjoyed by the African continent.

From Africa, we expect a clear message as regards an improvement in its governance, its capacity for realising added value and its determination to stop the pillaging of its resources. We also expect Africa to point out the obstacles that it is still in no position to eliminate with the help of its own resources.

From Europe, we expect it to develop its listening capacity, its part in the progress of Africa, its concern to free the dark continent of political, economic and commercial slavery. Europe has an overwhelming responsibility in these areas.

If the European Union-Africa Summit is going to contribute to opening the way to better representation for Africa on the Security Council and at the G20, and put it in a better position to eradicate poverty, the summit will not have been in vain.

Judith Sargentini, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (NL) Madam President, relations between Europe and Africa are under strain. In my opinion, this is not just owing to the economic crisis but also owing to our short-term instead of long-term thinking. Do we want, in the short term, to see free trade throughout Africa and thus to push through the European Partnership Agreement (EPA) of all those countries, or do we want a stable, growing economy in Africa in the long term, with whom we can then do business more generously? Do we want Africa to keep its migrants at home now, or do we recognise that our domestic populations are going to age in future and that we shall then be in need of workers? Do we want to avoid paying now for global warming and the problems this is causing in Africa and later be faced with a destabilising country, or continent, and large groups of refugees? Do we want to casually enter into a conflict with China now to obtain raw materials as quickly as possible, or do we want to still be able to benefit from Africa's prosperity at a later date? Also, primarily, how do we ensure that Africa can benefit from its own raw materials in the long term, too? How do we ensure that African citizens are able to call African leaders to account? After all, this EU-Africa Summit in Tripoli has also shown that we are dealing with leaders who have long been sitting out their time: Bouteflika, dos Santos, Mugabe – you could wonder whether any of these men have the best intentions for their people. We must find an answer to these questions.

Nirj Deva, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, Africa is the richest continent in the world and its people the poorest in terms of per capita income. How is this possible? I think Commissioner Piebalgs struck the right note when he said that we need concrete action at a regional, continental level.

To get there we do not need more handouts, which just keep people in subsistence poverty; we need to work to create economic growth. Economic growth can only come from enterprise and education, but education and enterprise can only come if there are the instruments to create economic growth. For example, much of Africa does not have electricity, so Africa does not have the proper education or the proper computers or the proper infrastructure for economic growth. We now need to put more electricity into Africa, we need clean water, and we need to have food security. I am delighted that the African Union is now following a policy of zero tolerance for coups d'état. Hooray, as the Council said.

What we need to do now is to look at Africa as a modern, emerging economic tiger and enable Africa to be fuelled faster and quicker in order to grow richer.

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

Richard Howitt (S&D). – Madam President, I thank Mr Deva for his contribution but can I ask him, when he says that the euro handouts are over, if he does not agree that all Member States, including the United Kingdom, should stick to the calendar for achieving the UN Millennium Development Goal of committing 0.7% of GNP to development aid by the year 2013?

If not, how can his aspiration for clean water, food security and an end to poverty be met without the international community meeting its promises on aid levels?

Nirj Deva (ECR). – Madam President, I am very grateful for the honourable Member's intervention. I said to the House that handouts will not simply alleviate poverty.

Of course, I support the Millennium Development Goals and I applaud the Conservative government which, while having to cut our national budget by something like 30%, including our school budget, has ring-fenced and increased our development assistance budget by 27%.

I am very grateful to Mr Howitt for enabling me to air this extraordinary act of consistency and generosity on the part of the coalition government in London.

But even by increasing the budget by 27%, and even if we reach the Millennium Development Goals, we are not going to eliminate poverty in Africa until we help Africans to grow wealthier.

Europe did not become what it is today just by eliminating poverty and living at subsistence level. It grew rich by creating wealth. Until we create wealth in Africa which can be retained and is not brought back, we will not succeed.

Elie Hoarau, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (FR) Madam President, the European Union frequently portrays economic partnership agreements as an opportunity for African countries. It also despairs of seeing these agreements signed rapidly.

However, the question that concerns us is knowing why these countries do not fall over themselves to sign these agreements that would be so advantageous for them. Quite clearly, views differ on the quality of these agreements, and as long as these differences of opinion remain, the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States will jib at signing them.

Would it not be advisable to engage further in dialogue and understanding by listening to the concerns and the expectations of the ACP Group of States? These states want to talk about development strategy, while, frequently, Europe replies only in terms of opening markets.

It is this listening that the ACP-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly enforces. I believe that the other European institutions should proceed in the same manner if we wish to build a real strategic partnership between Africa and the European Union.

Giancarlo Scottà, *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the third summit between the European Union and Africa is a fundamental opportunity to consolidate relations between the two parties.

During this event we will talk about economic growth, sustainable development and political governance, considering several dossiers, including an examination of the agriculture and food safety sector in the context of the Millennium Development Goals.

In order to guarantee universal access to food, combat poverty in rural areas and improve the quality of agricultural production, the participation of producers' organisations and sector associations is required so that they can be committed and aware, and improve the distribution and management of natural resources.

The European Union must work to make the best of these opportunities to intensify dialogue and cooperation in support of regional integration in Africa. In particular, the imbalances and corruption of cooperation initiatives must be fought. Governments' responsibilities must not predominate over those of civil society and the participation of

all those involved in strategies of sustainable economic and social growth must be guaranteed.

Franz Obermayr (NI). – (DE) Madam President, specific initiatives for growth and employment are to be discussed at the EU-Africa summit, and that is a good thing. However, it is not good for a ludicrous project like the trans-African Super Highway to be built with EU support, because the 500 km of road, planned for 2012, to be built right through Tanzania and Kenya, right through the largest game reserve in the world, the Serengeti, is a project that should be rejected. Every year, millions of wild animals roam through the Serengeti to their watering holes in the north. Scientists are issuing specific warnings about the ecological disaster that is looming here: if the animals cannot access the water, the ecosystem will collapse, biodiversity will be lost and it will damage local tourism, which accounts for 23% of Tanzania's income. I therefore call on the Council and the Commission to say a definite 'no' to this project, which represents ecological and economic madness. Let us protect Africa's last resources, let us save the Serengeti for a second time. I would also ask you, if you will, to sign the written declaration against this project, the Serengeti Highway, that I have submitted.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – (RO) Madam President, the European Union-Africa Summit taking place in Tripoli next week provides us with the opportunity to think about the direction in which we want to steer this partnership that links us with Africa.

In my view, the European Commission Communication of 11 November is welcome. I would particularly like to welcome the emphasis placed in this document on the need to supplement development cooperation with specific measures which could trigger sustainable, inclusive growth in this region.

In fact, if we want the countries in Africa to become the Union's genuine partners and take control of their own destiny, there is no other way to achieve this than by promoting economic growth. I would like to highlight three points which I feel are particularly important in our future relations with Africa:

– firstly, if we want the Union's voice to be heard in Africa, we must ensure that we are dealing with a partner who is receptive to our message. With this in mind, strengthening the African Union in institutional and operational terms is a priority;

– secondly, I believe that partnership in peace and security is the area of cooperation with Africa which works best at the moment, based on the analysis of both the Commission and experts. However, I believe that we can do more than this. In my view, we need to strengthen the conflict prevention aspect and the policy consolidation mechanisms because both the conflicts and fragile state of some countries in the region obviously influence the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

– finally, I would like to stress how vital it is to establish democracy and respect human rights. The European Union and Africa are frequently out of harmony on these matters. Political dialogue must therefore be strengthened and the establishment of democracy in this region must be a matter of priority raised systematically in relations with Africa.

Joanna Senyszyn (S&D). – (PL) Madam President, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals occupies a strategic position in the new plan to implement a joint Africa-EU strategy. A fundamental problem is to reduce poverty, which has become worse as a result of the crisis. Almost 30% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty, which means having less than USD 1.25 per day. Over 100 million people do not have

access to safe water. Almost 80 people die of hunger every minute, and this includes 60 children. Every year, this amounts to 40 million, equivalent to the population of a large European country. The situation is most difficult in Africa, and in particular in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition to strategic measures, this also requires an increase in immediate aid. The dying cannot wait. The Union is the largest donor of development aid. Over half of official support comes from us. We should be proud of this. We must intensify our aid for Africa, and make it more effective. Therefore, I support the Commission in its plans to strengthen cooperation on development, based on sustainable growth and action to prevent social exclusion.

Louis Michel (ALDE). – (FR) Madam President, Mr Chastel, in 2007, we Africans and Europeans were very ambitious. Our joint strategy was based on an action plan containing eight very concrete strategic partnerships.

At the Tripoli summit, a second action plan will be adopted. For my part, I should like to emphasise four requirements that need to be satisfied for this strategic plan to be a real success. I would first insist on greater participation by the national parliaments, European and Pan-African, in the implementation of this joint strategy.

Second, there must be better linkage between the joint strategy and the Cotonou Agreement.

Third, the Tripoli summit, which is dedicated to investment, economic growth and job creation, must, if it is to succeed, urgently address the question of improving the climate for business – I have heard this mentioned in several speeches, but it is essential. The legal and judicial inviolability of private investment is one of the keys to Africa's economic and social development. There will be no other development strategy, Mr Hoarau, than the opening of markets. Everything else is charity and, unfortunately, until now, that is not working, at least not sufficiently.

In conclusion, the final element: I should like to ask you, Commissioner, to see whether it would not be useful to discuss this quickly at Commission level and to draw up some proposals to ensure that those of our businesses operating in developing countries, and particularly in the natural resources sector in those countries, comply or fall in line with the Dodd Act enacted by the US Congress, because that would constitute a giant step in the fight against the pillaging of natural resources and against corruption.

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

Nirj Deva (ECR). – Madam President, I wanted to ask Mr Michel, given his distinguished career as a development Commissioner and his enormous experience in Africa, whether he could get African parliaments – particularly the African parliaments' public scrutiny committees on finances and budgets – to be empowered and strengthened and given greater support from us so that they could actually question what happens with their ministers and their presidents in the enactment and clarity and accountability of the legislative and spending process? Would he agree that this may be something very important that we can do practically?

Louis Michel (ALDE). – (FR) Madam President, that would certainly be possible. I must, moreover, say that the Commission has, for many years now, been financing the operations and capacities of national parliaments in developing countries precisely in order to give them the means of exercising that control. You will also know that, in another parliament and in another time, our fellow Member, Glenys Kinnock, championed the proposition

that strategy documents per country and regional documents be of necessity, I should say almost as a precaution, proactively, debated in national parliaments.

You will also know, for example, that in order for there to be what is termed budgetary assistance, one of the conditions for there to be budgetary assistance, which is an act of confidence in the institutions of a developing country, is that the national budget, and hence the use to which development funds are to be put, be debated in the national parliament. I believe that, as far as the Commission is concerned, a whole series of conditions and a whole series of methods are already deployed in any case from that point of view.

Charles Tannock (ECR). – Madam President, the African Union has proved sometimes to be a disappointment in confronting Africa's many challenges. The AU is all too often silent in the face of autocracy, corruption, electoral fraud and illegal coups d'état.

If the EU and Africa want to deepen and intensify their strategic cooperation in the future, we cannot shy away from expressing our expectations of Africa in a firm and frank manner. That means, in reality, that the African Union must become a more responsible and responsive organisation with genuine moral and political authority.

When Africa needs help to tackle humanitarian crises, we of course should continue to provide the necessary financial and human resources. In particular, the EU needs to ensure that its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals remains as robust as ever. The EU should also reflect on the damage done to African economies by its trade policies and its – sometimes somewhat absurd – farm subsidy regime.

But ultimately only Africans can solve Africa's problems. We need to grasp this reality and make it central to our approach to this strategic continent and our relationship with it.

Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE). – (FR) Madam President, there is no point in mentioning that a joint strategy is a strategy that sets joint priorities and goals. We already have this strategy. What we need today is to put in place specific means of attaining these goals.

To this end, we need clear policy lines, coherent economic policies and stable social criteria. At the political level, respect for democratic values and human rights remains our guiding thread. In this context, I should like to invite our partners to ratify the African Charter on Democracy as quickly as possible and to see to it that the commitments undertaken by both parties be respected.

At the economic level, ensuring appropriate and transparent funding of the strategy and fighting corruption at all levels are the additional guarantees for the success of our joint activities. It is also extremely important that we continue to work towards establishing regional markets in which there is a recognised place for agriculture.

At the social level, dialogue with local NGOs and all the players in civil society must be given priority. We must constantly be directing social policy to a higher level. In this respect, I believe that we must keep a special place for education, training and youth mobility, in order to relaunch a new global dynamic. Our two parliaments, Pan-African and European, must endeavour to establish a regular follow-up of reports and annual action plans, with the assistance of joint experts. We are thus faced with several challenges. In order to meet them, we must move beyond the differences between and within our two continents. The EU-Africa summit is the occasion for proposing effective joint solutions, and it is up to us to grasp this opportunity.

Norbert Neuser (S&D). – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the signs look very promising for the EU-Africa summit. The summit will revolve entirely around an equal partnership for a better common future. Two months after the Millennium Development Goals summit in New York, we have the unique opportunity to take further specific, binding steps in the fight against poverty in Africa.

We are, of course, following all of China's extensive activities on the African continent to safeguard its own supply of raw materials with great concern. It is very much reminiscent of the behaviour of colonial states. The European Union must, therefore, press for a regulation that promotes the common good of, and social progress in, the African countries. That will create work that is sustainable. I therefore expressly welcome the Commission's proposal to employ effective controls in the context of raw materials management. Together with the African partners, we need to support a structural policy that promotes growth and climate protection in order for the African people to escape from the poverty trap. We support the Commission's proposals for social cohesion, because they will help to create jobs. We must put the people of Africa in a position where they can achieve the goal of earning a living wage through their own work.

Finally, I would like to provide a summary of the following priorities. Firstly, we need to strengthen the African Union and its representations in all international bodies – the Security Council, G20 and the Pan-African Parliament. The Millennium Goals must be achieved in Africa by 2015 by means of further initiatives. We must ensure that the social standards stipulated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are laid down and made binding in any economic and trade agreements between the EU and Africa.

Geoffrey Van Orden (ECR). – Madam President, the Action Plan for the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership includes a section on democratic governance and human rights, which are regarded as 'key for sustainable development'. However, we have been very poor at implementing such objectives.

A prime example has been the failure to bring about real change in Zimbabwe. In 2007, in the lead-up to the first EU-Africa summit, we complained bitterly about the EU's hypocrisy in imposing a travel ban and asset freeze on Mugabe and his ilk with one hand, while inviting him to a summit in a European capital – Lisbon – with the other. Now we find that Mugabe is yet again invited to an EU-Africa summit, albeit in Libya, and we meekly trot along as if none of this mattered. To rub shoulders with Mugabe is an affront to our principles and is in direct contradiction to the EU's own, stated position. It is a failure of our diplomacy in Africa that any African government still has any regard for Mugabe.

Madam President, may I put two questions to the Council and the Commission? In Libya, will EU representatives voice their disapproval of Mugabe's presence? Secondly, what is the EU doing to actively promote good governance? Without it, there is little hope for a prosperous, democratic future for Africa.

Enrique Guerrero Salom (S&D). – (ES) Madam President, Commissioner, in just a few weeks the European Union has played a leading role in a large number of summits, beginning with China, then Asia, the United States and the G20. Soon we will go to Cancún and next week to the EU-Africa Summit.

We could see this as being simply a question of our schedule, a routine succession of summits that we encounter every year or every so often. We could, however, see it as being a series of summits in which we need to move forward on the issues, in which we need to

introduce the necessary reforms in order to face up to a world that is changing in terms of its problems, its responses and its players.

This is how we must see the forthcoming EU-Africa Summit. There are 80 countries meeting together, representing a third of the United Nations countries and 1.5 billion inhabitants, which is one in every four. Unfortunately, we cannot say that we have the same proportional gross domestic product, as the 53 African countries include some of the poorest countries in the world.

What do we need to do in order to improve the action that we are taking? Firstly, we need to focus our priorities on more infrastructure, greater food security and more support for governability.

Secondly, we need to focus our aid instruments, support civil society, support private initiative and strengthen the role of the European Parliament and of the Pan-African Parliament. Finally we need to unite with Africa in a series of strategic relationships, for example, regarding international financial institutions.

The reform of the World Bank has given greater powers to the emerging countries, but it has taken power away from Africa. The President of the World Bank said in April that now the concept of the 'third world' has been consigned to the history books. Unfortunately that is not the case, but we can do something to ensure that it becomes a reality in the near future.

Salvatore Iacolino (PPE). – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, first of all we must remember that Africa is the tenth world power, even in a year in which we remember an important issue – poverty – which certainly affects Africa as it affects many other continents.

We need to strengthen the association agreements and take action for economic sustainability, particularly through infrastructure, education, health and water resources, with real controls on the adequacy of the financial measures decided upon for African countries, remembering that Africa varies greatly from region to region. There are regions with particular needs, which often give rise to flows of illegal immigrants, for example. Instead, we need to adapt migratory flows to the effective needs of the labour market. A constructive dialogue can certainly protect fundamental rights and support governance in this extremely important continent.

Ana Gomes (S&D). – Madam President, at the upcoming EU-Africa summit in Libya, EU leaders will face Meles Zenawi, the prime minister of Ethiopia. Ethiopia is not only the second most populous country in Africa and the headquarters of the African Union, it is also the partner – in terms of the Cotonou Agreement – which has prevented the delivery of the EU election report in Addis Ababa in 2005, and more recently in 2010, in order to avoid exposing the irregularities and the manipulation of the elections.

What good is the talk of democracy, human rights and good governance, which the EU is going to have with African interlocutors, if Meles Zenawi, the dictator of Ethiopia, is the interlocutor for Africa?

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – (SK) Madam President, we all know that the populations of many African countries are now dependent on humanitarian assistance from advanced countries. In future, however, our assistance should be directed towards stimulating the economic

development of the populous areas, so that the citizens of African countries can gradually change the character of their countries through their own efforts.

Mineral resources and human resources give African countries the potential to escape from backwardness and poverty, with some well thought-out assistance from industrialised countries. If African countries are to attract jobs, know-how and major investment, there is clearly a need for greater political stability, a normal legal environment and acceptable rules for entrepreneurs, who will then be willing to develop their operations in African countries in an honest way.

A major barrier to such an environment is the savage authoritarian regimes whose behaviour discourages all decent people from entering into any form of cooperation. In my opinion, this is the problem which does most harm to the development prospects of the African continent. It is a problem that must be resolved.

Andreas Mölzer (NI). – (DE) Madam President, everyone knows the African proverb that asserts that ‘poverty is like a lion; if you do not fight, you get eaten’. If we consider the current development aid and the cooperation between Africa and the European Union, we cannot help thinking that billions are currently being thrown as food for the lion rather than actually being used to help people.

Of course, the African continent has a whole range of problems. For one thing, there are the numerous armed conflicts that we do not really succeed in bringing to a peaceful end and which the money provided in aid, which often falls into the wrong hands, repeatedly serves to fuel. Secondly, the fact that economic growth rates hardly go hand in hand with success in combating poverty is problematic. In this regard, we need to take seriously the criticism that the EU is pressing the African states to opening up the markets, which could exacerbate poverty and hunger. This needs to be brought up in the free trade agreement discussions at the EU-Africa summit, along with the criticism that cheap food exports are putting the livelihoods of whole population groups at risk.

Elena Băsescu (PPE). – (RO) Madam President, the forthcoming EU-Africa Summit provides a good opportunity for devising a realistic cooperation strategy.

I think that the proposals tabled by the European Commission will, in terms of strengthening relations between both continents, facilitate the adoption of a specific action plan during the Summit. The decisions made by the Heads of State or Government who will be gathering on this occasion will affect 1.5 billion people in 80 countries.

Eradication of poverty, human rights and economic governance are common challenges requiring a common approach. This is why it is important that the EU-Africa partnership does not remain that of donor-beneficiary but becomes a partnership between equals.

Just as I have done during the debates on combating poverty, I would like to stress the importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. I think that, in particular, better coordination is needed between the four priority action areas: financing, food security, health and education.

Alf Svensson (PPE). – (SV) Madam President, it should perhaps also be pointed out that Africa has in fact made some improvements itself recently. However, we know that there is still much to be done.

The economic crisis has unsettled and is still unsettling Europe. We analyse every-day life, but we pay very little attention to what has happened to the developing countries as a result

of the global economic crisis. I think it would be very important to carry out such an analysis. How have the developing countries been affected by the economic crisis?

I would also like to stress how important it is for us to facilitate, or rather improve, conditions for investments in developing countries, including for European investments in developing countries. There is no lack of ideas and investments from the developing countries themselves, but there is a need for stability. It would be an extremely positive development if the aid – or whatever we now want to call it – could help to create stability for the ideas, projects and investments of a domestic nature that could actually be carried out in the developing countries.

Andris Piebalgs, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, this has been an extremely rich debate and I would just like to emphasise a couple of points in answer to some questions.

I think it would be wrong not to recognise that Africa has changed substantially. Africa has more self-confidence; and good reason for it. Economic growth is there and, in a way, Africa has dealt with the economic and financial crises better than Europe has done.

Africa is much more organised and much stronger – even more than the European Commission – and has more power in the form of the African Union. At the same time it would be wrong to compare the African Union with the European Union, because they are different types of Unions and we should not try to compare them one to one. However, it is very clear that there is an African Union.

It is also important that Africa understands its power in the international arena. African countries are looking for representation in accordance with their political way. That means that this summit is a very particular summit. It is definitely not a donor/recipient summit. It is a summit that perhaps may not even be very high profile, but we need to make that relation thrive.

I believe that we need to address two critical issues. One is a more simple issue: that achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should be done in a sustainable way through inclusive growth. That is why we address the issue of energy. That is why much focus is placed on sustainable agriculture, because without it our results in achieving MDGs and fighting poverty and providing more stability will be under threat.

The second issue is very serious political debate. Yes, good governance and human rights are on the agenda. But it is not the case any more that one side is listening and the other one is making its point. It is a two-way street. On the one hand, that is a challenge and on the other hand it is an opportunity. Human rights and good governance are for us the backbone of stability in our societies. It is not that we wish to preach. However, we believe you cannot achieve the MDGs and eradicate poverty without addressing these issues.

That means that in all the programmes that we address, good governance is key. In the ex-ante procedure, we do not engage with governments where we see no hope of good governance. We then go on to deal with NGOs; we try to support the population by other means. However, in each and every project we increasingly emphasise the role of good governance and human rights.

Sustainability is also to the fore in our policy. We do not finance the Serengeti projects, for example. No EU money is involved in any project that damages the environment. Each project is evaluated on the basis of an environmental impact assessment. We have a very

sustainable approach to the projects. But at the same time it is very clear that we cannot expect that a continent that will double its population in a very short time will not have an impact on the environment.

And again, our role now in the current situation is really to look for sustainable growth; and renewable energy is the key to providing such a type of growth.

I believe that this is a very particular summit. It is a summit that is not so much about political slogans, but more about the trust that already exists. That is rather fragile. We could benefit from a lot from these relations, but there could be a lot of damage.

I believe that this summit will have a lasting impact, because I believe that the emphasis is on the right areas. We are looking from Africa's point of view at Africa's political role. We have provided a lot of support to bring Africa to where it is today, and we are committed to moving Africa forward with our support, and definitely by encouraging Africa to have ownership of the processes in Africa.

IN THE CHAIR: SILVANA KOCH-MEHRIN

Vice-President

Olivier Chastel, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (FR) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, somewhat by way of a complement to what the Commission has just told us and by way of a conclusion, I should like to tell you that the third European Union-Africa summit in Tripoli must send an important political signal aimed at deepening our cooperation with Africa in the years to come.

It will be about better cooperation on the challenges faced by the two continents, about better exploitation of the possibilities offered by the combination of their enormous potential and about better coordination of our positions on the international stage. African and European leaders will not fail to find pointers for the road to follow. In this debate, we have heard a number of specific pointers, which we shall obviously not fail to pass on. All contributions, particularly those made by parliamentarians, are welcome.

I should also like to reply to one question in particular. A number of you have specifically mentioned the economic partnership agreements which, it is true, are a sensitive issue, and which were already a significant cause of disagreement at the 2007 Lisbon summit. Given the strong reluctance on the part of Africa to conclude economic partnership agreements, it is true that certain players have asked for a political signal that we are taking account of the African position; others argue for a much more proactive and positive approach on the nature of our proposals.

At the summit, our genuine feeling is that it will be best as far as this issue is concerned to look for an agreement to reopen these negotiations in any case.

President. – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place during the next part-session in December.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Nuno Teixeira (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The Africa-EU strategic partnership established in 2007 at the Lisbon Summit allowed the two continents to define common interests and strategic objectives, going beyond traditional EU development policy. The objectives outlined were put into practice with the adoption of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the

2008-2010 action plan which sets out eight priority areas: peace and security; democratic governance and human rights; trade, regional integration and infrastructure, the millennium development goals, energy, climate change, migration, mobility and employment, science, information society and space. The third Africa-EU Summit, to take place in Tripoli, the capital of Libya, will have 'Investment, economic growth and job creation' as its theme, with the aim of outlining long-term joint guidelines in these areas, while safeguarding the priorities set out in the EU 2020 strategy. I believe that this is an opportunity for Portuguese traders to make closer connections in the African market as part of their business networks, but the issues of insecurity and the high levels of crime perpetrated by the Portuguese community, particularly the Madeiran Community resident in South Africa, must nevertheless be addressed. It is therefore vital to strengthen and develop concrete and concerted cooperation, and simultaneously adapt it to new challenges in international relations.

16. Situation in Western Sahara (debate)

President. – The next item is the debate on the situation in Western Sahara.

Statements by the Council and the Commission.

Andris Piebalgs, *Member of the Commission, on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – Madam President, I thank this House for a very timely discussion on Western Sahara. I am answering, on behalf of Catherine Ashton, on the basis of the oral questions put forward by Members of the Parliament.

The European Union is worried about the events which took place in Laâyoune at the beginning of November, and it regrets the loss of lives. Now calm has returned to Laâyoune, even though underlying tensions still remain. The European Union is worried that the violent outburst witnessed in Laâyoune could hamper the United Nations Secretary-General's attempts to find a mutually-acceptable solution to the Western Sahara conflict.

Regarding the concerns we are talking about today, we shall make sure that they reach the Moroccan authorities through the appropriate channels. The issue of Western Sahara is on the agenda of the Association Council's next meeting in December. It could also be raised within the Joint Parliamentary Committee between the European Parliament and Morocco.

The European Union continues to be engaged with Morocco on reforms in areas such as good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The European Union maintains a good and frank policy dialogue with Morocco within the bodies responsible for the follow-up of our Association Agreement. Within this framework, the European Union has reminded our partner of the importance of it abiding by the international commitments it has undertaken regarding respect for human rights. As for the use of Western Sahara's natural resources, it is Morocco's responsibility to comply with its obligations under international law, including those related to the use of Western Sahara's natural resources.

The European Union supports the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution which will

provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in agreement with the Security Council resolutions.

Bernd Posselt (PPE). – (DE) Madam President, I have been waiting for 70 minutes for Question Time to begin and would like to ask when it will actually take place. Normally, the debate is interrupted for Question Time and then continued afterwards.

President. – There will be no Question Time, because the group chairs decided at the Conference of Presidents that it would not take place. I therefore do not think there is any point in you waiting any longer.

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (ES) Madam President, they say that the philosopher Aristotle was walking around his famous Peripatetic School with his students when one of them made a comment that upset his master. By way of apology, he said, 'that was not my comment, it was made by your master Plato'. Then Aristotle stopped and pronounced a sentence that has been repeated numerous times on the European stage from the fourth century BC to the present day. He said, 'Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is the truth'.

Madam President, Morocco is a positive and active partner of the European Union, and it is also a strategic and fundamental ally in containing radical Islamic fundamentalism. However, as President Sarkozy said when he spoke here, Parliament is the democratic heartbeat of the European Union, and has an irrevocable and undeniable commitment to the cause of human rights. Therefore, if these rights are not acknowledged, it cannot stand aside and look the other way. It must speak out loud and clear about the principles that drive us.

Madam President, the European Union has been, is and will be a loyal partner of Morocco, but that partnership is based on principles and values, and we have to proclaim those principles and values.

I will conclude now, Madam President, by saying that truly, moderation in character or temperament is always a virtue, but moderation in the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of expression, is always a vice, always a weakness and always cowardly, and as representatives of the people of the European Union we cannot allow ourselves to act in that way.

Véronique De Keyser, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (FR) Madam President, this resolution was difficult to negotiate, but we have finally ended up with something which I think has managed to satisfy all groups. I would like to thank my fellow Members for their efforts, because we dare not speak any more about Sahara, knowing as we do what a sensitive subject it is. There will therefore be no political stance here on the conflict between Morocco and Sahara.

On the other hand, the first point condemns the violence that unfolded during the dismantling of the camp near Laâyoune; and this condemnation of violence is clear even if we do not currently have all the facts to say who did what.

As for the second point, we regret – to put it mildly – the fact that there is no freedom of the press and that humanitarian organisations and parliamentarians are unable to go to the region. We believe this is unacceptable.

The third point is closely linked. We note that Morocco is going to launch an investigation, but we resolutely believe and we demand that there should be an international inquiry to shed light on events.

That aside, in terms of the political conflict, we shall leave that to the UN and we urge both parties to resume negotiations.

Ivo Vajgl, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (SL) Madam President, Commissioner, this debate and the resolution on which we will be taking a vote tomorrow were triggered by two incidents: the death of a fourteen-year-old boy who was killed by a Moroccan policeman's bullet and, a few days later, the violent dismantling of the protest camp housing more than ten thousand natives of Western Sahara who had peacefully tried to draw the world's attention, and ours too, to the intolerability of their social, political and economic situation.

This incident has claimed new human casualties, which we regret. They have paid the highest possible price for this ongoing problem that is familiar to us all. Western Sahara is the last example in the world of a process of decolonisation having remained incomplete, one where the neighbouring country is enjoying the benefits of illegal occupation of a foreign territory, rejecting Security Council resolutions, repeatedly ignoring UN demands for a referendum and the right to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara and infringing human rights and standards of international law.

Western Sahara, a country of sand and stone which is crossed by a wall of shame measuring more than a thousand kilometres, is rich enough to excite the appetites and expectations of Morocco and those countries that are actively or passively supporting its unrelenting stance. We know who they are. The problem of Western Sahara is a political problem, a problem of decolonisation. It can be solved in only one way, in the same way that similar problems were solved elsewhere, that is on the basis of international law, self-determination of nations and agreements. We need to strengthen the role of the United Nations in Western Sahara; the mandate of MINURSO is too narrow, with the mission simply maintaining the *status quo*, and proving to be powerless and purely a formality.

Commissioner, thank you very much for your clear words. Despite the different interests of some influential Member States, or precisely because of those, the European Union should play a more active role and use every means at its disposal. Morocco, too, which enjoys support and understanding in many quarters, should make an effort to resolve the situation constructively.

Raül Romeva i Rueda, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (ES) Madam President, I would first of all like to welcome the fact that we finally have an opportunity to talk about the Western Sahara and to adopt a resolution. For once the pressure from Morocco has not triumphed, as it has on other occasions. I believe that this is good for Parliament's credibility, but also for the transparency of what is happening in the Western Sahara.

Secondly, I want to loudly, clearly and firmly condemn the irresponsible and provocative manner in which the Gdaim Izyk camp was dismantled. It is true that the violence came from many sides, but I think it is entirely unjustifiable to place those who are defending themselves against an attack on the same level as those who are repressing, persecuting and torturing them.

We therefore demand an independent investigation under the aegis of the United Nations. We are not talking about a conflict between equals. Not everyone has the same level of

responsibility and not everyone in this conflict is using the same strategies or the same weapons.

We must indeed ask for calm from all parties, but most importantly we must demand that the Kingdom of Morocco ceases its hostile attitude towards the Saharan people and stops harassing parliamentarians, the media and human rights defenders.

The European Union cannot continue to turn a blind eye to this as if nothing were happening. We in the European Union have a major historical responsibility, particularly certain countries such as Spain and France.

Let us indeed act sensibly, as the Minister, Mrs Jiménez, asked us to do, but the sensible thing to do now is to say 'enough' to the Moroccan regime. It all very well to want good trade relations with Morocco. That is a necessary and positive thing, but not at the cost of human rights or at the cost of infringing international law.

Mrs Jiménez, Baroness Ashton, in order to arrive at a fair, sustainable and mutually acceptable solution, the referendum on self-determination needs to be held. Let us make that possible.

Charles Tannock, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, the frozen conflict over Western Sahara is destabilising the surrounding region. Morocco's intransigence continues to deny justice to the people of Western Sahara, who have been waiting for a referendum on independence for the past 20 years.

While I do accept that Morocco is an important ally of the West in the fight against terrorism, it is deeply regrettable that Morocco will not deliver on its stated commitments to the terms of the UN settlement plan. We should now, in the light of the report of violence against the people of Western Sahara, give the UN mission there a mandate to monitor the human rights of the Sahrawi people. But efforts to develop this capacity have been sadly and consistently blocked by France. This is almost unique among all UN missions: it is the only one without a human rights mandate. Morocco and the Polisario Front both need to understand what is expected of them in terms of standards by the international community. We do have a lot of leverage over Morocco here in the EU, particularly over fishing rights and aid.

Hopefully the impending referendum scheduled for South Sudan, which will create a new sovereign state in the south, will provide fresh motivation for all the parties involved to seek a final resolution to this long-standing dispute over Western Sahara – a territory and a people which, in my mind, deserve a peaceful and prosperous future.

Willy Meyer, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (ES) Madam President, I would like to start by stating the obvious: we need to tell the Kingdom of Morocco that this is not its parliament. This Parliament's sovereignty stems from the citizens of Europe, and therefore it decides its agenda, issues and resolutions, and the constant interference in this institution by the Kingdom of Morocco is unacceptable.

Secondly, ladies and gentlemen, the basic issue is that we are talking about an occupation by the military, police and Moroccan settlers; an illegal occupation of a 'non-self-governing territory' as defined by international law. Morocco has no sovereignty over the Western Sahara; I repeat, none. It cannot apply its laws, it cannot apply its sovereignty, and Parliament therefore needs to send a very clear message to the international community and to the Saharan people, as they are the ones that need to decide their future through a

referendum on self-determination, which is what the United Nations Security Council has agreed.

All the abuses and repression that are being perpetrated in the Western Sahara by the Moroccan Government only have one aim: ensuring that they cannot exercise their right to self-determination. The European Parliament therefore needs to be firmer in defending that right, standing with the Saharan people and condemning the abuses. The dismantling of the Dignity Camp should never have been allowed.

I went there a few hours beforehand. I am in elected office and I was prevented from disembarking a Spanish plane in order to be present at what was unfortunately about to happen a few hours later, because they did not want any witnesses. They have a great deal to hide, and Parliament cannot be a party to the systematic concealment of everything that this repression means. As for the association agreement, ladies and gentlemen, Baroness Ashton – who regrettably is absent – when is it going to be frozen? When will we say that this course is unacceptable? I believe that Parliament needs to speak out loud and clear, ladies and gentlemen.

Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE). – *(PL)* Madam President, Western Sahara is, today, at a crossroads. We must not ignore the recent actions of the government of Morocco. Conflicting reports exist as to what really happened in the camp on the outskirts of the city of Laâyoune. However, we must not treat lightly the fact that 15 000 people have lost their homes and been forced to leave the towns where they lived, and this is, in fact, only one example of human rights violations which go back to 1975. We – the members of the European Parliament – must take a close look at the history of this region and the cruelty which the Sahrawis have experienced, and we must strengthen policy aimed at resolving the conflict and this problem.

Some Member States have tried to resolve these problems by working with the UN, but these efforts, however, have proved unsuccessful. It has not been possible to agree the recommendations necessary to bring Morocco to book. UN security forces have been restricted in their activity in Western Sahara, whereas they should be able to exercise complete control and oversee humanitarian aid. Furthermore, Morocco has not lifted the blockade on free access to the region for journalists and international observers.

One UN observer has rightly stated that attention focussed on this region of Africa might save life and protect the Sahrawis from the Moroccan policy of extermination. Amnesty International is calling for an independent investigation to be made about the violence. This is a good idea. It should be done. It is not known, today, how many people have died, been seriously injured or have simply disappeared as a result of Morocco's actions.

Finally, I would like to call upon our House to make a definite reaction which will put an end to the current slow international diplomacy and to develop a solution which will protect the Sahrawis from further cruelty.

María Muñoz De Urquiza (S&D). – *(ES)* Madam President, the violence that has shaken the Western Sahara, which we strongly condemn, just as we regret the loss of human life and demand respect for human rights, must not break out again.

There needs to be a permanent, fair and mutually acceptable solution, within the framework of the United Nations, to a conflict that has now gone on for more than 30 years and is condemning thousands of Saharan refugees to despair and condemning a neighbouring area that is of fundamental importance to the European Union to instability.

We therefore call on Morocco, which is a prominent and reliable partner of the European Union, with which we share major interests and plans, to redouble its efforts at dialogue in order to bring a negotiated end to the conflict. We also call for calm among the Saharan people and their representatives, to whom we offer a message of solidarity in their circumstances. We also call on them to maintain dialogue with an open and constructive attitude.

We ask the European Union to join in the efforts of the group of countries that are friends of the Sahara, which includes my own country, Spain, in facilitating that dialogue as a credible negotiator in the region. The opening of a Moroccan parliamentary investigation into the events in the Sahara and the fact that the Moroccan authorities are prepared to inform Parliament about what has happened are significant signs that we do value. They are not, however, a substitute for a policy of information transparency ensuring the presence of all media in the area.

The resolution that we will adopt tomorrow is the result of a complex agreement which reflects Parliament's concern regarding stability in the Maghreb and for human rights. It is also a demonstration of Parliament's backing for a negotiated end to the conflict, with no prior conditions, but on the basis of the United Nations Security Council resolutions establishing the Saharan people's right to self-determination.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE). – (ES) Madam President, the Moroccan authorities deserved our condemnation for the attack on the Gdaim Izyk camp, following which the serious incidents in Laâyoune took place. The individual rights of the Saharan people, who were asking peacefully for better living conditions, have been infringed. Moreover, freedom of the press and of information have been limited, and dozens of members of this and other parliaments, including that of my country, the Basque Parliament, have been denied access to the area.

There is no reliable information, therefore we ask the United Nations to conduct an official investigation into what happened. We do, however, know that there were deaths, injuries and hundreds of people detained. We regret all deaths that occurred during this incident, because all of them – whether they be Moroccan police or Saharan activists – are irreparable. I would like to express my solidarity with all of their families.

The camp was attacked on the day that the third round of informal meetings was beginning in New York on the situation in the Western Sahara. This attack does not favour dialogue, agreements or peace; on the contrary, it is an obstacle to a peaceful and fair outcome to the occupation of the Western Sahara.

I want to ask for calm from the parties. Resolving this problem requires permanent dialogue between Morocco and the Saharan people, based on mutual respect and with the aim of fulfilling the United Nations resolutions, which include the Saharan people exercising their right to self-determination.

I will conclude with some self-criticism: we must always criticise violations of human rights. It does not matter who, where, how or why they are perpetrated, because democratic principles and values must always come before interests. I therefore ask the European Union for greater commitment.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL). – (PT) Madam President, the events in recent weeks in the Western Sahara were not an isolated incident. They are part of a long history of three and a half decades of repression, violence and the oppression of a people. Western

Sahara's history is one of constant attempts by Moroccans to block negotiations on the implementation of the Sahrawi people's unalienable right to self-determination.

This is therefore the moment to once again condemn the brutal repression by Moroccan authorities of everyone in the occupied territories who resists colonisation and fights for their people's legitimate right to self-determination. This is also the time to expose the real humanitarian tragedy that is being forced upon the Sahrawi people, who are obliged to live far from their homeland in refugee camps, and to call for the urgent strengthening of international humanitarian aid. There should also be demands for the enforcement of international law and UN resolutions, and the need to hold a referendum.

The European Union and the Member States have a great responsibility in all of this, which they cannot ignore lest they become accomplices, Morocco being a country that benefits from a special status due to several agreements that it has with the EU.

Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE). – (ES) Madam President, thousands of Saharans left their cities and peacefully set up the Gdaim Izyk camp in order to demand better living conditions. The Moroccan security forces violently dismantled the camp and, as a result, serious riots broke out in Al Aaiún. The Moroccan armed forces killed a young Saharan, and a Spanish citizen died in unclear circumstances.

There are currently no reliable figures regarding the number of deaths, injuries, disappearances or arrests during those riots. Moreover, numerous MEPs have been banned from entering the Sahara, along with journalists who are still having serious problems doing their work.

Morocco is Europe's friend and strategic ally, and it is not good to have doubts or misunderstandings between friends. If Morocco has nothing to hide, it must allow the clarification of what happened. Therefore, although it is true that the Moroccan Parliament has set up an investigative commission, I think it is essential that an international commission be set up, that European and politicians and journalists have freedom of access to the area and that the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara extend its mandate to the protection of human rights, both in the area controlled by Morocco and in the area controlled by Polisario.

The Commission and the European governments, least of all the Spanish Government, cannot look the other way in response to this situation. *Realpolitik* must not be an excuse for turning a blind eye. They must request clarification regarding these serious events and ask Morocco and the Polisario to resume discussions as soon as possible in order to arrive at a peaceful agreement on the basis of the United Nations resolutions.

Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D). – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I should like first of all to say to Mr Salafrañca Sánchez-Neyra that, ahead of resolving the conflict between Plato and the truth, perhaps we needed a little more time before coming up with this resolution, for at least two reasons.

Firstly, we could have collected all the information to help guarantee that Parliament would take a more solid stance and, secondly, a series of meetings and hearings had got under way in the relevant committees Parliament took the legitimate decision to move ahead immediately. In any case, this does not diminish the requirement for these hearings and the need to keep the negotiations with Morocco open.

I therefore believe that, after the vote, it is a good idea to apply our efforts in three specific directions: establishing a new leading role for Europe, with its diplomacy and neighbourhood policies; contributing to a positive outcome to the negotiations opened by the United Nations; and, finally, using all parliamentary instruments – beginning with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the mixed committee – to ensure that the meeting goes ahead and helps find solutions. I think it would be helpful to work determinedly towards these specific objectives.

Frédérique Ries (ALDE). – (FR) Madam President, I would like to thank the Commissioner, who has clearly shown himself this evening to be on the side of appeasement. Yes, we had to condemn the violence on both sides. Yes, we needed to call for a lasting solution to this conflict, which has been going on now for over 30 years. And yes, obviously, we needed to address the importance of press freedom, the cornerstone of any democratic country.

That being said, I still regret the lack of balance in this text on certain issues. For instance, I would have liked mention to have been made of the fate of Mustapha Salma, the Polisario Front dissident kidnapped for having dared to call for dialogue. Human rights are mentioned, of course, but not for everybody, which is regrettable. In this conflict, it is not just a question of innocents on one side and guilty on the other. There are responsibilities, albeit unequal, on both sides of this conflict, which has lasted over 30 years.

Above all – and this is essential – all parties share responsibility now for finding a just, realistic and sustainable solution, and when I say all parties, I mean Morocco, I mean the Polisario Front and also Algeria, a key symbolic player that is only mentioned in the final words of our resolution.

To conclude, I would just like to say, Madam President, that I fully support the proposals to continue this constructive dialogue as put forward by Mr Panzeri.

Marco Scurria (PPE). – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, amongst friends one can speak frankly and tell things as they are. Hence, we are telling Morocco that it must do much more to resolve the Western Sahara situation.

The European Union cannot continue, and could not continue, to pretend that it is all nothing, because we risk committing a serious error. We risk telling those who have chosen peace, like the Sahrawi people did through the Polisario Front, that they have chosen wrongly.

Those who do not send suicide bombers, who do not carry out attacks, and who trust only in international organisations do not make the news. For these people the powers of the world do not come together. Madam President, that is not right, because the Sahrawi are a courageous but mild-mannered people, they live their religion in the right way and their women have important roles in society. The Sahrawi are fighting for their land, for which their love is as infinite as their desert; and they are fighting for their identity, and it is not right that they are left to themselves.

The vote we have striven for tomorrow in this part-session is an important sign that the European Union is working to take a decisive role in the destiny of this area of land.

Norbert Neuser (S&D). – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, I welcome the clear words chosen by Mr Piebalgs. It is important for the European Parliament to show clearly where it stands and also to condemn the brutality that has taken place there. It has taken

us a long time to hold the debate on Western Sahara in the European Parliament, and I think that we have been too hesitant in our actions and that we act only after there have been fatalities there.

I am pleased that we will be able to adopt a resolution tomorrow with all parties, which will perhaps not go as far as one or other of the groups would like, but it represents a broad consensus and is a clear signal to Morocco and to the population of Western Sahara that the European Parliament stands by its fundamental values.

As chair of the Intergroup, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of its members, who have ensured that Western Sahara has remained, and will continue to remain, on the agenda. I am certain that, together with Mr Piebalgs and Baroness Ashton, we must remain committed to Western Sahara.

Ana Gomes (S&D). – (PT) Madam President, the brutal attack on the peaceful protest of the Sahrawi camp has stuck a serious blow to the negotiations under the auspices of the UN. It reminded me of the worst times in East Timor: talks being held in the UN while the people were being attacked in order to thwart them. Spain could be an advocate for the former colony that it abandoned, as Portugal was for self-determination in East Timor, but it is not, as it does not wish to compromise its commercial and other interests in Morocco.

It is now known that Madrid and the UN were warned of the attack. It is but a short step from negligence to complicity. France bears particular responsibility for encouraging Morocco to continue with the occupation. As for the European Union, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy only spoke of the attack weeks after it had happened, and did so in an extremely brief, irrelevant statement. In this resolution Parliament is calling out to the European Union, demanding an international independent enquiry into the events and the identification of the dead, missing and prisoners, demanding unrestricted access to the international press, humanitarian organisations and observers, demanding that the UN monitor human rights in Western Sahara and demanding the immediate release of all Sahrawis detained in Morocco or in the occupied territory of Western Sahara.

Guido Milana (S&D). – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I have only one regret in this Chamber this evening, and that is that we are only discussing the Sahrawi people because the Moroccans have invaded the camp outside Laâyoune, and that is a shame for democracy in this Parliament.

Parliament should have found the will to discuss this issue of its own accord, as it has been rotting on international negotiating tables for 30 years. This is the most significant political fact. We were forced into it by acts of violence, not because we autonomously decided to guarantee human rights. What is the fact that a referendum for self-determination should be held there, if not a question of respect for human rights?

Precisely because Morocco is our friend, because Morocco is the strong party in the relationship, we must forcefully request that it is no longer possible to postpone this desire and follow up with all consequent actions. We must seek to create the conditions so that the aim of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) is not only to realise the conditions for a referendum which is constantly being postponed. We must try to use all the means at the disposal of the European Union to bring this event about and ensure that the referendum does justice to a people's 30 years of suffering.

Gilles Pargneaux (S&D). – (FR) Madam President, Commissioner, leaving aside this afternoon's debate and the resolution which we will consider tomorrow, let us get back to the main issue, which I did not really hear mentioned during the debate just now.

A real national cause for Morocco, let us not forget that this major political issue is a diplomatic challenge for Morocco's relations with the countries of Africa and the Maghreb, primarily Algeria.

Secondly, it is an economic challenge as this issue hinders the formation of a prosperous and stable Maghreb. It is also a security challenge due to the activism of the al-Qaeda terrorist organisation in Islamic Maghreb, and subsequently, it is a humanitarian challenge for the Sahrawi people in question, particularly those in the Tindouf camps, who cannot get out.

We must get back to what matters. What matters is resolution 1920, adopted unanimously by the UN, which requests that we be able to put the issue of autonomy proposed by Morocco on the table and which also calls for family visits between Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps.

So there, in essence, are the challenges we believe important. As suggested by our colleague, Mr Panzeri, dialogue needs to be reopened with all parties, in particular with the Moroccan authorities in the weeks that follow, which will be done, as there are plans for the foreign affairs minister to appear before us on 1 December.

Antonio Masip Hidalgo (S&D). – (ES) Madam President, on 18 November, in the Spanish Parliament, the Minister Mrs Jiménez stressed that the opinion of the International Court of Justice in The Hague was that decolonisation has not yet taken place and that Western Sahara cannot be assimilated into Morocco. There have been 35 years of illegal suffering and occupation. The camp is the epitome of the distance between Morocco and the Saharan people, no matter how many settlers and soldiers they have introduced into the area from which they expelled thousands of genuine inhabitants.

Morocco is repressing with hatred what it knows to be a different people. Soon there will be colonial trials such as the one that took place on 5 November in Casablanca, where foreign and European observers were beaten. Let us prevent the destruction of a noble, heroic people group that is a friend of Europe.

Salvatore Iacolino (PPE). – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, such a serious event as that which has taken place in recent weeks to the detriment of the Sahrawi people cannot go unpunished and therefore the European Parliament is duty-bound and required to intervene.

On the other hand, there is no doubt – as Mr Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra rightly said – that over time the people of Morocco have made a series of important contributions to Africa, which mean that we can consider them not only friends, but particularly close to the positions held by the European Union.

Without prejudice to the penalty, which we are duty-bound to apply and is absolutely essential, a new path of negotiations should be associated with this, as already launched in the joint committee, which really allows fundamental rights to be protected, since they cannot continue to be violated as they have been, ahead of the United Nations throwing full light on the issue we are talking about today, in order to throw light on a violation of fundamental rights which really must be penalised.

Metin Kazak (ALDE). – (BG) Madam President, I, too, wish to congratulate Commissioner Piebalgs for the exceptionally balanced, even presentation of the European Commission's attitude to the events in Western Sahara. I believe that we are at risk of doing more harm than good with this resolution because no attention is being paid to the efforts which Morocco is making to achieve a lasting, just solution to the Western Sahara conflict.

I would like to say that many international organisations are still there, conducting their investigations into what happened. I believe that the best forum for dialogue with Morocco is the EU-Morocco Joint Parliamentary Committee. I think that support needs to be given to the efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution under the auspices of the United Nations, rather than making biased statements.

Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D). – (PL) Madam President, I cannot emphasise too strongly that the situation in Western Sahara is rightly the cause of our concern. We, in this Chamber, know very well that the conflict, which has been going on there for many years, may have effects in territories which are much further away. There are people there who have no hope, who are being both repressed and humiliated. In a situation like this, the people who have been humiliated can often constitute a natural base for terrorist activity. They can be receptive to terrorist indoctrination, and Western Sahara may become a place from which terrorism is exported. Therefore, the European Union should condemn all cases of violations of the law, but I think that greater effort should be made to help UN forces, so that they can be still more effective in ensuring security in the area.

Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE). – (FR) Madam President, on 8 November, the Moroccan authorities used violence in dismantling the camp set up near Laâyoune, in Western Sahara, resulting in deaths and numerous injuries.

I am absolutely outraged that a Member State, in this instance France, should object to the request for a UN fact-finding mission looking into these events. Uganda's proposal at the UN Security Council meeting on 16 November was however both legitimate and desirable. It is all very well for France to hide behind the lack of decision on the part of the Security Council when it has abused its weight of veto power to prevent any light being shed on these incidents. Would the truth be so hard to face?

Europe, which likes to think itself exemplary in protecting human rights, must demand an independent and transparent fact-finding mission, under the aegis of the United Nations, and an extended mandate for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). More generally, we are counting on Baroness Ashton for a fair and lasting solution to be brought to this unacceptable situation for the Sahrawi people.

Dominique Vlasto (PPE). – (FR) Madam President, like my fellow Members, I deplore the loss of life in this conflict. However, I would like to say that the proposed text is unbalanced and I regret that the vote on this resolution has been rushed. It would have been better to wait for the results of the investigations to have a proper discussion on solid foundations and to enable fellow Members to gain a true idea of what is really happening. Indeed this could be seen as a way of influencing UN negotiations on the future of Western Sahara. I must say that this worries me at a time when the Euro-Mediterranean policy is being relaunched. It will take time to establish the facts and to know who is responsible for what. As far as I am concerned, this is essential for the stability of this highly sensitive region and for the wellbeing of its people.

John Bufton (EFD). – Madam President, I will also talk today about the upsetting developments in Western Sahara.

As we have been reading in our newspapers, there have been violent confrontations in refugee camps, where the bulk of the Western Saharan population have been confined since the Moroccan invasion of the 1970s. To invade their country is one thing, but to confine a large percentage of the population in refugee camps is another.

The Western Sahara in Exile movement has courageously brought this situation to the world's attention. The UN Security Council has examined this latest violent episode, but stopped short of calling for an independent investigation.

It is a safe bet that the Moroccan authorities will be less than impartial if the investigation is left up to them. The Moroccan authorities cannot even decide how many people were killed in the raid at the camp in Laâyoune. Given the proximity of Western Sahara to Europe, and its potential to destabilize the sensitive North African region, this could escalate if things are not done soon.

I strongly believe that there should be an independent investigation and I call on the UN Security Council to launch one.

Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D). – (FR) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to begin by pointing out that I did not believe it right to give our opinion so early on with a vote on the events that took place in Laâyoune on 8 November, when we do not have all the facts at our disposal to give us the necessary hindsight and objectivity.

Nevertheless, given these conditions, I am relieved to see that we have reached a relatively balanced and measured joint resolution which takes into account the concept of human rights and which does not unduly condemn either party, even though some points are questionable. In any case, the most important thing I think is not to inflame the situation further so that investigations and negotiations can be conducted in an atmosphere of calm, and so I think it wise not to be drawn into challenging the privileged status of a neighbouring partner country on the basis of partial and often contradictory reports.

Andreas Mölzer (NI). – (DE) Madam President, Morocco's desire to suppress reports of the incidents in Western Sahara does not show the country in a good light. When the Gaza aid flotilla was attacked there was an immediate international outcry. However, when a protest camp was cleared in the occupied Western Sahara, with people being killed in the process, and the town in question was declared a no-go zone, even for journalists, there was a lack of combined dynamic action from the international community.

Of course, it was only to be expected that, in view of the intractable situation, the liberation movement would at some point no longer feel bound by the ceasefire. This was also linked to a referendum on Western Sahara – a referendum the participants of which could never actually be agreed on. Meanwhile, more and more Moroccans settled there. In my opinion, these incidents must be fully investigated. The European Union should act as a neutral mediator and try to bring both parties in the dispute to the table once again.

Ulrike Rodust (S&D). – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I support the compromise reached for the resolution. As coordinator for the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament in the Committee on Fisheries, I am also interested in the fisheries agreement with Morocco. It is good that we

are calling for the resolution for international law to be respected in connection with the exploitation of resources in Western Sahara. Unfortunately, most Members of this House are not aware that there is an opinion issued by Parliament's legal service which states that the current fisheries agreement with Morocco contravenes international law if it is not demonstrated that the people of Western Sahara benefit from the agreement. There is currently no demonstration of this and the European Commission has therefore put negotiations concerning renewal of the agreement on hold. I very much hope that a diplomatic solution can be found here. However, it has to be clear to us that we cannot ignore international law on account of economic interests.

Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE). – (DE) Madam President, I, too, am very pleased that we finally have a resolution on the conflict in Western Sahara in this House. I think this should have happened a lot sooner on other grounds, not only after the occurrence of these atrocious incidents in the Gdaim Izyk camp.

I really do not understand why Morocco is not prepared to allow an independent inquiry. If it has nothing to hide, the inquiry should be carried out. So why is it not being done? I very much hope that this resolution will be adopted in Parliament tomorrow – of course that does not mean that there should not be dialogue with Morocco. Next week, the Moroccan and Algerian foreign ministers, as well as the Polisario Front, are invited to attend a meeting of the Committee of Foreign Affairs. I hope they will come and engage in a discussion with us.

However, I do not think the suggestion to postpone the resolution is a sensible one, because, as the European Parliament, it is important for us to respect and support the principle of compliance with human rights, as well as the principle of a people's right to self-determination – in this case for the Sahrawi. I visited the camps close to Tindouf for the first time 23 years ago. Since then, this people has been fighting to finally be able to observe its own law and to hold a referendum that is fair and just. I am therefore pleased that this resolution is now on the table and that tomorrow it will hopefully actually be adopted, too.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – (FR) Madam President, firstly, I would like to say that it is true that we could have debated longer and come up with a different text. At the same time, however, the text was given more or less the same time that is usually devoted to emergency resolutions. Our Moroccan partners should therefore be told that this is, in fact, the consensus reached by the various political groups.

I believe that it is a stage of this dialogue. Probably for the first time, I support the proposal made by Mr Panzeri for continued dialogue within the parliamentary committee on certain matters that bind us to our Moroccan colleagues. It is a recently created committee which can be supported – why not? – by a group of friends from Morocco, because there are a lot of them here. I am also really looking forward to dialogue with the Moroccan Foreign Affairs Minister. He has announced that he will address the Committee on Foreign Affairs next week. This will present another opportunity to continue this dialogue.

Andris Piebalgs, *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, after very closely following the debate, I would like to stick to my initial statement. I believe that it is very balanced and very correct.

I would just repeat the last sentence. The United Nations Secretary-General has the support of the EU in achieving a just, lasting and mutually-acceptable political solution which will

provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in agreement with the Security Council resolutions. I would definitely encourage both sides to support the efforts of the United Nations.

President. – Seven motions for resolutions ⁽²⁾ have been tabled to wind up the debate. That brings the debate to a close.

The vote will take place tomorrow at 12:00.

(The sitting was suspended at 20:00 and resumed at 21:00)

Written statements (Rule 149)

Dominique Baudis (PPE), *in writing.* – (FR) Looking carefully at the images available on the Internet, one can measure the level of violence used against the Moroccan law enforcement authorities. The scenes witnessed at both the Gdaim Izyk camp and on the road to Laâyoune are evidence of the deadly acts of violence against the Moroccan security services. Not even the emergency vehicles were spared. The reality is very far removed from what the propaganda would have us believe. Our Parliament therefore needs to show restraint and use discretion rather than unduly laying the blame on the Moroccan authorities and holding them fully responsible for this situation.

Debora Serracchiani (S&D), *in writing.* – (IT) The latest violent events linked to the dispute between Morocco and the Polisario Front over the Western Sahara require greater attention due to the negative effects they could have on stability in the region. The clearing of the camp at Laâyoune seems to have resulted in about a dozen deaths, more than 700 wounded, 150 missing and 160 arrested by the Moroccan authorities and is believed to have led to the killing of a Spanish citizen of Sahrawi origins, Baby Hamday Buyema. We must not leave the Sahrawi people all alone, but we need to finish off the negotiations conducted under the aegis of the United Nations, in accordance with the principles of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 2. The European Union must intervene and urge the Moroccan Government to avoid further bloodshed and release those Sahrawi who have been detained illegally. The resumption of informal talks between the parties, which took place on 7 and 8 November 2010, must represent the first sign that a fair solution can be peacefully accepted by the parties.

IN THE CHAIR: RAINER WIELAND

Vice-President

17. Request for the waiver of parliamentary immunity: see Minutes

18. Composition of committees and delegations: see Minutes

19. Ukraine (debate)

President. – The next item is the statement by the Commission on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Ukraine. I would first like to give the floor to Commissioner De Gucht on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Ashton.

⁽²⁾ See Minutes

Karel De Gucht, *Member of the Commission, on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – (FR) Mr President, I have great pleasure this evening in debating the situation in Ukraine on behalf of Cathy Ashton, High Representative and Vice-President, who regrets her absence here today.

Today marks an important day for Ukraine with its OSCE Chairmanship for 2013 having been declared this morning. It is a privilege, but also a responsibility and it will give Ukraine the opportunity to live up to expectations, which are certainly high.

I want to dwell now on our bilateral relations, marked last Monday by a summit at the Château Val Duchesse in Brussels, attended by President Yanukovych, as well as by Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso. Cathy Ashton took part in the discussion on international issues. I was also there to take stock of the prospects for establishing, in the near future, a deep and comprehensive free trade area with a high level of ambition. Our discussions were sincere, and I am confident that the summit has put a relationship that deserves to be more extensive and more tangible on the right track.

The two most important outcomes of the summit are the adoption of the action plan on the free movement of persons and the signing of the protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement enabling Ukraine to take part in EU programmes.

Other items on the agenda were the internal situation in Ukraine, current negotiations on the future Association Agreement and the reform process. Ukraine is part of our neighbourhood. We are therefore trying to embrace its proximity, and Ukraine's neighbourhood is not standing still, either, if you think about the NATO summit this weekend and today's conclusion of bilateral negotiations in Brussels, where I was just a few hours ago, enabling the EU to support Russia's accession to the WTO.

Let us get back to the summit. The current government has undertaken a number of important economic reforms, which we have welcomed. Firstly, there is the public procurement law, which should play an important role in the fight against corruption. Agreements have been entered into with the IMF and important reforms have been introduced in the key energy sector. The Ukrainian Government has been fairly successful in stabilising the situation in the country. This is obviously very important.

Nevertheless, we are concerned by continued reports of a corrosion of fundamental freedoms and democratic principles in Ukraine. Of particular concern are grievances voiced regarding freedom of the media and freedom of assembly and of association. Furthermore, as you know, the Ukrainian Constitutional Court has recently overturned the 2004 constitution, which was adopted during the Orange Revolution. So it is the 1996 constitution, which gives increased power to the President, which once again applies. This very controversial decision is evidence that an open and participative constitutional reform process is needed in Ukraine.

This process should be aimed at establishing a sustainable system of checks and balances in line with European standards. This subject was also raised in your resolution in February.

Another very recent decision taken by the Constitutional Court, which is open to various interpretations, is the duration of the current parliament's mandate. Whereas the 1996 constitution, which is currently in force, provides for a four-year mandate, the Court has ruled that the current parliament's powers will only expire after five years, as it was elected during the period covered by the 2004 constitution. This decision conveys the 'à la carte' approach which is increasingly being adopted by the current administration. Once

again, Ukraine sorely needs an open and participative constitutional reform process, not decisions made according to circumstances.

In recent years, the level of political freedom has been very high in Ukraine, with election after election being recognised by credible bodies as conforming to international standards. It is therefore regrettable to note that the latest municipal elections held on 31 October were criticised by most observers. Although those criticisms concerned only technical and procedural aspects, it was still a step backwards.

Democratic values and principles along with human rights are fundamental principles for EU Member States. They are principles on which there can be no compromise, all the more so as we are talking here about a key partner.

Shared values for a common future: this is the challenge of the future association between Ukraine and the EU. As we did at the summit last Monday and for as long as problems persist, we must continue to send a very clear message regarding respect for fundamental values.

Elmar Brok, *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to offer my sincere thanks for the statement that has been given here on behalf of the High Representative, and to which I actually have very little to add. I believe that we can safely say that reforms and greater stability have been decided on, including for reasons relating to parliamentary stability, and that is to be welcomed, but we must also note that although the last parliamentary elections were fair and just, the local elections were not, because they were changed and the opposition did not have an equal opportunity to draw up lists everywhere. I believe we must also take note of the fact that the head of the secret service also has a top supervisory role in the constitutional court and that judges are being replaced there in order to overturn the constitution of the Orange Revolution. These are facts. I would therefore like to express my thanks for the statement that the issues of common values and of fundamental rights play a crucial role. The European Perspective for Ukraine is, of course, also an important issue.

On the other hand, I am pleased that vital progress was made on important matters at the summit on Monday. The words of criticism that I have just expressed should not be dependent, or be made dependent, on what happens in this phase with regard to visa facilities. It is good and important for us to make progress in this area.

It is important that we make progress with regard to the deepened Free Trade Area, which will bring Ukraine closer to the European internal market, and make it clear that not only the political but also the economic perspective of Ukraine lies in Europe. It does not make any sense to adopt a Russian economic system without having Russian raw materials. The European market will then be of much greater interest to Ukraine and that should also improve with the Association Agreement. However, I think that we should be clear in our minds that this is not only in the interests of Ukraine but it is also in our own interests and that we should attach importance to ensuring that the external and internal development of Turkey progresses in a way that satisfies our common interests here.

Adrian Severin, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – Mr President, my group's philosophy on Ukraine-European Union relations today could be expressed by the following paraphrase of a famous speech: do not ask what Ukraine could do for the European Union, but ask what the European could do for Ukraine, in order to have in Ukraine a reliable pillar of the European Union project.

To this end, the European Union approach on Ukraine should be balanced, fair, fact-based and strategic. I believe that these criteria were met by the results of the recent summit, and I would like to thank the Commissioner for expressing our approach in this way.

'Balanced' means asking for improvements and at the same time offering assistance. 'Fair' means avoiding taking sides in internal political controversies and using the same standards when evaluating the actions of parties wearing the colour we like and those wearing the colour we do not like. 'Fact-based' means deciding to trust in evidence and not mere allegations, rumours and prejudices. 'Strategic' means promoting policies which could allow Ukraine to become organically integrated in the European Union project and not policies which are meant to use Ukraine in our confrontation with its neighbours.

The compromise resolution we are supposed to be adopting following today's debate is not a perfect but a decent example of such an approach. I have to deplore a few mistakes in the printing of the text. We must ask all political players in Ukraine to avoid presenting this resolution as a victory of one against another. In fact, this resolution is meant to send to all Ukrainian political forces the message that it is high time for them to unite behind a minimum national agenda and to deliver the long-awaited reforms, policies and political results which would assure a better life for the people and a better opportunity for the country, with the aim of European integration. There is no need for internationalisation of the internal controversies in Ukraine.

Let us all accomplish our duties both here and there, and the future will reward all of us.

Adina-Ioana Vălean, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, it is interesting to see that Ukraine is so often on our agenda. I hope this signifies progress in our relationship.

I tend to believe that, with pragmatism and respect on both sides, understanding differences but finding common interests, we can build on common projects and achieve an honest partnership.

I appreciate the recent statements of the Ukrainian leadership, which I hope now are putting aside some fears that Ukraine is moving away from a European future. On the other hand, any debate on Ukraine has a tendency to become a war between the European political families of the opposition and government political parties of Ukraine. I think this does not help, because it is not about who is better – government or opposition – or who is better supported by the Europeans, it is about Ukrainian citizens' democratic future, and about Ukrainians having a strong, democratic and prosperous country.

The summit that took place this week achieved good results in fostering access to EU programmes and in the negotiations on the association agreement. I am particularly happy to see long-awaited progress towards a free trade area.

Of course, much remains to be done, in terms both of economic and institutional reforms, and the steps taken should be consolidated. No exemptions should be allowed to be made under the public procurement law, which was adopted earlier this year – not even for the European football championship.

While a new tax code is a good step towards improving the fiscal environment, this should not become a burden, especially on SMEs, which play such an important role in any healthy economy.

But let me be clear. This is not about us telling Ukraine what to do, and it is not about what Ukraine needs to do for us. It is primarily about what Ukraine needs to do for itself, because

both institutional and economic reforms are a prerequisite for a prosperous democratic future, and this is in the Ukrainian citizens' best interest.

Rebecca Harms, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, in recent days, large protests have been taking place in Kiev, Lugansk, Kharkov and many other large and small towns in Ukraine. Tens or hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens are taking to the street. They are protesting against tax laws that they consider to be unfair. If our resolution is directed at anyone, then in this context it should, in my opinion, be the Ukrainian citizens, who with this protest are guaranteeing that Ukraine's development as a democracy continues. Our resolution, which expresses concerns over the erosion of a democracy, is of course directed at the government and the authorities, particularly in connection with these protests, in particular the interior authorities of Ukraine, to urge them to allow these protests to continue. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people are expected to be in Kiev tomorrow. I must admit that I am very anxiously following developments here and I am not without concerns about what might happen. So far, so good – touch wood. In the last few days, the government has shown that the freedom of assembly is operating. I very much hope that that will continue to be the case.

I think it was very important for us to make this a cross-group resolution. It would be a grave mistake for the development of Ukraine if in future one side of this House should side with the Party of Regions and the other with Yulia Tymoshenko's party. That would not help the democratic development of Ukraine. I hope that this resolution will be taken seriously – even if we adopt it after the summit – particularly in view of the large protests and people's concerns about the effects of the IMF reform, and that we follow what is happening now in Kiev and Ukraine in general very closely. Thank you for your attention and I hope that we – including the Commission – will continue to show solidarity in our work together with this country, which is so close to us as Europeans.

Paweł Robert Kowal, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – (PL) Mr President, in the European Parliament, we have had several weeks of fascinating debate on Ukrainian affairs. I think this has been a very good thing. The results of our proceedings are being followed with great interest in Ukraine – greater than in many countries of the European Union. Let us, therefore, treat our resolution as a letter, not to one or other party, but as a letter to Ukrainians, in which we will say sincerely that we are watching with interest what is happening, and that we are neighbours who are ready to open the door to Ukraine and who want more contact with the country's citizens. I would like to thank Mrs Harms very much for her splendid words. She always senses so very well what needs to be said at such moments.

Let us speak sincerely about the elections, which did not satisfy us. Many features of the elections were of a standard which left much to be desired. It did not prove possible to maintain the good trend of the previous elections, but let us say, too, that there is still a chance for Ukraine and that we want to help Ukraine in this. Therefore, let us say what good things are happening there, and that not only in the area of economics, but also in the area of politics and above all in relation to every Ukrainian the door to Europe is open, and that it is good that such a signal has come this week from the European Union-Ukraine Summit. It is a good coincidence that we are talking, today, about the fact that the resolution is not for one or other party in Ukraine. It is for Ukrainians, and we are adopting it together.

Jaromír Kohlíček, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (CS) Mr President, whenever Ukraine is mentioned, the average EU citizen thinks of the boxer Klitschko, easily defeating his opponents. In economic terms, however, Ukraine has a similarly important weight and a number of EU and Balkan countries are dependent on transport routes supplying them with Central Asian and Siberian oil and natural gas through Ukrainian territory. It is clearly the most important player out of the Eastern Partnership countries. I therefore welcome the improved relations with Russia and the results of the EU-Ukraine summit. In many EU countries, Ukrainians make up a significant portion of the foreign workers, and mutual trade between Ukraine and the EU is showing dynamic growth. The main problems of the country are the same problems facing many EU countries: corruption, an unfavourable visa regime and mutually incompatible legislation. It should be mentioned that, according to observers, the municipal elections passed off without major technical shortcomings. The resolution proposed across the political spectrum represents a balanced compromise, and although I might have reservations over some of the details, the GUE/NGL Group supports it.

Bastiaan Belder, *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – (NL) Mr President, the many, sometimes incredible, irregularities in the local and regional elections in Ukraine on 31 October must be a red flag for the European Union. To give just a couple of examples: the massive-scale, uncontrolled printing of additional ballot papers in many regions and the photographing of ballot papers, and what about the massive pressure on officials, teachers, doctors and professors to refrain from standing for opposition parties? The European Union – and you can do this – should be taking a firm stance against this bad, undemocratic overture to the 2012 Ukrainian parliamentary elections; maintaining our own political values in the face of authoritarian tendencies in Ukraine. If not, we risk our credibility among the top elites in the country and, in particular, among the reform-minded and democratic forces. Fortunately your clear speech, Commissioner, gives no cause for concern on this score.

Andreas Mölzer (NI). – (DE) Mr President, we all know that Ukraine is one of the EU's largest neighbouring states and that it has a considerable amount of potential for the future. Therefore, it is certainly an extremely important partner for the EU. However, from a political point of view it seems noticeably to be distancing itself from the EU. It was, of course, not without reason that the pro-Russian fraction was successful in the last local elections. That probably also represented a defeat for the European Union. The EU is therefore clearly losing its attraction for Ukrainians. Ordinary citizens in Ukraine would probably like to be European, but not necessarily part of the European Union. The EU is gradually giving away its trump cards here by acting rather like an arrogant superpower. The Ukrainians, however, would no doubt like to be regarded as equal partners, by the EU as well as by Russia.

Therefore, let us not merely look down on the Ukrainians from a lofty height as if their highest goal could only possibly be accession to the EU. Let us give them the chance to develop their own identity over the coming years and then to decide whether they want to draw closer to the EU or perhaps would prefer to remain independent.

Michael Gahler (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, there is huge potential for cooperation between the EU and Ukraine. That was evident at the summit. The Action Plan towards visa liberalisation and the Association Agreement are just two examples that demonstrate this.

In this compromise resolution – and this is evident from the aspects from which this resolution is put together – we have also highlighted the potentially positive aspects. However, I would like to quote an English proverb, which says that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Whether the reform package and reform laws will actually be implemented in practice remains to be seen.

The Commissioner mentioned the Law on Public Procurement. A major exception to this has just been adopted. All procurements in connection with the European Football Championship have been excluded from the scope of this law. I can already very well imagine who will grow wonderfully rich as a result of this. Thus, this is an example of the principle being held in high esteem, but things looking very different in practice.

I would like to expressly thank the Commissioner for expressing concern about freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and freedom of expression and also clearly stating that the local elections represent a backward step. At least that was how it was expressed in the German translation. That is also the view of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), and we have also expressed that view very clearly.

If Mr Severin is claiming that there is no need to internationalise internal conflicts, that to me is a nicer way of putting what was previously referred to as the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. There has been too much of this, and this should not therefore be the principle that guides our actions in respect of Ukraine. Precisely because we want to bring this country closer to Europe, it must also allow itself to be measured by European standards. For that reason, Mrs Harms is right in what she said, namely that we must now remain in very close contact with Ukraine and ensure that what has been achieved there in terms of democracy and human rights is not called into question once again by a backward-looking policy.

Hannes Swoboda (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, let us be frank. Unfortunately, the Orange Revolution, and I would like to emphasise the word 'unfortunately' here, has not achieved what it should have done. This is because of the dispute between Mrs Tymoshenko and Mr Yushchenko, among other things. Mr Yushchenko is now saying that Mrs Tymoshenko is exactly the same as Mr Yanukovich, which is interesting. Sadly, the local elections have not lived up to our expectations. They did not comply with European standards and this has now also become clear to the people of Ukraine.

Let us be honest, what Mr Severin meant was something quite different, Mr Gahler. You should talk to Mrs Tymoshenko in the same way as we do to our friends in the Ukrainian Party of Regions, in other words, you should encourage her to take the European route. Let us leave the oligarchs behind us and move towards a democratic state. Do not attempt to interrupt the work of Parliament and we will definitely exert pressure to ensure that European legal standards are met. Mrs Harms is sitting in the middle. Although this is not always the position taken by the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, we can agree on what Mrs Harms has said. Let us give this country a helping hand, on the basis of European standards and a European legal system. This is important on all sides. It is our policy and we will continue with it until we get somewhere. This is why we were critical of the fact that the elections did not go well. Make sure that Mrs Tymoshenko helps to set up a constructive opposition. Advise Mrs Tymoshenko in the same way as we did Mr Yanukovich.

Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR). – *(PL)* Mr President, Commissioner, I will start with the words of Mr Severin, who said a very important thing, namely that we should try to think what we can do for Ukraine, and not what the Ukrainians can do for us. I would like to thank Mr Severin for those words, because this is, indeed, what we should do.

Yes, those elections were not conducted in the way we wanted. Things happened there which should not have happened. However, I agree with Mrs Harms, who says that what we should do is not to look for support from one or other party, but to look at what the Ukrainians want and what we want. Therefore, the integration of Ukraine with European structures, and let us say this clearly – membership of the European Union – is in the interest of the European Union and also of the Ukrainians themselves. In my opinion, this raising of the standards expected of the Ukrainians is a little dishonest. This is because in this Chamber there are those who are very magnanimous towards their strategic partners on questions of human rights, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Meanwhile, they are very substantially raising and increasing the standard expected of our friends from Ukraine. We need to exercise moderation, here. The Ukrainians deserve our cooperation, our words of support and – as Mr Swoboda has said – this is regardless of whether it is this or that camp. The same thing sometimes happens here – certain divisions lose significance because the issue itself is more important than the divisions. That issue is the closest possible cooperation between the European Union and Ukraine.

David Campbell Bannerman (EFD). – Mr President, I know Ukraine from visits to Kiev and the Crimea and collect Ukrainian artists such as Tetenko and Shishko. The Ukrainians are a good, generous, warm-hearted people, but politically I would counsel great care. Ukraine is a country divided between a pro-western west and a Russian-facing east. It is also a big player, with 45 million citizens, and Russia sees the country as very much in its backyard.

I have toured the Russian fleet in Sevastopol, on the Crimean peninsula. The Russians will jealously guard access to the Black Sea from there. Any talk of Ukraine joining NATO would be a sharp kick to the Russian Bear.

A clumsy diplomatic approach by Baroness Ashton could exacerbate tensions at a difficult time, whilst the cost of forcing Ukraine into the EU in terms of farming subsidies, regional aid and mass migration would be prohibitive. Better to help in other ways and keep Ukraine as a proud, independent, non-EU nation.

Csanád Szegedi (NI). – *(HU)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I believe we all agree that due to its large geographical size and population, Ukraine is of strategic and perhaps even of key significance to the European Union.

I do, however, find two issues missing from the report. One of them is a mention of minorities in the Ukraine. As we all know, only around 65–70% of Ukraine's population is Ukrainian, even if we include the Ruthenian population. There is a fairly large Russian minority living there, as well as many Hungarians, Tatars and Romanians. I strongly suggest that this be included in the report and that our concerns regarding minorities be voiced in our demands. It is also worth mentioning the need to support local education, namely minority education and the use of minority languages, and the fact that local monuments of the Subcarpathian Hungarian minority have been vandalised.

The other issue is that I regret that we have not spoken out more emphatically against the fraud committed during the local government elections. I hereby call on the EU to ask Ukraine to provide clarification on these two issues.

Paweł Zalewski (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, this week is a good one for EU-Ukraine relations. First, during the summit on Monday, we jointly established a road map for the deregulation of visa traffic. Next, tomorrow, we are going to vote on what I think is a good European Parliament resolution which opens up possibilities for further cooperation and a strengthening of cooperation between the European Union and Ukraine. It opens up such a possibility, and at the same time ends a very important discussion which had been taking place on this subject in the European Parliament.

It is a good thing that we have reached a compromise and that we are speaking in agreement. We are unanimous in what we are saying, not to particular political groups in Ukraine, not to the ruling group of President Yanukovych or the opposition of Mrs Tymoshenko, but we are talking first and foremost to Ukrainians themselves. We want Ukraine to reform in a way which will, in the future, enable it to become a part of the European Union. This is extremely important. It is important to judge the work of the Ukrainian Government on its merits and on the basis of its actions.

It needs to be said that this is, firstly, the first government for many years which has begun to introduce reforms in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund, and it can be seen, today, that these reforms are having a beneficial effect on the economy – it can be seen clearly that there is a chance the period of stagnation which has been in evidence in recent years in Ukraine will come to an end. On the other hand, Ukraine itself is saying that it wants to become a part of the European Union, which is why it is giving us the right to evaluate it in accordance with European standards. This is why we must, of course, deal with questions concerning the irregularities which occurred during the recent elections.

Marek Siwiec (S&D). – (PL) Mr President, we are talking, today, in a different atmosphere than that of a month ago. Emotions have subsided. The words we have included in the motion for a resolution are more appropriate to the real situation. It is good that Parliament is trying to speak as one, although these words are at times inept and sometimes reveal great incompetence.

What is this resolution about? It is, in fact, about the quality of democracy, and about how much the European Parliament wants democracy in Ukraine to be of a high quality. The resolution is directed to both sides of the 'blue-orange' divide. Over the past five years in Ukraine, the situation has been one in which first the 'orange' party won, then the 'blue' party, then the 'orange' party won again, and now the 'blue' party is in government. I would like the 'blue' group – President Yanukovych, Prime Minister Azarov, the Party of the Regions – to hear from this House that they are responsible for protecting the great heritage of Independence Square, the great heritage of what several million people demanded in Independence Square several years ago. They are responsible, because it is they who hold power.

I also want these words to be heard by Yulia Tymoshenko, who is responsible for the opposition's image. I would like the great opposition leader – Yulia Tymoshenko – to understand that when in opposition it is not enough just to demand power. It is necessary to have an alternative for the country, and to show people this alternative and interest them in it so that they understand. If the 'blue' and the 'orange' groups understand that they are in power for a while and then are in opposition for a while, and that in fact Ukraine

needs the same care, the same imagination and the same courage all the time, we will have achieved a great success, because we will have helped them in this.

To my fellow member from the Czech Republic – it is not Victor Klitschko, but Vitali Klitschko who has been giving the Americans a pounding in German boxing rings. There are two Klitschkos. The fact that Ukraine has produced two such boxers shows what a great country it is.

Tunne Kelam (PPE). – Mr President, one of the most important results of the collapse of the Soviet Union was the creation of an independent Ukraine. It is a country which can be seen as a future member of the European Community.

I can only welcome the fact that President Yanukovich and the new parliament have confirmed their aspirations to join Europe, because a genuinely independent and democratic Ukraine, free of corruption and a fear of power structures and oligarchs, and a Ukraine which is firmly based on the rule of law is, and will be, an irreplaceable factor of stability for the whole continent. Without a genuinely democratic Ukraine, it is hard to imagine a genuinely democratic Russia.

Yesterday marked six years since the start of the Orange Revolution. Sadly, the huge potential of that change has been wasted. However, thanks to the victory of democratic protesters in December 2004, the credibility of multi-party elections and the freedom of the press was established. In its draft resolution, the European Parliament expresses concern over the increasing number of reports that democratic freedoms and rights, including the freedom of the media, have been under threat and that security services have started to intervene in the democratic activities of citizens once again.

I would like to send an important message to the new government, which is that Europe is open to all fields of cooperation, but the price of that cooperation can never be to ignore the curbing of basic freedoms. As true friends of Ukraine, we need more than ever to be frank, friendly and consistent in asserting our values. It is regrettable that, six years on, the new elites still cannot accept the Orange Revolution as a genuine expression of popular will. Coming to terms with the causes and results of that revolution can only improve the integration of Ukrainian society.

Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (PPE). – *(PL)* Mr President, I do not want to speak about what we have to do for Ukraine or what Ukraine has to do for us, I want to talk about what Ukraine has to do for itself, because its fate is, in fact, in its own hands. On the one hand, Ukraine declares a desire for integration with the European Union, but on the other hand, we continue to receive numerous reports of violations of civil liberties there. In the last few days, the European Parliament has received an appeal from journalists at the Ukrainian television station TVi, who complain of political pressure and constant surveillance. There is a similar problem at the commercial TV station Channel 5. On the other hand, independent analytical centres in Ukraine have reported recently that out of 69 planned reforms, only four have been made.

During recent discussions in the European Parliament, some Members were of the opinion that criticising undemocratic behaviour discourages both the European Commission and the Ukrainian authorities from seeking closer relations between Ukraine and the European Union, so it is better not to condemn the Ukrainian authorities, but to encourage them to undertake reforms. However, I think the European Parliament should, above all, guard democratic values and call attention to the need for the rule of law. A realistic policy, a

policy of pressure, incentives and negotiations should be pursued by governments, while the European Parliament should condemn the violation of democratic freedoms and persuade the European Commission to use the tools which are available to the Union for this purpose, by which I mean programmes for promoting democracy.

I am pleased that as a result of Monday's EU-Ukraine Summit, a protocol has been signed which will give Ukraine access to certain EU programmes, and that action has been taken over lifting the visa requirement. However, progress on reform and democracy are in the hands of Ukraine.

Jan Kozłowski (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, during the October part-session, Commissioner Füle stressed that relations with Ukraine should be looked at from the point of view of three events, namely EU-Ukraine meetings at ministerial level, the local elections and the EU-Ukraine Summit.

I am particularly disturbed by the local elections, which I had the opportunity to observe together with my fellow Member Mr Kowal. Unfortunately, the introduction of changes to electoral law three months before the elections and the repeal of the Constitution of 2004 may suggest that Ukrainian citizens do not have a sense of the certainty and permanence of the law. In addition, the infringements which occurred during the elections themselves may be a cause of doubt as to whether democratic standards were upheld. The fight against corruption and increasing transparency in the work of the public administration should also be an important element of reform. I would like, however, to express the hope that the resolution will be an encouragement to Ukraine to continue the path, which has now begun, of economic and institutional reforms.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D). – (LT) Mr President, Parliament's compromise resolution on Ukraine is crucial for the people of Ukraine, but let us not forget that it is also very significant for the people of the European Union, because Ukraine is an important partner of ours, especially in implementing the European Neighbourhood Policy with Eastern Europe. Therefore it is really very important for us to continue to strive for close cooperation, in particular in the field of visa requirements. Thus both the Commission and the Council must draft an action plan as soon as possible on establishing a visa free regime. We must also agree on the free trade agreement soon. In order to ensure long-term political stability both within the country and with neighbouring countries, it is doubtless very important for Ukraine to implement constitutional reforms, but we – the European Union and its institutions – must understand that this requires time and we must not always criticise, but help Ukraine integrate into our family.

Siiri Oviir (ALDE). – (ET) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, Ukraine is predictably unpredictable. I am very pleased that this assessment given by the European Policy Centre is starting to fade. I am very pleased that the Ukrainian Government has managed to stabilise the situation. It is good that unemployment is also falling and that the economy is growing. Ukraine is interested in cooperating with the European Union, but the interest is mutual. The European Union also has an interest in the existence of democratic rule on its borders.

Today we can reproach Ukraine for the situation with regard to human rights and fundamental rights. We are frightened by corruption and its entanglement with politics. Ukraine knows, however, that the European Union will make no concessions on this issue. Here we must create real cooperation. Finally, I cannot finish without saying that the decision of this House last month to postpone the adoption of the report was a wise one.

Tomorrow we will be adopting a comprehensive and balanced report from which Ukraine will truly benefit.

Dimitar Stoyanov (NI). – (BG) Mr President, I was a member of Parliament's delegation which visited Ukraine. Quite frankly, I returned with mixed feelings. While there, we saw protests and numerous disturbances. However, we also saw some positive signs. I welcome the decision made by the Constitutional Court concerning the parliamentary term of office because it removes a major obstacle blocking the path to stability.

Fellow Members, nearly 1 million people of Bulgarian origin live in Ukraine. This means 1 million potential ambassadors for the European idea in Ukraine who have nothing to do with and are not guilty of involvement in oligarchic power games. We must find a way, as part of the visa policy, to ensure that these people, who with their ancestors have been cut off from their homeland for more than 300 years, have the opportunity to travel freely to Bulgaria and export our European ideals from there to Ukraine.

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – (LT) Mr President, not so long ago, Ukraine was doubtless ahead of our other Eastern neighbours, in terms of the application of European standards, economic and legal reforms and the internal political process. Of course, recent events in this country are worrying, and so I feel that we really must express to our partner Ukraine our concern over those ills that we see, in particular the powers that have been given to Ukraine's security service, and the measures that the security service has taken, attempting to intimidate non-governmental organisations and control Ukraine's press. At the same time, I would like to say something else. We should support the process of Ukraine's European integration. We can use a carrot and stick policy, but there must be more carrot. We should bring Ukraine closer to the European Union and not push it further away. I believe that Ukraine's membership of the European Union is also our strategic objective, and so we must find suitable means of achieving that objective.

Alexander Mirsky (S&D). – (LV) Mr President, I have a question for all Members. Why did we need this resolution on Ukraine at this time? To help Ukraine's new government or to interfere in the internal affairs of that country in advance of the local elections and prevent them from improving the situation in the country by themselves? To interfere in advance of the local elections, it would appear. On the sly, a text was drawn up containing the opinion that everything in Ukraine is going very badly. However, those people who want to portray the real situation in Ukraine in a different light are mistaken. From now on, we should first reflect the facts properly and more broadly, and write only afterwards. We must be very serious in our conclusions, for we shall surely reap what we sow. Thank you.

Elena Băsescu (PPE). – (RO) Mr President, one important point in today's debate has been the criticism concerning the transparency and integrity of the local elections held on 31 October. It has been justifiably levelled at the government's increased influence over the media, the political role of the secret services and the adoption of a new electoral law which puts the opposition parties at a disadvantage.

Ukraine remains a key partner for the EU. In this respect, I welcome the EU's involvement in the process of reform and democratisation, reconfirmed during Monday's summit. The partnership with Ukraine is also natural for Romania, given the important role they play in the Black Sea region and the common challenges they face in terms of energy security.

As has already happened for the Republic of Moldova, a local border traffic agreement is expected to be finalised with Ukraine, in accordance with EU regulations. My country has also voiced its support in favour of launching the EU action plan aimed at visa liberalisation for Ukrainian citizens.

Karel De Gucht, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, let me first answer a factual question on the public procurement law that has been put to me by Mrs Vălean.

When the law was passed we welcomed it. However, subsequent amendments altered the quality of the law. The Commission is closely following these recent developments and a change for the better is also one of the conditions for disbursement of our budget support in the energy sector. Apart from that, I very much welcome the across-the-board agreement on what the analysis of the current situation in Ukraine should be. This is duly reflected in the resolution that will be put to a vote tomorrow.

I really believe that if we, as the European Parliament and the European Union, want to have an influence in this specific matter then having an across-the-board agreement on the principles of such a position is very important. So I welcome this on behalf of the Commission and on behalf of the High Representative.

President. – Six motions for resolutions ⁽³⁾ have been tabled to wind up the debate. The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow at 12:00.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) I wish to recall that any country is entitled to become a member of the EU, as stipulated by Article 49 of the Treaties of the Union. It is precisely because Ukraine wishes to become a member of the EU one day that I am deeply concerned by the way in which the local elections passed off recently in this country. The elections were not free, fair or democratic. The legislative amendment made shortly before the ballot, as well as the fact that the Party of Regions was ‘pushed’ to the top of the electoral lists in 85% of cases through the late registration of the opposition parties, along with other obstacles preventing fair representation for opposition parties raise a question mark over the nature of the political system.

Just as the US Government has also highlighted, the local elections were obviously below the standard of the presidential elections in January. To demonstrate their commitment to democratic values, Ukraine’s leaders must adopt electoral legislation which complies with international standards.

Rafał Trzaskowski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) The complicated nature of the situation in the country of our eastern neighbour is demonstrated by the very intensive discussion which took place recently in this Chamber. It is certain that we cannot ignore the irregularities to which we were witnesses before and after the recent local elections, for these irregularities mean that Ukraine still does not come up to what we regard as the European standard in terms of political culture. However, we cannot fail to notice the positive effects of the changes which are taking place in Ukraine and, in particular, the effort being put into making economic reforms – things which were confirmed, too, by

(3) See Minutes

the recent EU-Ukraine Summit. It is this compromise which should become the position of Parliament.

20. Human rights, social and environmental standards in International Trade agreements - International Trade Policy in the context of Climate Change imperatives - Corporate social responsibility in international trade agreements (debate)

President. – The next item is the joint debate on the following reports on the subject of international trade:

- A7-0312/2010 by Mrs Saïfi, on behalf of the Committee on International Trade, on human rights, social and environmental standards in international trade agreements (2009/2219(INI));
- A7-0310/2010 by Mr Jadot, on behalf of the Committee on International Trade, on international trade policy in the context of climate change imperatives (2010/2103(INI));
- A7-0317/2010 by Mr Désir, on behalf of the Committee on International Trade, on corporate social responsibility in international trade agreements (2009/2201(INI)).

Tokia Saïfi, rapporteur. – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the subject of this report has provoked debate within the international community. Developing countries think that developed countries invoke human rights clauses to establish a form of disguised protectionism, whereas developed countries denounce the social and environmental dumping of emerging countries. I wanted to adopt a positive approach by showing how social and environmental standards and commercial interests can be mutually supportive if all countries are on a level playing field.

The EU must exert its influence in international trade to initiate a change. It would be acting in accordance with its founding texts, which state that the EU should contribute in particular to sustainable development, free and fair trade and the protection of human rights. To my mind, it must act simultaneously at multilateral, bilateral and unilateral level.

At multilateral level, the EU must encourage international organisations, in particular the World Trade Organisation, to take social and environmental standards more into account. At the same time, these international organisations should work together more. That is why, in particular, I propose that the International Labour Organisation should be granted official observer status in the WTO.

As for the environment, I believe that priority should be given to improving access to green goods and technologies, as not only do they promote new forms of employment policies, they also provide new growth opportunities for high-performing European businesses working in this field. Consideration must also be given to setting up a genuine World Environmental Organisation to which cases of environmental dumping could be referred.

The bilateral level is the one at which the EU can really set an example. While I am pleased that the 'new-generation' free trade agreements contain a binding human rights clause, I would like it if this were also extended to the chapter on sustainable development.

Furthermore, the European Commission negotiates these agreements. It should ensure that they include a set of social and environmental standards to be respected by all the EU's trading partners. Depending on the degree of economic, social and environmental development in the country concerned, these basic standards could be supplemented by

additional conventions, on a case by case basis. This gradual and flexible approach would allow for fairer dealings with our various trade partners and would be more equitable for all. Above all, there needs to be greater monitoring of the implementation of bilateral agreements. I therefore propose that impact assessments be carried out before, during and after the negotiations and that they no longer cover just sustainable development but also look at the issue of human rights.

Lastly, I have great hopes that things will happen quickly at unilateral level, since the generalised system of preferences should be reformed quite soon. As you know, the GSP requires the ratification of some 30 international conventions on human and labour rights, environmental protection and good governance. While these conventions have been widely ratified, in practice they have been poorly implemented, and it is on this point that we should focus our efforts. The Commission must launch investigations, or even remove preferences if there are a number of signs leading it to believe that conventions are not being implemented.

To conclude, some of these actions can be taken now, but attitudes will not change overnight. The EU must take gradual action at all levels to achieve fairer and more equitable trade relations.

Yannick Jadot, *rapporteur*. – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that, just as the European Union is trying to redefine its trade policy after the Treaty of Lisbon, while at the same time trying to reconcile it with its industrial policy, the fact that this Parliament is simultaneously debating three reports that address issues ultimately falling within the same political and public debate on ‘what is trade and how can it be reconciled with social, environmental and human rights issues?’ is to be welcomed.

In fact, we are ultimately in a state of permanent schizophrenia: everywhere, companies are relocating, social rights are being called into question, environmental degradation is increasing and, at the same time, we are negotiating free trade agreements, we are negotiating within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) a whole series of measures which, unfortunately, are totally out of step with the public debate in which our citizens are trying to engage.

How can we explain to our public today that a football entering the European market produced under decent working conditions, where the environment is respected, and a football produced by child labour or in a country where trade unions are prohibited is the same football? We cannot explain this to our public. Our responsibility today is therefore to integrate these environmental and social issues into trade.

Regarding my report more specifically, with respect to trade there are currently a number of European countries whose imports of products largely offset the reductions in their own emissions. A third of Europe’s emissions are not produced in Europe but correspond to imported goods. It is therefore essential to integrate the climate issue into our trade policies.

How can we explain to our public that, at the same time as concluding a free trade agreement which will potentially lead to deforestation, we are going to Cancún to negotiate a Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) agreement aimed at providing financial compensation for non-deforestation in the countries of the South? It is therefore essential to reconcile these different issues.

When we drafted this report – and I would like to thank the shadow rapporteurs from the various groups – we tried to be as constructive as possible. I hope this will be reflected in the vote tomorrow. We also tried to put an end to black or white debates. We no longer say that trade liberalisation and combating climate change will destroy 100% of our industries in Europe, where, in a way, we do not care, because the climate issue must take precedence.

When we worked on the issue of carbon leakage, for example, we always tried to specify which sector of activity might be put at risk and which tools could be developed to protect that sector. The same is true for the laws governing the framework for the anti-dumping discussion at the WTO. The same is true for production processes and methods. On all these issues, we tried, with the other groups, to come up with proposals to move things forward, and I believe that we have come up with concrete proposals that are commensurate with our ambitions, with the mandate of the European Commission and of all the European institutions.

I would just say once again that I hope that the cooperative, constructive spirit in which we drafted this report will be reflected in the vote tomorrow and, once again, I would like to thank all my colleagues for the work they have done.

Harlem Désir, *rapporteur*. – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I, too, would like to begin by thanking my colleagues in the Committee on International Trade and, in particular, the shadow rapporteurs from the various groups for their cooperation in the drafting of this third report on a related topic. Today, we are able, thanks to this cooperation, to present a set of innovative, concrete proposals to move corporate social responsibility forward within the framework of EU trade policy.

After the international crisis and the economic and social damage it caused, and after the debates it prompted, the expectations voiced by the public and the political expectations for lessons to be learnt, our common conviction is that Europe's trade policy must contribute more than ever to the objectives of regulating globalisation and, in particular, to its social and environmental objectives.

This regulation concerns the States and their economies, but it is clear that the main economic players are undertakings and, in particular, multinational corporations: they are the main players in world trade. They are the ones that have benefited most from market liberalisation, not only in terms of gaining access to customers, but also in order to externalise part of their production and to diversify their supply arrangements, often by drawing on countries where production costs are low and, above all, where social and environmental rules are applied less rigorously.

The liberalisation of trade has been accompanied by fierce competition among countries seeking to attract foreign investors and by stiffer competition between undertakings. All too often this has led to unacceptable abuses in relation to working conditions, and to human rights violations and environmental damage.

From the Bhopal disaster at the subsidiary of a chemical multinational in India, which claimed thousands of victims and for which the parent company has still not been punished to this day, to the behaviour of oil and mining companies in Africa, in Burma, and in many other countries, which is destroying their environment and reducing their workers to the rank of slaves; and from child labour in Asian textile factories to the murder of trade unionists on agricultural holdings in Central America, the examples are legion. And they

are all the more unacceptable given that they often concern undertakings from industrialised countries, their subsidiaries and their supply chain, including European undertakings.

This gave rise, many years ago, to a debate and a campaign which, I might add, was supported on several occasions within this Parliament through the adoption of resolutions on corporate social and environmental responsibility. The progress made in corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not yet on a par with the debate on social standards in trade agreements, the subject of the report by Mrs Saïfi. This is understandable, because trade agreements concern legal rules that are binding among the States, whereas corporate social responsibility concerns voluntary commitments by undertakings. At the same time, however, it is paradoxical, because CSR and the social and environmental clauses pull in the same direction, namely, towards globalisation which is more respectful of human rights and the environment and which is conducive to sustainable development.

We therefore propose to incorporate CSR into trade agreements and, specifically, to incorporate a corporate social responsibility clause into the chapters on sustainable development, especially of free trade agreements (FTA), with a number of clear and verifiable commitments by undertakings. First, there must be a reciprocal commitment between the European Union and its partners to encourage undertakings to enter into CSR commitments and to verify them: the establishment of contact points not only to foster the provision of information but also to receive complaints from trade unionists and civil society; a requirement for corporations to publish their balance sheets regularly, which will reinforce transparency; a reporting requirement; and a requirement for undertakings to show due diligence and to take preventive measures.

Finally, we propose that, in the event of serious breaches of the principles underpinning CSR and also of the violation of social rights and social and environmental laws, there should be mechanisms ...

(The President cut off the speaker)

President. – I would like to ask everyone for their forbearance, but there are some things which simply should not be allowed to happen. You have a speaking time of four minutes. Despite my interruption, you spoke for more than four-and-a-half minutes. I draw a rough line for every Member of this House. I attempt to be as fair as possible, but in the middle of your speech you said: ‘I am keeping an eye on the clock’. If we want to have more lively debates, this does not necessarily mean that we must read our speeches more quickly. You should not only be thinking about your French voters – and that applies to all the Members, who should not only be considering their own electorate – because all the citizens of the European Union can access the interpretation of speeches via the website. If the interpreters cannot follow what is being said, the people in the rest of Europe will not be able to understand your speech, because it was read too quickly. Therefore, everyone should keep to their speaking time and not break into the speaking time of other Members, because this is ultimately deducted from the catch-the-eye procedure.

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD). – Mr President, this is the second time that I have sat in this Chamber and seen the President interrupt one of the speakers on the basis that they are speaking too quickly.

I do not know how often you speak yourself, but you should understand that such an interruption has the consequence of completely wrecking the speech.

Now, I happen to disagree entirely with what Mr Désir said, but I think that, really, the interpreters are paid employees and if they cannot keep up, that is their problem. It is not for the President to interrupt in the way that you have just done.

President. – It certainly is my job to interrupt. You can pay a one-hundred-metre runner EUR 1 million to run the one-hundred-metre race in 10 seconds. However, even if you pay him EUR 100 million, he will not manage to do it in five seconds. I am obliged to interrupt Members if they speak too quickly. I have been a Member of this House for 13 years and I know very well that when the interpreters can no longer keep up, they press a button and a bulb on my desk lights up. You are very welcome to have a look at it. It is labelled ‘slow down’. I have already experienced this in the committees. At some point, the interpreters say that they are going to stop working. If a Member then complains, the whole thing comes to a grinding halt and the speaker cannot go on speaking.

(Heckling)

Mrs Berès, I am doing what you also do in your committee, which is to explain the situation when a point of order is raised.

(Heckling)

It is precisely the same thing.

Karel De Gucht, *Member of the Commission.* – Mr President, let me assure you that if ever I were to run the 100 metres, it would take me at least 15 seconds, so there is no major problem with me – at least not in that respect.

First, I would like to thank the rapporteurs and the INTA Committee for these reports, which raise important issues concerning the contribution of the European Union’s trade policy towards the achievement of some of the fundamental objectives of public policy: respect for human rights, the pursuit of economic welfare and social justice, the achievement of sustainable growth and respect for the environment and particularly the climate system.

You will understand that, in the short time I have at my disposal today, it is impossible to go into the details of each one. But allow me to make a few general considerations.

The three reports have many points in common. They all address policy coherence and, more particularly, the need for trade policy to be conducted in the framework of the EU’s overall objectives, in particular its economic, social and environmental objectives. I could not agree more with the goal of fully using all the instruments at our disposal to achieve these aims. At the same time, it should be stressed that effective action must rely on those instruments that are most suitable to address each issue.

I see trade policy as one of the key factors in promoting and safeguarding the European Union’s social model, its values and its principles, and I am aware that there are high expectations in this respect. But we must bear in mind that not all problems can necessarily be solved through trade policy. Other policies may offer key elements or even better options for effective solutions. We must also be aware that balancing different interests is at the core of political action. So there will always be choices to be made.

Challenges will also be different, depending on whether we are considering autonomous instruments such as GSP, bilateral agreements or multilateral agreements. Ms Saïfi’s report on human rights, social and environmental standards in trade agreements recognises that each of those dimensions offers different possibilities.

In general, international cooperation has the potential to trigger more effective action. On the other hand, it takes two to tango. We have to take account of what is acceptable to our trade partners – and at what price.

Especially when it comes to multilateral settings, achieving consensus can become very hard. The EU has a general interest in improving international governance, including through increased coherence between actions in different fora: the WTO, the ILO, the international climate negotiations, and so on.

The three reports outline several possible directions of work in this respect. We need to be pragmatic and be able to discern between those practical steps likely to prove successful in the short term and those steps more likely to produce an effect in the longer-term objectives. We need to give ourselves the scope to think ahead and think big. On the other hand, the Commission wants trade policy and our actions in trade bodies to have an impact and lead to results.

This also applies to our bilateral deals. The provisions in our free trade agreements are not there to become mere declarations of good intentions. They must be ‘implementable’.

Turning to Mr Jadot’s report on climate change, I would like to highlight the need to ensure that any options are indeed capable of effectively reducing the risk of carbon leakage and of being applied at reasonable cost. We all know, for instance, that options such as border measures raise a number of issues: how to measure, how to monitor, and so on. The truth is that we need to exercise caution and assess all relevant issues before precipitating conclusions. That said, the EU should definitely continue to look into all feasible options.

As regards Mr Désir’s report on corporate social responsibility, I note the statement that ‘Commission initiatives should focus on supporting rather than regulating CSR activities’. There is, however, a fine line to be drawn between supporting, regulating and enforcing – a line that the rapporteur has skilfully explored but that embodies a great number of political and practical considerations. Indeed, CSR cannot replace states or exempt them from their responsibility in enforcing their laws – just as state bodies are not there to enforce corporate policies as such. It is useful to note that many of these issues are being considered in the update of the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises due for adoption in 2011. This is one example of the useful work being carried out and in which we are actively engaged.

The reports under consideration today include very specific orientations on possible avenues for increasing the scope, effectiveness, consistency and transparency of our actions as regards social and environmental provisions in FTAs, including provisions on CSR or climate change issues. Needless to say, the Commission will continue to consider these orientations. In line with the caveats that I have already spelled out, you should anticipate important reservations on several points – as well as wholehearted agreement on others.

We will have plenty of opportunities, for instance under next year’s GSP review, to discuss these issues further in the following months or years, including in the context of upcoming legislative or consent procedures. The European Commission is willing to examine – together with the European Parliament – suitable, effective and workable means to ensure that trade policy duly reflects societal concerns. The guiding principle should be careful, analytical policymaking on the basis of forward-looking objectives but also of realistic expectations.

David Martin, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*. – Mr President, should Europe's trade policy simply be about obtaining maximum economic advantage, or should it be used to underpin and promote our wider goals: sustainable environment policy, fight against climate change, our social model, the promotion of human rights and democratic values? The three speakers before me – the three rapporteurs – have all confirmed that the answer to that should be in the affirmative and, I am pleased to say, so has the Commissioner. Indeed, already in our actions we do put human rights, environmental protection and labour standards in our bilateral trade agreements. But the question is: do we do it in a way that allows us to ensure proper application and compliance with these standards?

The Subcommittee on Human Rights of this Parliament has serious doubts about our effectiveness so far. In the case of future trade agreements, we would like to ensure that, before any agreement is initialled, an FTA is subject to a human rights impact assessment to make sure that there are not only economic benefits from the agreement, but human rights gains from any such agreement.

We believe that the system for suspending free trade agreements for abuse of human rights must be made more transparent and accessible, and I acknowledge the fact that Mr De Gucht in the Korea FTA has started to go down that route.

We believe that in relation to GSP+, beneficiaries must be subjected to consistent and fairer benchmarking to make sure that their application of environmental, social and human standards remains at a high level and consistent.

Mrs Saïfi, Mr Désir and Mr Jadot have all made it very clear that trade must not be viewed as an end in itself but must be part of a wider global strategy to promote a fairer, safer and healthier planet.

Filip Kaczmarek, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Development*. – (PL) Mr President, I am pleased that Mr De Gucht, Mr Désir and Mrs Saïfi understand very well that if we are to have equal trade conditions, then standards – and I mean standards in a broad sense, including human rights and social and environmental standards – must undergo extensive harmonisation. These standards are an extremely important matter, not only for world trade, but also for cooperation on development, and even more importantly, for the pursuit of values which we call fundamental values.

The Committee on Development has tabled several remarks about the Saïfi report. We regret, for example, that the European Union does not have an overall approach to the way in which businesses meet human rights obligations. This allows some firms and Member States to ignore these standards. We insist on compliance with the fundamental standards of the International Labour Organisation as a preliminary condition for entering into trade agreements.

Catherine Grèze, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Development*. – (FR) Mr President, I should like to begin, if I may, on behalf of the Committee on Development, by repeating a number of key ideas.

I would like to reiterate that it is the most vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples, who are affected by climate change, and so their participation in policymaking, especially trade policy, is essential.

Next, I would like to reiterate that EU trade policies must be consistent with combating climate change and poverty. We are asking for the insertion of environmental clauses in all the trade agreements of the EU and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), a review of the clean development mechanisms, a real transfer of technology and the combating of biopiracy.

Last but not least, since 20% of emissions are due to transport, we must move towards short distribution channels, first and foremost in agriculture, which will lead to the creation of jobs in our own countries as well as in developing countries and to a reduction in our emissions.

Pervenche Berès, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.* – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, we subscribe to the logic of the report drafted by Mr Désir within the Committee on International Trade. In our committee, as elsewhere, one of the most hotly debated issues is that of the purpose of corporate social responsibility. Is it an end in itself or should it lead to laws once it has been applied by many undertakings? This debate is not clear cut; it encourages us to develop our thinking with regard to corporate governance and to reconcile the two debates.

Within the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs we think that social responsibility is essential if we want to combat tax evasion and undeclared work through trade agreements. We also think that, among the stakeholders that are key to raising the profile of corporate social responsibility, trade unions, social dialogue and European works councils must be fully involved, because they make a quite essential contribution. We also think that, to ensure that these tools are fully utilised, the United Nations Human Rights Council, in its 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' initiative, has a vital role, and we must take advantage of this.

We also think that corporate social responsibility is a tool of competitiveness, which must be explored. However, when, once again, consensus has been reached, when corporate social responsibility has been defined through standards that are finally generally accepted, it should be able to succeed, without becoming a substitute for labour regulations or collective agreements.

Finally, we think that corporate social responsibility, including trade agreements, must be dynamic and must be able to adapt to new sectors to be covered.

Richard Howitt, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.* – Mr President, as this Parliament's rapporteur on corporate social responsibility for over three parliamentary terms now, I strongly welcome my colleague, Harlem Désir's initiative on trade and CSR.

Companies often say they should mainstream CSR, and this initiative reflects that public policy should do so too. I very much hope that Commissioner De Gucht will reflect its recommendations in the new trade policy communication.

In recent years, my own work has increasingly involved representing European interests in advancing global CSR mechanisms. Therefore, as a friend of the OECD guidelines – in my view now the foremost international CSR standard, and also one signed up to by governments – I strongly support paragraph 25, that future EU trade agreements should specifically cite the guidelines.

The Commission officially operates national contact points under those guidelines, and I hope this commitment will also be reviewed.

As a consultee of Professor John Ruggie on business and human rights, I endorse the requirement in recital Q of the report for companies to undertake due diligence and congratulate the previous Swedish Presidency for putting full support for the UN Special Representatives' recommendations into the Council conclusions.

The Commissioner should particularly read Ruggie's strong criticism of governmental failures to respect human rights considerations as the Commission develops its new competence on investment.

As a member of the advisory board of the Global Reporting Initiative, can I endorse the objective of transparency in paragraph 15, but also ask that the imminent public consultation by the Commission on non-financial disclosure moves decisively towards the principle of integrated reporting on financial, social, environmental and human rights impacts by companies.

President. – I would like to remind you about this once again. This time I have refrained from interrupting the Member shortly before the end of his speaking time. However, just as he stopped speaking, the interpreters said: 'He really is speaking too quickly. We are sorry.' I would like to ask the Members to keep to a normal speaking speed.

Daniel Caspary, *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (DE) Mr President, Mr Wieland, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to congratulate all three rapporteurs on their reports. I think that the discussions and negotiations about these three reports were a very good example of how we can reach a common approach in Parliament on important subjects like these.

I would like to focus primarily on one point. I have the impression that in these three reports we have spoken in great detail about the contribution of trade policy to the three areas of policy addressed in the reports. In the case of Mr Désir's report, which is about companies, Mrs Saïfi's report, which is about human rights and environmental standards, and Mr Jadot's report, which is about climate change, we have examined very closely what trade policy can contribute to these other policy areas. However, I often wonder what these individual areas of policy themselves achieve. Are we imposing a sufficiently strong obligation on the environmental and social policymakers and on policymakers in other areas to do their homework on their own subjects?

In order to ensure that we do not misunderstand one another, I should say that I think we all agree on the objectives. However, sometimes I am concerned that we are overloading trade policy, when other areas of policy increasingly often do not do their homework. One example of this is the environmental policymakers in Copenhagen who did not succeed in finding a solution in the field of climate change policy. The result of this was to overload trade policy with the responsibility for making up for all these shortcomings.

I would be very grateful if we could pay serious consideration here in Parliament over the next few weeks and months to the contribution that other areas of policy could make to trade policy in this respect. Therefore, I would like to hear us saying in future 'trade and ...' and not always discussing everything else and then also trade.

Kriton Arsenis, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (EL) Mr President, Commissioner, I am sure that your services often explain to you that certain necessary measures for climate change cannot be taken and applied.

However, the threat of climate change is so huge that the question is not what will be applied, but how we can find ways of addressing this problem, how we can find ways of applying the necessary measures.

One solution being discussed in terms of the contribution of commerce to climate change is border tax adjustments, a tax on imports from countries which do not take the same measures as us in terms of climate change.

We also need to examine disincentives to the trade in such goods. Water is a local resource and yet countries such as France and Belgium are, at the same time, among the biggest European exporters and the biggest European importers of water.

Metin Kazak, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (BG) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I would first of all like to thank the three rapporteurs, Mrs Saïfi, Mr Désir and Mr Jadot, for the good job they have done on their respective reports. I welcome the call to produce legally binding clauses on human rights standards in international trade agreements and support the idea of focusing greater attention on their implementation.

I want to focus particular attention on compliance with labour laws, and especially on women and children in the countries the European Union trades with. Both the generalised system of preferences and GSP+ are effective instruments for encouraging democratic values in partner countries. However, a closer link needs to be established between human rights clauses and GSP+. Coordination should be stepped up between the World Trade Organisation, on the one hand, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Labour Organisation, on the other hand. This is why I believe that the ILO must be granted official observer status in the World Trade Organisation.

Last but not least, as representatives of Europe's citizens, we should be informed in detail about international trade agreement negotiations, in keeping with the new powers enjoyed by the European Parliament under the Treaty of Lisbon.

With regard to Yannick Jadot's report, we must, of course, promote 'green' trade. However, we should once again be extremely vigilant when identifying goods which are defined as 'green'. Similarly, we must place greater emphasis on promoting environmentally sound renewable energy sources, as opposed to subsidising fossil fuels.

Setting a fair environmental price in accordance with global climate protection standards is another important point in the report, which I welcome. As there is no prospect in the near future of reaching a multilateral climate agreement, it is important to work at European level on devising a mechanism for restricting carbon dioxide emissions. I think that both biofuels and biomass must be included among the mandatory sustainability criteria, given the contradictory impact they have on the environment.

I would like to thank all my fellow Members once again and I hope that these reports will really have an important impact on international agreement negotiations.

Keith Taylor, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, I was the Green/EFA shadow for both the Saïfi and the Désir reports. We welcome these as important steps forward to secure better human rights and social and environmental standards in the countries that are our trading partners.

If those countries want to sell on the lucrative EU markets, we should encourage them to adopt decent and sustainable standards at home. Securing improvement through mandatory clauses and requirements in trade agreements is one way to achieve this.

Mrs Saïfi, who did an excellent job as rapporteur, discusses constructively the different levels and aspects of human rights, and environmental and social standards at differing levels. We agree with Ms Saïfi's suggestion that a world environment organisation be formed and that the ILO status should be strengthened. We liked the sustainable development chapter in FTAs but wish those standards to be binding, not voluntary. Similarly, the GSP schemes should be given proper teeth and be enforceable.

But we could not agree with the rapporteur that the human rights clause in the FTA with Colombia was satisfactory. In fact we thought that was a meaningless, formulaic human rights clause that makes a mockery of the aspirations of this House in that regard.

Turning to Mr Désir's report, we could not agree more with him when he names the transnational corporations as a source of negative effects on the environment and on our social standards. They have profited from trade liberalisation and they have exploited cheap labour – and, all too often, cheap materials – but failed to adequately redistribute the wealth they have created at others' expense.

We have successfully amended both reports, and will be supporting both of them when it comes to the vote. In closing, I would very quickly stress that more needs to be done in specifying the human rights and social responsibilities we want to prioritise. We should do so in terms of obligatory requirements and not rely on voluntary codes.

Peter van Dalen, *on behalf of the ECR Group.* – (NL) Mr President, Mrs Saïfi has produced a sound report. Purely commercial interests must never be at the expense of concern for our fellow human beings in other countries, particularly in developing countries. I am including in this countries where Christians and other religious minorities are persecuted for their beliefs. The EU has trade relations with Pakistan, for example. We are now seeking to give that country additional trade advantages to help it back on its feet after the floods. Let us use our trade relations to denounce the religious persecution and the blasphemy legislation in Pakistan. I would also mention the negotiations between the European Union and India in this regard. Europe must not give in to pressure by India to leave non-trade issues out of the new trade agreement. Human rights and child labour cannot be regarded separately from trade and investment. I call upon the Commission and my fellow Members to adopt a firm stance on this, in accordance with the European Parliament's resolution of March 2009.

Helmut Scholz, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (DE) Mr President, Mr De Gucht, ladies and gentlemen, there is a good reason why we are discussing these three reports in a joint debate. I would like to thank the three rapporteurs for their excellent work. All of the reports make it clear that all the groups in the European Parliament want to put EU trade policy into a broader context.

The times of tough, one-sided external economic aid should now be over. Therefore, today's discussion is taking place at a highly appropriate time, because we are holding a debate on the basis of the trade strategy presented by Mr De Gucht, which should include a number of proposals and considerations and also specific projects.

Protecting the climate, the environment and human dignity, together with eliminating poverty throughout the world, have been recognised and acknowledged as joint tasks for all of mankind. These tasks are much more important than conventional trade interests. However, it is essential that these objectives are incorporated into modern trade policy.

Increasing social prosperity, as defined by the human development index, and the rule of law are in the best interests of the European economy. They will enable it to network successfully with other economies. These things are covered to a certain extent by corporate social responsibility, but they cannot be implemented without a national framework.

I would like to emphasise that my group would like to have seen some of the points addressed in the three reports being taken further. Although we welcome the fact that companies are living up to their social responsibilities on their own initiative, it is a fact that thousands of people throughout the world discover every day that their rights at best exist only on paper and are simply ignored in their day-to-day working life. The conditions in subcontracting companies and suppliers, including in the production of raw materials, are often appalling. This is demonstrated by the films about child labour in the chocolate production industry.

In order to have a sustainable, uninterrupted supply of raw materials and energy, as described in your strategy, Mr De Gucht, we must take these aspects of the three reports into account.

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – Mr President, trade delivers mutual prosperity, and I emphasise the word ‘mutual’. It follows, therefore, that trade policy should almost never be burdened with a political agenda.

Now, on a personal level I have great respect for the rapporteurs of these three reports, but the philosophy which underpins the reports has been put forward at many elections and mostly voted down.

What we are seeing is an attempt to manipulate the trade policy of the European Union – which, unfortunately, the UK is bound by for the moment – in order to implement by stealth a largely Socialist agenda that has been consistently rejected.

At a political level, the machinations of the rapporteurs are rather impressive. But, as a democrat, I have to say no and that is why we will be voting no tomorrow.

Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI) . – (NL) Mr President, the causes and effects of climate change are based on a theory, but it seems to have more the nature of a religious conviction. Nevertheless, everything is subordinated to this religion, as can be seen by reading this report on international trade. It is a veritable climate diplomacy that is being proposed; that is, the European Union is happy to do business, but only under strict climate-neutral conditions – just the way the European Union likes it – as though these trading partners would like nothing better than to apply themselves without delay to the development of a single market. After all, export means transport, and more transport is very bad for global CO₂ emissions. Well, Europe will really help the developing countries with this – particularly countries that depend on the export of competing agricultural products, for example. What has this got to do with the European Union? Mr President, the document shows a lack of economic understanding. I should like to quote from the report by Mr Jadot, paragraph 57: ‘regrets that a significant part of international trade consists of homogeneous products which could just as easily be produced locally’. End of quote. What economic genius thought that up? Anyone with even a modicum of economic education will be familiar with the economic principle that specialisation and trade are the very driving force behind economic growth. The naive reasoning in this report would be disastrous to the global economy. It is no wonder that the majority of citizens and businesses can do without European climate targets. Yet Europe is persisting and drawing up the umpteenth series of absurd climate

targets. Emerging economies such as China and India do not care about these and will reap profit from Europe's self-imposed restrictions. Who will ultimately pay the price for the pursuit of Europe's Utopia? It will be the citizens and businesses.

Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, Commissioner, first of all, I would like to thank Mr Désir for very good cooperation on the report on corporate social responsibility in international trade agreements. I was shadow rapporteur from the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) for this report. Corporate social responsibility has for some time now been present in debate about international trade, and this is seen in the reference to the principles of social responsibility in the trade agreements recently negotiated by the Union with countries such as South Korea, Colombia and Peru.

I am pleased that with this report Parliament has underscored the need to continue to extend the use of these references, which in the report it calls corporate social responsibility clauses. I am certain that including such clauses in international agreements will contribute to greater recognisability of instruments of corporate social responsibility and to promoting and encouraging businesses themselves to apply them more extensively. For we should not forget that the proper functioning of these instruments depends to a large extent on the will of businesses themselves, since it is businesses which decide to go beyond the limits of legally binding standards.

Ladies and gentlemen, during my recent visit to India, I asked the business people whom I had the opportunity to meet about what they are doing in the area of corporate social responsibility. All of them gave very specific examples of measures they are taking in this area. This fills me, personally, with very great optimism. I hope the Désir report will be a new voice on measures taken by the Union and will contribute to ever more extensive application of the standards of corporate social responsibility.

George Sabin Cutaş (S&D). – (RO) Mr President, I would like to congratulate Yannick Jadot for the ambitious proposals he has put forward in this report and especially for the readiness to reach a compromise with all the political groups which tabled amendments.

We must admit that there have been key moments when the European Union has had the opportunity to speak with one voice. Copenhagen was one of those when the whole planet was expecting the European Union to assume the leading role in the battle against climate change and pull cautious states along in the same direction. Unfortunately, expectations were not realised and the disappointment was directly proportional to this.

The conclusion which can be drawn is that there was a lack of consensus within the Union. There are national governments which are really not prepared to take on substantial commitments in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. One definite explanation for this could be the economic and financial crisis which has dampened their enthusiasm for committing to devising an ambitious climate policy.

However, the battle against climate change both locally and globally must be a matter of constant concern for all countries in the world. It is not only about the future of subsequent generations being jeopardised, but also about global justice.

It is not fair that developing countries are left to pay for the cost of global warming, while the industrialised countries engage in thinking pragmatically about their own needs. Real North-South solidarity is required.

This is why I regard the Cancún Summit as an opportunity to go further than an operational agreement. Cancún must signify a global, legally binding agreement, which will help maintain global warming below two degrees Celsius.

A verification procedure is also required which is more clearly defined than the one established in Copenhagen. In addition, the European Union's sole efforts to combat climate change cannot guarantee the success of an agreement in the period after 2012. We must successfully persuade other parties as well to assume more ambitious commitments for reducing gas emissions, including greenhouse gases.

Last but not least, I would like to touch on the relationship between international trade and climate change. Trade is an important instrument for transferring technology to developing countries. Therefore, the barriers to green trade must be removed. This could take the form of removing the rates for green products, at least within the World Trade Organisation. At the same time, we must be aware of the split caused globally by the current trade system with regard to work and production based on transport. This is why I am ending with a plea to encourage local production in the European Union.

Catherine Bearder (ALDE). – Mr President, I would point out to the Commissioner that the concept and practice of corporate social responsibility has spread rapidly through the business sector during the last decade. Who can object to such basic values as companies treating their employees well and respecting human rights and the environment?

Yet up till now, the link between trade and corporate social responsibility has been tenuous at best, and arguments abound. International trade is governed by agreements between states, but should CSR be a binding commitment to which those undertakings must sign up? Or may they comply on a voluntary basis?

European citizens are becoming more aware. So many recent disasters – not least the BP oil spill – have shown that the standards and ethics under which our European companies operate abroad must be monitored.

Ordinary Europeans are no longer willing to welcome and support an expansion in international trade purely on economic grounds. When trade destroys the natural environment and lowers the living standards of local populations, we say enough is enough. Only governments can set standards which ensure that those who behave in an ethical and transparent way are not undercut by those who do not.

The European Union must encourage businesses to adopt and to report on CSR obligations in all their business activities, both at home and abroad. Without this, CSR risks remaining little more than an exercise in public relations for a few multinational companies.

I welcome this own-initiative report, which calls on the Commission to bring CSR into the heart of the EU's international trade agreements. We must guarantee that respect for sustainable development and labour rights remains equally important in the pursuit of the European Union's commercial interests abroad.

Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL). – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Commission, in defending rampant free-marketism, in orchestrating the commercial disarmament of the Union, has played to the full its servile role as an instrument serving very specific interests, which are harmful to European employees. Free, undistorted competition is a myth that destroys jobs and lives.

Indeed, if competition is free then all forms of dumping are possible, starting with tax, social, monetary and environmental dumping. Competition is necessarily distorted. To find a way out of this situation, which kills industrial employment and plunges employees and their families into destitution, there must be strict control of capital movements by Member States, tax havens must be destroyed, the sectors essential to life – energy, water, medicines, agriculture and training – must be removed from the field of commerce and, above all, environmental and social criteria guaranteeing equality in commercial activity and the rights of employees must be defined and enforced.

Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, the European Union has a major responsibility for human rights, social standards and safeguarding the environment in its current and future trade relations. These standards form an important basis for the discussions on free trade agreements. The EU should set an example in all its negotiations and call for fair employment conditions and the sustainable use of resources. In this context, I would like to highlight, in particular, the current Mercosur negotiations and those with India. Does the European Union really want to import cheap products which have been manufactured using child labour and which involve the destruction of natural resources? Our objective must be to ensure good working conditions and good wages in these countries, instead of quick profits. The European Commission must continue to incorporate clear standards in future trade agreements and to include them in international negotiations.

However, these standards are not just about the ethical considerations and the values which the EU represents, but also about equal treatment for producers both inside and outside Europe. Other important factors are the growing demand from European consumers for products and the traceability of production methods. Against this background, I would like to look last of all at Mr Jadot's report. Paragraph 48 is highly critical of the common agricultural model. However, this model guarantees a secure supply of high quality food. The report refers to its apparent negative impacts on climate change. I would like to make it quite clear that the priority here is food security for our 500 million citizens. The EU must remain self-sufficient as far as its food supply is concerned and should not become dependent on imports. This would be a disaster. I have a strong obligation to the citizens of the EU and, therefore, I cannot support this passage in the report.

Zuzana Roithová (PPE). – (CS) Mr President, I am very closely involved in the new strategy on international trade. As a member of the INTA Committee in the previous period, I patiently called for our trade policy to be an instrument supporting fair competition, and a key to the maintenance of European values and commercial interests on the global market. Pressure to increase social and environmental standards is the way to eliminate unfairness and unequal conditions in international trade competition. For six years I have been calling for all trade agreements to have human rights clauses, compliance with which would be a condition for a preferential policy.

Finally, the European Parliament is today asking the Commission through this report to submit a draft regulation prohibiting the importation into the EU of goods produced through the use of modern forms of slavery and forced labour, and in countries where basic human rights standards are violated. This must apply both to ACP countries and to China. I would like to express my thanks and sincere congratulations to my colleague Mrs Saïfi for this document, which provides an example of the fact that Parliament is making progress

Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE). – (SK) Mr President, the opportunities afforded by the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon make possible the long-awaited establishment of a balance between commercial law and human rights. I firmly believe that the European Union, in the interests of upholding its credibility and integrity, must make active use of this opportunity, and start to act consistently over human rights, both in its internal and its external policies.

I would like to emphasise the request for the Commission to conclude agreements containing clauses on democracy, human rights and compliance with social, health and environmental standards, and at the same time to ensure the effective monitoring of compliance with, and implementation of, these standards in practice. Special attention should be paid in agreements on commercial aspects of intellectual property rights to ensuring the protection of the right to health, which is closely connected with the actual right to life. I would like to congratulate Mrs Saïfi for a very bold and consistent text.

Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE). – (SV) Mr President, I think that we can summarise these three reports by saying that we are moving from viewing people as tools to be used for trade to viewing trade as a tool to be used for people. We want to move away from a logic in which a euro profit from trade is matched by two euros lost on the environment or in social costs. The reports also contain many specific proposals, for example Mrs Saïfi's excellent proposal for a world organisation for the environment, or the proposal for increased power for the International Labour Organisation or border charges as a means of reducing unfair competition and emissions that are harmful to the climate, as well as the proposal for consultation with the local community before investments are made.

These, Commissioner, are not merely good intentions that you should take note of. Rather, we now want to see the concrete results of our demands. We want to see legislation when this is necessary. We want to see changes to its implementation when necessary, and we want to see the Commission take the initiative in international negotiations in order to improve the rules.

Csanád Szegedi (NI). – (HU) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, my party, Jobbik – The Movement for a Better Hungary, attaches profound importance to environmental protection and the restoration of ecological balance. We are convinced that Europe is faced not only with an economic crunch and recession but also with an environmental crisis. In this regard we consider it extremely important to create self-governance in the food and light industries in the European Union. Nobody understands why the EU has to import vast amounts of garlic and peppers from China and chicken from Brazil when these products could be produced locally. This is why we say that we need local self-governance in the food and light industries. It is our responsibility here in the European Parliament to protect European farmers, SMEs and our own citizens, giving them the opportunity to obtain clean, high quality food from local farmers. We also believe that it is crucial to introduce the mandatory adoption of environmentally friendly technologies to the largest extent possible.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Mr President, competition is the life of trade. Obviously, to have competition you must be able to compete, and some of the arrangements we have with third countries disadvantage our own producers.

Elisabeth Köstinger referred to Mercosur, and it is certainly true that many agricultural and fisheries products coming into the EU are produced at a far inferior standard than those which we demand from within. That certainly must be addressed.

Having said that, on a positive note, some of the agreements we have had in recent times are very good, such as the free trade agreement with Korea. We need more of that. I think most people would agree that it would benefit us and it would benefit them.

I would ask the Commissioner whether there are any plans to engage in an economic partnership agreement with Japan. The Copenhagen Economic Study has shown that we would gain EUR 33 billion and Japan would gain EUR 18 billion by such an arrangement.

Karel De Gucht, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I think this has been a very rich debate. While the philosophy behind the three reports is similar, the details, ideas and responses we have shared today cannot be addressed adequately in the short time at my disposal. Some ideas are workable, others less so, because we operate in a legal, an institutional and a political framework, both as a Union of 27 Member States and as a member of the WTO. I will try to highlight what I believe to be the salient considerations for each report. Unfortunately I cannot be exhaustive.

On the Saïfi report, a number of you have raised the possibility of ILO observer status in the WTO. My starting point is that there is definitely much scope for improved international governance and better coordination between international organisations. My next consideration is that, in order to leverage trade policy to achieve a better social and environmental outcome, we need to set feasible objectives. Structural changes take a long time to implement and, if we are realistic about the WTO membership coming round to a 'trade and ...' agenda, this is a long-term endeavour.

Let me add that, with regard to the proposal in the Saïfi report that there should be a human rights assessment of free trade agreements (FTAs), I believe this should happen throughout the negotiations. I would be rather sceptical about having a special period between the end of the negotiations and the initialling of the agreement. This was also discussed this morning in another context, but I think we should stick to the procedure in the Treaty of Lisbon which makes it very clear that it is up to the Commission to initial such agreements; after that, the ratification procedure starts and the Council signs, which is their way of ratifying; then the European Parliament has the right and the duty to ratify by vote. With regard to the idea of having a human rights assessment before the initialling – let us call it a kind of pre-condition – I would not be positive about this. On the other hand, I think the actual idea of assessing the human rights impact of an agreement makes sense, and I am positive on that.

Specific questions have also been put, for example on child labour. You know that we are currently negotiating a free trade agreement with India, where the whole matter of sustainability also has to be addressed. India is very sceptical about such a sustainability chapter in the agreement, but we insist – and we will continue to insist – that such a chapter has its place, and I think that ultimately it will be included.

I would simply like to ask that, later on when you will have to discuss this, you take into account the fact that the ideas of individual third countries on such a sustainability chapter may concern not only the content of it but also the philosophy of certain third countries on this issue.

With respect to the Jadot report, I have heard calls for a climate chapter in each bilateral agreement. I am all for environmental sustainability because the future does not belong to us. Where I think we must be careful, however, is in recognising that the many elements which need to come into play to provide a satisfactory response to the climate change

challenge – from emission caps to financing – cannot be translated into provisions in our trade agreements. I think there is a wider forum for that and, provided that there is an agreement in the wider forum, then of course such an agreement has to be reflected in the bilateral free trade agreements. Whether it is also possible in the development round that we have just discussed, the Doha Round, is much more questionable because there is certainly not agreement among all the participants in this multilateral process to have a climate chapter in the final outcome. However, our position will be that we are in favour of this.

Lastly, on Mr Désir's report, I think this comes at a very timely moment, given that a new Commission communication on corporate social responsibility (CSR) is in preparation.

The Commission and the members of the OECD are actively contributing to updating the current OECD benchmarks in time for the OECD ministerial meeting in May 2011.

In all our CSR-related activities, we will carefully consider various options for promoting responsible behaviour by European companies, irrespective of their place of operation, and with special regard to feasibility and consequences.

Let me add that this is not only a matter of trade, or of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. In the United States, legislation was recently adopted whereby multinational companies – and not only those with their operations in the United States but also those with their registered offices there – are required to be responsible and to produce certification of their financial operations and transactions with respect to raw materials.

I think it is a very laudable initiative which is, in fact, completely outside bilateral agreements. Most of these operations concerning raw materials are not covered by bilateral agreements, they are simply financial and industrial operations by multinational companies, but if they have their registered offices in the United States, then the United States can take action vis-à-vis such companies. I think it would be a very good idea for us to consider doing exactly the same with respect to European companies that are active mostly in Third World countries, and then to extend the same approach to countries like Canada and Australia, so that we would ultimately encompass the majority of these kinds of industrial activities and extractive industries in the world. I think this would be a considerable contribution to development in sustainable conditions.

In short, congratulations for the three reports. I am certainly willing to continue the discussion on these subjects with you in the coming months and years.

Tokia Saïfi, *rapporteur*. – (FR) Mr President, there is too little time, Commissioner, to reopen a debate on the reply you have just given us. We will therefore continue the discussion, as you said.

I should like to begin by thanking all the speakers, particularly the shadow rapporteurs, as well as my colleagues Mr Jadot and Mr Désir for our cooperation. The subjects were similar and complementary, and that enabled us to exchange ideas. It also enabled us to demonstrate a consistency of approach in our work: to make trade and commerce less impervious to concepts of human rights, labour law and environmental law.

As I pointed out earlier, it will take time, as you said, Commissioner, for mindsets to change, but we cannot wait for them to change on their own. Therefore, if we implement some of the measures proposed in the various reports we have presented to you this evening, we

will gradually move towards a fairer and greener economy. The European Union must initiate this change and set an example to its trade partners.

Yannick Jadot, *rapporteur*. – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, I should like to thank Commissioner De Gucht for his answers and for his proposal for work. I have taken note of his reply on the climate chapter, and I hope that we will also manage to work on the remaining aspects and make proposals that will result in concrete action being taken and certain elements being included in the trade agreements. Finally, the fact that the trade negotiations at the World Trade Organisation, which are undoubtedly very complex, have broken down also offers the European Union various opportunities to integrate more innovative elements into bilateral agreements and to try to construct new types of trade agreements which further integrate the EU's objectives with regard to the environment, climate, human rights or social rights.

This is therefore, in a sense, an opportunity. I believe it is a very strong request, and if these reports receive broad support tomorrow, this will indeed be – and I want to believe it will be – an extremely important signal from the European Parliament to the Commission and to the Council.

I would like to reply to Mrs Stassen, who has left, regarding the economy. Books on the economy have continued to be written after the 19th century. We can therefore see that the challenges concerning the way in which to integrate social and environmental issues into production costs are an important factor in terms of defining the reality of comparative advantages.

Similarly, Mrs Muscardini, you will always have my support when it comes to defending the food sovereignty of the European Union. Moreover, if you are prepared, with me and others, to combat the Blair House Agreement, which is, after all, the main obstacle to real food sovereignty, to real food security today in Europe, you will have my support.

Thank you, therefore, to all my colleagues, and to you, Commissioner, for your openness towards concrete work and concrete action with a view to the agreements that will soon be negotiated and concluded.

Harlem Désir, *rapporteur*. – (FR) Mr President, as you can see, I had two minutes left. You knew this, so, if you had a time issue earlier, you could have deducted the time from this part of my speech, which could have been shorter. I should especially like to thank my colleagues and the Commissioner for his reply.

What has been striking in this debate is the very broad consensus extending beyond the differences between groups. This is, however, qualified by the need to genuinely take greater account of the social and environmental dimensions in trade policy, in the agreements we negotiate.

When you cut me off for your very interesting speech, which I am sure our fellow citizens throughout the Union will have found fascinating, I simply wanted to raise a point that the Commissioner himself raised, which is that corporate social responsibility cannot – he is absolutely right – replace compliance with the law and the responsibilities of the Member States.

Furthermore, Mr De Gucht is also right when he says that, at this very moment, within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and also within the World Trade Organisation (WTO), as a result of Professor Ruggie's report, which Mr Howitt

mentioned, new steps have been proposed with regard to the responsibility of multinational companies, not only in relation to mining but also in many other areas of responsibility – especially as regards their foreign subsidiaries – within their spheres of influence or throughout their supply chains. Judicial cooperation will also ensure that a parent company cannot evade its responsibilities in relation to the action of one of its subsidiaries or of a subcontractor, when it has infringed environmental or social rules. All of this is absolutely critical.

I simply believe, though I admit it will be difficult, that we must establish a link with trade agreements. There are already a small number of references to corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the agreement with Korea and in the agreements with Latin American countries. I believe that, through the dialogue we have begun today with the Commission, we must continue to ensure that our CSR objectives and our sustainable development objectives are consistent with each other in international trade agreements.

President. – Thank you very much, Mr Désir.

President. – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow, Thursday, 25 November 2010, at 12:00.

21. Anti-dumping cases - state of play and prospects (debate)

President. – The next item is the debate on the oral question to the Commission on anti-dumping cases – state of play and prospects by Daniel Caspary, Cristiana Muscardini, Tokia Saïfi, Georgios Papastamkos, Kader Arif, Bernd Lange, Gianluca Susta, Metin Kazak, Niccolò Rinaldi, Marielle De Sarnez, Yannick Jadot, Carl Schlyter, Helmut Scholz, Robert Sturdy, Syed Kamall, Jan Zahradil, on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left and the European Conservatives and Reformists (O-0132/2010 – B7-0562/2010).

Daniel Caspary, author. – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, anti-dumping measures play an important role in the world. For us in the European Parliament, and I believe I can speak for the majority of Members here, this is not about protectionism, but about a sensible use of the anti-dumping instrument. We must be able to defend ourselves if other countries distort competition using state subsidies. We must be able to defend ourselves if companies dump products onto the market, in other words, if they sell products at less than the cost of producing them, in order to force their competitors out of the market and to gain an illegitimate advantage.

I would like to look at one point in particular. I would be interested in answers to the following questions from the Commission. Does the Commission have any experience or any feedback from the Council on the extent to which foreign governments are involved in these activities? Are there cases where governments in whose countries specific companies are based attempt to influence the decisions made in the Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices? Have there been reactions or perhaps even attempts to exert influence which have led to a difference in the results of votes? I would be interested in finding out about this, because companies have come to me in the past with their concerns.

My second point is that on several occasions companies have approached me and asked me to make contact with the Commission and to prevent anti-dumping investigations from taking place in certain cases. If you impose an anti-dumping duty, this will have a negative impact on European companies doing business in other areas, such as Asia. I would be interested to know what the Commission's feeling is in this respect. What is the current state of affairs? Are there cases of this kind?

Vital Moreira, *author.* – (PT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to challenge the Commissioner to clarify as fully as possible the position of the Commission on trade defence instruments, which include anti-dumping measures. The fact is that in a recent communication the Commission said that open trade depends on fair competition between national and foreign producers, and added: 'we protect EU production from international trade distortions or disruptions, by applying trade defence instruments in compliance with [World Trade Organisation] rules'. That is all well and good. However, besides a good legal basis there also needs to be an effective and predictable decision-making mechanism so that these objectives can be achieved.

My question is as follows: could it be that the Council's recent proposal on Member States controlling the Commission's implementing acts, which include trade defence measures, correspond to this wish for a guarantee that trade defence measures are actually undertaken? I recall that this decision by the Council provides for exemptions from the general committee rules, which means that it is possible to make difficult, if not block, delay and, at the very least, politicise decision making on this matter, which is the Commission's responsibility. My second question concerns the following: in this communication the Commission also mentions that it is going to analyse the way in which to proceed with the updating and modernisation of our trade-defence instruments, along with the relevance of doing so. My concern is this: If the Commission does not fight this proposal by the Council on the procedure of deciding upon trade-defence measures, can it give us any guarantee that when it comes to the issue of reviewing them, it will resist the Member States which are interested in undermining and weakening the application of trade-defence measures?

Niccolò Rinaldi, *author.* – (IT) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, there are only a few of us here this evening to talk about anti-dumping, which is, however, an issue we speak about a great deal in our own countries. I believe that there is no issue in international trade that business people, small and medium-sized enterprises, trade unions and consumers care more about than dumping. Dealing with dumping is basically a daily task for a large part of our productive economy.

The Commission is working hard and is certainly doing its duty when it comes to anti-dumping initiatives, but we are calling for action based on the following principles.

Firstly, transparency of action, full transparency of procedures, of the evaluation criteria adopted and their results, and then communications and a communications strategy, because the actions taken on anti-dumping by the European Commission can serve to reassure our business people and workers.

Secondly, there is space for the exercise of discretion in anti-dumping procedures. This is common sense, but sometimes I have the impression that too much discretion is exercised in the decisions that are taken.

Thirdly, following the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Parliament must be better integrated, involved and informed. It seems to me that there the Commission is labouring somewhat

to recognise Parliament's role in international trade – even though much effort has been made, for which we are grateful to the Commissioner – and Parliament certainly needs to have a stronger voice on anti-dumping as well.

Lastly, there is the question of dialogue with society. Once again, perhaps, the Commission still has much to do on this issue. Parliament cannot merely sit and listen to the players in society, including in anti-dumping matters. In this respect, the Commission should probably take note of the new requirements with respect to the exclusive powers on international trade recognised to it by the Treaty of Lisbon.

Lastly, it is clear to us that anti-dumping must be part of a coherent commercial strategy and an integrated policy based on the criteria of honesty and openness. Bearing this in mind, Europe will be able to move forward with its head held high.

Carl Schlyter, *author.* – (SV) Mr President, we can now see the consequences here. It is a shame that the Commission did not take the opportunity to reform the Trade Defence Instruments in 2007 when we were talking about Global Europe, which was perhaps the original intention. When it comes to the question of the Treaty of Lisbon and which decision-making procedure we should have, perhaps none of those that exist really fit our purposes properly. However, we Greens actually have no problem with the question of implementation, provided the rules are clear, transparent and fair.

I would like to emphasise that, in this context, it is also important not only to safeguard the interests of producers, but also to include the interests of consumers and the actual purpose itself, just as Mr Caspary said, namely to put a stop to dumping below the actual costs. In this regard, however, I would like to stress that the actual costs must include environmental dumping. Obtaining an economic advantage by circumventing environmental legislation is just like obtaining another form of subsidy besides economic dumping, but in the form of the environment. It must be possible to include it when we look at the dumping issue.

We talked previously about trade policy as an instrument for achieving other goals. In this case, it may even be more effective to use anti-dumping measures to prevent carbon dioxide leakage within the Emissions Trading System, for example. In the current system there is a long list of hundreds of business sectors, covering tens of thousands of companies, with four different criteria for when they are to be granted exemption from the ETS or receive free allocation. In this case it is, of course, much easier to instigate anti-dumping proceedings when a European company is affected by unfair competition on account of a lack of environmental responsibility in other countries.

Helmut Scholz, *author.* – (DE) Mr President, Mr De Gucht, ladies and gentlemen, we have already discussed in the previous debate the need to put trade policy into a broader context and to comply with, protect and implement international law. One of the legal frameworks which the European Union and its Member States form part of is the World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, my group has been critical of its shortcomings right from the beginning and particularly in this respect. The Commission is under an obligation to protect European companies and their employees from unfair competition using the anti-dumping instruments permitted by the WTO. In concrete terms, this is about selling products below cost. We are calling on you to expand the definition of production costs and to apply this definition multilaterally, because social dumping and environmental dumping, as other speakers have already emphasised, cause production costs to fall. The result is unfair competitive pressure on European companies, which may even put their

survival at risk. We are threatened by a global downward spiral, which we cannot and will not accept.

Against this background, we must continue to work on defining objective criteria for the use of the instruments, because they currently have the reputation among countries both outside and inside the European Union of being arbitrary. One reason for this is the lack of a functioning appeal body. Some small and medium-sized businesses inside the EU are complaining that their interests are seen as less important than those of larger companies when the anti-dumping instruments are used. This applies particularly to the global division of labour for manufacturing firms in Europe. These companies are questioning whether the Commission still has a clear overview of the consequences of the measures it imposes. I would like the Commission to address this using the specific example of case AD549, with the keyword being the European Saint-Gobain group. The Commission's decision on this company may well help to support it, but from our perspective it also puts many jobs in small and medium-sized manufacturing companies at risk. My question to you, Mr De Gucht, is: Were adequate investigations carried out, were there appropriate opportunities to object, were these opportunities used and were the small and medium-sized companies given enough information about the procedures?

Robert Sturdy, *author*. – Mr President, I would say this to the Commissioner: since the start of the economic downturn, the Commission has repeatedly promised not to turn to protectionist policies but to embrace liberalisation – which you yourself have been very much in favour of – create opportunities for European businesses and make a more attractive opportunity in Europe for investment.

While I agree that anti-dumping measures must be used where they are necessary, the problem is, of course, whether you use them as a protectionist measure. The sheer number of anti-dumping investigations at the moment would suggest that they are being so used.

On this matter, Commissioner, I beg to differ with you on a particular problem in Belgium with an electronic company about which I spoke to you only about three or four weeks ago. In actual fact they have come to an agreement and they have sorted it out themselves, yet you have not dropped the anti-dumping legislation against that particular company. It was a Chinese company and a Belgian electronic company. They have sorted it out and are actually working together specifically to provide job opportunities in the European Union.

I will give you another example. We have a situation within the United Kingdom – and, for that matter, Europe – over fibreglass, which has an import duty at the moment of (and I stand to be corrected on this) 43.6%. This is a useful product used right across the United Kingdom and Europe for the manufacture of a number of products.

Finally, Commissioner, let me remind you that it was not you, not your predecessor but the predecessor of your predecessor who put in place anti-dumping legislation on fertiliser. Regarding agricultural products, at the moment we are deeply worried about the cost of production, supply and security of food. Yet the actual costs of fertiliser – because you have put in place anti-dumping legislation – have risen by 173%. Why is this happening? We must open up our markets. I trust you, of all people, implicitly to actually get rid of this protectionism across Europe. I look forward to hearing your answers.

Karel De Gucht, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I am happy that the European Parliament shares our view that the defence of EU production against international trade

distortions should be considered as a necessary component of an open and fair trade strategy.

I share your view that trade defence instrument (TDI) decisions must continue to be founded on technical and factual elements, and I am confident we have one of the most effective and fairest trade defence systems in the world. I am aware that, in anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigations, there are many interests at stake and that some stakeholders attempt to influence the decision. Nevertheless, I can confirm that the decision-making process is effective, transparent and based on factual evidence and thorough analysis.

I acknowledge that third parties have recently tried to influence our decision making by pressuring industries or, indeed, Member States and companies operating in these third countries. I strongly condemn such actions. In this context, the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon provides an opportunity to address this problem.

I would like to assure you that the number of TDI cases remains stable over the medium and long term: so, in response to Mr Sturdy, no, it is not going up. We have managed to avoid any significant increase which could have happened as a result of the world recession, and have ensured that the anti-dumping instrument would not be used for protectionist purposes.

Most statistics show that the number of cases in the EU remains lower than in our main trading partners. China remains, by and large, the main source of unfair trade (around 35% of cases launched by the EU are against China). I am determined to take action where necessary, and this includes anti-subsidy action.

Mr Sturdy also put a question with respect to a recent case, the so-called 'modern case', where the Commission had, in fact, looked at three aspects: the dumping, the subsidisation and also the safeguards. The dumping and the subsidisation were investigated on the basis of complaints by the company concerned and, according to the basic regulations, complainants can withdraw their complaints. EU law stipulates that, where a case is withdrawn, the proceedings can be terminated unless such termination would not be in the Community interests. We are currently examining the implications of the withdrawals. It should be pointed out that the Commission has accepted such withdrawals in the past and has consequently terminated investigations without taking measures.

On the third case, concerning the safeguards, this is, in fact, a complaint initiated by the government concerned in the case – the Belgian Government – so that is a somewhat different procedure. The company concerned (Option NV) has now informed the Commission that it has asked the Belgian Government to withdraw the request for the imposition of safeguard measures, but the Belgian Government has not yet informed the Commission whether it will comply with Option's request, so we are waiting for the Belgian Government to take a decision on its position. That is precisely what has happened in this case.

Now, continuing on the broader issues, trade defence instruments are there for good reasons. In the absence of international competition rules and other rules associated with properly functioning markets, trade defence instruments are the only possible means of protecting our industry against unfairly traded goods. We seek to use these rules in the most efficient way for our industries. The existence of time limits ensures quick action for the industry and predictability for exporters. I intend to keep our instruments effective and fair, for the benefit of all the economic operators concerned.

The international rules on trade defence are being renegotiated in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The EU position there is clear: we want to maintain the effectiveness of our instruments while protecting our business against protectionist actions by others. These WTO negotiations, as well as changes brought about by the Treaty of Lisbon, are important in relation to any review of our rules that we would wish to undertake.

As regards SMEs, trade defence instruments indeed represent a challenge for SMEs, in terms of both costs and complexity. There is a need to reduce the administrative burden for SMEs in trade defence investigations. This is why I have commissioned a study to look at the specific difficulties that SMEs face when dealing with TDIs, and at possible solutions to alleviate these difficulties.

Regarding the institutional aspects, you will have noted that the comitology proposal submitted by the Commission in March provides for Parliament to be fully informed as to the committee proceedings. The Commission will also provide information on the proposed measures on which the committees are asked to deliver an opinion, the final measures and the final adoption by the Commission. At any time, Parliament can obtain further information on request.

In this context, let me confirm that the Commission is effectively ready to make a proposal on the alignment of the trade defence instruments with the new system of control of delegated and implementing acts (this is the so-called "trade omnibus"). However, as you are aware, there is significant discussion between the institutions on the overall issue of implementing acts. The Commission is carefully following the discussion and gauging, on the basis of contacts with the other institutions, when such a proposal should be adopted by the Commission. However, let me be clear that the only issue is that of when the proposal will be made, not whether it will be made.

There was also the specific question by Mr Moreira on the comitology. There, I would like to be very clear. I see no argument whatsoever in the Treaty of Lisbon for having special treatment for comitology when it concerns trade, and we will not agree to that. Of course, the decision is in the hands of Parliament and the Council, although the Commission could also have a role to play, as, ultimately, could the European Court of Justice. Introducing a different majority – because that is what it really comes down to – for overruling the Commission on questions of trade is not acceptable to us, and it is certainly not acceptable to me.

Finally, regarding the use of trade defence instruments by third countries, we have indeed observed an increase since the beginning of the economic crisis.

I would like to assure you that we follow trade defence actions by third countries closely, and we take action when necessary – including intense monitoring, effective support for EU exporters affected and, indeed, the initiation of dispute-settlement procedures at the WTO.

In many cases the Commission's actions lead to the termination of the investigation without the imposition of measures. In other cases, these interventions often result in lesser measures being imposed on the EU exporters concerned.

There was also a question about possible forms of retaliation towards third countries in respect of pressures exerted on European companies. We have received petitions on this matter from European companies but we do not disclose their names, in order to protect them. For example, in a recent case involving China, China attacked the dispute settlement

in the WTO and the panel supported us, but we have not made public the names of the companies concerned, and I think this was also to protect the companies.

Two final questions were on whether we are going to review the trade defence instruments. We are not, because I truly believe it is not necessary. There is an enormous amount of work to be done on trade in the coming years, and I must say that I do not want to reopen certain discussions through such a review process. I would consider doing so only once the Doha Round is over.

There was also a specific question by the Green member. Mr Schlyter, your question is an interesting one, I must say, because, as you most probably know, these anti-dumping cases are introduced by companies. They are taken on the basis of a complaint by a company. So if a company were to raise the issue that you put forward concerning carbon leakage, then the Commission would, of course, investigate and see whether the case ought to result in measures being imposed. But the issue is certainly not beyond the scope of the arguments that we consider. We consider the arguments that are put forward by the companies concerned, so if a company were to put this before us then we would certainly look into the matter.

Cristiana Muscardini, *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (IT) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, anti-dumping represents one of the most incisive instruments for defending commercial decency in the European Union in order to compete fairly on the market. It needs clear and enforceable rules within the new comitology.

The Treaty of Lisbon clearly states that the Commission is responsible for executive acts. The Council and Parliament have the power to monitor the work of the Commission. The compromise under examination today removes the role assigned to Parliament by the Treaty of Lisbon and could therefore create a new democratic deficit within the institutions.

In detail, we do not understand and we reject the proposal to apply differential treatment to anti-dumping measures, which introduces elements of discretionary decision making, politicisation and legal uncertainty to proceedings, which should instead aim to protect the legitimate interests of businesses damaged by practices of unfair competition.

At a time of serious economic crisis like the present, it seems unreasonable and masochistic to make the conclusion of anti-dumping procedures complicated and perhaps impractical. Indeed, that would be the result of the current proposal if it were not amended.

We appeal to the Member States' sense of responsibility, as well as to that of the Commission, since their common interest must be to guarantee greater development. Development is only possible in the presence of rules that prevent market distortion, respect institutional roles and make procedures swift.

Mario Pirillo, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (IT) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, over recent years the number of anti-dumping procedures applied by the European Commission has increased. This is a sign of the increase in unfair practices operated by other countries against European businesses. Despite the economic and financial crisis, some 332 protectionist measures have been adopted by our international partners over the last two years.

We believe in free but fair international trade which is based on sharing rules which are the same for everyone. It is important to safeguard the effectiveness of Europe's instruments of commercial protection, which are used to correct illegal situations.

I am profoundly concerned about the effects that the current attempts to reform comitology may have on the effectiveness of these instruments. Leaving space for political and diplomatic negotiations to decide on the application of anti-dumping measures risks perverting a process that should instead remain based on concrete, objective information.

Jan Zahradil, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – (CS) Mr President, I would like to return to what my colleague, Mr Sturdy, was talking about here. Anti-dumping is a good servant but a bad master. Just as it serves to protect European companies and the European economy from unfair competition and unfair commercial practices, so can it be abused in the interests of protectionism, unfortunately, to close European markets to imports from third countries. I therefore call on the Commission, and I call on you, Commissioner, not to allow such a development, and for us to warn against anti-dumping measures being abused in the interests of protectionism and in the interests of closing the European market and European economy to the rest of the world. In my opinion, this would not benefit us, and, in my opinion, a closed fortress Europe would benefit no one and, in my opinion, history always shows that if Europe is open and cooperates with the rest of the world, then it only benefits from this. Please bear this in mind.

Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, cheap labour and social dumping are methods which are used very frequently in developing and emerging countries. The problem of anti-dumping shows how important it is to call for environmental and social standards, in particular, and also trade protection measures during negotiations on free trade agreements with third countries. European companies in all areas of manufacturing must not be put at a disadvantage because of their high quality standards, which, of course, are reflected in their prices. The developments during the current Mercosur negotiations are causing me great concern in this respect.

We must not open the door to social dumping, but instead we must incorporate a sustainable approach into trade agreements. Dumping is a major problem in the agricultural industry, in particular when it results in the disappearance of small, independent farms which are replaced by agricultural contractors.

In this context, I would like to highlight the own-initiative report on trade relations between the EU and Latin America. This report clearly explains the concerns of the European Union on social, environmental and production standards. I would like to thank the Members who raised this important question with the Commission.

Karel De Gucht, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, this will be a very short reply. I still have to answer the question put by Mr Scholz on the Saint-Gobain glass fibre case.

Anti-dumping duties can make supplies more expensive – including for SMEs. The Commission is calculating this potential impact under the public interest test. SMEs can participate in the proceedings. We have an SME helpline to make cooperation easier. However, in this case, the impact is small because China has only 14% of the EU market.

Regarding the question put by Mr Zahradil on the use of the trade defence instrument as a protectionist tool and the risk of this happening, the only factor that influences the number of cases is the number of complaints received by the Commission and the quality of the evidence provided. The Commission's trade defence policy is a rules-based system in line with WTO rules. If a complaint is filed and there is sufficient substantiating evidence that dumping is taking place, then the Commission has no other choice than to open an investigation.

President. – The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), in writing. – (PL) In order to protect the European economy, it is necessary to introduce effective restrictions on the process used to lobby on behalf of products which originate in third countries. These products are very often made using materials which contain substances which are harmful both to the environment and to consumers. A conspicuous example are children's toys – dangerous ingredients contained in the paints or plastic parts can cause health problems, and poor workmanship can cause an accident which ends up with a visit to hospital. It is in precisely this way, of course – by using cheap materials and not paying attention to workmanship – that it is possible to achieve low retail prices and to flood markets. We must rigorously increase control over production of imported articles and ensure effective enforcement of the legislation which governs the introduction of cheap products from third countries to the European market. Trade protection instruments must be effective and must guarantee that all our businesses have fair conditions of competition.

22. Agenda of the next sitting: see Minutes

23. Closure of the sitting

(The sitting was closed at 23:55)